

Marking guidelines for the PH450 2nd Report 2020-21

Preface

This academic year has been especially challenging for conducting the PH450 Projects. This set of guidance outlines considerations that markers should keep in mind when assessing the 2nd Report and should be **used in conjunction with the official marking sheets**. In comparison with previous years, the amount of novel or original work that can be expected is reduced. The change in the assessment programme has also reduced the weighting on the final project report.

Specific Guidance

Due to many projects having to be refactored from being experimental in nature to being able to be remotely supervised with limited resources, the degree by which students are able to conduct original work is less than in previous years. The lack of in-person contact will have affected all projects, regardless of the topic. Markers are advised to take into account circumstances outwith the student's control. For example, some projects may have relied on the provision of experimental data generated by the Supervisor's group, but may not have been possible due to lab access restrictions. Regardless, reports can be assessed on the demonstration of critical analysis, even if it may be on the existing data or research literature. Supervisor should inform the rest of their project markers of any such **extenuating circumstances** (beyond what would be expected in a "normal" year).

The 2nd Report is worth 30% of the final PH450 mark in 2020-21, compared with 50% for the final report in previous years, and this **reduced scope and coverage** should be reflected in the assessment.

The 2nd Report length has a suggested length of 6000 words in Physical Review A article format. Students were encouraged to be concise and possibly selective in the coverage of their project work. For reports significantly beyond 6000 words, markers should consider whether students have been **adequately concise or selective**. For reports below 6000 words, markers should assess the reports on the effectiveness of the writing and the depth of coverage and explanation. Short, but well written reports should not attract penalties due to their length.

Students were advised that they were allowed to adapt parts of the 1st Report to include in the introductory sections of the 2nd Report, but that the material "should be suitably condensed". Markers should consider whether any repeated material has been **appropriately adapted** in an effective manner for the article format.

Students have been specifically instructed to aim the level of the report at the non-specialist. Markers should consider whether the student has been able to **explain and convey** the key concepts of their project in a manner accessible to researchers outside of a specialist field.