A Guide for Undergraduate Students 2019-2020
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Preface: About this Guide

On behalf of the all members of the Department I would like to welcome new students to the Department and also to welcome back existing students following the summer vacation. We hope that you will enjoy your time with us and that you will find your degree programme enjoyable and stimulating.

The University of Sheffield’s Department of Physics and Astronomy is an active and long-established department with over 45 academic staff members who pursue research in a wide variety of fields from active galaxies to organic thin films and from the search for dark matter to semiconductor nanostructures. The Department has a strong commitment to teaching and we pride ourselves on the friendly relations between staff and students and on the number of our undergraduates who choose to remain in Sheffield for postgraduate work.

This Guide contains a brief summary of the teaching aims and objectives of the Department and those aspects of the way the Department is run which may be important to you as a student. More details about your particular course can be found on the departmental website, and in the material posted on Undergraduate Information notice boards around the Department. You should read this material since it contains important information.

It is important to stress that, as well as the information contained in this guide, we want you to feel that you can talk to tutors, lecturers or advisors about any matter that may concern you. The student members of the departmental Student-Staff Committee are there to represent student views, and you should feel free to contact them at any time; the administrative staff in Hicks Student Support, room F10, will be also happy to help you, especially with filling in forms or other administrative issues. Finally, the University as a whole has many staff devoted to supporting our students: see https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/ssid/sos for many useful links and contact details.

Professor Paul Crowther
Head of Department
August 2019
1 Aims and Objectives of the University and Department

1.1 The Sheffield Graduate

The University has produced a list of skills, characteristics and attitudes which all students should have had the opportunity to develop during their time at Sheffield. These attributes are divided into four broad categories: knowledge, application of knowledge, scholarship, and development. The intent of the University is that all graduates will be

- acquainted with the **knowledge** appropriate to their discipline, and therefore
  1. knowledgeable in their subject area;
  2. equipped to work collaboratively and confidently both outside and across disciplines;
  3. confident in applying their knowledge and skills to authentic challenges;
  4. able to exhibit ethical behaviour as appropriate to their discipline;
- able to **apply** their knowledge in a wider context, including being
  5. confident in considering issues within local, national and international contexts and equipped to work in diverse cultural settings;
  6. aware and respectful of a range of perspectives and considerate of diversity;
  7. experienced at working in partnership with others, including communities and external partners;
  8. able to translate and adapt knowledge, and apply lateral thinking in problem solving;
- equipped with the tools and techniques of academic **scholarship**, and therefore
  9. experienced in the processes and methods of research;
  10. critical, analytical thinkers;
  11. creative and innovative, and able to understand and manage risk;
  12. equipped with appropriate information and digital literacy skills;
- possessed of the skills and attitudes necessary to continue their own personal **development**, namely
  13. lifelong learners who understand the importance of continual development;
  14. excellent team workers, able to manage their time efficiently;
  15. skilled communicators, comfortable with different styles and audiences;
  16. reflective, self-aware and able to take ownership of their own learning;
  17. professional and adaptable, resilient and flexible in their approach.

These are general attributes, applicable to the whole University. In the Department of Physics and Astronomy, we aim to interpret these in the context of helping you to acquire the knowledge, skills and personal qualities expected of a professional physicist or astronomer.

1.2 The aims of the Department of Physics and Astronomy

The Department of Physics and Astronomy aims to provide high quality education to students from a wide variety of educational and social backgrounds, consistent with the University's Mission "to maintain the highest standards of excellence as a research-led institution, whose staff work at the frontiers of academic enquiry and educate students in a research environment". This overall intent is embodied in a series of aims and objectives which form part of the specification of our degree programmes and are intended to reflect the general Sheffield Graduate attributes in the context of physics and astronomy.

*Aims*

The Department aims to:

- provide teaching at undergraduate and postgraduate levels that is informed and invigorated
by the research and scholarship of the staff and is stimulating, useful and enjoyable to
students from a wide variety of educational backgrounds;

• sustain a culture of teaching and research that is able to foster the free pursuit of knowledge
  and the rigorous analysis of information;
• meet a wide diversity of student interests and aspirations through degree courses which
  furnish a well-rounded understanding of the subject;
• encourage and develop the students’ desire for learning and support development of
  appropriate interpersonal and transferable skills;
• produce graduates with well-developed practical, analytical, communication and problem-
  solving abilities, who readily find employment in industry, the professions and public service;
• provide, through the Foundation Year, access to degree courses for all those with suitable
  levels of academic ability even if lacking the usual school qualifications.

Particularly for the 4-year MPhys degrees, the department also aims to:

• prepare students for a professional career or research degree based on physics, astronomy
  or medical physics;
• allow students to extend their knowledge and understanding in particular areas of interest.

For the Foundation Year, the aim is to:

• bring students up to the appropriate academic level in Physics to enable them to pursue
  degree courses in the Faculties of Science and Engineering.

Objectives

Students who successfully complete any of our degree programmes should:

• gain a sound grasp of the fundamental principles of physics and/or astronomy (as appropriate
  to the degree programme);
• be able to tailor their studies to match their interests and abilities, by choosing from a range
  of Single and Dual Honours degree programmes, with the possibility of internal transfer in the
  first year, and by selecting appropriate optional courses later in their degree programme;
• develop an appreciation of logical analysis and scientific method and the knowledge, skills and
  attitudes expected of a professional scientist;
• become equipped with the mathematical, scientific and technical skills to apply physical
  principles creatively to the solution of problems and the acquisition, analysis and
  interpretation of data;
• particularly in experimental programmes, be trained in sound laboratory techniques so that
  they can plan and perform experiments accurately, efficiently and safely, with due regard for
  the limitations of the equipment;
• acquire effective study habits and the ability to work efficiently both individually and as
  members of a team;
• develop the ability to communicate scientific results, ideas and arguments in a clear, logical
  and concise way, both orally and in writing;
• acquire computing skills to aid in data analysis, problem solving and report presentation;
• experience active learning through independent study, in addition to formal lectures;
• become acquainted with both traditional and modern methods of information storage,
  retrieval and dissemination.

The objectives of the MPhys degrees are to enhance and extend the BSc, in that students should also:

• conduct a challenging research project in a research environment, developing the ability to
  plan and carry out theoretical, computational or experimental scientific work;
• acquire the skills and knowledge necessary to proceed into postgraduate research and
  advanced study, if they have the aptitude and desire to do so;
• take advanced courses relevant to and informed by modern research.

It is possible to proceed to postgraduate research after a good BSc degree, but students with a BSc
are indubitably disadvantaged when applying for PhD positions compared to similarly able students
with an MPhys. Students intending to pursue a research career should therefore normally plan to
complete the MPhys.

### 1.3 The Departmental Code of Conduct

We hope that the Department of Physics and Astronomy offers a friendly, welcoming and supportive environment for all our members, both staff and students. In order to ensure that this is the case, we have implemented a departmental code of conduct based on the themes of **Respect**, **Diversity** and **Integrity**.

**Respect**

All members of the Department will

- **treat others** with tact, courtesy and respect;
- **not tolerate** verbal, non-verbal or physical harassment of any kind;
- **not tolerate** bullying of any form, including—but not limited to—physical bullying, verbal abuse, disparagement, intimidation or exclusion;
- **recognise** that behaviours acceptable to one person may not be to another, and reflect on our impact rather than intent.

**Diversity**

We will

- **respect** and **value** differences;
- **actively discourage** discrimination on any grounds, including—but not limited to—sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, physical appearance, body size, age, race, nationality, ethnicity, political affiliation, religion, pregnancy or status;
- **refrain** from use of sexual language or imagery, sexist, racist or other exclusionary jokes;
- **be inclusive**, recognising that as humans we are biased, and pledge to foster awareness of our own biases to better combat them.

**Integrity**

We will

- **be accountable** for our own actions and exercise authority responsibly and transparently;
- **address conflict** in a constructive and respectful manner;
- **demonstrate** fairness, impartiality and honesty;
- **strive to understand** what is expected of us and to fulfil our role to the best of our ability, as well as act on constructive criticism;
- **welcome questions** and seek to answer them respectfully, providing constructive criticism and feedback where appropriate.

If at any time you feel that a member of the Department, either staff or student, is in breach of this code of conduct, you should feel able to **speak up** and point out the issue. Anyone asked to cease behaviour that contravenes the code is expected to comply immediately, regardless of original intent (as noted above, we recognise that behaviour seen as inappropriate may not have been intended as such—but it is the impact, and not the intent, that is most important).

If you have concerns that someone is consistently behaving in a manner that violates the code of conduct, you can report your worries to your academic or personal tutor, the Year Tutor, the Senior Tutor, or anyone in F10. Any such report will be treated as confidential. Anonymous comments can be made using the QR code on the Code of Conduct posters displayed around the Department.
2 Organisation of Courses

2.1 Degree Programmes in the Department

All of our degree programmes are accredited by the Institute of Physics. The following degree programmes are taught wholly or partly within the Department of Physics and Astronomy:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Title</th>
<th>BSc</th>
<th>MPhys</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Single Honours Programmes</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physics</td>
<td>PHYU01</td>
<td>PHYU02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physics with Employment Experience/Year in Industry</td>
<td>PHYU31</td>
<td>PHYU32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theoretical Physics</td>
<td>PHYU04</td>
<td>PHYU16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theoretical Physics with Employment Experience/Year in Industry</td>
<td>PHYU28</td>
<td>PHYU29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Materials Physics (with NJTech)</td>
<td>PHYU33</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dual Honours Programmes</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physics and Astrophysics</td>
<td>PHYU06</td>
<td>PHYU11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physics and Astrophysics with Employment Experience/Year in Industry</td>
<td>PHYU26</td>
<td>PHYU27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physics with Medical Physics</td>
<td>PHYU05</td>
<td>PHYU10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physics with Philosophy</td>
<td>PHYU14</td>
<td>PHYU30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physics with Computer Science (last entry 2018/19)</td>
<td>PHYU18</td>
<td>PHYU19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chemical Physics (last entry 2018/19)</td>
<td>CHMU03</td>
<td>CHMU08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Study Abroad</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physics with Study Abroad</td>
<td>PHYU35*</td>
<td>PHYU23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theoretical Physics with Study Abroad</td>
<td>PHYU36*</td>
<td>PHYU24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physics and Astrophysics with Study Abroad</td>
<td>PHYU37*</td>
<td>PHYU25</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

* The BSc codes in the Study Abroad programmes are “exit awards” only. These programmes are all intended as MPhys courses, but there may be circumstances in which a student cannot or does not wish to continue with the fourth year of the MPhys programme, and in this case, assuming that their performance while on placement was satisfactory and fulfilled the programme requirements, a BSc with Study Abroad will be awarded. You cannot sign up for or transfer to a BSc with Study Abroad.

The course codes are the University codes, which are used in University documentation such as the degree programme regulations. These, and not the JACS codes used by UCAS, are the codes you should use if filling out a Change of Programme form. University codes starting with CHM indicate a programme which is administered by Chemistry.
2.2 Relationships between the MPhys and the BSc

The 4-year MPhys courses (5 years if taken with Employment Experience/Year in Industry) offer an opportunity to increase both the depth and the breadth of your knowledge of physics—they include all the BSc material plus an extended research project and a range of advanced lecture courses allowing you to explore topics of particular interest to you—while the BSc degree continues to provide a sound training in all aspects of the subject within the confines of a 3-year programme (4 years with Employment Experience/Year in Industry).

Which should I choose?

As a very general guide, the MPhys is the better choice if you are intending to go on to do a PhD, and probably also if you want a physics-related career in industry, while the BSc is more suitable if your career plans are not directly physics-oriented, and especially if your plans include a specialist postgraduate training course such as teacher training, a vocational MSc course, etc. You would not be advised to take the MPhys if you find the core second year material very challenging, and in recognition of this there is a regulation which states that you must have a grade point average of at least 59.5% in the second year to be progress on the MPhys. There is also a 59.5% threshold to progress to 4th year. You should discuss your choice with your Personal Tutor.

When must I choose?

The degree programmes of the BSc and the MPhys are almost the same up to the end of second year, so from an academic standpoint you may delay your decision until the end of your second year, and in some cases even up to the end of the first semester of your third year. However, in some programmes the choice of second year options may be slightly different for MPhys and BSc: if you are on the BSc and considering changing to the MPhys, make sure that you choose a programme that is valid for either. Your personal tutor (see section 4) will be happy to help you with this.

2.3 MPhys or MSc?

Another option for a fourth year of study is to do a stand-alone MSc course. The Department offers a number of MSc courses (see https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/physics/postgraduate-admissions/masters), and of course other physics departments in the UK and beyond also offer MSc programmes.

MPhys and MSc programmes are nominally at the same level—the MPhys is referred to as an “integrated masters”—but have somewhat different objectives. The MPhys is intended to provide a more advanced general education in physics, although as the fourth year consists entirely of options (the fourth year project is required, but offers a wide range of different project topics) you can tailor it to suit your interests, aptitudes and aspirations. MSc degrees are inherently specialised, a fact reflected in degree titles such as “Biological Imaging” or “Solar Cell Technology”, and are usually intended as routes into a specific career path. The MSc year is longer—180 credits, representing a full 12-month year, as opposed to 120 credits reflecting two 15-week semesters—and the project is more substantial, typically 60 or 90 credits for a “taught” MSc (some universities offer “MSc by research” degrees which, as the title suggests, place even greater emphasis on the project). Entry requirements for MSc courses vary widely—some require a first or upper second class BSc, whereas others will accept applicants with lower second class BSc degrees—so you should always check before applying.

