

School of Physics and Astronomy

Notes for Directors of Studies

September 2011

General

- For each of your directees, eligibility for progression (i.e. moving to the next year of their degree programme) should be established — check both the total point count and that all pre-requisites have been passed.
- Students who have not achieved the full 120 credits for the year are considered to have no automatic right to progress (used to be called FAP, and the forms still are) and should be identified and reported to our Teaching Office by email and/or on the FAP form ASAP. If they are in this position for the first-time, and are within 20 credits of being able to progress, then you as the DoS can determine an appropriate course of action and explain this on the FAP form. Otherwise the student will require a formal progression interview with DoT.
- If such a student is missing no more than 40 credits then (assuming they are given permission to continue study by you or DoT) it may be possible for them to progress, catching up the missing courses/credits in parallel with their next year of study. This will depend which courses they are missing: where pre-requisite courses have been failed, concessions are required to permit progression. Concession applications should be submitted (by DoSs) to the Teaching Office. Guidelines establishing which ‘routine’ concession requests are granted or refused are available in a separate document produced by the Curriculum Approval Officer.
- Students progressing to the next year of their programme while carrying failed courses normally retake the assessment component of the failed courses without attending classes. They must apply for permission to retake assessment without attending a course using an Exam Only form, which you print for them (or email to them). When students are repeating assessment but not attending a course you should indicate the appropriate Study Mode in the EUCLID enrolment for that course as ‘Exam Only’. Some courses can be failed due to inadequate coursework performance - students repeating only the coursework aspect should also be registered ‘Exam Only’ (more correctly ‘Assessment Only’) - the ‘Class Only’ option in EUCLID does not cover this.
- Students who are not eligible for progression can attempt to rehabilitate themselves by:
 - retaking the year by attendance (be sure to update their ‘Year of Programme’ in EUCLID)
 - withdrawing temporarily and re-taking courses on an ‘Exam Only’ basis (again update YoP and also change the ‘Method of Study’ (in the ‘Prog/Sess’ section) to ‘dormant’)
 - part-time study (i.e. attending classes but taking less than 120 points worth of courses) in order to make up the missing points (update YoP and change Method of Study to either Full-Time-Part-Year or Part-Time-Full-Year as appropriate).

More problematic non-progressing students may also consider:

- transferring to a different degree programme (or different University)
- aiming for an Ordinary or General degree (see College regulations in DRPS, and below).
- Any student needing to retake a course should be sternly warned about the College’s rule that you are allowed a maximum of three attempts at any given course [this will become 4 for students starting courses for the first time in 2011/2].
- If a student has fallen foul of the maximum-number-of-sits rule, then alternative ways forward (e.g. General Degree) will need to be explored, or the student will have to withdraw.

First Year

Prior to their DoS interviews students will have been issued with a Pre-Honours Guide, a list of commonly chosen optional courses, and directed to on-line course information (including DRPS and TimeTab). They should come to you having already considered ideas for their optional courses. You should also receive the results of their diagnostic maths test, which can be used to help decide on the appropriate pre-honours maths courses (see separate document).

Using TimeTab you should check that these courses fit into their timetable. When the decisions are made you should print their timetable (TimeTab will automatically list first meeting events, but its worth checking they are all there) and enrol them on the chosen courses using EUCLID. It is worth emphasizing that in the event of problems with their curricula, students should contact you sooner rather than later. Course enrolments can be routinely changed in the first two weeks of each semester.

Second Year

Optional courses need to be discussed, checked for timetable compatibility, and the appropriate enrolments made. Again it is helpful to give the student a TimeTab printout.

Junior Honours

You may wish to stress:

- The start of year meeting at *9.00am on Monday 19th Sept, in the Dynamics & Relativity Lecture*. This will be followed by photos being taken between 11 and 1.
- An additional start of year meeting for Astrophysics students at *11.30am on Tuesday 20th Sept, in the ROE lecture theatre*.
- The '50/50 rule' of BSc Honours assessment. For MPhys the weighting will be 20/40/40.
- The criteria for entry to MPhys at the end of 3rd year (> 55% average mark).
- That students who fail the JH year in May (ie. more than 40 failed credits, or an average below 40%), will be permanently barred from progression to Senior Hons. Resit exams in failed courses may be taken in order to earn sufficient points for an Ordinary degree.

Given the dire consequences mentioned above, weak students wishing to carry failed courses into Junior Hons should think long and hard. Even students granted a concession to do this should be in no doubt that the stakes are high.

It is very difficult to achieve an Ordinary after failing the normal JH year. Students who seem destined to fail the JH Hons curriculum should therefore be advised to consider taking a non-standard curriculum from the outset, aiming instead towards a General Degree.

Junior Hons curricula generally only allow course choice between Computational Methods (U01354) and Advanced Computer Simulation (U01368). The latter can only be taken if either Computer Simulation or Computer Science 2B has been passed in second year.

JH students can download Programme Guides and timetables from the School's Teaching web pages.

Senior Honours and Masters

- There will be important start-of-year meetings for all SH and IM students on *Wednesday 21st September*. The SH meeting will be in *the JCMB Lecture Theatre C at 11am*, and the IM meeting will be in *Rm 5327 JCMB at 10am*. All major issues (assessment, projects, Team Review and Group Work etc.) will be explained there.
- In August, successful JH students (and their DoSs) were sent letters congratulating them on passing their JH year and informing them of eligibility (or otherwise) for MPhys. You should check that their 'Qualification sought' entry in EUCLID (in the 'Prog/Sess' section) is consistent with this letter, and that pre-Hons courses taken in the JH year (usually FoMP) have been passed.
- The rules regarding transfer between MPhys to BSc programmes during Senior Hons are described in the SH Programme Guide
- Programme Guides and Timetables can be downloaded from the School's Teaching web pages.
- Students should not expect detailed guidance and extended discussion on the many 4th/5th year course options at their DoS interview — you probably won't have time to do that. Students should be encouraged to sample courses in the first two weeks of the semester before finalising their choices either through you or by handing a course enrolment form to the Teaching Office (where the information will be entered into EUCLID).
- You may wish to suggest SH students think about planning life beyond graduation.