

**Faculty: Business and Physical Sciences**

**Department: Physics**

**Date/Time: 17/11/2021, 1:00pm**

**Reps in Attendance:** David Fifer, Marcus Hall, Terry Hand, Zoe Hayne, Ciera Leonard-Davies, Luke Pearson, Harry Marsh, Skylar Rees.

**Staff in Attendance:** Andrew Evans, Chris Finlayson, Edwin Flikkema, Simon French, Jessica Gittins (minutes), Morwenna Jeffery, Alun Jones, Dave Langstaff, Xing Li, Balazs Pinter, Eleri Pryse, Youra Taroyan

**Apologies/Absent:** Millie Astbury, Martina Mclvor, Alejandro Rowlands Doblas

The meeting started with a welcome from Dave Langstaff who chaired the Meeting. Student reps are reminded to elect a chair for the next SSCC Meeting.

**Agenda**

1. Apologies for absence
2. Welcoming of new reps and election of chair
3. **Previous Minutes:** Accepted with two amendments (below)

Section 3.3 correction- Professional Skills in Engineering- PH384- **change to PH385.**

Section 2.3 correction- Refers to **PH220**, not PH345.

4. **Matters arising from previous minutes:**

Action Number:	Action:	Action Status and Outcome:	Whose Action:
1	<b>Status of Activity Weekend:</b> Andy Evans. The activity weekend is usually an in-person event at the beginning of the term. Unfortunately the department was not able to work this due to COVID-19 protocols.	<b>On-going:</b> The department will consider running this when circumstances are considered safe enough. This will be revisited in the next SSCC when there is more clarity on the situation for 2022 activities. The department is also trying to build upon/improve social activities for incoming students.	Andrew Evans
2	Feedback was previously received asking if the Assignment timetable could be released earlier for students.	<b>Complete:</b> It is commented that this has been raised at staff Learning and Teaching meetings and discussed. Resulting feedback was that submission/release dates are difficult to arrange	Eleri Pryse

		so early on in the Semester, and so it would be a large pressure on staff to release this earlier than it currently is. However, staff will continue to provide students with as much notice as possible.	
3	Reminder to staff: please tick 'email' option when sending messages through Blackboard module pages.	<b>Complete:</b> Staff have been reminded of this, and student feedback suggests that this has improved/ no further issues.	Andrew Evans
4	Update on further new Postgraduate courses and developments.	<b>Complete:</b> Andrew Evans responds that there is a new MSc in Radio Spectrum Engineering (started 2021).  The Department is also establishing a seminar series for Research/PhD students/staff who wish to discuss Research.	Andrew Evans
5	A request for additional Python coding resources/hints and tips.	<b>Complete:</b> Tom Knight has acted on this and provided further support for Python coding.	Tom Knight
6	A request for staff to allow feedback for assignments to be available for viewing sooner prior to exams. Plan of Action is being decided for this. Andy/Eleri asked to comment- staff have been reminded, and reminders will be circulated during exam periods.	<b>On-going</b> A plan of action is being decided for this. Staff have been reminded, and reminders will continue to be circulated throughout exam periods.	Andrew Evans, Eleri Pryse

## 5. Information Services (Simon French, Alun Jones )

### Simon French (Library Services)

- Library service is up and running: both the Physical Sciences library and Huw Owen library are open. A reminder to all that masks are mandatory unless you are exempt.
- The Click-and-collect service will be phased out towards the end of the Semester.
- Study spaces are available and bookable via. The Information Services webpages.
- Students are reminded that they can source books that the library does not currently hold through Primo. The library will then contact you when the material has arrived.
- A Customer User survey is being circulated over the next few days. Students and staff are encouraged to submit any feedback or comments they may have about services.
- Students are encouraged to get Library Services know if any links/resources on Aspire Reading Lists are not working.
- Appointments can be made with Simon via. Teams. Simon is also available on the Physical Sciences Library on Mondays.
- Skylar Rees raises that there is a **possible health and safety risk with the card release system in the Physical Sciences Library**. There was an incident where a student was stuck in the library after closing hours plus concerns about fire regulations. Simon responds that the card release system should still work after closing (24hrs) and that this incident was discussed. Simon is checking with estates for further details/clarification. The following response was received: *'All swipe card doors automatically open if the fire alarm is activated. There is also a green 'break glass' fire alarm activation point next to the swipe point in the event of an emergency in the Physics Library.'*

