

**University College Cork
Department of Physics**



FINAL YEAR PROJECT HANDBOOK

**Guidelines and Regulations
for modules**

**PY4114 (Minor Research Project)
PY4115 (Major Research Project)**

**Module Coordinator: Prof. F. H. Peters
(Academic Year 2016-2017)**

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction and Objectives

The purpose of this handbook is to provide Final Year students in the Department of Physics with practical information and the guidelines, rules, and regulations that apply to Modules PY4114 (Minor Research Project) and PY4115 (Major Research Project).

The objective of the final year project module is "To develop skills in independent research and presentation" [1]. The project will give students an opportunity to practice and, where necessary, improve their analytical skills in situations where there may not be a single, simple, correct solution. It is the responsibility of each student, as an individual or as part of a team, to pursue the problem and reach the best outcome within the resources and time available. In many cases a seemingly insurmountable obstacle may present itself during the course of the project, and some quick lateral thinking may be required to move beyond this and achieve a useful result. The final year project is normally a very enjoyable and worthwhile experience, but students will only reap the rewards if a concerted effort is expended.

1.2 Expectations

The final year project is compulsory and 100% based on continuous assessment, i.e. it must be passed at the summer examinations. No autumn repeat exists for the final year project - *students who fail the project module must repeat the entire year for their degree to be awarded*. Module PY4115 is worth 10 credits out of a total of 60, i.e. the equivalent of two full lecture courses in the final year, and so a proportionate amount of effort is expected. For example this 10 credits should take up approximately one third of your time, thus:

$$\frac{40 \text{ hours}}{\text{week}} \times \frac{1}{3} = 13 \frac{1 \text{ hours}}{3 \text{ week}}$$

This works out to be 160 hours in the semester.

The final year project is an assessment of performance away from a formal examination, and it is a student's ability in this environment that is often scrutinised by employers. The project will demonstrate a student's work ethic, level of initiative, determination and approach to problem solving, and whether a student is adaptable and able to think laterally when difficulties are encountered. The project also gives an early indication of a physicist's project management skills, as each student is largely responsible for their own programme of work. The project module is effectively a test of general physics ability.

A student's performance during his/her final year project often forms the basis of any reference prepared by the supervisor for a potential employer. In addition, the external examiner may use a student's final year project report to help decide between borderline degree classifications in the summer examination results.

Important Note: Attending the Departmental Seminar series (Mondays, 4-5 p.m. in KANE_G7) is a compulsory component of the research projects. Each attended seminar will have 0.5 marks associated with it up to a maximum of 5 marks. Attendance lists will be kept.

2 TIME TABLE OF EVENTS

The main events and submission deadlines for final year projects during Teaching Periods 1 and 2 are summarised below in Table I. The exact dates may be subject to minor changes as the year progresses and the students will be informed of any such changes well in advance.

EVENT	PY4114 Dates	PY4115 Dates
Project Description Circulation	October 2016	October 2016
Collection Selection List	October 2016	October 2016
Allocation of Projects	November 2016	November 2016
Commencement of Projects	Standard dates: Monday, 16th January 2016 but later dates are also possible	Monday, 16th January 2016
Project Presentations	April 5-6 2017	April 5-6 2017
Deadline for Final Reports	7th April 2017 (end of business)	7th April 2017 (end of business)

Table I: Final Timetable of Events for PY4114 and PY4115 Projects.

3 ALLOCATION OF FINAL YEAR PROJECTS

Projects are available within the Department of Physics and within Tyndall National Institute. The contact details of staff within the Department of Physics are provided in the Appendix of this document. At the start of term each Monday afternoon (4-5:30 pm in KANE-G7) short overview presentation will be given by staff members offering 4th year projects. All students should go to these presentations in order to select projects that appear interesting to them. The project descriptions will also be made available on the webpage:

<http://www.physics.ucc.ie/fpetersweb/FrankWeb/courses/PY4050.html>

All students are expected to study the project details listed and obtain information on all projects in different subject areas in order to establish an (unranked) list of up to 4 projects that they would like as their 4th year project. Each student is expected to return their list to the final year project coordinator on the date agreed upon between the class and the final year coordinator. The final allocation of projects to students will be made by the final year project coordinator and staff from the Physics Department. This allocation will be announced to all students before the end of November and published on the above web-page.