You may find the BSc + MSc route preferable to the MPhys if

- you have a definite career plan which requires specialised knowledge that you will not acquire in a standard physics degree (e.g. climate science, geophysics, sustainable energy);
- you are particularly good in one specific area of physics;
- there is some reason why it would suit you to move to a different university, e.g. to be closer to family or to a partner.

You are likely to be better off with the MPhys if

- you plan to apply for a PhD in physics (most groups prefer MPhys to MSc because some MSc
programmes admit students with Lower Second class BSc degrees who may struggle with the academic content of a PhD);  
• you are not sure what your future career intentions are, so you want to keep your options open;  
• you are planning a career that does not directly involve physics.

As with the choice between BSc and MPhys, your personal tutor will be happy to help you decide which route is better for you.

2.4 Transferring between Degree Programmes

Before taking such a step please see your Personal Tutor. They will be able to point out any consequences of your decision that you may not have recognised, and will also be able to advise you as to whether your proposed change really deals with the issues that have prompted you to consider it. If you and your Personal Tutor agree that a change of programme is your best course of action, you should fill in a Change of Programme form and return it to the Hicks Student Support F10 with a signature from your Year Tutor.

Regulations for which modules are available to take on each degree programme can be found online at https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/programmeregulationsfinder/faculty?code=FCP&year=2019 (note that degree programme regulations do sometimes change from year to year as we strive to improve your learning experience, so occasionally a module which is listed this year will not be available next year).

2.5 Choosing and Changing Modules

Assuming that your degree programme regulations do not prescribe all 120 credits, in the second half of the second semester you will take part in online module choice, indicating which modules you intend to take the following year. However, it is possible that at some point you may decide that you have made a wrong choice. This is not a serious problem, but you must follow the correct procedures so that the appropriate administrative actions can be taken—otherwise you may find yourself, for example, trying to sit two examinations at the same time. What you have to do is to complete module add/drop online via your MUSE account before the end of the third week of the semester. Make sure before doing this that the action you want to take is permitted under your degree programme regulations (for example, you are not trying to drop a core module, or add one that is not allowed for your degree); if in doubt, consult your personal tutor.

Although module add/drop is permitted up to the end of week 3 of each semester, be aware that if you leave it this late you will have missed about a quarter of the material of the module you are adding. This is quite a lot to have to catch up. Therefore:

• if you do want to change modules, do so as soon as possible;
• if you are genuinely undecided between two modules at module choice time, and their timetables do not conflict, it is worth attending both sets of lectures until you make your decision—that way, you will not have missed any course content, and you will have a clearer idea of what you are taking on.
3 Teaching and Learning

3.1 General Information

All courses in the University of Sheffield are packaged into modules, worth a specified number of credits. A full-time student is required to register for modules totalling 120 credits in each academic year. You are not allowed to register for more than 120, even if you think you could cope with the work, and only in special circumstances—usually if you have failed several modules and have to repeat them to progress to the next year of your course—can you register for less than 120. Your 120 credits should be split as equally as possible between the two semesters; any imbalance greater than 70–50 is not permitted.

Week 7 in semester 1 and week 27 (i.e. the 12th teaching week of the semester) in semester 2 are designated as a “reading week”. These weeks are to give you more time to assimilate the lecture material—there will be no standard lectures or labs in these weeks unless in exceptional circumstances (e.g. if lectures have had to be postponed because the lecturer was ill), but there may be homework assignments to complete, especially in week 7, or revision lectures to help you prepare for the exams.

Most modules in this Department are taught in the traditional way through 50-minute lectures, backed up by regular small-group tutorials (see section 4.3) in years 1 and 2. Although most lecturers will endeavour to help you by either handing out lecture summaries/copies of pictorial material or by making material available online, it is important that you develop the ability to take good and effective lecture notes. This is not only crucial in ensuring that you make the most of your lectures, but is also a very useful skill to have in later life. Try to strike a balance between making notes and listening carefully. You should aim to understand the main points of the lecture as it happens, while at the same time making sufficient notes to enable you to revise and use all the material later. Be aware that lecturers may add details in the lectures which are not written down in the lecture handouts! It is good practice to read through your notes soon after each lecture and highlight key points. It is especially important to highlight anything you do not understand, so that you can identify problem areas for discussion in tutorials.

Although almost every module taught in the Department has a final examination, most also include various forms of continuous assessment such as marked homeworks, progress tests, essays or lab work. These are intended as teaching aids as well as assessment tools, and are designed to help you get the best from your course. Marked scripts from progress tests and assessed homeworks will be returned via Hicks Student +Support (F10) or at lectures or through your tutors: take the time to read through them and consider any comments made by the marker. Ask your tutor, or the lecturer, if there is some aspect of the marking which seems unclear or wrong—if you have misunderstood something in the lectures, this is an opportunity to clarify the point, and if there really is a mistake in the marking we will be happy to correct it.

Lecture timetables can be found on the University and Departmental websites. Any alterations, e.g. if a lecturer is ill or away, will be emailed to students and announced in lectures and/or posted on notice boards. The times of progress tests and deadlines for submission of assessed homework will be included in the year guide where possible, and otherwise posted on the departmental website on notice boards or stated in lecture handouts, at least a week in advance of the date in question.

If you are having difficulty with any of the lecture material you should not hesitate to ask questions, either directly of the lecturer or in your weekly tutorial. It is often helpful to get a different perspective

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1 There is one exception to this rule. If you have no unrestricted module choice (which is the case for all our Dual Honours programmes), you may still take up to 20 credits of modern languages under the Languages for All scheme ([https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/languages/nfcmodules](https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/languages/nfcmodules)). Any modules you take under this scheme are designated “Not For Credit” and will not be included in your grade average, but they can be included in your Higher Education Achievement Report (HEAR).
on difficult material, so you should make use of the textbooks on your lecturer's recommended list, and indeed other appropriate textbooks available in the main library.

Copies of past examination papers are useful revision aids and can be obtained via the department web page.

It is generally true that the only way to learn to solve problems is to try to solve problems—make full use of any problem sheets that the lecturer may hand out, do past exam papers, look at problems set in recommended textbooks, and so on.

### 3.2 Information for Disabled and Dyslexic Students

If you have a disability, medical condition or a specific learning difficulty, we strongly encourage you to contact the Disability and Dyslexia Support Services (DDSS). The DDSS is a confidential and friendly service which offers a range of support, including:

- liaising with academic staff and central services about disabled students’ support needs;
- helping students to apply for Disabled Students’ Allowances;
- organising support workers, e.g. note takers, readers, library support, scribes, interpreters;
- advising on specialist equipment and technology;
- referring Dyslexic students for study skill support at the English Language Teaching Centre;
- referring students who think that they might be dyslexic for diagnostic assessments with an Educational Psychologist;
- putting students in contact with local and national external agencies who offer support and advice to disabled people on specific issues;
- formalising alternative arrangements for examinations and assessments, e.g. extra time in examinations, reasonable adjustments to assessment tasks; or alternative assessment formats.

For further information, please contact the DDSS, The Hillsborough Centre, Alfred Denny Building, tel. 0114 22 21303, email disability.info@shef.ac.uk, website https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/ssid/disability.

If you have a disability or specific learning difficulty (SpLD, e.g. dyslexia) which affects your studies, the DDSS will put together an individual Learning Support Plan (LSP) which will be communicated to the Department. Your LSP might include, for example, a need for handouts to be provided in advance or for extra time in assessments that are done under exam conditions (e.g. class tests). It may also include special arrangements for examinations (extra time, rest breaks, alternative venues, etc.), for which the DDSS will liaise directly with the Examinations Office. In order to ensure that your LSP is implemented effectively, it is important that you contact the DDSS as soon as possible after arriving at University, or as soon as possible after your diagnosis if you are diagnosed with an SpLD or a disability during your studies.

### 3.3 Encore: making use of lecture recordings

Encore is the University’s lecture capture system. The system records the display (lectern or laptop) and audio from suitable teaching sessions, and makes these available to you via the module’s MOLE page. You can then access these recordings to help you with your studies—for example, revisiting parts of lectures that you have missed or did not understand, to help with revision or for writing more detailed notes. Research has also shown that lecture recordings can be useful for students with certain disabilities, or with English as a second language. Note that in most cases (except Hicks LT3 and LT4) there is no facility for video capture of chalk/whiteboard work, so the usefulness of the recording is lower in courses where the lecturer does a lot of board work, and some of the smaller teaching spaces (e.g. Hicks F30) are not set up for lecture recording.

The recordings are not a replacement for attending lectures, and it is important to remember that attendance at live lectures is a critical part of your course and is the best way to engage with the content, the lecturer and other students. The recordings are there to enhance and supplement your
learning and teaching experience, and there are resources on the 301 webpages (see below) to help you use lecture recordings most effectively to support your learning.

For further information on Encore see https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/cics/encore/students. For some tips (compiled by students) on how to use lecture recordings to help you to learn more effectively, see https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/ssid/301/study-skills/university-study/lecturerecording.

3.4 Our responsibilities to you

The Department is fully supportive of the ideas set out in the University document known as “Our Commitment” (https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/ssid/ourcommitment). The aim of this document is to ensure that staff and students work together to create a supportive community and an outstanding educational experience.

Our Commitment is a partnership document struck between teachers and students as members of the University. It has been written by staff and students and is collectively owned by the University and the Students’ Union.

Our Commitment is best understood as a statement of collective ethos, setting out the qualities and responsibilities underpinning the education on University of Sheffield degree programmes. It has been endorsed by the President and Vice-Chancellor of the University and the President of the Students’ Union, on behalf of all staff and students.

The student side of Our Commitment is discussed in the section 5. The staff side states that, “As staff, to enable the best learning experience for all,

- we will provide inspirational, engaging and knowledgeable teaching that draws on our research interests;
- we will take a professional approach to our teaching, being well prepared, reliable and using a variety of methods;
- we will take a scholarly approach to learning, teaching and assessment, to inform what we do and help us develop;
- we will provide clear assessment criteria and good feedback to enable effective learning;
- we will be approachable, get to know students and use the available time to help them identify and develop their skills; we will also support them through any personal and academic challenges;
- we will seek out, listen to and consider students’ views, acting on them when appropriate, and communicate our response;
- we will work well across the range of University services to help students to progress on their course and prepare for the future;
- we will provide accessible and inclusive learning and teaching that respects and benefits from our diversity;
- we will prioritise good occupational health, drawing on support when it is needed;
- we will foster an environment in which everyone engages positively with their University and local community, treats others with respect, dignity and care, and speaks up for what is right.”

We believe that our wide choice of research-led modules, especially in years 3 and 4, our Student-Staff committee and module evaluation system, the personal tutor system, and our departmental Code of Conduct, which you will find on noticeboards throughout the Department, satisfy this commitment. The point which is most difficult for us as staff to assess is the intent to provide clear assessment criteria and good feedback: we make every attempt to do this, but sometimes a statement which seems clear to a member of staff may not be so clear to you. If at any time you are confused about assessment criteria or would like more detailed feedback on an assignment, please do approach the staff member concerned. We want all our students to do well in their degree and will do our best to help you.
4 Tutors

4.1 Your Personal Tutor, Academic Tutor, Year Tutor and Senior Tutor

In addition to your lecturers, lab demonstrators and so on, there are between four and six people, depending on your degree programme, who have specific responsibilities towards you as an individual student. These are

- your Personal Tutor;
- your Academic Tutor and, if relevant, your Astronomy problem class leader;
- the Year Tutor(s);
- the Senior Tutor.

The following sections explain how each of these people can support you and set out the circumstances in which you may need to talk to them. You can of course talk to other people as well—if for some reason you do not feel able to discuss a particular problem with either your Personal Tutor or the Senior Tutor, we hope that you will feel able to approach some other member of staff with whom you are more at ease. Your welfare is important to us—if you need help, please do let somebody know about it.

4.2 Your Personal Tutor

Your Personal Tutor will be a member of staff with whom you will have regular meetings throughout your degree. The task of your personal tutor is to help you plan your degree programme so that it best reflects your current interests, your future aspirations, and your academic strengths. In addition, your Tutor can be approached for help with any problem, academic or personal. You will generally keep the same personal tutor throughout your degree programme, unless you request otherwise (see below) or unless the person to whom you were originally assigned leaves the Department, is on study leave (e.g. at CERN), or takes on a role that does not leave them time to do justice to their responsibilities as a personal tutor.

It should be stressed that your Tutor is there to provide positive and constructive support. For example, if you have not performed as well as you had hoped in a recent set of exams your Tutor will not reprimand you on your performance but will seek to discover reasons for these problems and discuss ways to avoid them in the future. Although you will meet your Tutor regularly at least once a semester you will be given the opportunity to arrange additional meetings at appropriate points in your course, either during their office hours or by prior appointment.

