

**FACULTY OF SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND ENGINEERING
QUALITY ASSURANCE OF UNITS**

Report by Unit Co-ordinator

Unit code: PHY3SCA	Year: 2008	Campus: Bundoora
Unit coordinator: Dr Chris Pakes		
Teaching staff: C. Pakes, Y. Bogdanova, D. Hoxley, C. Tran		

SECTION A: NUMERICAL INFORMATION

Number enrolled: 9

Number completing the QAU questionnaire: 9

Grade distribution : A: 3 B: 2 C: 4 D: E: N: NS:

Other (Please list):

SECTION B: STUDENT RESPONSES TO THE QUESTIONNAIRE

(a) Please complete the following table for questions used in your unit (with previous year's results if available)

		Current Mean	Last Year's Mean
19	Overall, I was satisfied with the quality of this unit	3.9	3.3

(b) Summary of student comments on best aspects

Seven students provided positive comments. Generally, the unit was considered to be difficult but rewarding, with a committed and approachable group of lecturers who are willing to provide additional time to the students. Assignments were considered to be relevant to the material being taught and the laboratory classes challenging and interactive. Students are supportive of the new, white-paper style laboratory reports, which asked them to write up their results in a form similar to a two-page journal article.

(c) Summary of student comments on needed improvements

Three students suggested that the work load was excessive, particularly with regard to the computational physics component and assignments. Three students noted that the organisation of class times and scheduling of assignments was difficult to follow.

SECTION C: UNIT COORDINATOR'S COMMENTS

(d) Last year's suggested improvements

During 2007 four new experiments are under development for the 3rd year laboratory with the aim of making the development of practical experimental skills a key feature of this unit.

The unit has undergone a review and it is intended that computational physics will be taught within the framework of the undergraduate laboratory, with laboratory-based exercises replacing a more traditional lecture-based course. The total amount of material covered in this unit is also under review.

(e) Unit coordinator's comments on the unit this year

Students have generally responded well to this unit, with the majority of students tackling a difficult subject proactively and finding the unit rewarding. It is pleasing to note that a number of students who were struggling during the semester did well in the exams.

During the semester there were a significant number of lecture timetabling swaps due to the absence of three of the lecturing staff for extended periods. This was planned and timetable changes were communicated to the students at the start of semester. Students were informed of any additional changes via webct and email, and the course coordinator reminded students of changes weekly during lectures.

The workload for this unit is not significantly greater than to be expected for a 30 CP unit. As usual, attendance rates for some of the subjects were poor with occasionally only 50% of the students attending classes and I feel that this underlies the difficulty that students have with the assignment problems.

(f) Unit coordinator's suggestions for improvements next year

During the year the Department of Physics has undergone a major review of its 2nd and 3rd year courses. From 2009, new 15 CP units will be introduced to replace the 30 CP offering at 3rd year. As a result of this the computational component of the course will be integrated into the laboratory exercises and no longer treated as a separate subject, which will make any computational exercises directly relevant to the student's work and will lead to a small reduction in student workload for this unit.

SECTION D: COMMENTS BY HEAD OF SCHOOL OR NOMINEE

This unit has been replaced in 2009 with a completely overhauled physics major stream. We have introduced thematic 15CP units providing tighter focus on key topics and strong alignment between class topics and associated practical tasks. This approach in future will allow the selection of better textbook materials for all senior physics offerings



Signed
Date 17-09-09

(for Head of School)