- PY4115 projects start on Monday, 16th January 2017; the duration is 12 weeks.
- PY4114 projects start preferably on Monday, 16th January 2017, or in consultation at a later date; the duration is 6 weeks.

Once the project allocations have been announced, students must complete and sign a "Project Allocation / Plagiarism Form" (in the Appendix) which is to be submitted to their respective project supervisor prior to the end of the project. The project supervisor will countersign the form and keep it safe until the end of the academic year.

Ordinarily, project loads will be distributed amongst all staff members - this is to ensure that all students receive an adequate level of supervision. Students must not apply pressure to staff to take on additional projects / students or to reassign them from their allocated project.

Students should be aware that some of the projects may be extremely popular. Allocation of projects to the students will be on the basis of their academic performance to date, their preferences, their specific interests and the particular staff member's workload.

4 PROJECT ASSESSMENT

All students are required to give a seminar presentation on the project and provide a final report. In addition PY4115 students must provide a **written work summary** at the end of Teaching Period 1, which will be used to judge the students understanding of the project's subject.

There is a maximum of 100 marks awarded for the project, divided as follows:

Seminar Presentation	20 marks
Effort & Commitment	10 marks
Achievement & Understanding	25 marks
Final Report	40 marks
Departmental Seminar Attendance	5 marks

(Note: for PY4115 projects these marks will be scaled to a total of 300). The pass mark in each assessment is 40%. All assessments are compulsory. Any students with a registered disability should identify themselves to the module co-ordinator by email (f.peters-at-ucc.ie) before commencement of the project.

The marking template for the final year project reports is included in the Appendix.

4.1 Assessment of Student Performance

All project supervisors assess the individual performance of each of their project students during the relevant Teaching Periods, and give marks for organisation and planning, effort and commitment, achievements and initiatives as well as originality during the project.

It is imperative that students start work on their project immediately, and maintain regular contact with their project supervisor or demonstrator. The following form part of the Assessment of Student Performance:

Students should *see their project supervisors or demonstrator* every week for a progress meeting, at a time to be arranged with the supervisors. Failure to attend these and any other progress meetings arranged by the project supervisor will lead to a reduction in marks.

Students must maintain a *laboratory notebook*, in which all project information should be recorded. Students are advised to keep records of everything, failures as well as successes, to account for their time and also to avoid repeating mistakes.

Students are expected to take the initiative in their final year projects, and not to seek out their supervisors at every available opportunity. Self-motivation and individual effort will help to prepare the students for their ultimate careers.

4.2 The Seminar Presentation

Each project student must give a short seminar presentation about their project to a panel of three academic staff and an audience of their peers in the last project week. A list of seminar speakers, times, and location will be posted on the Final Year notice board and on the above webpage nearer to the event. All students giving seminars must be present at the start of the relevant session and must stay for the entire session to avoid interrupting other speakers.

PY4114 students are allocated 15 minutes for the presentation and PY4115 students are allocated 20 minutes for the presentation. These times must include 3-5 minutes at the end for questions from the judging panel. Students should note that their project supervisor will not be on the judging panel. The seminar presentation should contain the following:

- a *brief* introduction to the subject area, putting the project into context
- an outline of the main project aims and goals
- a *brief* summary of the relevant theory
- a statement of the work achieved to date
- a discussion of the problems encountered and how they were overcome

The presentations should be presented using PowerPoint or similar software packages.

The quality of the presentation will be assessed, and students are strongly advised to practice their presentations in advance, and familiarise themselves with the projection equipment. There is no substitute for a well-delivered, well-rehearsed presentation. Lack of preparation is easy to spot, and will incur penalties.

