

UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD: DEPARTMENT OF PHYSICS

PHYSICS JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

MT22-1: 13:00 on Wednesday, Wk 2 MT22
Robert Hooke Meeting Room

ATTENDANCE

• Those Present

- Wendy (Yixuan) Dang (WD) - Chair, PhysPhil Rep
- Om Gupta (OG) - Secretary
- Jack Barker (JaB) - Webmaster
- Gareth Hopkins (GH) - 2nd Year Rep
- Thomas Ford (TF) - 2nd Year Rep
- Woon Sing Lau (WSL) - 3rd Year Rep
- Bradley Westwood (BW) - 3rd Year Rep
- Andrew Okukura (AO) - 4th year Rep, EDI Rep
- Uri Sharell (US) - 4th Year Rep, MMathPhys Rep
- Suat Baris Tuncay (SBT) - 4th year Rep, MMathPhys Rep
- Hans Kraus (HK) - Head of Teaching
- Jenny Barnes (JB) - Teaching Laboratories Manager
- Carrie Leonard-McIntyre (CL-M) - Assistant Head of Teaching
- Malcolm John (MJ) - Academic Committee
- Hannah Glanville (HG) - Teaching Faculty Administration Officer

MINUTES

1. Minutes of last meeting (Wednesday, Wk 2 TT22) (5)
 - (a) No matters arising
2. Committee business (30)
 - (a) **Chair**
 - i. IOP Accreditation Visit

- WD started the meeting talking about updates from the academic committee with the IOP accreditation visit. She emphasized the need to have early elections for 1st year reps in order to have 1st year representatives in the visit.
 - CL-M notified the PJCC that the IOP visit is to occur on Thursday, 3rd of November. It is a full day event that would require representatives from all year groups so they can talk about the student experience in the course. She further explained that IOP guidelines what is required in an undergraduate Physics course and helps shape the Physics course.
- ii. Preparing for Learning and Teaching at Oxford (PLTO)
- WD brought up the PLTO. She recalled AA's point about student faculty relations from last term and that this would be a good way to ensure incidents like these don't happen again
 - HK mentioned that the EDI head of the department recently held a talk to raise sensitivity regarding student faculty relations. HK reiterated that any cause of concern can be immediately brought to the attention of the teaching office. HK also emphasized that they took issues like these very seriously.
 - WD asked if the PLTO was launched just this year. HK said it wasn't but the Teaching Office didn't have reports of inappropriate behaviour until last year. PLTO was focused on the academic aspects but will now also include behavioural aspects
 - GH asked about the possibility of putting up posters in the department to ensure everyone was aware of the process involved in such issues. HK said that this was certainly a possibility but the best course of action to contact the teaching office directly
 - US asked if this was available in the student handbook. HK mentioned that this could be done but this could alarm students unnecessarily
 - WD mentioned that the handbook isn't read very often by students. HK acknowledged this and said this was because it is quite dense with the answer to every question that students ask. It is slightly easier now that it is searchable now and not a printed copy. But HK mentioned the possibility of improving the form in which information is delivered to students
- iii. Formalise a procedure of communication regarding exam results
- WD mentioned the feedback survey students filled regarding exams and shared with the PJCC that in a draft of the examiners' report shared in Academic Committee, the Department commented that PJCC's actions might have unnecessarily stressed students and impacted their performance
 - WD then stressed that the survey was conducted in week 9 after all exams were finished so there would have been no impact to students' performance. The academic committee also suggested the PJCC could formalise this process of conducting a survey eg. setting up a clear timeline
 - HK mentioned that most of the feedback was related to academic matters and appeals about academic matters are generally not heard.

Instead appeals related to deficiencies about exam processes are heard.

iv. Discussion about delay of exam results

- HK floated the possibility of setting a very late date i.e. 15th August for exam results so that there are no queries before then and if results do come before, students are pleased
- AO said he'd also received a lot of messages regarding exam results and agreed with HK about setting a date in mid-August for results.
- CL-M said she'd received about 250 messages in total regarding exam results and this was frustrating because releasing results isn't in hers or the Teaching Office's control. She also said it was very hard for the examiners to give a provisional date for results
- HK reiterated the best solution would be to offer a very generous date for results.
- CL-M mentioned that she took care to ensure 4th years got their results first and then the BAs who were graduating.
- HK mentioned that the reasons behind the delay would be available when the chair's report came out. There is a lot of effort that goes into releasing exam results and care is taken to ensure everything is done correctly
- AO mentioned that anxiety about exams has possibly carried on from the uncertainty of COVID. US said that as a student that uncertainty about exam dates worried him a lot as well
- CL-M said that a very late provisional date could only be a recommendation as it is ultimately up to examiners to set a date
- HK emphasized that the delay was definitely a one-off event with examiners having to mark during term time and that this was the first set of exams taken after the pandemic

v. Undergraduate Newsletter

- WD mentioned the newsletter which was talked about in the last meeting. She suggested that an email could be sent monthly with the newsletter in which they could also ask about the lecture feedback. WD also asked for volunteers within the PJCC to write a first draft of the undergraduate newsletter
- TF suggested that the link to lecture feedback could be sent along with the newsletter to make it more visible

(b) **Secretary**

No business

(c) **Webmaster**

No business

3. Year reps' business (10)

(a) **First Year**

No business

(b) **Second Year**

No business

(c) **Third Year**

No business

(d) **Fourth Year**

i. Communication about Major Option Choices

- AO asked if queries about major options could be handled by students but CL-M said she would be happy to send a mail on behalf of students but all formal communication can be handled only by members of the teaching office
- CL-M said it has been quite difficult to coordinate major option choices with students not being proactive about choices
- SBT said he thought the initial survey was just an indicator of interest and not a final choice so many students hadn't filled it
- CL-M said she was careful to send the survey only after exam results since she was aware that students would change their choice once results were released. CL-M also mentioned she would be sending an email about short options soon

4. **PhysPhil business** (5)

No business

5. **MMathPhys business** (10)

(a) Missing data on Canvas for MMathPhys Students

- US asked if MMathPhys students could regain access to past year data for Physics students
- JB mentioned this loss of access was a result of how Canvas was structured and while she has added all students back to the respective year groups, students could still go back to her if anyone hasn't regained access to courses
- US asked if access to old lectures for advanced quantum theory was available
- HG said that all lecture recordings have to be copied manually and that while they will become available, this might take time
- CL-M mentioned that there was a Panopto outage across the university last week but should be fixed now.
- WSL asked if there was the possibility to incorporate individual practical courses into finals scores
- JB said that this was something she was looking into but hadn't been implemented yet

(a) **Physics Forum**

No business

6. **Practical Course business** (5)

No business

7. **Any other business**

No business