

New Student Handy Guide



2018-2019

Guide for new students welcoming you
to the School of Physics and Astronomy

<http://www.physics.manchester.ac.uk/>

physics@manchester.ac.uk

*School of Physics and
Astronomy*

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Disclaimer: Please note that this guide was correct at the time of publishing online.

The Undergraduate Handbook for 2018-19 can here found [here](#)
The Course Unit Syllabus for 2018-19 can be found [here](#)

Foreword

Welcome to the School of Physics and Astronomy at the University of Manchester.



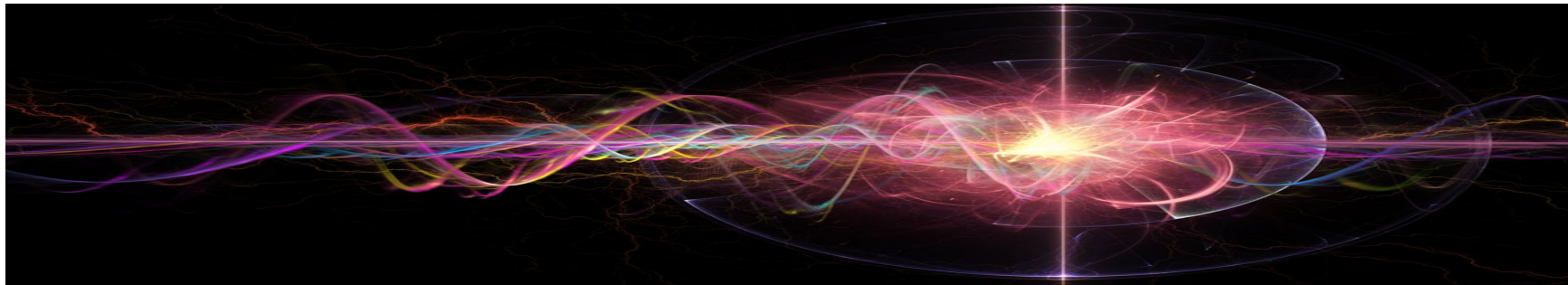
Dr. Peter W Mitchell
First Year Tutor
September 2018
Peter.Mitchell@manchester.ac.uk

We are a community of physicists dedicated to advancing the subject, and to bringing on the next generation of physicists – that’s you!

A recent ranking of world physics schools ^[1] put us 9th in the world and first in the UK and Europe. We aspire to be the very best in all we do, and we hope that you do too. We are not satisfied with 9th! You wouldn’t be here unless you were already amongst the best of your age-group, and we want you to press on to be the best physics graduates anywhere in three or four years’ time. Studying physics is hard work, and we all need to be serious about learning to succeed.

This handy guide is intended to help you to find quickly the information you need about student life, and to let you focus on actually studying. We hope you find it useful. Please let us know if you think it can be improved.

[1] <http://www.shanghairanking.com/Shanghairanking-Subject-Rankings/physics.html>



Student Support & Welfare



"The sooner we know of any problems, the sooner we can help you."

Géraldine Garrabet, our Student Support and Welfare Officer

It's good to talk...

If you experience any personal problems during your studies, please consider talking in confidence to Géraldine Garrabet, our Student Support and Welfare Officer. Géraldine and the Student Support team are based in the Teaching and Learning Office on the First floor of the Schuster building.

If you would like to make an appointment, please email physics.support@manchester.ac.uk

If needed, Géraldine can put you in touch with other support services such as the Counselling Service and the Disability Advisory and Support Service (DASS).

You are also encouraged to make contact with your Personal Tutor. However, we would recommend that you speak with the Student Support Team in the first instance as they will be able to advise and guide you through your options and support.

Should your problem be academic related and your Personal Tutor is not available, please contact either your Physics Tutor or the Year Tutor.

For issues relating to choosing courses, the right person to contact is the Year Tutor.