You should meet your personal tutor at least once a semester throughout your degree. These meetings will give you the opportunity to discuss your progress so far and your module choices for the following semester. Your Tutor will be able to guide you in selecting optional modules: for example, they will be able to tell you how your choice of level 2 optional modules affects the options you will be able to take at level 3. Of course, you do not have to follow this advice—the final decision as to the course of your degree programme is always yours. Towards the end of your course you may wish to discuss possible careers with your Tutor. You are welcome to contact them at any time to discuss an immediate problem.

You should ask to see your Tutor if:

- you are considering changing your choice of modules or your degree programme;
- you have personal problems which you believe are affecting your academic performance (such matters are treated as confidential, unless you ask for them to be shared so that appropriate allowances can be made);
- you want to discuss career issues which may have an impact on your choice of course (e.g. if you are considering whether or not to go on to postgraduate study).

Your personal tutor may ask to see you if the Senior Tutor or your Year Tutor has reported
problems—if you are missing labs or lectures, for example, or if a particular lecturer feels you are not coping academically with his/her course. If this happens, you should make every effort to arrange a meeting as soon as possible. Your Tutor is on your side, and will be looking for a way to deal with the problem so that it does not prevent you from completing your degree programme as you would wish. It is in your best interests to help them to do this. You can make an appointment by calling in to their office during their drop-in hours, or by email. If you are unable to contact your tutor for some reason, you should contact Hicks Student Support (F10) for assistance.

We hope that all our Tutors are sympathetic and helpful. However, if for any reason you wish to change your Tutor, please go to Hicks Student Support in room F10 who will assign you to an alternative Tutor after discussion with the Personal Tutor coordinator for the Department. You do not have to explain why you wish to be assigned a new Tutor.

4.3 Your Academic Tutor - Tutorials

The role of your academic tutor is to help you with the day-to-day problems of mastering the material you are currently being taught. You will meet your tutor once a week, in a small group of approximately 6–7 students, during your first and second years. There are no formal tutorials in Years 3 and 4, because by this point some of the material is becoming sufficiently specialised that only researchers in that area are competent to provide advice, so Y3 and Y4 students are encouraged to contact the appropriate lecturer for help with academic questions.

The time of the weekly tutorial will normally be assigned. If your timetable turns out to be incompatible with your group, perhaps because of a different choice of options for Dual students, consult the Year Tutor, who will be able to change your group assignment. It would be helpful if you could first ask around your fellow students in case others have the same problem, as it is easier to deal with a whole group of people at once than to make many individual changes. The most important thing is that you let us know of the difficulty quickly otherwise you will be depriving yourself of valuable help in tackling your courses, and you will also run the risk of being reported for poor attendance.

Your academic tutor is your main source of help and advice about the academic aspects of your course.

Your weekly tutorials will cover topics such as problem solving, difficult aspects of the lecture material, writing lab reports and so forth. You are required to attend these weekly sessions. In some tutorials you may need to submit work, the marks for which will contribute to the module mark or, in year 1, to your portfolio. You are also welcome to contact your tutor for additional help, for example if you have additional questions, need help with a specific problem or require help preparing for examinations.

The tutorial system is designed to help you assimilate information, develop problem solving techniques and prepare effectively for examinations. However, you will only obtain the full benefits of this system if you prepare for and attend tutorials, and actively participate in the tutorial discussions.

In astronomy, tutorials are replaced by rather larger problems classes typically consisting of about 20 students. Each problems class in years 1 and 2 has both a leader (usually a member of staff) and an assistant (usually a postgraduate student), so you will still get individual attention despite the larger groups.

4.4 Year Tutors

The Year Tutor is responsible for the administration and organisation of each year’s modules (courses) in Physics and Astronomy. He or she deals with organisational problems such as timetable clashes, assigns students to lab classes and academic tutors, monitors students’ attendance and academic performance, and oversees the final assignment of module grades. In years 3 and 4, the Year Tutor also oversees the allocation and assessment of projects.
Under normal circumstances you should have no need to contact the Year Tutor, except perhaps to deal with timetable problems if your assigned lab class or tutorial group meets at a time when you have lectures in another subject. You may wish to see him or her if you feel there is some general organisational problem—for example, if you consistently get three homework assignments in one week and none in the next—but you can equally well talk to your own academic tutor, problems class leader or personal tutor, who will pass the information on to the Year Tutor and any other people involved.

The Year Tutor will ask to see you if some aspect of your progress has been reported to him or her as unsatisfactory. This probably means you have been missing labs or lectures or failing to hand in homework. If you are summoned to such a meeting, you must go, otherwise the Year Tutor will start the formal disciplinary process which in the worst case could lead to your exclusion from the University.

4.5 Senior Tutor

The Senior Tutor has overall responsibility for all matters that involve the welfare of individual undergraduate students. They chair the Extenuating Circumstances group that makes recommendations to the Exam Board each semester, as well as overseeing student attendance and engagement. They advise students on matters such as taking leave of absence. They respond to student enquiries on diverse matters (missed exams, extenuating circumstances, change of status etc.). They oversee the personal tutorial system, and reallocate personal tutors should students wish to change, working closely with the Student Support Adviser. They monitor attendance at lectures and tutorials, and work with Personal Tutors to identify and chase up students who risk becoming disengaged from their studies. The Senior Tutor is assisted by the Disability Liaison Officer, who deals with academic matters related to students with disabilities or specific learning difficulties, and by the Student Support Adviser for Welfare in F10.

5 Your Responsibilities as a Student

5.1 Your responsibilities under “Our Commitment”

Our responsibilities to you as defined by the staff-student document “Our Commitment” were discussed in section 3. Your responsibilities as a student are defined in the same document: “As a student, to have the best learning experience,

- I will develop my knowledge by exploring my passion for my subject and sharing in this with other students and my tutors;
- I will work hard and to the best of my abilities, on my own and with others, by participating actively in the range of activities set by my tutors;
- I will be prepared for and not miss out on scheduled learning;
- I will make the most of the feedback I receive on my work and seek out support to do this;
- I will ask questions and talk to my tutors, including my personal and academic tutor, so that they can best support me;
- I will seek out and take up the opportunities available alongside my studies that enrich my knowledge, skills and experience and allow me to contribute to the University and its community;
- I will make good use of the range of services at the University that help me to progress on my course and prepare for my future;
- I will acknowledge, appreciate and learn from the diversity of our population, and strive to be an active citizen;
- I will take care of myself and my physical and mental health, drawing on support when I need it;
- I will engage positively with my University and local community, treat others with respect,
dignity and care, and speak up for what is right."

In fulfilment of these responsibilities, the Department expects that you will

- attend all lectures, labs and tutorials appropriate for the modules you are taking;
- complete any written assignments you may be given and hand them in promptly;
- have proper regard at all times for the interests and the safety of other members of the
department (this applies particularly to working in the labs and the observatory);
- abide by the Departmental Code of Conduct (see section 1.3).

The Department takes non-attendance at lectures/laboratories/tutorials etc. very seriously.
Attendance is monitored by barcode scanners or by paper sign-in sheets. If your attendance is
consistently below expectations, and you have not provided details of extenuating circumstances to
account for this, the Department may ask you attend a Progress of Students meeting to explore the
reasons for your poor attendance and develop a plan to address these. Note that if you are an
overseas student, regular attendance is a condition of your student visa,
and you should therefore take extra care to ensure that your attendance is registered—if the barcode scanner or
sign-in sheet missed your row, make sure that you get hold of it at the end of the lecture.

As a student of the University, you are also expected to abide by the University's General Regulations,
which can be found at https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/calendar. Your attention is drawn particularly to
the following (regulation 56 of the General University Regulations):

"Every student is required
(a) to attend punctually and regularly lectures and classes;
(b) to complete all written assignments, practical or other coursework;
(c) to keep appointments to meet with the student’s supervisor; and
(d) to attend all examinations, as appropriate in each case to the relevant programme of study or
research.

A candidate who fails to comply with this Regulation may be failed in the examination for, and (in the
case of modular programmes) be denied the credits assigned to, the relevant units or other parts of
the programme of study or dealt with under the General Regulations as to the Progress of Students."

It is worth noting here that if you were to be "dealt with under the General Regulations as to the
Progress of Students", this could (in the worst case scenario) result in your being expelled from the
Faculty of Science.

5.2 Absence from the Department

During your undergraduate career there may well be occasions when you cannot attend lectures
because of illness, urgent personal business, etc. If you have to be away from the university for longer
than a day or so, it is important that you let us know as soon as possible, and provide documentary
evidence where appropriate. This will ensure that we do not start disciplinary procedures for poor
attendance, and it will also let us make due allowance for any elements of continuous assessment that
you may have missed or handed in late as a result of your absence.

The relevant forms can be downloaded from https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/ssid/forms/circs. There are
two distinct cases: absences of less than a week which did not cause you to miss any assessments or
deadlines, and absences which lasted longer than a week or affected assessed work.

Absence of less than one week (7 calendar days)

If you have had a one-off minor illness, job interview, etc., and no assessment is affected, you should fill
in a Self-Certification form which does not require any supporting information. This should be
completed if you miss a laboratory session, tutorial, project meeting etc. (see below), and handed in to
Hicks Student Support (room F10). If you know in advance that you will miss a tutorial or project
meeting, for instance to attend a job interview, it is common courtesy to let your tutor or supervisor
Longer absence, or failure to complete an item of assessment (test, homework, assessed lab session or exam)

In this case you are required to complete an Extenuating Circumstances form, which you should submit together with supporting documentation (if applicable), such as a note from the University Health Service if you have been ill, a letter from your family in the case of a family bereavement or similar serious personal problem. We recognise that this may seem like unnecessary bureaucracy when you are in pain or distress, but in fairness to your fellow students we must have some way to be sure that the problem is real. If only a single module is affected, with the assignment contributing <5% towards the module, the lecturer/module leader should be asked to sign the form, which should then be handed in to F10. If multiple modules are affected and/or the assignment contributes >5% of the module grade, the Senior Tutor (Prof. Mowbray) should sign the form, which you should take to F10. If Prof. Mowbray is away, the Director of Teaching (Dr Cartwright) should be contacted instead. Note that the University Health Service does not automatically forward doctor's notes to the Department, for reasons of medical confidentiality: you must go to UHS and collect the completed form yourself.

The University's Examination Conventions, http://www.shef.ac.uk/ssid/exams/conventions/ug, state that "It is the responsibility of students to notify their tutors and supervisors, or other appropriate departmental staff, at the earliest opportunity of any extenuating circumstances that might have a bearing on their examination performance. [...] Notification of medical or personal circumstances, including assessments of dyslexia, which have not been submitted within any specified departmental deadline ... will not normally be considered by the meeting of departmental examiners". Therefore, it is very important that you make us aware of anything that might affect your assessment as soon as you are aware of it. If you wait until after you have done badly in an examination, or failed to meet a deadline, you should not be surprised to find that the lecturer or examiner is not sympathetic.

If your illness does not prevent you from taking a test or examination, but will disadvantage you relative to other students—for example, if you break your arm the week before an exam—let us know as quickly as possible so that appropriate arrangements can be made. We can also arrange for you to sit exams in private if you find that the environment of the exam hall causes you severe psychological distress—again, advance notice and a letter from Student Health or the Counselling Service are needed so that the Exams Office can organise this.

5.3 Effect of Extenuating Circumstances

If you are unfortunate enough to suffer problems that justify an Extenuating Circumstances form, what action(s) can the Department take? This depends on the timing and severity of your extenuating circumstances.

1. If you had a short-duration illness, family emergency, etc., that caused you to miss the deadline for handing in an assessment, we can extend the deadline, generally by a period corresponding to the duration of the extenuating circumstances. If you missed an in-class assessment such as a class test or assessed lab experiment, we may reschedule the assessment or adjust the way your module grade is calculated so that the missed assessment is not taken into account.

2. If you had a similar short-duration problem that caused you to miss an exam, we can return your module grade as Not Assessed and allow you to take the exam during the August resit period as a first attempt. Note that if you fail this August sitting there is usually not enough time to arrange for a regular (capped) resit, so you would have to carry the failed grade through to the next year or, if the module in question is core for your degree, delay your degree for a year and resit the module in the following academic year.

3. According to the Examination Conventions, "It is the general expectation that a student who opts to take an examination is declaring themselves fit to do so." However, we recognise that in some cases (especially relating to mental health or adverse family situations such as
bereavement) students may misjudge the extent to which they have been affected, so we may, on the advice of the Senior Tutor, return a failed module as Not Assessed if we consider that you were not, in fact, fit to sit the exam.

4. If you are in your final year and you miss an exam because of extenuating circumstances, having to wait for a special sitting in August may have significant consequences, for example if you are holding a conditional offer of a job or PhD place. In such a case, we may be able to award an “aegrotat pass” for the module in question: this means that you are deemed to have passed the module (so the relevant credits are awarded), but no numerical grade is assigned and the module is not used in the calculation of mean or median grades. This is a rare event requiring Faculty approval, which is not guaranteed, and is normally only possible in your final year (since in all other years you should not be disadvantaged by having to take the exam later). We have to provide Faculty with evidence that you would have passed the exam, had you been able to sit it.