### **Alun Jones (Technical Support)**

- New machines for the teaching labs have been delivered. There have been some issues with booting, but these are being worked through. Staff and students are encouraged to report any machine issues to the Support team.
- A reminder is given about the remote desktop service: this is still available for student use.
- The KickLab service will be in 'read only' mode for this week as the team have been alerted to a security issue. This should take around a week to resolve.
- Dave Langstaff has previously circulated instructions for using the remote desktop service instructions. These will be circulated again.

**Action: Dave Langstaff to circulate instructions for using the remote desktop service.**

### **6. Employability & Careers (Morwenna Jeffery)**

- Students are reminded that the Careers service are still remote only. The main Student Union office is open for appointments only. Further information on drop-ins is available online.
- The Careers service will continue to run a series of seminars throughout the term. Recordings are available for most webinars upon request.
- David Fifer asks if the Year in Employment option could be promoted more within the Physics department. Morwenna responds that a further session can be set up to promote this further.
- Harry Marsh requests further communication between the Careers service and Physics department regarding CV workshops, as certain CVs checked with Careers were marked down within the department's career planning module. Morwenna thanks Harry for raising this and will investigate further.

### **7. Diversity and Inclusion (Dave Langstaff)**

- Dave updates that the JUNO committee within the Physics Department are planning to resubmit an application for practitioner status. Regular committee meetings are being held and a survey is planned. Students will be updated on how they can get involved.
- A question is asked as to whether there are any gender neutral toilets in the Physics building? Dave responds that there are on the first floor and third room. Staff will be checking that these are adequately signposted.

**Action: Dave Langstaff to check gender neutral toilets signposting and to send reminder to students.**

### **8. NSS Results and Departmental Action plan (Dave Langstaff)**

- Dave explains the NSS (National Student Survey), which happens between January and March. Academic staff would appreciate help from the student reps in encouraging students to take part.

Areas to improve on from the previous NSS (20/21) are viewed/discussed.

- *'My course has challenged me to achieve best work'*: Our departmental response was lower than average.

Suggestions: David Fifer suggests looking into the format of assessments; perhaps it would be more beneficial for reports to allow for further elaboration on working, rather than just the questions themselves.

Andy Evans comments that the IOP, our accrediting body, are aware of the need to vary assessment types and are currently investigating this within their restructure.

- *Assessment and feedback* category: overall positive response. There are individual items where we did not perform as well, such as Marking Criteria. The following actions are suggested: reminding all academic staff of procedures and the importance of following University guidance.

David Fifer comments that students may sometimes forget to take weekends into account with the '3 working day' response aim. Dave Langstaff responds that we need to emphasise to students/staff about holiday times/periods of response and reasonable response expectations.

- *Academic support* category: There is a clear polarisation between Astrophysics feedback and Physics feedback here. Astrophysics scored well, Physics less so. Staff are keen to find out why this is the case- reps are invited to submit comments for the next meeting and via. Email.
- *Timetable* category: Has scored quite low. Issues have been relayed and an action plan has been discussed. David Fifer asks for consideration of how spread out activities are, and to try to consider scheduling practical sessions after relevant lectures where possible.
- Reading weeks are a point of discussion within staff meetings. These give students a week to catch up on material. Reps are invited to comment, and comments are invited from each year group.
- *Deadlines*: Luke Pearson comments that the spacing of assignments is generally good. Some due in dates in Foundation Year are due in the middle of the day, during work times or straight after a lecture, which can be awkward for students.

