

Physics and Astronomy degrees with a Foundation Year (PFY)

1 Introduction

The PFY programme is one of the foundation years which is run jointly with the School of Mathematical & Physical Sciences and the School of Engineering & Informatics and some modules are shared between the programmes.

All of the foundation years attract students with widely differing entrance qualifications, ages, backgrounds and experience but those students taking the PFY programme are expected to be particularly interested and sufficiently motivated to study Physics at degree level. We aim to provide a curriculum which encompasses the necessary quality and depth of study in mathematics and physics required for progress to BSc or MPhys Honours degree courses in the Department of Physics and Astronomy.

Details of the modules taken by PFY students can be found under the link 'Foundation Year modules' and your teaching timetable can be found on Sussex Direct.

2 Structure of the Programme

Lecture modules, together with the Physics Laboratory, are the primary means of learning about the subjects. Each module is accompanied by a weekly workshop. The purpose of the workshops is to give you the opportunity to practice problem solving and discuss difficulties with the problem sets, which form the continuous assessment for the courses, with the Associate tutors who run the workshops.

Please note that although we encourage you to discuss the problems among yourselves, it is not acceptable simply to copy the solution from someone else and then submit it as your own work. This is **plagiarism and/or collusion**, the penalties for which are severe.

It is important to realise that solving problems is the only real way to understand physics and maths. Every time you get stuck with a problem, a weakness has been identified in your understanding and the help you get at the workshop will enable you to overcome that weakness. For this reason participation in workshops is essential and not optional. It is very clear from the results, that students who make good use of the workshops perform much better than those who do not and are better prepared for Year 1.

The laboratory work will develop your practical skills in measurement techniques and in communication and some of the experiments will help you in understanding the material in the lecture modules. Laboratory reports are written up and submitted for marking and are combined to produce a laboratory course mark at the end of the year. Note that satisfactory performance in the laboratory is required to pass the year.

Apart from the laboratory, students are assessed through unseen exams at the end each academic term and by continuous assessment throughout the year. Deadlines will be set for the coursework which must be strictly adhered to. Details of assessment modes can be found on Sussex Direct. Any Exceptional Circumstances must be submitted online through Sussex Direct within 7 days and evidence supplied. The assessments for the Foundation Year do not count towards the final degree classification but form an entry requirement for Year 1.

3 Academic Advisors

PFY students will be allocated an academic advisor who is a member of faculty in the Department of Physics and Astronomy. You must meet with your academic advisor at the beginning of the year and at intervals during the year as directed. In particular you may discuss problems which affect your academic progress with your academic advisor or with the Foundation Year convenor. It is important that you ask for help and advice as soon as it is needed and do not allow problems to become out of control. We want you to enjoy your stay at Sussex and achieve success.

4 Textbook

The recommended textbook for several of the physics courses in the FY is

- Introduction to Physics 10th Edition by John D Cutnell and Kenneth W Johnson, Wiley

The recommended textbook for Foundation Maths F3203 is

- Pure Mathematics 1 L Bostock and S Chandler, Nelson Thornes

5 Canvas website

Canvas is your online resource for lecture notes and other information about the modules you are taking. You should use the “All MPS Students 20/21” Canvas page as your first source for up to date information about your studies: <https://canvas.sussex.ac.uk/courses/15312>.

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