5. If your extenuating circumstances have affected or are likely to affect a significant fraction of the semester, such that you cannot reasonably be expected to pass the exams even if you will be fit to sit them, we may recommend that you should take Leave of Absence on medical or personal grounds (depending on the nature of the extenuating circumstances) and restart the affected semester next year. For medical Leave of Absence, you may be required to provide a medical certificate at the end of your leave to show that you are considered fit to resume your studies.

Note that the Department will not make changes to module grades, except as regards changing the way the grade is calculated to omit a missed assessment (see 1 above). It is simply not possible to know what grade you might have achieved had your performance not been affected by your extenuating circumstances, and making arbitrary adjustments is not fair to other students. What we will do is consider the extenuating circumstances at the point at which your degree classification is calculated, and see whether there is a case for adjusting the results of the calculation (for example, if the results from the affected semester pulled your overall average down from 60.2 (upper second class) to 58.7 (lower second class), there would be a case for recommending the award of an upper second class degree, but not if the change was from 58.7 to 57.2, both of which are lower second). Note that such recommendations have to be approved by Faculty, and such approval is not guaranteed: it depends on how large an adjustment needs to be made to award the higher class, and on the strength of the evidence that your performance was adversely affected.

6 Assessment, Feedback and Progression

6.1 Coursework

Most modules taught in the Department contain some element of coursework, which may take a variety of forms including homework, class tests, lab diaries, computer code, reports, essays and oral presentations. Some of this coursework is intended to help you to prepare for the exam; in other cases, the coursework may address an intended learning outcome of the module which is not tested by a conventional exam (e.g. the ability to retrieve and assimilate information from published sources). Much of this coursework contributes to your module grade, but even if it does not, or if the contribution is very small, it is important to attempt it: our statistics consistently show that students who conscientiously hand in their coursework do better in the exams.

Particular coursework exercises may be submitted electronically or handed in at tutorial meetings, but most written coursework is submitted via a dropbox outside the Hicks Student Support at F10. There is a standard coversheet for all items of coursework submitted to F10, and it is very important that your work does have the relevant coversheet attached. You can obtain a cover sheet for a specific assignment from [https://sciencecoversheet.group.shef.ac.uk/](https://sciencecoversheet.group.shef.ac.uk/) (this link is also available from the "Information for current undergraduates" page on the departmental website).
Coversheets are available a week before the submission date. You will need to use your MUSE login details to access your coversheets. Print out the coversheet and attach this to the front of your work—please double-check that you have the right coversheet, since if two homework assignments are due at similar times more than one coversheet may be available for download. Note that coversheets are specific to a given item of coursework and student—please do not ask a friend to print out a coversheet for you, as the student details will not be correct and your marks may not be credited to you.

Failure to hand in work without extenuating circumstances (e.g. doctor's note) will result in a reduced mark. The standard University policy for late submission of assessed coursework is a deduction of 5% of the total mark for each working day after the submission date. Work submitted more than five working days late will receive a mark of zero. In cases where other late submission policies apply, the lecturer or course administrator should have informed you of the alternative policy. You should consult the lecturer or course administrator if you are unsure of the rules on late submission. In general, small items returned on a rapid timescale, e.g. weekly homework, carry a “zero tolerance” policy where late submissions will not be accepted.

Some written coursework, particularly lab and project reports, may have to be submitted twice: as a paper copy to F10 (with coversheet) and electronically via MOLE. The electronic submission is required because such work is automatically checked by the University's plagiarism detection software (see section 6.5 below). If this is the case, make sure that you do submit by both methods: your work may have a late penalty applied if you do not do this, even if one of the submissions was on time.

The first year portfolio
If you are a first-year student, you will be asked to collect much of your coursework into a portfolio demonstrating that you have met the intended learning outcomes of the Physics core modules PHY1001 and PHY1002. This is intended to help you see how different assignments work together to help you master the material and develop your skills as a future professional physicist. The portfolio is graded Pass/Fail (with a Distinction grade for exceptionally good work), and it—not the end-of-semester exam—determines whether or not you have passed the module. If your PHY1001 portfolio is graded Pass, you have automatically passed the module, even if you do very badly on the exam; conversely, if your portfolio grade is Fail, you cannot pass the module even if you pass the exam. This is because research shows that students who learn steadily through the year are much more likely to retain the information than those who just engage in last-minute cramming for the exam; it is also intended to make the exam period less stressful, since we expect that everyone who has worked conscientiously through the semester will have passed their portfolio, and will therefore be at no risk of failing the module through a bad exam performance.

6.2 Assessment

Each module of your course is assessed individually, by means of some combination of final written examination, oral exam, essay, presentation, progress tests, assessed homework, etc. Material assessed during the course, e.g. homework, lab reports and progress tests, will be returned to you after marking so that you can learn from the comments made by markers, but end of semester exam scripts are retained by the University for reference. You may, however, ask to see your marked script: if you wish to do this, simply complete the form that will be emailed to you in the first three weeks of the semester following the exam.

All end-of-semester examinations are assessed anonymously in accordance with standard University procedures. In addition, most of your assessed coursework will also be marked anonymously. However, in some cases (e.g. oral presentations and viva voce examinations) anonymous marking is not practicable, and in others, for example laboratory exercises, it is not appropriate: you will learn more from a lab exercise if you have the chance to discuss your work with a demonstrator than if your lab diary is marked anonymously outside the lab.

Written coursework (essays and reports) which accounts for a large proportion of the module grade
is generally double-marked by two members of staff. This may sometimes result in a delay in returning it to you, because if the two markers disagree there are various procedures (meetings between the markers, independent assessment by a third party, etc.) which have to be carried out before a final mark is agreed; however, we believe that the increase in the reliability of the grade is worth the possible delay.

Resits

If you fail an examined module in years 1 and 2, it is possible to resit the examination in August. Unless the original module grade was returned as "Not Assessed" because of extenuating circumstances, your resit module grade (not just the exam grade) will be capped at 40. There are no August resit exams for Year 3 and 4 modules.

It is generally not possible to resit coursework\(^2\) and the module mark following a resit is composed of the new exam mark plus the original coursework mark. It is hence very important that you attempt and submit all coursework throughout the year, as this will be your only opportunity to obtain the associated marks.

Note that you are only permitted two resits (i.e. a total of three attempts) of level 1 modules, and only one resit (a total of two attempts) at level 2. Any attempt that was returned Not Assessed is not counted (so if your first attempt at a level 2 module was returned Not Assessed, you have two further attempts). If you have failed a large number of credits, or if you know that your attendance and/or coursework performance was not as good as it should have been, it may not be in your best interests (especially at level 2) to resit in August: you may be better off retaking the relevant modules in the following year. If you think this may be the case, you should talk to your personal tutor as soon as you have your results, both so that you can decide on the best plan of action, and so that we know if you do not plan to take the August resits—otherwise you risk having your non-attendance at the resit counted as your second (and, at level 2, final) attempt.

6.3 Feedback

When assessed coursework is returned to you, it will normally include some feedback from the assessor. This may take a number of forms: comments written directly on the assessed work, a separate feedback sheet, or a set of "notes on common mistakes". Please take the time to read this feedback: if you do not, you run the risk of losing more marks in later coursework or exams through making the same mistakes again. Since many physics modules share common features, e.g. mathematical derivations and numerical calculations, feedback from one module may be applicable to other modules, so it is always worth reading the feedback even if the assignment in question was the last one for this particular module.

The University provides a tool, the Feedback Portal (https://feedbackportal.shef.ac.uk/), which is intended to help you make effective use of your feedback. It’s not completely clear that this is optimally designed for physics degrees—we have had some critical comments from physics student reps on the Faculty Teaching and Learning Committee—but it is worth taking a look at it to see if it will work for you. Even if the Feedback Portal does not meet your needs, its basic principle—"Get it, Log it, Use it"—is as applicable to physics degrees as it is to any other subject.

The questions you should ask yourself whenever you receive feedback on an assignment are:

1. **What feedback did I get?**
   Obviously, you can’t act on your feedback unless you know what it was. Finding out what your feedback was may mean reading through your assignment looking for marginal notes, reading

\(^2\) Exceptions to this are when a single item of coursework contributes a large proportion of the module grade. In this case, it is normally possible to resubmit this item, provided that it is a type of assignment which can be done outside the university (for example, a lab report can be done outside the university, but a lab experiment cannot).
the comments on the feedback sheet, or reading through the notes on common mistakes to see if any of them apply to you. If you can’t read the feedback (the handwriting of some staff members does leave a little to be desired), or you don’t understand it, ask the assessor (or the lecturer or module lead if you don’t know who the assessor was).

2. How can I use this feedback?
Try to divide your feedback into comments that are specific to the particular assignment (“you seem to have used the wrong formula for moment of inertia here”) and those that are more general (“you have quoted too many significant figures in your answers”). Specific comments are probably just there to explain to you why you have lost marks, but they are still worth logging because you may come across similar situations later, e.g. in the exam. General comments are more important, because they can be applied to other assignments in other modules: if you quoted too many significant figures here, you probably tend to do this in all numerical calculations.

3. What actions should I take in response to this feedback?
If your feedback indicates that you have misunderstood something in the course, the proper response is probably to reread your lecture notes and do some practice questions on the relevant topic. If on rereading the notes you still don’t understand where you went wrong, see the lecturer: you may have written something down wrongly (indeed, the lecturer may have written something down wrongly, and not noticed at the time), or you may need some additional explanation.
If your feedback suggests that there is a problem with the way you present your work (for example, too little explanation in mathematical derivations, failure to define terms, or consistently quoting the wrong number of significant figures), log this carefully and remember to change your technique in future. Again, if you don’t understand what you need to do (“what does he mean, ‘explain what you have done here’?”), see the lecturer.

A few notes that are probably worth adding:
• Don’t be disheartened if all your feedback seems to be negative!
In writing feedback, the assessor is likely to focus on noting ways in which you could improve your work, and therefore your marks. This may lead to the impression that they have nothing good to say about your effort, which is very dispiriting if you put a lot of hours into it. Always read your feedback in conjunction with your mark: if you got 7½/10, you did a good job, and the feedback is just about the 2½ marks you didn’t get!
• Don’t be afraid to ask for clarification.
The assessor probably had a lot of scripts to mark in a short time, and is therefore likely to have kept his or her comments rather brief. If you feel that you need a more detailed explanation in order to act on the feedback, do ask the assessor (if you know who it was) or the lecturer or module lead.

If you have MOLE quizzes as part of your coursework, feedback should be built in, but may not become available until after the due date for the quiz. If you cannot see the feedback, tell the module lead: MOLE is not always very user-friendly, and the lecturer may have failed to tick a box somewhere to display the feedback.

6.4 Preparing for your Examinations
Examinations for semester 1 modules are held in January/February, and those for semester 2 modules are held in May/June. Level 1 and 2 resit examinations for both semesters are held in August. Note that exam dates are determined centrally, and the Department has very little control over them: in particular, do not book holidays that overlap with the August resit period, because we cannot reschedule an exam because you are on holiday. (Bear in mind that even if you do not expect to fail anything, you could become ill during one of the main exam periods and wind up having to take an exam in August as a first attempt.)

It is very important that you prepare properly for your exams, as these are the major factor contributing to your final degree classification. You should ensure that you are familiar with the format of the paper and also the type and standard of questions. Note that the format of exam
papers does occasionally change, especially when a new lecturer takes over a course: if you have any doubts, check with the lecturer. Especially for papers that are largely mathematical, it is worth making sure that you know what is included in the data sheet of constants and mathematical formulae that is attached to most of the department’s exam papers.

It is a good idea to practise timed questions from old papers. This will help you test how much you have retained and understood, and how long it takes you to answer a question. Copies of past exam papers are available via the Departmental website. Your tutor may cover past exam questions in tutorials, and most lecturers will hold revision lectures, either at the end of the course or during the exam period. Model answers for examination papers are not available, but tutors and lecturers will be happy to provide numerical solutions and comment on questions that you have attempted. However, you should not confine your revision purely to answering questions in past papers: the fact that a particular topic has not come up as an exam question for the last three years is not a guarantee that it will not come up this year! Make sure that you read through all your lecture notes and handouts, attempt any practice problems that the lecturer has handed out, and read your feedback from any homework exercises, as well as any model answers that were provided.

The Academic Skills Centre, 301, has a web page on exam technique, https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/ssid/301/study-skills/assessment/exam-techniques, and one on revision strategies, https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/ssid/301/study-skills/assessment/exam-revision.

Check the web site https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/ssid/exams for full details of all aspects relating to exams and exam regulations, including resits and academic appeals.

6.5 Reporting of Marks

The University uses a 100 point scale for the reporting of module grades. The table below shows the correspondence between this scale and degree classifications.

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These ranges are defined by the University, but despite our best efforts exams do vary in difficulty and sometimes we have to adjust the final numerical grades so that the overall results are satisfactory. For this reason, you may sometimes find that the percentage marks calculated from the different components of your module grade do not quite tally with the grade reported on the 100 point scale (this is one reason why we call it a 100 point scale and not a percentage).

In addition to the numerical grades, there are some special codes that may be returned on occasion:

- **NC (not complete)** means you did not complete all the required work\(^3\) for the module, and is obviously classed as a FAIL;
- **NA (not assessed)** usually means that you missed the examination for some good reason such as documented illness;
- **DE (deferred)** means that the grades for this module have been delayed, e.g. by the need to hold oral examinations, and will be returned at a later date.

