

Minutes of the Meeting of the Examination Board for MSc Nanoscience, MSc Optical Technologies, MSc Applied Physics and MSc Advanced Physics Degrees

5th September 2016

Present: Dr N. Langford (Convenor), Prof. P. Gardner (External Examiner, via skype), Prof T. Ackemann, Prof. D. Birch, Dr Y. Chen, Dr A. Hurtado, Dr A. Kemp, Dr D. Oi, Dr. M. Piani, Prof E. Riis, Dr O Rolinski, Prof Zheng-Ming Sheng, Dr J Sutter, Dr L. Tagliacozzo, Dr C. Trager-Cowan, Dr A. Wark

Apologies: Dr P. Griffin, Dr B. Hourahine, Prof. S. Kuhr, Prof. R. W. Martin, Dr D. McKee, Dr F Papoff, Dr. G. Robb

1. **Welcome:** Dr Langford welcomed everybody to the meeting of the MSc Examination Board.
2. **Minutes:** Last year's minutes were approved without any changes.
3. **Consideration of Schedules:** The performance of the students given on the schedules was considered and the following recommendations made:
 - a. **MSc Optical Technologies**
 - 201551639 Award MSc with Distinction
 - 201559975 Award MSc with Distinction (best student on program, yet)
 - 201577292 Award MSc with Distinction
 - b. **MSc Nanofabrication**
 - 201583848 Award MSc with Distinction
 - 201585426 Award MSc with Distinction
 - 201561650 Award MSc with merit
(PH950 taken out of averaging as suggested by first board, ongoing issues with care for child during final phase of project)
 - 201568181 Award MSc
 - 201572229 Award MSc with merit
 - 201593916 Award MSc with Distinction
 - 201580545 Award MSc with merit
 - c. **MSc Applied Physics**
 - 201568211 Award MSc (PH962 pass by compensation)
 - 201581686 Award MSc with merit
(PH955 taken out of averaging as suggested by first board)
 - 201552895 Award MSc with merit
 - 201551887 Award MSc with Distinction
 - 201554572 no decision taken as project report deadline extended to 7/9/16 due to special circumstances
(pass of PH962 as first attempt)
 - d. **MSc Advanced Physics**
 - 201561314 no decision taken, agreement of board to extend project report deadline by two weeks due to personal circumstances (deadline set 19/9/16, 09.00)
(PH960 pass by compensation)

e) **PgDiploma Optical Technologies**

201561993 PgCert (as resit in EE473 failed)

4. **Prizes:** The Department of Physics MSc Prize will be awarded to Metin Ilke for the best project. He is also the best performing student overall.
5. **Comments from the External Examiner:** Prof Gardener recalled that he has been external examiner for the MSc courses of the department for four years. The portfolio of courses changed considerably over this time, but quality of programme and assessment processes were consistently high. He noted laudable attention to detail in the assessment process and the benefits to react to student circumstances in a flexible way allowed by board guidelines. He noted the good quality of the students, in particular the 100% distinctions in the Optical Technology programme and the healthy rate of distinction (38%) in the Nanoscience course. As he encouraged the department before to use the full spectrum of marks in the distinction range, he welcomes the excellent rating of Ilke's report but recognizes the need for final mediation of the full mark after the viva performance. He welcomed the project guidance introduced on his recommendation and was asking for student feedback on this. (Prof Ackemann answered that it is difficult to get useful student feedback on this issue due to their high work load during the final project phase, followed by a fast loss of interest as they are moving on after the assessment.) All individual taught modules seem to work fine as far as it can be judged from the partially small numbers of students taking them. PH955 had a unusual low outcome with a pass rate of 73% this year. However, the performance of the MPhys students taking it was healthy and quite a few of the MSc fails were qualifying for a 2nd first attempt or special consideration due to special circumstances. Hence, this slight drop in outcome does not give rise to major concern.
6. **Concluding Remarks:** The board confirmed that students of the new cohort which are delayed by visa issues should start on 3/10/16 (week 3) as latest, in line with university guidance. Prof. Ackemann might decide for a discretionary extension till 10/10/16 for highly qualified students, if necessary. Dr Langford and Prof Ackemann thanked everybody for attending the meeting and especially Prof. Gardener for his long-standing help as External Examiner.