

## Physics MSc degree programmes: Information on assessment

Dear Physics PGT student,

This email contains an important update regarding examinations and assessments. Please take the time to read it carefully.

I hope that you and your families are safe and well. Throughout the unprecedented and evolving situation relating to Covid-19, staff in the Physics Department and across the University are working hard to ensure that, in the most difficult of circumstances, you can continue your studies and your academic achievements can be suitably recognised. Please regularly consult the link

<https://www.strath.ac.uk/coronavirus/students/> for up-to-date information to keep abreast of University related issues and support.

We know that many of you are understandably worried about your assessments. In accordance with the Principal's guidance, formal, time bound examinations, originally planned to be delivered 20 April – 22 May will not take place. In light of this, the Department is putting in place the plans outlined below.

### **Semester 2 modules originally planned to have a substantial examination component:**

PH955, PH956, PH960, PH963, PH557, PH560, PH452, PH459 – These modules are designed to have an examination component that is greater than 50% (typically 70-80%), with the remaining component based on continuous assessment. The exam component will not take place. These modules will be assessed on a Pass/Fail basis, based on your performance in the continuous assessment elements. This is in line with the approach taken for the assessment of Year 5 undergraduate students also taking these modules.

The award of the MSc degree requires 120 credits from the taught modules and 60 credits from the project module. Independent of your choice of modules, you will have a minimum of 60 credits from taught modules with marks (primarily from semester 1). Your degree award level will be based on a credit-weighted average of all marked modules and the project (weighted by a factor of three).

### **Semester 2 modules with a substantial continuous assessment component:**

The following modules have sufficient continuous assessment to enable the learning outcomes to be assessed in a meaningful way, with a mark returned.

PH964 and PH562 – Your mark for these modules will be based on your performance in the continuous assessment component, which has not changed compared to the original plan. In PH562 you need only to supply the slides for your talk and not to give the talk.

PH958 – For this module, 75% of the intended assessment is completed or should be completed before the end of semester 2. The first completed assessment will contribute 33% of your overall mark. The second assessment, due in the middle of May, will contribute the remaining 67%.

PH968 – For this module, most of you have completed the first experiment, but many have not completed the second.

You are asked to write up the report for the second experiment taking the feedback on the first experiment into account. The deadline to submit your report is 11 May 2020. If you did not complete the experimental programme before the shutdown, you should write your report such that it includes discussion of the experiment set-up and methods, and a discussion of the expected results. If you completed the experiment but are not content with the results, please include a discussion of further measurements to be made or to be repeated, including a justification for this. The weighting of the assessment for this module has been adjusted as follows: Lab book for experiment 1 = 33.3%; Report on experiment 1 = 33.3%, Report on experiment 2 = 33.3%.

PH462 – For this module, 50% of the intended assessment is available or will be available by the end of semester 2. The exam component will not take place. The assessment will be as follows: Labs completed = 35%; Labs due by the beginning of May = 35%; Essay assignment due by the end of May = 30%.

CH907 – For this module, 66% of the originally planned assessment will be available by the end of semester 2. The exam component will not take place. The assessment will be as follows: First assessment = 50% (due 11 April 2020); Second assessment = 50% (due 18 May 2020).

### **Outstanding continuous assessment:**

**It is important to note that all continuous assessment elements of ALL your modules (regardless of the originally planned weighting of examination and continuous assessment) will need to be completed and submitted.** Given the significant challenges of the ongoing situation and the impact this is having at a personal level in homes across the community, please let us know if you require an extension to a deadline for any outstanding continuous assessment elements still due for submission.

If you fail a module impacted by Covid-19, you can resit the module as a first attempt in the next exam diet. If the fail is not related to disruptions caused by Covid-19, e.g. for the semester 1 modules, the type of resit will be decided at the 1<sup>st</sup> Board of Examiners meeting following standard procedures based on your personal circumstances.

### **Proceed to project:**

The regulations state that you need 100 credits in first attempt to proceed to undertake the project. Exceptions will be considered by the Board of Examiners based on your personal circumstances and the University's 'no detriment' policy (see below). This decision is taken at the 1<sup>st</sup> Board of Examiners meeting in May/June.

### **PH952 project:**

As you are aware, the projects are scheduled to start on 8 June 2020 and the deadline for submitting the report is 24 August 2020. We are planning to keep to this schedule, if possible, to enable you to achieve your degree and progress with your career plans. Given the Covid-19 situation, it is very unlikely that the projects can be delivered on-campus and therefore we are investigating alternative options, to include remote supervision. We are committed to providing a high-quality research experience and will contact you with further details in due course.

### **'No detriment' policy**

Your success in your studies is our success, and we are keen to mitigate as much as possible the negative impact of Covid-19 on your attainment. While we must maintain academic standards in order to protect the value of your degree, we have taken steps to manage the impact on your academic record and attainment through a 'no detriment' policy. Further detail on this policy can be found [here](#), in the Covid-19 FAQs. Although this policy is applied in practice after you have finished your classes, please be assured that staff and boards of examiners are very aware of the difficult circumstances you are experiencing and are keeping our university values at the heart of how we proceed.

### **Personal circumstances**

We recognise that some of you will have personal circumstances or difficulties that mean that you may not be able to undertake all of your assessments as scheduled. You or those close to you could become unwell, for example. Please keep your Advisor of Study informed and record your circumstances on Pegasus. Details of the Personal Circumstances Procedure can be found [here](#).

### **Progression decision and degree awards:**

We will consider the personal circumstances of each student on a case-by-case basis and make appropriate recommendations at the 1<sup>st</sup> PGT Exam Board, responsible for assessment of the taught courses and the progression decision to project, and the 2nd PGT Exam Board, responsible for the assessment of the resits, the quality of the overall course and the award decision, as has been the practice in previous years. The 1<sup>st</sup> PGT Exam Board is currently scheduled for 29<sup>th</sup> May 2020. All relevant circumstances need to reach the Director of PGT Teaching, Prof T Ackemann, at 17.00 on the working day before the board. Details of the Personal Circumstances Procedure can be found [here](#).

The Department will make every effort to work in the best interest of each student when making a decision.

### **Online Q&A sessions**

We will hold a Zoom meeting on Wednesday 8 April at 2pm to answer any questions you have. The details are: <https://strath.zoom.us/j/183630187?pwd=K1pIVis5MlBENGtwSEc1cnlvdkliQT09>

Meeting ID: 183-630-187; Password: 4219

Please email any questions that you would like to raise at the Zoom meeting to the PGT class rep, Iain Harley (iain.harley.2014@uni.strath.ac.uk). In order to manage the meeting, the class rep will pose these questions on your behalf.

Please note that individual queries relating to personal circumstances should not be raised in this meeting. Please refer to the FAQs and the personal circumstances policy.

Thanks for your understanding during these difficult times. We hope that you stay safe and well, and wish you all the best for the remaining assessment period.

Regards,

Paul McKenna

Head of Department, Physics