Credits for a module are only awarded if you achieve a pass grade (i.e. 40 or above in years 1-3, 50 or

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\(^3\) “Required work” means work that is compulsory in order to return a mark. You will not be given NC if you failed to submit a homework exercise, for example.
above in year 4). Therefore a student who registers for 120 credits, but fails two 10-credit modules, will only be awarded 100 credits. This is important because it affects your chances of progressing to the next year of your course, and also restricts your choice of options—for example, if you want to take PHY216 in year 2, you must take and pass PHY111 in year 1, because PHY111 is listed as a prerequisite for PHY216.

If you are on a Study Abroad degree, your third year grades will be awarded by the host institution and then translated into an equivalent Sheffield grade. In order to ensure that this translation is as fair as possible, it is normal to defer the Study Abroad grades until after the first semester of your fourth year, so that the Study Abroad tutor can check that the translated grades are broadly consistent with expectations. For convenience, your Study Abroad grades are loaded into the Sheffield system as a single 120-credit dummy module, but the individual module grades are retained by the Study Abroad tutor and used to calculate your degree class.

6.6 Plagiarism and Collusion

In the course of your degree programme you will be expected to produce written work, such as laboratory reports, homework exercises and essays, that counts toward your module mark but is not written under exam conditions. As it forms part of your assessment, any such material should naturally be entirely your own work, not copied from published sources or your fellow students. Submitting material that is not your own work is regarded by the University as “use of unfair means”. The following material is taken from the University’s document on the use of unfair means in non-invigilated examinations (available from https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/ssid/exams/plagiarism).

What constitutes unfair means?

The basic principle underlying the preparation of any piece of academic work is that the work submitted must be your own work. Plagiarism, submitting bought or commissioned work, double submission (or self-plagiarism), collusion and fabrication of results are not allowed because they violate this principle (see definitions below). Rules about these forms of cheating apply to all assessed and non-assessed work.

Plagiarism (either intentional or unintentional) is the stealing of ideas or work of another person (including experts and fellow or former students) and is considered dishonest and unprofessional. Plagiarism may take the form of cutting and pasting, taking or closely paraphrasing ideas, passages, sections, sentences, paragraphs, drawings, graphs and other graphical material from books, articles, internet sites or any other source and submitting them for assessment without appropriate acknowledgement.

Submitting bought or commissioned work (for example from internet sites, essay "banks" or "mills") is an extremely serious form of plagiarism. This may take the form of buying or commissioning either the whole assignment or part of it and implies a clear intention to deceive the examiners. The University also takes an extremely serious view of any student who sells, offers to sell or passes on their own assignments to other students.

Double submission (or self-plagiarism) is resubmitting previously submitted work on one or more occasions (without proper acknowledgement). This may take the form of copying either the whole assignment or part of it. Normally credit will already have been given for this work.

Collusion is where two or more people work together to produce a piece of work, all or part of which is then submitted by each of them as their own individual work. This includes passing on work in any format to another student. Collusion does not occur where students involved in group work are encouraged to work together to produce a single piece of work as part of the assessment process.

Fabrication is submitting work (for example, practical or laboratory work) any part of which is untrue, made up, falsified or fabricated in any way. This is regarded as fraudulent and dishonest.
How can I avoid the use of unfair means?

To avoid using unfair means, any work submitted must be your own and must not include the work of any other person, unless it is properly acknowledged and referenced. There are standard ways to reference sources: the Department accepts both numerical references (as in the American Institute of Physics style, see https://librarydevelopment.group.shef.ac.uk/shef-only/referencing/physics_AIP/contents.html) and the Harvard (name, date) style (https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/library/idlt/referencing). Note that you must still reference your source even though you have expressed the ideas in your own words (and minor rephrasing, such as replacing a few words or rearranging a sentence slightly, does not count as “your own words” and is most definitely plagiarism even if the source is referenced!). If you are writing a long essay or literature review with a large number of references, you may wish to make use of reference management software: see https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/library/refmant for details of some commonly used packages.

Proper referencing of sources and appropriate use of source material constitutes an essential skill that you will need throughout your University career and beyond. You should read the Departmental guidelines referenced above carefully and work through the University Information Skills tutorial on plagiarism (see "Understanding plagiarism" at https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/library/idlt/referencing). Notice that on the cover sheet you attach to your work, you expressly declare that you have "read and understood the University’s rules relating to plagiarism"—so claiming that in fact you did not understand is not a good excuse!

If you have any concerns about appropriate academic practices or if you are experiencing any personal difficulties which are affecting your work, you should consult your personal tutor or a member of staff involved with that unit of study.

The Library provides a range of online information and digital literacy skills tutorials, see https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/library/idlt, including advice on evaluating information and critical thinking as well as the referencing and plagiarism tutorials referred to above.

Some people find expressing ideas in their own words difficult because they are not confident in their use of formal written English. If you are worried about this, the English Language Teaching Centre operates a Writing Advisory Service through which students can make individual appointments to discuss a piece of writing. This is available for all students, both native and non-native speakers of English. Appointments can be booked via the web page, https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/eltc/languagesupport/writingadvisory.

What happens if I use unfair means?

Any form of unfair means is treated as a serious academic offence and action may be taken under the Discipline Regulations. For a student registered on a professionally accredited programme of study, action may also be taken under the Fitness to Practise Regulations. Where unfair means is found to have been used, the University may impose penalties ranging from awarding a grade of zero for the assignment through to expulsion from the University in extremely serious cases.

Detection of Unfair Means

The University subscribes to a national plagiarism detection service which helps academic staff identify the original source of material submitted by students. This means that academic staff have access to specialist software that searches a database of reference material gathered from professional publications, student essay websites and other work submitted by students. It is also a resource which can help tutors to advise students on ways of improving their referencing techniques. Your work is likely to be submitted to this service.
6.7 Progression

The only way to guarantee that you progress to the second year of your degree programme is to pass all the modules you are taking in your first year, even those which do not form part of the core of your programme.

If you do not pass all of your modules, you may be allowed to progress to your second year (a “conceded pass”), provided that:

- you have obtained at least 100 credits (i.e. you have failed not more than two 10-credit modules or one 20-credit module);
- you have passed all your core modules;
- your overall average grade, including failed modules, is at least 39.5;
- you have achieved a mark of at least 30 in the module(s) that you failed.

Therefore, if you have failed any module with a grade of less than 30, you must resit that module and improve your mark if you are to progress to second year. This is a University regulation and is not something in which the Department has discretion.

You should also be aware that a conceded pass is awarded at the Examiners’ discretion: you do not have a “right” to a conceded pass. In particular, the Department expects all students who fail a module at the first sitting to attempt the resit examination in August, even if their original failing grade was greater than 30. Students who do not attempt the resit examination should not assume that they will nevertheless be awarded a conceded pass. Also note that the list of “core” modules depends on your degree programme: a Single Honours Physics student who has failed PHY104 Introduction to Astrophysics with a grade of 35 may be awarded a conceded pass, but a Dual Physics and Astrophysics student will not, because PHY104 is essential preparation for your second year astrophysics modules.

Students on the Theoretical Physics degrees must obtain a minimum overall average of 59.5 at the end of year 1 to remain on this course. This reflects the more mathematical nature of this degree in later years. In addition, students on the Level 2-3 Year Abroad degrees must obtain an overall average of 59.5 for both years 1 and 2 to remain on these courses. Note that placement decisions for Study Abroad students are based partly on your first year marks: although these do not count towards your eventual degree classification, the better you do, the more likely you are to be placed at your first choice of host!

The University Regulations concerning examinations can be found at https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/ssid/exams/conventions/ug

University Regulations allow you up to two resits of level 1 modules. However, Regulations only allow a single resit of level 2 modules, so if you fail the August resit, you may not resit these again. If you enter Y3 with lost credits from Y2, the Y3 Year Tutor, Dr Booth, will call you in for an interview early in Y3: you should make sure that you attend this and take careful note of any suggestions he may make, as he has seen many other students in your position.

It is expected that all students will pass their exams at the first sitting, hence obtaining the 120 credits required to progress to the next year of their degree programme. In year 2 (and year 3 for MPhys degrees), you will normally be awarded a conceded pass with 100 or 110 credits, although you should recognise that this is at the discretion of the examiners and not a guaranteed right. However, the Regulations prescribe a minimum of 200 credits at levels 2 and 3 for an honours BSc degree, and 320 at levels 2-4 for an MPhys, so you should be aware that dropped credits at level 2 may have serious consequences later. For this reason, the Department normally expects all students to attempt the August resit for any failed modules.

MPhys students must achieve a minimum average of 59.5 for both years 2 and 3 in order to remain on the 4-year course, in part because of no masters awards are made below II.ii, and in part because the pass mark for level 4 modules is 50. If a lower average is obtained, it will be necessary to transfer to the corresponding BSc course. Note that this means that if you average less than 59.5 in year 3, you
will be awarded a BSc degree at that point, and will not be permitted to progress to year 4. (If this happens, it will unfortunately be too late for you to graduate in person at the summer graduation ceremony, although you will receive your BSc certificate in the post. This is regrettable but unavoidable: the ceremony takes place very soon after the examiners’ meetings, and it is not practicable to add more graduands at the last minute.)

For further information, the University regulations on progression can be found at https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/ssid/exams/conventions/ug (under 3.)

6.8 Your final degree class

Your degree classification is based on your performance in years 2, 3 and 4. To graduate with a BSc honours degree you must have obtained at least 200 credits including not fewer than 90 credits at level F6 (i.e. PHY3xx), and pass your third year physics research project (PHY319, 341, 342, 346, 391, 392, 393, or 394). Candidates for MPhys must obtain 320 credits including not fewer than 90 credits at level F7 (PHY4xx).

At the end of your programme of study, your degree will be classified on the basis of a calculation which takes into account both the weighted mean of your module grades and their median (i.e. the class in or above which half of your weighted module grades fall). Grades are weighted according to both the number of credits and the level of study: for a BSc degree, levels 2 and 3 are weighted 1:2, and for most MPhys degrees levels 2, 3 and 4 are weighted 1:2:2 (for Study Abroad degrees, to allow for the variability of course marks during the placement year, the weighting is 1:1:2). Note that the weighting is by year: if you took a second year course as a third year option, it will be weighted as level 3. Full details of the classification method are given in the General Regulations for First Degrees, which can be accessed from https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/calendar.

QAA regulations do not allow the award of a degree classification below II.ii for an undergraduate Masters degree (MPhys). This means that students in the 40–49 bracket will be awarded a BSc degree instead, despite the fact that they have completed 4 years of study. It is in fact very unusual for MPhys students to average less than 50, because of the 59.5 threshold imposed at levels 2 and 3, but it is a factor that you may need to consider if your year average is very close to the cut-off point. In addition, you should be aware that the pass mark for level 4 modules is 50, to harmonize with taught postgraduate (MSc) modules.

If you obtain 180 or 190 credits in a BSc degree, and your overall grade average (including the failed modules) is at least 39.5, the Examining Board is permitted to recommend the award of a Pass degree (even though you have not reached the minimum credit level). Note that you cannot be awarded an Honours degree under these circumstances even if your grade average would normally correspond to an Honours class. This is why it is crucial to resist any modules that you may have failed in second year, even if you have enough credits for a conceded pass: if you do badly in third year, you may need those credits for an Honours degree.

If you fail to obtain enough credits for the award of a degree, you may resit failed modules on one further occasion (i.e. you may sit the August exams for any failed level 2 modules, or the following year’s exams for levels 3 and 4). Multiple resits are not permitted at levels 3 and 4. However, you will then only be eligible for a Pass degree, irrespective of your grade average.

6.9 Extenuating Circumstances (see also section 5) and Academic Appeals

The Department is concerned about the welfare of students and we encourage students to talk to their Personal Tutor, Senior Tutor, or another member of staff, if they have any problems. Please remember that it is easier to solve a problem as soon as it arises than to attempt to deal with the consequences later.

Advice on reporting extenuating circumstances is prominently displayed on the Student Services
Information (SSID) website and forms are available from Students Services, at https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/ssid/forms/circs or from Hicks Student Support (F10). The form should be used to report the following circumstances:

- Medical circumstances (sickness, injury, surgery/hospitalization etc.) which have resulted in a period of short or long term absence and/or have affected performance or examinations/assessment.
- Other personal circumstances which have resulted in a period of absence and/or which have affected performance or examinations/assessment. Examples include illness or bereavement in your immediate family, being the victim of a crime such as burglary or assault, or having been prevented from attending an examination by unforeseen transport problems.

Note that the University's Examination conventions require you to report any extenuating circumstances "at the earliest opportunity". If you have a problem that you believe is affecting your work, do not wait until you have failed before reporting it.

The Student Administration Service (SAS) emails all students one month before the final examination period to remind students to notify the Department of any extenuating circumstances which should be considered by the Examiners.

Extenuating Circumstances Deadlines

If you experience extenuating circumstances during a semester it is important to ensure that you submit your form, to F10, by the dates below for the relevant semester.