Just to let you know that we have some information on common worries, making friends, getting to know the city and academic transition to University which can be found [here](#)

Disability Advisory and Support Service (DASS)

DASS is based on the second floor of University Place and provides help and advice for students with specific learning difficulties, disabilities, sensory impairments, mental health difficulties and medical conditions.

Further information on DASS can be found here:

Web: <http://www.dso.manchester.ac.uk/>

Email: dass@manchester.ac.uk

Tel: 0161 275 7512

To find out more information on the School's Student Support and Welfare team, please see the relevant area on [Blackboard](#) and Section 11 of the [Undergraduate Handbook](#)

Student Experience

"Student Experience covers all aspects of student life from recruitment to graduation and the "journey" in between." Sue Huzar, Student Experience Officer



Sue Huzar with the Student Reps at the Students' Union Awards evening 2017

The main areas where we offer support are summarised below:

PASS (Peer Assisted Study Sessions)

These are informal group discussions for all first years to discuss both course material and social aspects of university life. PASS Leaders (second or third year students) are assigned to each group to mediate discussion and offer advice and input. For further information please visit the [PASS website](#).

Careers

Working with the Faculty Careers office, we arrange 1-1 appointments with a Careers Consultant to provide advice on CV writing, interview techniques, personal statements and job applications. These are held in **Careers Corner** on the ground floor of the Schuster Annexe (outside room GA.08). We run joint events such as 'Meet the Professionals', Careers Fairs and joint Careers and Alumni events.

Employability

As a student studying with the School of Physics and Astronomy, we encourage you to build skills in order to develop your employability. These can include but are not limited to the following;

- Transferable skills and soft skills; technical writing, presenting and networking.
- [Outreach](#) and public engagement with Schools and Colleges
- Masters and PhD study at Manchester; take advantage of the [funding opportunities](#) as well as PG Loans for both Masters and PhD study.
- Summer and Professional [Placement opportunities](#) for students
- Change into a Star with [Stellify](#) access to societies, internships, volunteering and start up business ideas.

Volunteering

Volunteering is a great way to enhance your University experience. It's a great way to make new friends and become part of the local community as well as developing new skills and experiences which will look great on your CV when you start job hunting.

There are a wide range of opportunities to get involved. These range from activities that support other students and improve the University community as a result, through to getting involved in charities and not for profit organisations in the wider community outside of campus. For further information, please visit the [Student Volunteering website](#).

Student Engagement and Interaction

To enhance student engagement and interaction, we hold a wide range of events associated with the UG/PG student journey including, Welcome Week, Inductions, Wellbeing events for the Exam periods and Graduation celebration events. To keep our students informed of events, job opportunities, placements, funding and careers activities, we circulate a weekly news email to all students.

Wellbeing

To ensure our students get the best student experience whilst here in the School of Physics & Astronomy, we arrange “relaxation events” during the exam periods to help alleviate stress and provide some “down time” for our students. Such events are proven to help with physical health, performance at study and general quality of life.

Other useful sites:

- [Students Against Depression](#)
- [Young Minds](#)
- [Look After Your Mate](#)

Students who live at home

Increasingly, more students are choosing to commute to University – this should not be a hindrance to having a full and enriching University experience. Many look back on their University years as some of the best years of their life; this is down to more than just the academic achievements gained through Higher Education. This often relates to the extracurricular activities one engaged in while at University, the new experiences gained and the diverse selection of people they met and connected with. Your academic accolades will serve you well after you have graduated; but there are a plethora of other skills and experiences to be had during your time at University that will enhance your University experience and distinguish your CV. [Here](#) you will find some useful information to help make your transition into University life as positive as possible. In the School of Physics and Astronomy, we will be running a session for commuting students with current students who are also living at home.

Safety and Security

The University of Manchester is a very safe place to both study and live but we do have crime and property does get stolen.

The really good news is that you and I can prevent 86% of all the offences that happen on campus just by looking after our property and taking care when we’re out and about.

- Locking up your bike with a gold standard D lock will prevent it being stolen.
- Being aware of what’s happening around you when using your mobile phone on the street will keep it safe.
- Not leaving your property (laptops, mobile phones etc.) unattended in libraries, cafes, lecture theatres means you won’t lose them.
- Lock your accommodation room door when you’re not in the room.

