Pre-honours lecture times are set by the centre of the University. The School decides which member of staff is lecturing when amongst those slots. That distribution is carried out by the relevant module coordinator with due regard to pedagogic issues and other commitments of the staff involved. The detailed timetables showing what is being lectured in which slot are usually published later in the summer. The time slots are shown from now.

Honours timetables are usually proposed by Schools. I take responsibility for this for Physics and Astronomy, with input from School colleagues and in consultation with our partner schools in joint degree programmes. The University timetabling team, however, agrees or otherwise to our room and timing requests. These requests are made and considered, at least in part, based on module enrolment using pre-advising data. This is one reason why the University encourages students to pre-advise. Allocated rooms and times may on rare occasions have to change due to unexpected circumstances in modules across the University. Although I publish in July a draft timetable with rooms shown, at this stage these are “just” the requests from me to the central timetabling team.

I start with the general aim of changing the honours timetable as little as is possible, so that last year’s schedule is a decent guide to the coming year’s schedule.

For 2019-20 we have module changes including

1) New modules in the postgraduate MSc and EngD Photonics programmes.
2) A swap of semesters between level four Principles of Optics and Lasers 1, in part for pedagogic reasons, and in part due to the new postgraduate programmes.
3) A larger than usual third year class, which means (amongst other things) PH3080 Computational Physics runs on four afternoons a week, with students choosing one of four two-hour sessions across Monday and Tuesday, and similar across Thursday and Friday.
4) Some changes of teaching staff on modules.

For most lecture-based honours modules the School runs three timetabled slots a week for 15 credit modules and two timetabled slots a week for 10 credit modules. We are not permitted to oblige students to attend sessions after 1 pm on Wednesdays (but we may give them the choice to do so). Convention is that classes may take place between 9 am and 6 pm, though I aim to avoid the “lunch slot” of 1-2 pm. There are not enough slots in the week to have only one scheduled honours class at a time. I aim to put the timetable together to keep as many options open as possible, and to have no clashes amongst compulsory modules taken in the year of study recommended in the School’s honours handbook.

The School of Mathematics and Statistics has many joint degree programmes, and so its timetable is set well ahead of time. I aim to coordinate our timetable with theirs for the benefit of our students. This is the reason why some of our lecture courses have even/odd Mondays followed by a Tuesday and Thursday or a Wednesday and Friday. We typically have 0.5 lectures a week more than Maths for a 15-credit module, which is why you will often see an odd/even week lecture in an afternoon. Where I see in pre-advising (or expect) no overlaps with MT modules I may leave out the Monday morning/another afternoon alternation.
The joint degree with Chemistry has students doing only PH modules in SH. While that timetable is within our control, it has to include specified level 3000 and level 4000 modules. I am liaising with the School of Chemistry about timetabling of level five modules.

I liaise with Philosophy where appropriate to try to match our timetable to the timetables of PY modules that these students pre-advice into. I communicate with the central timetabling team about the CS modules for joint degree students with Computer Science.

Some level 5000 modules are shared with the SUPA Graduate School, and use video-conferencing on a timetable that is agreed across Scotland’s universities. Some level 5 lectures are taken locally at the same time by MPhys final-year students, taught postgraduate students, and Engineering Doctorate students.

I publish draft (later, final) honours timetables on the School web site. I do this in two formats. One shows the proposed times and locations of all the honours lectures and lab sessions. The other shows how the timing and choices might work for each of our degree programmes.

Students and staff are invited to contact me if they see a problem in the timetable.

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