If you submit your form after the dates below there is no guarantee that they will be considered: any consideration will be at the department's discretion. If you wait till after the official release of results before claiming extenuating circumstances, you will need to submit a formal Academic Appeal, which will require an explanation of why you were unable to provide the information earlier.

**Autumn Semester (S1)**
The deadline for EC requests relating to the overall exam period is **Friday 24th January at 4pm**. For any circumstances/events that occur after this date and that affect exams in the remaining weeks of the exam period, requests should be submitted by **Monday 10th February at 4pm**.

**Spring Semester (S2)**
The deadline for EC requests relating to the overall exam period is **Friday 29th May at 4pm**. For any circumstances/events that occur after this date and that affect exams in the remaining weeks of the exam period, requests should be submitted by **Wednesday 17th June at 4pm**.

**Resits and Special Sittings**
The deadline for EC requests relating to the overall exam period is **Friday 14th August at 4pm**. For any circumstances/events that occur after this date and that affect exams in the remaining weeks of the exam period, requests should be submitted by **Monday 31st August at 4pm**.

For more advice on what to do in case of problems, visit https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/ssid/sos.

**6.10 Note on Calculators**

The University has restrictions on the type of calculators which can be used in examinations. The regulations are designed primarily to forbid the use of calculators which can store information, thereby (in non-"open book" exams) giving students who have them an unfair advantage over those who do not. Before you go into the examination hall with a calculator, you should ensure that it has an official University "approved" sticker on it. These can be obtained by presenting your calculator for inspection at the Student Services Information Desk in the Students' Union. If you do not do this, you run the risk of having your calculator confiscated for the duration of the exam; although you will be provided with an approved substitute, using an unfamiliar machine will certainly lose you time and
increase the risk of numerical errors.

Website:  https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/ssid/exams/calculator

7 Student Evaluation

7.1 Evaluating your programme of study

Whilst you are a student, you will have opportunities to evaluate the quality of your programme of study and its individual units. Student evaluation of courses is required by University policy; more importantly, it is an essential part of assuring the quality of our courses and provides us with valuable feedback on your experiences during your programme of study.

We will ask for comments on your experience of each level as a whole in each session, in addition to commenting on individual units. The evaluation includes

- the overall coherence and content of your programme;
- tutorial support;
- assessment deadlines and feedback;
- appropriateness of the teaching methods;
- availability and suitability of learning resources.

For individual modules, anonymous questionnaires are conducted via a web based system at an appropriate point in the course. It is important that you take the time to fill these in, and that you do so honestly and fairly. It is always easier for us to respond positively to comments if they are detailed and constructive—for example “the handouts for this course are useless” gives the lecturer little help in deciding what to do about it, whereas “I cannot always follow the mathematical derivations in the handouts” is much more useful. Even if you have no particular point to make, it is important that you take the time to fill in the form: it is very hard to know whether to change something if only 10% of students have made any response at all.

The tabulated results of the questionnaires and lecturer responses are posted on the Undergraduate Students’ Information board. Year questionnaires are similar and are distributed towards the end of Semester 2. Questionnaires are considered, along with examination results, at a special meeting of the Departmental Teaching Committee in the summer. Be assured that student feedback often does lead to changes being made to units and programmes.

You can also make comments about the courses informally to members of staff such as your personal tutor, academic tutor, the Year Tutor, or the module head, or more formally via the Staff-Student Committee (see below). In addition, we have implemented a Quick Response (QR) system for reporting instant feedback from you to us.

Please be aware that many aspects of the course are fixed well in advance—for example, exam questions may have to be set before the lecturer concerned has even started teaching the course—and so it may not always be possible to make dramatic changes in response to criticisms even if everyone agrees that they are well-founded.

Participating in other evaluation processes

In addition to the student evaluation operated by the departments, you may also be asked to participate in other surveys throughout your study. Final year students are asked to take part in the National Student Survey (NSS), which seeks views from students on their overall satisfaction with their programme of study. The results of this survey are published and are used when evaluating the university’s teaching quality compared to other UK institutions.

From time to time, the Department may ask for student volunteers to join focus groups looking at particular aspects of the programme, or distribute special surveys asking about specific issues (as
opposed to specific modules). This is generally done when we are planning to make changes to the programme content or structure, and want to make sure that we are aware of what these look like from the student viewpoint. Please do fill in the surveys and consider volunteering for the focus groups: they should not take up much of your time, and they should help to ensure that any changes we make do not have unintended side-effects for our students.

### 7.2 Student Voice

The University places great value on the opinions of its students and there are numerous opportunities for you to get involved, to have your say and also to represent the views of other students. These opportunities are supplemented by invitations to participate in a range of surveys and evaluations on various aspects of your course and the University in general.

**What student representation opportunities are available?**

In the department, we have a Staff-Student Committee consisting of student representatives together with relevant academic staff. Getting involved will enable you to join in discussions and decision-making ranging across such topics as

- student feedback on the quality of teaching;
- inputs to the planning of curriculum changes;
- departmental/school services (e.g. hand-in arrangements, office opening times, study facilities, availability of personal tutors);
- improving channels of communication with students.

The Department will also ask one or more members of the Staff-Student Committee to sit on the Department’s Teaching Committee.

Students are encouraged to approach any of the student representatives with any problems or suggestions relating to the Department of Physics & Astronomy. The representatives will make themselves known early on in the academic year and will be happy to help at any time.

Students in the Department also run the Physics Society, PhySoc, and will be advertising this early in the semester. Any suggestions regarding excursions, guest lectures, staff-student activities etc., are more than welcome.

In the wider Faculty of Science, there are reserved places for students on the Faculty Learning & Teaching Committee, which deals with

- policy developments;
- student surveys;
- reviews of learning and teaching quality;
- design of new degree programmes and amendment of existing programmes;
- reflections on external reviews of the University.

This is rewarding work which will build your communications skills, offer you the opportunity for valuable networking and contribute to your personal development with skills to put on your CV.

The terms of reference the Committee require it to stimulate students’ engagement with learning, teaching and assessment, to ensure that students’ views are appropriately represented in Faculty learning and teaching discussion and to enhance the quality of the student experience. Consequently, contributions to this Committee are especially welcome from amongst the student body.

The present Faculty Director of Learning and Teaching is Dr Luke Wilson, who is a member of the Department of Physics and Astronomy. If you are interested in serving on this committee, you can contact him at luke.wilson@sheffield.ac.uk.

The university is currently engaged in a wide-ranging curriculum review known as the Programme Level Approach (PLA). In the Department of Physics and Astronomy, we believe that we have always
had a programme level approach—physics is a subject that has to be explored sequentially, with each level of study bringing greater depth to your understanding of the discipline—but we are using this review to enhance the way in which our course structure integrates knowledge and skills to ensure that you graduate from our department not merely knowing a lot of physics, but actually being able to function as a professional physicist. Student engagement is key to successful implementation of the Programme Level Approach, and there are likely to be opportunities to participate at departmental, faculty and university level: if you are interested in shaping the future of the university, watch out for invitations.

8 Your Higher Education Achievement Report (HEAR)

The University is committed to recognising the wide range of curricular and extra-curricular learning experiences that students gain during their time at Sheffield. It has introduced a new kind of degree transcript that is now offered to all new undergraduate students: the Higher Education Achievement Report or 'HEAR'. This transcript has been developed over the past four years, through a national project involving other universities, employers and students.

You will be issued with your HEAR alongside your degree certificate. As well as including your degree classification, an overview of your qualification and a list of your modules and grades, the HEAR will include more detailed information about your chosen course. It will also give details of non-academic achievements that the University or the Students’ Union can verify, to provide you with a broad picture of your university achievements. These might include additional modules you have taken (e.g. a language course), awards such as the Sheffield Graduate Award or Skills for Work Certificate, and other extra-curricular activities such as volunteering or mentoring.

You will have the opportunity to view your HEAR as it grows during your time at Sheffield. You can use it as support for the Sheffield Graduate Development Programme, by providing a basis for reviewing your progress and thinking about your personal development. You are also encouraged to refer to your HEAR in discussions with your personal tutor and the Careers Service, to help you identify and articulate the skills you are gaining, and reflect on how you can build on these to achieve your future goals.

The University will issue you with an 'interim' HEAR at various points during your degree, and you can share this with employers and others to provide evidence of your university achievements as you begin to apply for internships, jobs or further study. You are encouraged to take advantage of opportunities to gain recognition for activities you undertake outside the curriculum. This will help you demonstrate how you have made the most of your time at university, and gained valuable skills and experience that will enhance your employability and help you achieve your potential. There will of course be some things that the University cannot verify. However, employers are aware of this and will be equally interested in how you present yourself in CVs, personal statements, portfolios and interviews. If you refer to your additional activities and achievements in these other documents and during interviews, you will not be disadvantaged – and if you have used your HEAR to help you think about where you want to go and how all of your skills and experiences prepare you for this, you will be well set to impress!

For more information about the HEAR, visit https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/hear

9 Departmental Resources

9.1 Hicks Student Support (F10)

Hicks Student Support, room F10, is where you can go to:

- hand in homework, lab reports, etc. and also collect returned work;
- obtain Extenuating Circumstances or Change of Status forms;
• hand in copies of doctor’s notes or other official paperwork;
• leave messages for members of staff if you can’t find them.

The staff in F10 have wide experience of all matters relating to students and university administration. If you have a problem and you’re not sure where to go or what to do, it is always worth asking F10 for advice.

9.2 Information Technology

As a student of the University of Sheffield, you are provided with an account on the University computer network which provides access to the MUSE system. MUSE is designed to provide access to all the online services you are likely to need, including email, the University library catalogue and the MOLE system, which holds the online resources for most modules. (Note that many lecturers in the Department maintain their own course websites, either because these predate the MOLE system or because they find the MOLE user interface rather unfriendly: however, these non-MOLE sites should be linked from inside the course MOLE page. If they aren’t, please ask the lecturer to do so.) If your module has coursework assignments that need to be submitted electronically, this will be done via the course MOLE page. MUSE also provides you with a personalised timetable listing all the lectures, labs, seminars etc. that are associated with modules that you’re registered for.

The physics and astronomy laboratories are equipped with PCs which have various general and special-purpose data analysis software installed. In addition, the Department has installed physics-related software on the University network which can be accessed by undergraduates with IDs associated with the physics department. The 3rd and 4th year study room, E42, contains a number of University PCs that can be used for project work, and there are several public computer rooms in the Hicks Building that are free to use when not booked for teaching (consult the booking sheet on the door).

9.3 Careers advice

The University has a Careers Service, but we recognise that many people may find it easier to talk to a fellow physicist first. Dr Mark Quinn (room D18; m.quinn@sheffield.ac.uk) is the Departmental Employability Lead and will provide advice on careers and job applications, as well as organising a number of careers-related workshops and events throughout the year. Your personal tutor will also be happy to discuss your career choices with you at any point.

For those of you who are considering taking a PhD, the Department has a Research Prospectus available on request from the office, and your personal tutor will be able to explain the various topics and suggest who you should talk to if you want to find out more. Research groups within the department organise information sessions during semester 1 for prospective PhD applicants and will contact 3rd/4th year students directly.

A key point to make here is that it is never too early to start thinking about what you want to do after you graduate. If you have a clear plan—or even a set of vague aspirations—it will help to inform your choice of options and may lead to constructive ideas for summer internships or other activities. Even if you change your mind later, the exercise of thinking about what you want to do and how you can best prepare to do it is a valuable one.

9.4 Seminars and Colloquia

Much of the physics you learn in your degree programme is necessarily well-established, long-understood material, but you will find that links to current research are made in many of your modules, reflecting the fact that physics is an active field with exciting research going on in numerous areas ranging from pure curiosity-driven study to important industrial applications. In addition, to give students the opportunity to enhance their knowledge of up-to-date and important areas of research, the Department hosts a variety of seminars and colloquia throughout the academic year, some
organised by the department ("Fred Combley Colloquia"), some by the Yorkshire branch of the Institute of Physics (IoP), and some by the various research groups. Many of these, especially the departmental and IoP colloquia, are designed specifically to be suitable for undergraduate students and are advertised by notices around the department. An events calendar is available at https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/physics/news/calendar; announcements may also be posted on noticeboards or on the TV screen in the Hicks lobby.

More social events, such as trips and the annual Physics Ball, are organised and advertised by the Physics Society or PhySoc.

10 University Resources

10.1 Libraries

Some lecturers will explicitly require you to do some reading in the research literature as the basis for an essay, or to prepare a presentation, but even where this is not the case you will always benefit from doing some additional reading around your lecture material. Different authors will present the topic in different ways, some of which you may find easier to grasp than the approach favoured by your lecturer, and there may be useful background detail or interesting extensions into more advanced material as well as additional problems to practise on, and so forth. The libraries you will generally find useful as a physics student are the Information Commons and Western Bank Library near the Arts Tower.

The Information Commons is the University’s study hub and is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Here you will find undergraduate textbooks, a large number of computers, wireless networks for your laptop, printing facilities and a café. The Western Bank library may contain more specialised books and research journals which you may need to consult for more advanced modules and projects in years 3 and 4. Note that nearly all journals, and an increasing number of textbooks, are now available electronically, though older volumes (which may be needed for History of Astronomy, for example) may not be. The StarPlus electronic catalogue, accessible through the University web site, tells you where any particular book is held, how many copies there are, and whether they are out on loan, and provides links if the content is available electronically.