Report and Support

We believe that bullying, harassment, sexual harassment, and discrimination are never ok. All staff, students, and visitors to our campus can report something anonymously or get support from an advisor. For further information, please see the [Report and Support website](#).

Student Reps

To ensure the student voice is heard and appropriate feedback obtained, we hold informal monthly meetings with the Undergraduate and Postgraduate reps who are elected across all years. Student

reps also sit on a number of Teaching Committees which are held to facilitate communications between staff and students.

Student feedback is also provided via student surveys online and we encourage you to take part in these when you are invited to do so.

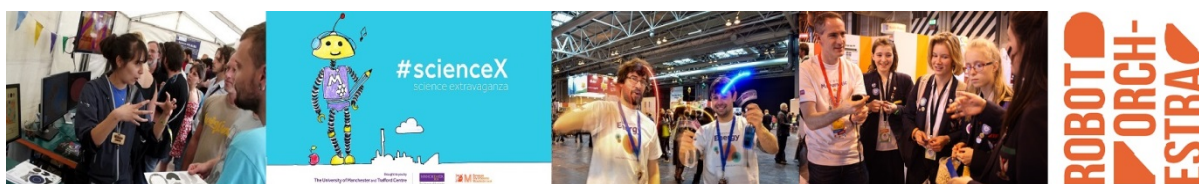
Outreach and Public Engagement

Students have lots of opportunities to get involved in outreach – engaging schools, families and the public. This is a fun way to meet other students, help your local communities, build your communication skills, and share your enthusiasm for physics while exploring creative ways to explain it to non-physicists.

UMPO (University of Manchester Physics Outreach) is a student-run outreach group who train their volunteers to deliver workshops to local primary and secondary schools and to do some “science busking” at large scale events like ScienceX at the Trafford Centre and the bluedot festival at Jodrell Bank. STEMSoc is another student outreach society which spans all the sciences, delivering activities in schools and libraries.



See **UoMPhysOutreach** on Twitter, Facebook or Instagram or [STEMSOC](#) or you can contact the School's physics public engagement manager at emma.nichols@manchester.ac.uk to discuss other opportunities.



#ScienceX A Science Extravaganza at intu Trafford Centre

The #ScienceX team brings together groups from across the University for a weekend-long science extravaganza which takes over Manchester's intu Trafford Centre and in 2016 also the Chill Factor. ScienceX is a big change from the traditional science festivals due to this unusual but exciting environment. The staff and student team behind the event are able to engage with a different and more varied audience than usual – particularly those who would be unlikely to seek out a science event and may know little about universities.

The collaboration allows the team and Faculty to engage with over 10,000 across the weekend, people from a varied demographic of age, ethnicity and experience of higher education. Feedback reported

how 99.7% of visitors enjoyed the activities. Comments from attendees shows the enthusiasm which was visible to see “it was fun and awesome, I liked everything!”, “I love learning about space and inventions... hopefully I will do it some day” and “It was a fun surprise for my son who loves science”. The first event was so successful that intu Trafford Centre welcomed us back for a second year in 2017 and plans are to hold something similar on an annual basis. Further information, please visit the [website](#).

Societies

Please find below a list of societies that you may wish to join in the School of Physics and Astronomy:

UMPO (University of Manchester Physics Outreach)

UMPO is a student run outreach program whose aim is to engage schools and the general public around Manchester in physics related experiments and workshops. Our volunteers are trained up to both deliver workshops to local primary/secondary schools and take part in several science busking activities where we show experiments to the general public at large scale events like ScienceX and the Blue dot festival.

Joining outreach as one of our volunteers is an excellent way to improve your public engagement skills, giving hands on experience with working with children and young adults. It also allows you to meet other physics students from across the years at our many science themed events! If you are interested in joining email umpo@manchester.ac.uk or speak to one of the current heads of UMPO Meg Kirkman or Caitlin Green. For more information, please see **UoMPhysOutreach** on Twitter, Facebook or Instagram.