Some general guidelines for presentations include:

- A 'balanced' number of transparencies so that the speaker is not forced to rush through the presentation.
- The use of reasonably large fonts.
- Good contrast between text and background colours - avoidance of complex background graphics or patterns.
- Avoidance of complex formulae, long equations, and very detailed diagrams or figures. Those may be too difficult to explain and to interpret in a short time.
- Clearly labelled block diagrams or bullet points or lists of text should be used where possible. Long continuous paragraphs or blocks of text should be avoided
- The information on each slide should act as a prompt to remind the speaker what to say → practice your presentation, speak slowly and articulate.

4.3 The Final Report

The assessment of the final report carries a significant portion of marks for the entire project. All students should note the following:

- Text taken from a book, journal article, web page, or other publication, must not be copied verbatim, and must be individually paraphrased by each student.
- The source of all material, including diagrams, figures or tables, must be clearly referenced.
- Failure to follow these guidelines will be interpreted by the examiners as plagiarism and cheating (see below).

Students should take great care to acknowledge *any* work they did not undertake themselves failure to do so could be interpreted by the examiners as cheating (see below). A high level of grammatical correctness will be expected. Students may to consult the writing guide that is at their disposal in the departmental admin office.

The submission deadline for the final report is given in Table I above (or will be communicated by email, overruling Table I). The penalty for late submission of reports is 2% of the overall module result per (working) day delay – this will be rigorously enforced. Reports that are late by 14 days or more will not be graded anymore, a zero mark for the report will be returned (when finally submitted). Students are reminded that printing delays, binding delays, disk/network/power failures or similar are not valid excuses for late submission. A valid Medical Certificate must accompany late reports.

Each student must submit **one electronic copy in pdf-format** to the 4th year coordinator Prof. Frank Peters. The time of submission will be based on the when this report is emailed. Due to the size of the report, it is recommended to avoid attaching the report to the email. Rather, in your email provide a link to a cloud based location (Dropbox, Google Drive, etc.). Note that each UCC student has unlimited storage in Google Drive. Many web sites are now available which will offer free translation of documents to pdf format, but if students experience difficulty with generating a pdf-format, they should approach their supervisor for help. Students are encouraged to also keep an additional paper copy of their report for their own use, for example, during job interviews or for the visit by the external examiner.

The report will be marked by the project supervisor and a second assessor to ensure fairness. Marks are awarded for the following:

- presentation and logical development of the report.
- introduction, background and theory.
- quality of content.

These marks are taken from both assessors, and then combined to give a final total mark. In the event of a large difference between the marks awarded by the supervisor and those of the second assessor, a third assessor may be used. The Final Report must contain the following:

- Header Page, consisting of (in the order given below):
 - " Department of Physics "
 - " Module PY4114/PY4115 (Minor/Major Research Project) "
 - " Final Report "
 - Project Title
 - Author's Name and Student Number
 - Supervisor's Name
 - Date of Submission
- Declaration Page (see below)
- Summary (1 page maximum)
- Acknowledgements
- Contents, including page numbers
- List of Figures and Tables
- List of Abbreviations
- List of Scientific Symbols
- Main body of the Report

The declaration page must be signed (electronic signature is OK) and dated, and must consist of the following text:

"This report was written entirely by the author, except where stated otherwise. The source of any material not created by the author has been clearly referenced. The work described in this report was conducted by the author, except where stated otherwise."

The one page summary is mandatory and must be included at the start of the report after the declaration. Writing a concise summary that accurately and succinctly informs the reader about the achievements of a project is an important skill that every physicist should acquire. The summary should state what was achieved in the project, and give a brief overview of any results. A summary or abstract will often be the only part of a paper or report that will be read by a researcher performing an initial literature review. Therefore, it should contain enough information for the reader to determine if the topic is relevant to his or her technical area.

The table of contents should include all section headings and must include page numbers. Many word processors have the facility to generate the table of contents automatically.

All figures and tables should be individually numbered and captioned where they appear in the text, e.g.: "Figure 2.3: Intensity versus time for different temperatures." or "Table 3.2: Properties of typical dielectric materials.". This information should also be included at the start of the report in the List of Figures and Tables. Page numbers may also be included in the list if desired.