Dave Langstaff responds that the University generally prefers academic staff to set deadline times during the working day so that a member of staff can respond if a student is encountering issues with uploading etc. However, this feedback will be taken in account.

- *Access to course-specific resources* category: It is commented that Covid conditions may have affected this, as the result is lower than usual/expected. Academic staff will be encouraged to raise greater awareness of reading lists and further resources available online. Harry Marsh suggests that lecturers could note on lecture slides where material is available for (as some lecturers already do).
- *'The Student Union represents students' academic interest'*: This is an ongoing low score and continues to be looked at by the University. It is noted that students tend to score the Student Union not knowing that this is where Academic Representatives come from. Reps are encouraged to make this clear to students. David Fifer comments that student engagement with Academic Reps is generally quite low. Terry Hand also adds that there is a poor response rate to emails from reps.

## 9. Student Matters

### Foundation Year/ Luke Pearson

	<b>Comments/Feedback:</b>	<b>Action (where applicable):</b>	<b>Whose Action:</b>
1	<p><b>Main feedback in general: for more than one lecture, one lecture has not shown up.</b> Students have been waiting for 45 minutes with no email notifications etc. sent. Students have commented that it would be beneficial for lecturers to inform students when they are going to be late.</p> <p>Andy Evans asked if the Foundation Year coordinator was informed. Balazs Pinter comments that he received a message from the lecturer and then covered the session himself. However, a more time effective solution to this situatuon (in general) needs to be discussed, so that staff are not required to cover last minute requests.</p>	<p><b>To be discussed in Physics departmental staff meetings.</b></p> <p>Andy Evans also asks students to please let Year Coordinators know about any similar incidences as soon as possible.</p>	Andy Evans
2	<p>Students have asked if there could be a designated online Team per module, rather than mutiple lecture links. This would make navigating a lot easier. Many people are getting confused with exactly where to go.</p>	<p><b>To be raised in Physics departmental staff meetings.</b></p>	Dave Langstaff

3	Positive feedback has been received for the covid safety measures in place. Students are finding feedback from lecturers very helpful re: covid issues.	N/A	
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**Year 1/ Terry Hand, Marcus Hall**

	Comments/Feedback:	Action (where applicable):	Whose Action:
1	Both reps report receiving very low feedback for Semester 1. It is suggested that an anonymous method of providing feedback is set up (such as an anonymous Dropbox), as this might encourage more feedback.	Year 1 Reps to look into setting up an anonymous method for students to provide feedback.	Terry Hand, Marcus Hall

**Year 2 / Zoe Hayne, Harry Marsh**

	Comments/Feedback:	Action (where applicable):	Whose Action:
1	<b>Students and reps would like to say thank you</b> to the Academic Staff and Administrative Staff for their support and time throughout a very difficult period.	To be extended to staff in the Physics Departmental Staff Meeting.	Andy Evans
2	<b>Timetabling:</b> students are finding it more manageable with spacing between in-person and Online activities.	N/A	
3	<b>Students have responded that materials available on Blackboard are good/clear to access.</b>	N/A	
4	<b>The high quality of assignments has been commented on.</b> Staff feedback to questions/queries and assignment feedback has been good/excellent with the coursework for Astrophysics receiving particularly high praise. It is commented that the PDF document on Blackboard with assignment lists has been very useful.	N/A	
5	<b>Feedback has been received that students have sometimes found marking rubrics confusing</b> , particularly on module tests submitted via Blackboard. Students would like to receive more feedback on BB tests.	To be raised in Physics Learning and Teaching Meetings.	Andy Evans
6	<b>PH26020/FG26020:</b> Feedback has been received that some students are unhappy that Blackboard material is from the previous year. Comments have also been received that the lecturer delivering in-person seminars did not appear well prepared and students would like to have received resources with example questions  Edwin Flikkema responds that the content of the Online material would not be different this year. The aim is for in-person sessions to be used for discussion about material/ an opportunity for questions.  It is suggested that techniques encouraging student participation could be looked into (e.g.: Vevox), or discussion based practices modelled off Year 1/FY modules so that students build social/employability skills.  Ciera Leonard-Davies raises the example of a practice at York University. Students are split into groups and present their answers/ideas about the current lecture material in an hour's session. Andy Evans agrees that this is a good example and that the Department is continually	To be raised in Physics Learning and Teaching Meetings.	Andy Evans