Physics Netball Society

We are a friendly club for anyone who wants a more casual training schedule than offered by the uni team or just wants to try out something new! We play weekly competitive matches against the other schools within the university, which is a great way to bond as a team and put our training into practice.

We train for one hour a week at a local high school. For more information come see us at the Physics welcome fair or email Milly on: melisande.croft@student.manchester.ac.uk or Abby on: abigail.morris-2@student.manchester.ac.uk

The International Society

The International Society is an independent, not-for-profit organisation unique to Greater Manchester. It provides a warm and welcoming place where international and british students and members of the local community come together and make new friends from all over the world.

Through its work the International Society aims to make a positive contribution to community cohesion and international relations. The International Society's trips, classes, events, activities and community projects are open to everyone.



Women in Physics

The University of Manchester Women in Physics Society was founded in February 2017. Our main goal is to support the career advancement of women physicists at the university and to provide networking opportunities. Alongside many events, the group will host regular meet-ups which will feature guest female physicists speaking about both their research and their experience navigating their career. We hope to create an inclusive community that both invites women to connect with each other and allows everyone in the physics community to connect with and learn from the experiences of their female colleagues.

We welcome both women and men, and participants from all disciplines to become members and contribute to our efforts.



Women in Physics Society
of The University of Manchester

Like us on Facebook at

www.facebook.com/manchesterwomenphys/?fref=ts

Feel free to join our Facebook group at

www.facebook.com/groups/uomwomenphys/

Other societies who will be attending the Careers Fair in the School during Welcome Week

- The Astronomy Society
- The Nuclear Society
- WISE: Women in Science and Engineering
- Physics Christian Society

General Support



A variety of sources and guidance are available to students. The most important of these are listed below. In the case of any personal problems, a student is encouraged in the first instance to contact the Student Support and Welfare Team in the Teaching and Learning Office. If you have an academic-related question, such as choice of courses, you should start by talking to your Personal Tutor. Then, if you need further information or permission, you may need to contact your Programme Director or Year Tutor. If you are unsure about the most appropriate person to contact, the School Teaching and Learning Office will always be happy to advise you. Beyond the School, the University operates disability-support, counselling, and careers services.

The School Student Experience Services Centre

The School's Student Experience Services Centre is based on the 1st floor of the Schuster building and provides general and administrative as well as specialised student support to all Undergraduate students.

The Undergraduate Team provide support on degree programmes, course units, room bookings, timetabling, examinations and any administrative support to do with your study. If you would like to contact the Undergraduate Team, please email physics@manchester.ac.uk.

Personal Tutors

Each student is assigned a Personal Tutor at the beginning of the degree programme. The Personal Tutor advises on choosing course unit options and monitors progress throughout the degree programme. Four official meetings are scheduled each academic year: a meeting in registration week at the beginning of the academic year, a meeting to consider progress at the end of the first semester, a mid-year progress meeting in week four of the second semester, and an end of year meeting following the June examination period. However, at all times during the year, students should feel free to approach their Personal Tutors on matters affecting study.

General FAQs

For formal guidance please refer to the [Undergraduate Handbook 2018-2019](#)

Q: How do I contact the School Office?

A: You should email physics@manchester.ac.uk from your University email address.

Q: What happens if I don't register with the University by the deadline?

A: A £200 late registration charge will be applied if you have not registered by 30th September.

Q: Who should I contact about fees and student loans?

A: You should contact the Student Services Centre (SSC) on 0161 275 5000 or via email ssc@manchester.ac.uk

Q: Who should I contact about my scholarship?

A: You should contact the Recruitment and Admissions Office at ug.physics@manchester.ac.uk

Q: What happens if I have a debt to the University?

A: You will not be able to graduate or progress to the next year until the debt has been cleared.

Q: How do I book a room in the Schuster building?

A: You should email physics@manchester.ac.uk with your requirements, e.g room size, date and times.

Q: I need an unofficial transcript, how do I get one?