In addition to Information Commons and Western Bank Library, the Diamond hosts state-of-the-art facilities, including study spaces, IT provision, creative media support, recording booths and media editing facilities, plus a CiCS and Library service point.

If you need a book which is not in any of the university’s collections, it can be obtained by Inter-Library Loan. This requires authorisation by a member of staff: consult the Departmental Office for details. If you feel that the book is sufficiently relevant to one of our courses that it really should be in the main library, you should contact Dr Katherine Inskip, room E47, the Department’s library representative.

10.2 Computing Facilities

On registration, you should have been provided with a username and email address on the University computer network. Your username is essential to allow you to log on to MUSE, which gives you access to course MOLE pages, your personalised timetable, electronic submission of coursework and various university resources. If you do not have a username, perhaps because you arrived in Sheffield late and missed the nominal registration during Intro Week, you should go to CiCS with your UCard and ask for help.

As well as the MUSE login facilities, your username gives you access to a large number of university PCs around the University (running the Windows 10 operating system). The computer rooms most likely to be of use to you are in the Hicks Building (room D17 and several rooms on G floor); there are also University PCs in the teaching lab and the 3rd and 4th year study room. Note that the public
computer rooms can be booked for teaching; please consult the booking sheets on the door before using them, especially if you arrive just before the hour (it is inconvenient to log on at 10:55 only to be chased out at 11:00 because the room is booked!). The software provided on the University “managed desktop” includes general-purpose packages such as word processors, spreadsheets, graphics and Internet access, as well as some specifically physics-related tools which are accessible to those with “physics department” usernames.

The University also provides a range of software that can be installed on your own computer, free or at discounted prices—see https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/cics/software/available for links.

If you regularly use your own computer to carry out data analysis, write reports, etc., do **remember to back it up regularly**. You do *not* want to lose your final year project report the day before the submission deadline because your hard drive failed! Note that the University guidelines on extenuating circumstances (https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/ssid/forms/circsnotes) specifically list “loss of computer data/printer problems” as something that is *not* likely to be accepted as an extenuating circumstance, because “all work should be backed up”.

### 10.3 **Student Services**

A convenient way to get general information on many University resources is the Student Services Information Desk located in the Students’ Union next to the Student Advice Centre. The Information Desk has stocks of useful forms, including Module Add/Drop and Change of Status forms, assorted financial forms, immigration documents, calculator approval for examinations, and so on. This service is open from 9 am to 5 pm on weekdays.

Forms can also be downloaded from https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/ssid/forms.

### 10.4 **301: the Academic Skills Centre**

The Academic Skills Centre, [https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/ssid/301/services/index](https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/ssid/301/services/index), located just across from the Students’ Union at 301 Glossop Road, is intended to help you develop the academic and study skills that you need to make the most of your degree. It provides workshops, 1:1 tutorials, and online resources covering a very wide range of topics including study skills, revision and exam techniques, academic writing, and a maths and statistics help service. Some of the sessions are drop-in, while others require appointments. A good starting point is the online Skills Audit, [https://301skills.shef.ac.uk/skills_audits](https://301skills.shef.ac.uk/skills_audits), which will help you to work out where your strengths and weaknesses are and point you in the direction of appropriate resources.

If you choose to engage seriously with the services provided by 301, you can earn an Academic Skills Certificate recognising the work that you have done to improve your academic, professional and transferable skills. This is not credit-bearing, but it can be added to your HEAR to provide evidence of your achievements.

### 11 **Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures**

We pride ourselves on providing a friendly and open learning environment with close contact between staff and students. If problems do arise, we endeavour to sort them out informally within the Department, through our system of Personal Tutors, Year Tutors and Senior Tutor. Usually this is by far the best way to deal with such issues, because it allows them to be resolved quickly. However, it is of course necessary to have formal procedures which can be invoked if the initial informal approach fails to produce a solution satisfactory to all parties.

#### 11.1 **Disciplinary procedures**

Occasionally for some reason a student does not adjust well to university life, and therefore does not
make the academic progress we expect of them. Unfortunately it is necessary to have a formal procedure for identifying such students and, in the last resort, applying sanctions. This section summarises the procedure, and you can ask your Personal Tutor for more details if you wish.

The person responsible for dealing with disciplinary matters within the Department is the appropriate Year Tutor. You will be reported to the Year Tutor if your attendance at lectures, labs or tutorials is unsatisfactory—that is, if you have missed a significant number of lectures, labs or tutorials—or if you consistently fail to hand in homework, lab assignments, or any other compulsory written work.

If you are reported to the Year Tutor, he or she will arrange for you to be interviewed by the Departmental Progress of Students Committee. The committee will explore with you the reasons for your unsatisfactory performance, and will set milestones that you must reach in future. The interview and its conclusions will be entered on your student record, and you will be sent a written copy of its findings.

If you fail to reach the milestones set in your interview, or if your academic performance gives some other cause for concern, you will be reported to the Faculty Progress of Students Committee, which is part of the University’s formal disciplinary mechanisms. In the worst case, this can lead to your being expelled from the University altogether.

We hope that by identifying students at risk of this early in their courses we can help them to get back on track and achieve their academic and career objectives.

At this point it may be useful to repeat that we do not wish to cause further stress to students who are missing lectures because of illness or a serious personal problem. If you are ill, please obtain a doctor’s certificate and send it to the F10 Hicks Student Support as soon as possible; if there is some other serious problem, see your Personal Tutor or the Senior Tutor. This will not only prevent you being reported as absent; it may also permit the Year Tutors to make allowances for the time you have missed, for example by adjusting your lab and homework marks.

11.2 Grievance procedures

If you think that you have been treated unfairly in any respect, and you feel unable to raise the matter informally with the member of staff in question, the first thing you should do is to discuss it with your Personal Tutor, the relevant Year Tutor or Senior Tutor. They will then investigate and either rectify the problem or, if they are satisfied that there is no real cause for concern—for example, if you have queried the mark you received in an examination, but having looked at your script they are happy that the mark given does properly reflect your performance—then they will explain to you what steps they have taken and why they do not believe that there is a problem. If you are still unhappy, you should make a formal written complaint to the Head of Department, setting out clearly the nature of your complaint, the evidence that you have to support it, the actions that have been taken so far and the reason that you remain unsatisfied. It is University policy that such a formal complaint must have a response within ten working days (though if the case is complicated this response may only be a description of the steps currently being taken to investigate it, rather than a complete answer to the complaint). If you are still unhappy after this, you can take your complaint beyond the Department to University level. For academic matters, i.e. disputes about module grades or degree classifications, the University has a published academic appeals procedure, details of which are available from the Student Services Information Desk. There is also a formal procedure for dealing with accusations of personal harassment, and a leaflet explaining the University’s policy on this is also available from Student Services. For any other type of complaint, you should write formally to the Registrar and Secretary of the University, setting out your case as you did in writing to the Head of Department.

12 Safety

The University is committed to ensuring a safe working environment for both students and staff. To this end you must obey any safety instructions, either written or verbal. In particular:
• **Smoking** is not permitted within any part of the Department. This includes the entrance of the Hicks Building.
• **Food and drink.** You are not permitted to consume food or drink within any of the teaching or research laboratories.
• **Fire.** You must familiarise yourself with the local fire procedures. If you discover a fire you can contact the emergency services by calling 4444 from the internal phone system. If you hear the fire alarm then you must leave the building immediately via the nearest safe exit. You must not congregate near to the entrances of the building but move towards the concourse in front of the Students' Union building. The fire alarm is tested every Wednesday at approximately 9.30 am (you can simply ignore this) and there will be a practice evacuation of the building early in Semester 1.
• **Working out of hours.** The Hicks Building's standard working hours are 08:00 to 18:00 Monday to Friday. Access to most of the Hicks Building outside these times is by swipe card and requires you to have undertaken the Out of Hours training course, which is normally accessible only to University staff and postgraduates (not undergraduates). During term time, there may be evening access to lecture theatres and seminar rooms for evening classes, student society meetings etc., but the rest of the building is not accessible, and the entrance at the bottom of Hounsfield Road is locked.

### 13 Departmental Committees

A number of committees are involved in the running of the Department. Strategy (including new academic appointments) is the responsibility of the Executive Committee which is chaired by the Head of Department and meets approximately every two months. The Teaching Committee looks after all aspects of teaching including quality control, programme development. This committee is chaired by the Director of Teaching and includes student representatives. It typically meets every two months. There are also committees to cover research, health and safety and graduate students.

All committees feed into the Executive Committee and also staff-meetings which are attended by all staff in the Department. The Staff-Student committee has representative students from all years and a range of academic staff, normally including the Director of Teaching and/or Head of Department.

The Department's Teaching Committee is ultimately responsible for all aspects of teaching, including development and quality control. This committee meets regularly throughout the academic year. Before each meeting, staff are invited to raise issues for discussion. Relevant staff are invited, where appropriate, to attend teaching committee meetings to discuss particular issues. Over the summer a Teaching Committee meeting is held to review all taught modules with input consisting of exam results, the results of student questionnaires, issues raised by students at staff-student committee meetings etc. If an issue with a module is identified the relevant staff are asked to respond. The Director of the Department’s Teaching Committee sits on the Faculty’s Learning and Teaching Committee.

There are two student representatives on the Teaching Committee, nominated by the Staff-Student Committee. If you would like to raise an issue with the Teaching Committee, you should do so through the student representatives, or send an email to phy-support@sheffield.ac.uk. Note, however, that because the Teaching Committee meets comparatively infrequently and is more concerned with strategy than with day-to-day teaching matters, it is almost always more effective to contact the Year Tutor (who will either deal with it personally or pass the matter to the Teaching Committee if appropriate).

Three external examiners cover undergraduate teaching. For 2019/20, external examiners for undergraduate programmes are as follows:

**Prof. I J Douglas MacGregor** (University of Glasgow) for Physics and Medical Physics programmes;
**Dr Mark Everitt** (Loughborough University) for Theoretical Physics programmes;
**Dr Simon Morris** (University of Durham) for Astrophysics dual programmes.
These examiners review all Year 2, 3 and 4 exam papers and make two visits to the Department to review the semester 1 and 2 examination results. They also attend the final examiners’ meeting where degree classifications are decided. There are no vivas; however, the external examiners meet with students from all Years during their Autumn visit to the department. Each year the external examiners write a report which is forwarded to the Department and the HoD is required to respond to any issues raised.
# 14 Dates of Standard Semesters – 2019/20

## Autumn Semester

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Date Range</th>
<th>Weeks</th>
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<tr>
<td>Intro</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>30 Sep 2019</td>
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<td>total 12w</td>
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<td></td>
<td>[4 Weeks Christmas vacation]</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>20 Jan 2020</td>
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<tr>
<td>Saturday</td>
<td>8 Feb 2020</td>
<td>total 3w</td>
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## Spring Semester

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<td>10 Feb 2020</td>
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<tr>
<td>Saturday</td>
<td>4 Apr 2020</td>
<td>total 9w</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[3 weeks Easter vacation, Easter Day 12 Apr 2020]</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>27 Apr 2020</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturday</td>
<td>13 June 2020</td>
<td>total 6w</td>
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## Resit Period

The resit and special sitting period runs between Monday 10 and Friday 28 Aug 2020. **If you are in year 1 or year 2, please ensure that you do not book holidays during this period.** The timetable for resit exams is released in late July.
# Appendix: People and Places

The following pages contain some useful reference information about people you might wish to talk to in the Department, along with contact details for University resources that you might need if you are having problems. This information was all correct at the time of printing (August 2019).