The main body of the report should consist of the following 'type of sections', the individual nature of each section depends on the work and results during the project - guideline:

- Introduction including objectives
- Background information and previous work in the subject area (referenced)
- Theoretical aspects / modelling / simulation/strategies
- Experimental techniques / methods / apparatus / rationale
- Results
- Discussion of results / critical analysis / comparison with other work
- Suggestions for future work
- Conclusions
- References
- Appendices (equations / program code / equipment specifications / etc.)

It is essential that students write their introduction in such a way that a reader with a scientific background, who may be unfamiliar with the subject area, can understand the material. Therefore the introduction should start in general terms, explaining basic concepts and principles relevant to the project in sufficient detail so that the main body of the work can be understood.

The conclusions section should review the material presented in the main body of the report, and effectively remind the reader of all the achievements and the salient points from the discussion and future work. No new material should be presented in the conclusions, and the emphasis should be on providing an objective summary of the project results.

References must be listed in a separate section at the end of the report, and corresponding items referred to in square parentheses (e.g. [12, 21-26]) at the relevant point in the text. The recommended reference style for papers is: author(s), article title, periodical (in italics), volume number, year of publication, start and end page numbers. The recommended reference style for books is: author(s), book title (in italics), publisher, location, year of publication, chapter or page numbers. Web addresses should be avoided since web resources are generally volatile. If necessary, then a webpage should be listed in full (i.e. the *exact* page containing the referenced material), along with the date they were last accessed. References should be uniform in the way they are presented.

Examples:

- [1] E. N. Ivanov, M. E. Tobar and R. A. Woode, "A study of noise phenomena in microwave components using an advanced noise measurement system", *IEEE Transactions on Ultrasonics, Ferroelectrics and Frequency Control*, **44** (1997) 161-163.
- [2] S. Wolfram, *Mathematica – A System for Doing Mathematics by Computer*, 2nd Edition, Addison-Wesley, Redwood City, California, (1991), Ch. 2.

[3] <http://electronics.howstuffworks.com/capacitor.htm>, accessed 15/9/05

The maximum page limit for the final report is **20 pages** for PY4114 and **40 pages** for PY4115, excluding title pages, tables of contents, lists, references and appendices. The report and any appendices must be bound together in a single volume. Reports exceeding the page limits may lose marks. This rule has some flexibility, especially for project reports that use a large number of pictures.

Some additional report guidelines are:

- Reports must be typed and submitted electronically in a pdf document
- Permitted fonts are Times Roman, Courier or Arial, size 11 point or 12 point
- Line spacing must be 1.5
- All margins must be 1 inch (2.54 cm)
- All pages must be sequentially numbered
- All figures, tables and equations must be individually numbered, and referred to explicitly in the text (e.g.: "The results shown in Figure 2.3(a)....")
- The report should be written in the past tense, passive voice, i.e. do not use "I", "we", "our", or "my" anywhere in the text. Use phrases such as "The experiment was performed..." rather than "We did the experiment..."
- Avoid the use of spoken abbreviations such as "comms" for communications", "tech" for "technical", and other casual phrases used in spoken English.
- Avoid colloquialisms such as "actual", "basically", "like", etc.
- Avoid pseudo-technical words such as "inputted", "outputted", etc.
- Use proper scientific notation at all times e.g. "10 μA " not "10 uA", " 1.0×10^{-12} s" not "1.0e-12 sec".

5 USE OF DEPARTMENTAL FACILITIES

There is a very limited budget for consumable items such as electronic components and mechanical materials. Students should make every effort to locate several sources for any items required, and get the best value for money. In rare circumstances an expensive item may be required that exceeds the total project budget - this may be permitted at the discretion of the Head of Department.

5.1 Mechanical Workshop

The department has a well-equipped mechanical workshop with a variety of manufacturing facilities. The workshop also has a large number of standard materials and fasteners in stock, and many others may be quickly ordered.