A: Email physics@manchester.ac.uk with your student number, degree programme, the deadline of when the transcript is required and if you require a hard copy or an emailed copy.

Q: I need an official transcript, how do I get one?

A: Your official transcript can be accessed via the Student Services system Digitally
<https://edocs.manchester.ac.uk/wallet/servlet/UserWalletApp/template/Login.vm> for further details please visit
<http://www.graduation.manchester.ac.uk/after-youve-graduated/copies-of-degree-certificates-and-transcripts/>

Paper copies of academic transcripts

Official Paper Copies can be purchased through our [online store](#) for a charge of £15 for 3 copies.

If you have any queries please email transcripts@manchester.ac.uk

Q: What happens if I want to get a job whilst studying?

A: The University of Manchester recommends that students work for no more than 15 hours per week. This is so that you can achieve the right balance between your studies, other commitments and the need to earn money to support yourself. The full guidance can be found at:
<http://www.careers.manchester.ac.uk/findjobs/workwhilestudy/parttime/>

For international students, the statement below is from the Careers web pages

(<http://www.careers.manchester.ac.uk/international/workduringstudy/>):

"It is important to check your visa to confirm if you can work during your studies. Most international students are allowed to work up to 20 hours per week during term time and full time during vacations but there are different vacation rules for postgraduate students. There are also some restrictions on the type of work you can do".

The full guide for Tier 4 Students can be found at:

<http://www.careers.manchester.ac.uk/media/services/careersandemployabilitydivision/careersservice/international/Tier-4-working-guide.pdf>

Student Support FAQs

For formal guidance please refer to the [Undergraduate Handbook 2018-2019](#)

Q: Who should I contact if I have any personal issues?

A: You should contact the Student Support and Welfare Team on physics.support@manchester.ac.uk

Q: I've been advised to contact the Student Support and Welfare Team, will this be confidential?

A: Yes. You can contact the team in confidence by phone, e-mail or in person. There will be a "drop in" session each Wednesday afternoon from 2pm till 3pm, during term time, within a private meeting room in the Student Experience Services area.

Q: Can I get someone else to speak on my behalf?

A: Due to Data Protection regulations, we do not discuss students with any other party unless written permission is given by the student. If you would prefer someone to speak on your behalf, then send an e-mail to the Student Support Team from your University e-mail address giving your permission.

Q: What sort of supporting evidence do I need to provide along with my mitigating circumstances form?

A: The nature of this documentation will vary according to the nature of the circumstances, but it must be sufficiently independent to confirm the case you are making. Contact the Student Support and Welfare Team if you are unsure whether the evidence you have is acceptable. Also, refer to section 11 in the [See UG Handbook 2018-19](#)

Q: What happens if I don't have supporting evidence ready in time for the mitigating circumstances deadline?

A: If supporting evidence has not been received before the Mitigating Circumstances Committee (MCC) meets, your application will not normally be processed further. However, you should still submit an application form, to ensure that the School is aware of your situation, even if evidence is not available in time for the MCC to accept it.

Q: I'm registered with DASS, do I still need to submit for mitigating circumstances and provide evidence?

A: If you need to apply for mitigating circumstances due to issues directly related to your disability, you do not need to provide any additional supporting evidence if you are registered with DASS. However, you must provide a detailed explanation of how your disability is currently affecting your studies. It is not sufficient to indicate only that you are registered with DASS. A Disability Advisor from DASS will be in liaison with the MCC that will consider your application.

Q: What happens once I have submitted my mitigating circumstances form?

A: Forms and evidence are taken before the MCC which meets three times a year to rule on requests for mitigation. The decision of the panel is provisional and is reviewed by the Board of Examiners at their meeting in June or September.

Q: How do I find out the decision made on my mitigating circumstances?

A: Students will be contacted and informed of their mitigating circumstances outcome by the Student Support Team within 10 working days from when the committee meets. Remember to check your University email account regularly.

Q: How do I apply for an Interruption of Studies?