## Who’s who in the Department

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Room</th>
<th>Ext no.</th>
<th>Email address</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Head of Department</td>
<td>F9a</td>
<td>24291</td>
<td><a href="mailto:paul.crowther@sheffield.ac.uk">paul.crowther@sheffield.ac.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Director for Learning and Teaching</td>
<td>D22</td>
<td>24572</td>
<td><a href="mailto:s.cartwright@sheffield.ac.uk">s.cartwright@sheffield.ac.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior Tutor</td>
<td>E15</td>
<td>24561</td>
<td><a href="mailto:d.mowbray@sheffield.ac.uk">d.mowbray@sheffield.ac.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study Support Tutor / Disability Support Officer</td>
<td>E47</td>
<td>24540</td>
<td><a href="mailto:k.inskip@sheffield.ac.uk">k.inskip@sheffield.ac.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Tutor Coordinator</td>
<td>F29</td>
<td>24525</td>
<td><a href="mailto:s.littlefair@sheffield.ac.uk">s.littlefair@sheffield.ac.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching timetable</td>
<td></td>
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<td><a href="mailto:phy-timetable@sheffield.ac.uk">phy-timetable@sheffield.ac.uk</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Prof. Davide Costanzo</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><a href="mailto:d.costanzo@sheffield.ac.uk">d.costanzo@sheffield.ac.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 1</td>
<td>E12A</td>
<td>23538</td>
<td><a href="mailto:p.kok@sheffield.ac.uk">p.kok@sheffield.ac.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 2</td>
<td>E45</td>
<td>24531</td>
<td><a href="mailto:v.kudryavtsev@sheffield.ac.uk">v.kudryavtsev@sheffield.ac.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 3</td>
<td>D24</td>
<td>23541</td>
<td><a href="mailto:c.booth@sheffield.ac.uk">c.booth@sheffield.ac.uk</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Year 4</td>
<td>E14</td>
<td>24527</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Years 3 and 4</td>
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<td>24300</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Medical Physics</strong></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>All years</td>
<td>RHH</td>
<td>13687</td>
<td><a href="mailto:j.w.fenner@sheffield.ac.uk">j.w.fenner@sheffield.ac.uk</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Secretary</td>
<td>RHH</td>
<td>59503</td>
<td><a href="mailto:mpy-admin@sheffield.ac.uk">mpy-admin@sheffield.ac.uk</a></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Dual Degree Contacts</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Theoretical Physics</td>
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<td>23537</td>
<td><a href="mailto:d.m.whittaker@sheffield.ac.uk">d.m.whittaker@sheffield.ac.uk</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Chemical Physics</td>
<td>F07</td>
<td>24532</td>
<td><a href="mailto:jamie.hobbs@sheffield.ac.uk">jamie.hobbs@sheffield.ac.uk</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Physics / Med Phys</td>
<td>D28</td>
<td>24353</td>
<td><a href="mailto:e.daw@sheffield.ac.uk">e.daw@sheffield.ac.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physics / Philosophy</td>
<td>D24</td>
<td>23541</td>
<td><a href="mailto:c.booth@sheffield.ac.uk">c.booth@sheffield.ac.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physics / Comp. Sci.</td>
<td>E41</td>
<td>24577</td>
<td><a href="mailto:l.thompson@sheffield.ac.uk">l.thompson@sheffield.ac.uk</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Study Abroad</td>
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<tr>
<td>Physics</td>
<td>Prof. Ed Daw</td>
<td>D28</td>
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<td>Physics/Astrophysics</td>
<td>Dr James Mullaney</td>
<td>F19</td>
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<td><strong>Lab Head / Project Coordinator</strong></td>
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<td>Dr Mark Quinn</td>
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<td>Dr Matt Mears</td>
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<td>Prof. Mark Fox</td>
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<td><strong>Lab Head / Project Coordinator</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Year 1</td>
<td>Dr Katherine Inskip</td>
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<td>Prof. Clive Tadhunter</td>
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<td>Dr John Fenner</td>
<td>RHH</td>
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<tr>
<td>Secretary</td>
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<td>RHH</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Hicks Support</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Secretarial staff, Hicks Reception</td>
<td>F10</td>
<td>23752</td>
<td><a href="mailto:hicksstudentsupport@sheffield.ac.uk">hicksstudentsupport@sheffield.ac.uk</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Departmental Manager for Learning and Teaching</td>
<td>Ms Elizabeth Lydon</td>
<td>F10a</td>
<td>23539</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student Support Advisor</td>
<td>Miss Sally Merrett</td>
<td>F10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student Support Advisor for Welfare</td>
<td>Ms Lizzie Ibbotson</td>
<td>F10</td>
<td>23802</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student Support Officer</td>
<td>Miss Ursula McGuone</td>
<td>F10</td>
<td>23733</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Full Postal Address:
Department of Physics and Astronomy
University of Sheffield
Hicks Building
Hounsfield Road
Sheffield S3 7RH

Web page: http://www.shef.ac.uk/physics/
Central Support and Welfare

**University Health Service**  
Telephone: 0114 222 2100 (24 hours), NHS 111 – for urgent medical advice call 111 (24 hours), or 999 if the situation is very serious and immediate help is required.  
Email: health.service@sheffield.ac.uk., please do not use for medical enquiries.  
Website: http://www.shef.ac.uk/health/

**Central Welfare and Guidance (CWaG)**  
Supports students who are experiencing personal difficulties that are impacting their studies. You may access this service for yourself or ask for advice if you are worried about a friend, coursemate or housemate. If the latter, you do not have to give the name of the student you are worried about.  
Location: Level 6, Students’ Union Building  
Telephone: 0114 222 4321. Email: support@sheffield.ac.uk  
Website: https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/sss/sss/cwag

**Student Access to Mental Health Support (SAMHS)**  
SAMHS is intended as a first point of contact for students with concerns about their mental wellbeing.  
Website: https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/mental-wellbeing  
Note that SAMHS is **not** a crisis service: if you need help urgently, contact one of the services listed at https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/ssid/counselling/immediate-support

**University Counselling Service (UCS)**  
Provides a free and confidential service. The counsellors will not discuss your case in any way with any academics unless you ask them to do so. Individual student access to UCS is provided via a triage appointment with SAMHS (see above), but the service also offers drop-in workshops and a list of online self-help resources.  
Website: https://www.shef.ac.uk/counselling

**SSiD (Student Services Information Desk)**  
Conveniently located in the Students’ Union Building just behind the Hicks Building, SSiD provides an information service for all non-departmental (i.e. not specifically physics-related) worries, questions or issues that you might have.  
Location: Level 3 of the Students’ Union Building  
Telephone: 0114 222 1299.  
Website: http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/ssid/  
SSiD has a very useful webpage with links for all kinds of worries that you might have, whether academic, health-related or personal: https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/ssid/sos

**Women’s Safety and the Women’s Minibus**  
If you have any worries about safety, or would like help solving any problems you or your friends are facing, please contact the Women’s Officer at the Sabbatical Office, Level 4, Union of Student’s Building, tel. 222 8608.  
Email: womens.officer@sheffield.ac.uk  
A Women’s minibus service operates every evening from the Union of Students to your door (within a 2 mile radius). See timetable on Union web pages.  
Website: https://su.sheffield.ac.uk/advice-support/safety/women-s-minibus

**Disability and Dyslexia Support Service (DDSS)**  
Provides support for students who have a specific learning difficulty such as dyslexia, dyspraxia or ADHD, have a mental health condition such as depression or an anxiety disorder, have an autism spectrum condition, are blind or partially sighted, are deaf or hard of hearing, have a long standing illness or health condition such as asthma, epilepsy or chronic fatigue syndrome or have a physical impairment or mobility difficulty.  
Location: The Hillsborough Centre, Alfred Denny Building  
Telephone: 0114 222 1303. Email: disability.info@sheffield.ac.uk
Note: If you know that you have a disability or a specific learning difficulty such as dyslexia, please get in touch with DDSS as soon as you arrive at university. They will set up an individual Learning Support Plan to provide you with the help and support you need.

If you think that you may have a specific learning difficulty (or if one of your lecturers or tutors suggests that this may be the case) but you have not been diagnosed, DDSS can arrange a diagnostic assessment: see https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/ssid/disability/spldtest

Financial Help
The website gives information on short term emergency financial assistance, hardship loans, and student financial support. The Student Advice Centre can provide overall financial advice.
Website: https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/ssid/finance

International Students
This website gives information on re-entering the UK, extending leave to remain (short period, visa extension, opening a UK bank account).
Website: https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/ssid/international/
Departmental contact: Dr Rhoda Hawkins.

Mature Students
Website: https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/ssid/mature-students

Nightline
This is a confidential listening and information service which is manned by trained student volunteers between 8.00 pm and 8.00 am during term time. In addition to providing a listening service it also provides information ranging from university information such as exam dates to contact information for shops, taxi services and so on. It can be called free from the Halls of Residence or (0114) 222 8787 for the listening services and (0114) 222 8788 for information. These numbers are also listed on the back of your U Card. email: nightline@sheffield.ac.uk
Website: http://www.sheffieldnightline.co.uk

Big White Wall
This is a totally anonymous service providing 24/7 online peer and professional mental health support. Access is free to all University of Sheffield students. See link at https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/mental-wellbeing/bww
Members of staff with special responsibilities

Specific degree programmes

Tutor for Theoretical Physics
Professor David Whittaker (room E12B) has overall responsibility for the BSc and MPhys degrees in Theoretical Physics. You should talk to Professor Whittaker if you have any queries or comments which relate specifically to this degree; alternatively, you can always discuss the matter with your Personal or Academic Tutor, who will then consult Prof. Whittaker if it seems necessary.

Tutor for Medical Physics
The Medical Physics side of the BSc and MPhys degrees in Physics with Medical Physics is run by Dr John Fenner who is based at the Hallamshire Hospital, but in the Department of Physics Prof. Ed Daw (room D28) is responsible for liaison with Dr Fenner and for ensuring that the Physics side of the degree is running smoothly. Again, you can transmit comments to Prof. Daw either directly or through your personal or academic tutor.

Tutor for Chemical Physics
Prof. Jamie Hobbs (room F11) is responsible for students taking the single honours degree in Chemical Physics. Prof. Hobbs acts as liaison to the chemistry department and oversees the physics part of the degree.

Tutor for Materials Physics
Prof. David Mowbray (room E15) is responsible for students on the Materials Physics programme (joint with Nanjing Tech).

Study Abroad Tutors
The University of Sheffield has exchange programme agreements with various American, Canadian and Australian/New Zealand universities, allowing MPhys students to spend the third year of their course overseas. Most students do this as part of a named degree programme, but students on other programmes may also apply for “non-mandatory” placements, which are awarded competitively across the whole University. If you are interested, you should see Prof. Ed Daw (Physics or Theoretical Physics) or Dr James Mullaney (Physics and Astrophysics) as soon as possible: as numbers are limited, transfers on to the named degree programmes are subject to approval by the International Office. Placements are agreed in January of your second year, primarily on the basis of your first-year marks. Prof. Daw also has responsibility for any overseas exchange students who may be taking courses in the Department of Physics and Astronomy during their stay in Sheffield.

Careers and Employability

Degrees with Employment Experience/Year in Industry
If you wish to enhance your CV and develop your professional skills before graduating, the Department has a number of degree programmes with Employment Experience or with a Year in Industry (these are equivalent programmes: the title depends on whether you applied to this programme through UCAS or joined it after first arranging an internship or placement). In these programmes, you spend the year before your final year (i.e. between years 2 and 3 of a BSc degree, or between years 3 and 4 of an MPhys) working in physics-based business, industry or a national lab, or—for Physics and Astrophysics students—working as a staff astronomer in an observatory. The Programme Lead for these programmes is Dr Mack Durham (room F32, w.m.durham@sheffield.ac.uk). If you are interested in participating in one of these programmes, you should see Dr Durham as soon as possible, since many internship programmes require applications very early in the academic year prior to placement.

Note: students who want to experience working with industry but are not sure they want to commit to an entire year should consider signing up for the 3rd year Group Industrial Project, PHY346, in which...
students work in groups to tackle genuine problems submitted by industrial partners. The contact person for this module is Dr Alastair Buckley (E49, alastair.buckley@sheffield.ac.uk).

Careers and Employment
Dr Mark Quinn (D18, m.quinn@sheffield.ac.uk) is the Departmental Employability Lead and is responsible for organising employability workshops during term, co-organising (with other Yorkshire universities in the White Rose Industrial Physics Academy (WRIPA) collaboration) an annual Careers Fair, and generally liaising with the university careers service and the department’s industrial partners.

Student welfare team

Student Support Advisor for Welfare
If you have a disability or specific learning difficulty that may impact your studies (for example, dyslexia, dyspraxia, impaired mobility, impaired vision or hearing, autistic spectrum, photosensitive or uncontrolled epilepsy), your first port of call should be the Dyslexia and Disability Support Service, which will assess your issues and put together an individual Learning Support Plan (LSP) to mitigate them. The Department’s response to your LSP will be coordinated by the Student Support Advisor for Welfare, Ms Lizzie Ibbotson, who is based in F10.

Disability Liaison Officer/Student Support Officer
If your Learning Support Plan may have an impact on the academic content of your studies—for example, if it means that you should not conduct certain types of experimental work—you should contact the Disability Liaison Officer, Dr Katherine Inskip, who will work with the module leader(s) involved to ensure that you can achieve the intended learning outcomes of the module without putting yourself at risk or being disadvantaged relative to other students. Dr Inskip is also responsible for helping students who have taken Leave of Absence for medical or other reasons to reintegrate into our community and re-engage with their studies.

Senior Tutor
The Senior Tutor, Prof. David Mowbray, has overall responsibility for the welfare of students in the Department. If you feel that your studies are being affected by circumstances beyond your control, such as illness, bereavement or serious personal or family problems, you should fill in an Extenuating Circumstances form explaining the problem and providing supporting documentation. It is Prof. Mowbray’s responsibility to assess the seriousness of the issue and make recommendations about how it should be dealt with. You may ask to see Prof. Mowbray if you are experiencing problems and your personal tutor is away or you do not feel that they will be able to help you; conversely, Prof. Mowbray may ask to see you if your attendance or academic record lead us to believe that there may be something wrong.

Women’s Issues
If you are a woman student and you have a problem that you would rather not discuss with a male member of staff, please feel free to consult Dr Susan Cartwright, Dr Rhoda Hawkins, Dr Katherine Inskip or Dr Bianca Sala. (You can also speak to a member of the Teaching Support Team in Hicks Reception, F10, or consult the University’s Central Welfare and Guidance team.)

If you have any suggestions how we might improve the material presented in this guide, please contact in F10.