Students must first discuss their preliminary designs with their supervisors and the technical staff in the workshop, who will be able to offer advice and suggest the best (and often quickest) method of manufacture. Many materials and fixings come in standard sizes - using

these as much as possible will speed up production. Students should not rely on the workshop staff to design apparatus for them.

Students must then submit clear, annotated drawings to the workshop as soon as possible during their project planning. In order to prevent further delays in the workshop, students should ensure that drawings contain as much information as possible. All linear and angular dimensions should be clearly labelled, and hole diameters, screw/bolt sizes and materials should also be specified. Indicate on all drawings any dimensions that are not critical as this allows for some flexibility in their manufacture.

Major items are manufactured in the workshops on a first come, first served basis, and therefore workshop requests submitted late in the programme will be given a low priority. However, small workshop jobs such as hole drilling may be completed on an *ad hoc* basis.

5.2 Electronic Components

A large number of different electronic components are kept in stock in the Electronics Workshop. Any other components should be ordered through Mr. David O'Kelly or the project supervisor. Students should make every effort to source any components themselves first, using the catalogues or websites for companies such as Radionics, Farnell and Maplin as required.

5.3 Electrical Equipment

The majority of equipment required by final year projects should already be available in the individual laboratories associated with the project supervisors. There is also a supply of equipment such as digital oscilloscopes, power supplies, signal/function generators and multimeters available in the Development Laboratory. **Items of equipment must not be removed from the laboratory.** Most equipment is not exclusively for final year projects; many items are also used by staff, postgraduates, and other undergraduates. Therefore:

Students must not borrow any items from any laboratory or move equipment between laboratories without express permission from members of staff.

5.4 Computing Facilities

The computer facilities in the department are managed by Mr. John O'Riordan, who is the Departmental Computer Systems Administrator.

Only fully licensed software is installed on the laboratory systems. No extra software will be installed on these systems for individual projects unless compelling cases are made.

Disk quotas are in operation on users' Home Directories - these are backed up to tape on a weekly basis. Local machines have space available on D:\Local - this storage is not secure, will not be backed up and may be erased periodically, albeit with prior notification.

While every effort is made to maintain the printing service in full working order, this cannot be assumed and will not be accepted as an excuse for late submission of reports. It is the responsibility of each student to ensure that any report is printed out in good time.

Computer stations are not to be regarded as "full research" stations, i.e. stations should not be cluttered up with full sets of manuals etc. while work is underway - just bring what is needed for that particular work session.

6 SAFETY IN LABORATORIES

Students should familiarise themselves with the Departmental Safety Statement, and must adhere to any Health and Safety regulations which apply to any laboratories in which their final year project work will be undertaken. Students should also familiarise themselves thoroughly with any equipment that will be used as part of their final year project, and use it in a safe and responsible manner. If in doubt regarding the safe operation of an item of equipment, the student should ask a member of staff for guidance. Use your common sense at all times, "if something appears unsafe, don't touch it".

Students are reminded that eating and/or drinking is prohibited in all laboratories.

7 SUSPECTED CHEATING

The attention of all students is brought to "Guide To Examinations for Academic Staff and Students" [2]. Section 6 of this document deals with "Breaches of Examination Regulations". In particular, section 6.1 states:

"6.1. Cheating means an attempt to benefit oneself, or another by deceit or fraud or another breach of examination regulation. Such breaches include personation and plagiarism. As regards plagiarism a significant amount of unacknowledged copying shall be deemed to constitute prima facie evidence of deliberation. Plagiarism is the presentation of someone else's work as your own. When done deliberately, it is claiming credit for work not done by you and failing to give credit for the work of others. Plagiarism applies not just to text, but to graphics, tables, formulae or any representation of ideas in print, electronic or other media."

The attention of students is also drawn to Section 6.6 of the document on "Assessments not undertaken as part of Invigilated Examinations".