A: Students who wish to explore this option should contact Géraldine Garrabet, the Student Support and Welfare Officer, in the first instance. To apply you should download and complete the form from Blackboard and submit this to Géraldine, along with sufficient evidence.

Q: What should I do if I am unwell and cannot attend University?

A: If you are absent from the University, due to illness, for up to 7 days you must complete a [Short Term Absence form](#). Submit this to the Student Support Team at your earliest convenience. The relevant members of staff will then be notified of your absence and you will be marked as excused. If you miss more than 7 days, you will need to submit for mitigating circumstances.

Teaching and Learning FAQs

For formal guidance please refer to the [Undergraduate Handbook 2018-2019](#)

Q: Who do I contact if I am struggling academically?

A: In the first instance, contact your Personal or Physics Tutor. If necessary you can also contact your Year Tutor or the Deputy Director of Teaching and Learning.

Q: How do I change my programme of study?

A: If you would like to change degree programme, you should email karen.rogers@manchester.ac.uk. For more information see below:

Q: When must I make my final decision on whether to take a BSc or MPhys programme?

A: You must have decided which degree programme you want to take by the end of registration week in September of 3rd year.

Q: I want to study abroad in 3rd year, how do I get further information?

A: Information about the study abroad programme is given at a meeting during October of 2nd year. The Study Abroad Co-ordinator is Dr Yvonne Peters (yvonne.peters@manchester.ac.uk).

Q: Can I change my option at any time if I don't like it?

A: No, only within the first 2 weeks of each semester. Any changes after the 2 week deadline must only be in exceptional cases which are approved by your Year Tutor and Programme Director. It would be detrimental to your study if you changed your options after week 2.

Q: Can I take an external option module outside of the programme structure?

A: You may be allowed, but this would require formal approval from your year tutor by completing the [Change of Options Form](#) on Blackboard.

Q: Can I take an option if it clashes with another module?

A: In 1st and 2nd year you cannot take options that clash. If you decide to take a module which clashes with another module in 3rd and 4th year, you will only be permitted if the clash is no more than 1 hour per week. You should complete the [Option Clash Approval Form](#) on Blackboard and get this signed by your programme director.

Q: Can I take more than 120 credits in the year?

A: No. Students should register for a total of 120 credits per year or 125 credits in the case of some Mathematics and Physics and Physics with Philosophy students.

Q: What happens if I don't register for an exam by the deadline set by the Exams Office?

A: Failure to register for an exam will mean you will not be able to sit the exam.

Q: What do I do if one of my exams is missing from my exam timetable?

A: The Exams Office is responsible for timetabling examinations and email students regarding timetables. Students should follow the instructions written in the email and update their exam details within their 'My Manchester' page.

Q: What happens if I miss an exam?

A: You will receive a mark of zero unless you have valid mitigating circumstances

Q: How do I find out my exam results?

A: Results are posted on the student system. You will be sent an email giving details on how to access them.

Q: What happens if I fail some units?

A: You will be allowed resits in 1st and 2nd year providing you pass 60 credits at the first attempt (including lab). Some marks below 40% but above 30% may be compensated. **There are no resits in 3rd and 4th year.**

Q: How do I register for a resit exam?

A: You will be automatically registered for any resit examinations you have to take.

Q: When do the resits take place?

A: [See UG Handbook 2018-19](#)

Q: What happens if I fail my resit exam(s)?

A: You will receive a letter clarifying your results and the next steps you need to take. If you have any queries you contact the Teaching and Learning office.

Q: Can I carry my marks if I interrupt and repeat the year with attendance?

A: No. You will be repeating all of the year, therefore, you will repeat everything and any marks from the year you have interrupted against will not be counted or carried.

Q: Do I get an opportunity to view my exam scripts?

A: You will be sent emails regarding script viewing sessions.

Q: When will I get feedback on coursework?

A: All formative assessments and assessed coursework feedback will be provided within 15 working days of the final submission deadline.



Jodrell Bank's Lovell Telescope at sunset (Credit: Professor Tim O'Brien)