	developing/evolving its teaching style (including online and in-person elements).		
7	<p><b>It is commented that one assignment was released on a Friday afternoon and due on Monday.</b> This has been difficult for students who have jobs over the weekend.</p> <p>Andy Evans comments that this scheduling should be avoided where possible.</p> <p>Chris Finlayson responds that this incidence was a smaller assignment/class test, and so it was decided that this was doable. Students would usually received a 24-hour window to complete these in. This time, students received a 72-hour window. However, it is acknowledged that it is important to avoid weekend scheduling wherever possible.</p>	Chris Finlayson and module team to investigate this further.	Chris Finlayson

### Year 3 / Ciera Leonard-Davies, Skylar Rees

	<b>Comments/Feedback:</b>	<b>Action (where applicable):</b>	<b>Whose Action:</b>
1	<p><b>There has been a mixed reaction to in-person/Online seminars.</b></p> <p>It seems that if the quality of Online material is more detailed, then students are less receptive towards seminars, as they have no further questions.</p> <p>There is a request for lecturers to give more examples/case studies within Online/lecture material to be discussed in seminars.</p>	To be raised in Physics Learning and Teaching Meetings.	Andy Evans
2	<b>There is a lot of positive feedback for Year 3 modules overall.</b>	N/A	
4	<p><b>Students on the Astrophysics scheme have been very busy with assignments, with lengths of time per assignment varying, e.g: some one day, other a week.</b></p> <p>Students would like more uniform deadlines.</p>	To be raised in Physics Learning and Teaching Meetings.	Andy Evans
5	<b>Reading week was received with positive feedback.</b> Students were grateful for an opportunity to catch up on material.	N/A	
6	<b>Positive feedback is received for the lecturer's notes on webpages for Year 3 and 4 Project modules.</b>	To be relayed to teaching staff on Project modules.	Dave Langstaff
7	<b>PH33310:</b> A comment was received that a student found lecture notes insufficient to complete an assignment for this module.	To be raised with module coordinator.	Dave Langstaff
8	<b>Students seem to prefer online exams, but would prefer in-person activities.</b>	To be raised in Physics Learning and Teaching Meetings.	Dave Langstaff

**Year 4 / PG / David Fifer**

	<b>Comments/Feedback:</b>	<b>Action (where applicable):</b>	<b>Whose Action:</b>
<b>1</b>	Students in Year 4 have responded favourably towards online lectures, however, discussions and further explanations are preferred in-person.	To be raised in Physics Learning and Teaching Meetings.	Dave Langstaff
<b>2</b>	Students have asked if there is any update to the proposed In-person Gregynog trip. Balazs Pinter comments that has raised this and the trip is being considered by the Department. There is a view to add an Industrial Year.	Balazs Pinter to keep students updated	Balazs Pinter
<b>4</b>	No PG rep in session.	N/A	

**10. Welsh Medium/ Skylar Rees**

- Students have raised that they would like more modules at a higher level (Year 2 +) to be made available in Welsh, and more modules in general to be available for Study through the medium of Welsh.

**11. Staff Matters**

- Andy Evans comments that it has been a difficult period for both staff and students, and that everyone has risen to the challenge. The Department is proud of the effort from all to make the transition as smooth as possible.-

**12. Any other Business**

- A thank you to all for attending.