All students must therefore ensure that any work submitted as part of their final year project is an individual effort, as mentioned previously. Any report must be a separate and individual effort by each student. Duplication of identical material is not permitted. Text taken from a book, journal article, web page, or other publication, must not be copied verbatim, and must be paraphrased by each student individually. The source of all material, including diagrams, figures or tables, must be clearly referenced. Failure to follow these instructions will be interpreted by the examiners as plagiarism and cheating. Information taken from a common source and used by more than one student, should be paraphrased separately by each student

using it, and the source of the material clearly referenced. Figures, tables and diagrams reproduced from other texts should also be referenced.

REFERENCES

- [1] *Book of Modules 2013/2013*, Available by selecting “Physics”, “PYXXXX” and then “PY4114 Project” or “PY4115 Project” from: <http://www.ucc.ie/modules/>
- [2] *Guide-to-Examinations-for-staff-and-students-Jan-2016.pdf*, Available from <http://www.ucc.ie/en/media/support/recordsandexaminations/exams/Guide-to-Examinations-for-staff-and-students-Jan-2016.pdf>
- [3] *UCC Plagiarism Policy*, Available from: <http://www.ucc.ie/en/exams/procedures-regulations/plagiarism/>

APPENDICES **Departmental Staff / 'Project Allocation - Anti-Plagiarism Form' / Form for the 'Receipt of Submission of Assessed Work' / Marking Template**

Departmental Staff

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Prof. P. Townsend		paul.townsend@tyndall.ie

Project Allocation

UCC Module code: PY411

Project title:

Student's name:

Student' ID number:

Supervisor's name:

The above project is subject to

Anti-Plagiarism

The attention of all students is brought to " Guide-to-Examinations-for-staff-and-students-Jan-2016.pdf " [2]. Section 10 of this document deals with " Breach of Examination Regulations and Procedures ". In particular, section 10.1 states:

"10.1. Cheating means an attempt to benefit oneself, or another, by deceit or fraud or other breach of the examination regulations and procedures. Such breaches include personation, collusion and plagiarism as set out in the Plagiarism Policy.

The attention of students is also drawn to Section 10.4 of the document on "Assessments not undertaken as part of Invigilated Examinations". All students must therefore ensure that any work submitted as part of their final year project is an individual effort, as mentioned previously in Section 9, which is expanded in the UCC Plagiarism policy.[3]

Any report must be a separate and individual effort by each student. Duplication of identical material is not permitted. Text taken from a book, journal article, web page, or other publication, must not be copied verbatim, and must be paraphrased by each student individually. The source of all material, including diagrams, figures or tables, must be clearly referenced. Failure to follow these instructions will be interpreted by the examiners as plagiarism and cheating.

Information taken from a common source and used by more than one student, should be paraphrased separately by each student using it, and the source of the material clearly referenced. Figures, tables and diagrams reproduced from other texts should also be referenced.

The signature below indicates that you have read and understood the severity with which plagiarism/cheating will be penalised and that if the project work is plagiarised or if there is evidence of cheating the project work will not be graded. Please submit this signed form with your project report. No grade will be recorded for your report until the report is submitted.

Student Signature:

Date:

Final Year Marking Template

UCC Physics - Final Year Project Marking Template			
Student Name	?		
Project Title:	?		
No. Of Credits	5 or 10		
Assessor Name	?		
Category	Marks awarded (out of 10) - Based on scoring criteria below	Weighting	Total
Abstract & Introduction/background <small>(Coverage of relevant theory / techniques/ applications)</small>		x 1.5	0
Project Work Undertaken <small>(Coverage of Experimental Work / Theoretical Models / Mathematical / Computational)</small>		x 2.5	0
Analysis/Interpretation		x 2.5	0
Discussion/Conclusions		x 1.5	0
Presentation of written report (structure, text, tables, figures, referencing)		x 2	0
	Final Score		0
Outline Scoring Key:			
10 Faultless, well above expectation with considerable originality and/or initiative			
9 Excellent, exceeding expectations and showing originality and/or initiative			
8 Extremely good, reached requirements on all levels			
7 Very good			
6 Good			
5 Fair			
4 Adequate			
2-3 Poor			
0-1 Unacceptable			