School of Chemistry – Unit Survey Feedback

Semester One 2014/15

LEVEL 3 COURSE UNITS

Unit code: CHEM30211/40221		
Unit title: Principles of Modern Physical Chemistry		
Unit co-ordinator: Sven Koehler		
No of students taking unit: 159		
Other teaching staff: Gareth Morris, Neil Burton, Peter Budd		
General University Questions	**Response**	**Mean score**
Overall, I would rate this unit as being excellent	26% (42/159)	3.40
The feeback that I received on my work was helpful	26% (42/159)	3.36
This unit was well organised	26% (42/159)	3.93
The eLearning resources provided in this unit enhanced my learning experience	26% (42/159)	3.79

Please summarise the main themes from students' comments:

The course generally received positive (for Physical Chemistry) scores, and the students' comments ranged from 'hard, but learned something new' to 'slightly too difficult in places', which indicates a good mix.

Podcasts were considered helpful for the taught material but a couple of comments mentioned the lack of podcast for some lectures, however, a podcast for every single lecture seems (at least now) to be available online.

Feedback on comments:

The reason for running photochemistry and NMR in parallel over the last six weeks is – while maybe not be to everyone's taste – that both modules are covered in the final tutorial, which would not be the case if the two modules were run one after the other, so this structure will remain.

Hand-outs for Photochemistry will be re-worked.

Unit code: CHEM30311/40341/61521

Unit title: Coordination Chemistry

Unit co-ordinator: Mark Whiteley

No of students taking unit: 191

Other teaching staff: Sarah Heath, David Mills

General University Questions	**Response**	**Mean score**
Overall, I would rate this unit as being excellent	27% (51/191)	4.51
The feeback that I received on my work was helpful	27% (51/191)	4.39
This unit was well organised	27% (51/191)	4.73
The eLearning resources provided in this unit enhanced my learning experience	27% (51/191)	4.27

Please provide feedback to students comments:

We are pleased with the generally very positive feedback received for the unit and by the good performance of students in the Semester 1 exam. We were a little concerned by lack of attendance at lectures (especially Wed 9.00am in the later weeks of the course) but clearly most students attained a good understanding of the material.

For 2015/16 changes suggested by the students concerning the availability of lectures notes with gaps in advance of the course, the overlap of some level 2 and level 3 organometallics material and the relevance of workshop and tutorial material to the unit delivered will be reviewed and acted upon.

Unit Code: CHEM30411/61041

Unit Title: Core Organic

Unit co-ordinator: Simon Webb

No of students taking unit: 192

Other teaching staff: Andrew Regan, John Gardiner

General University Questions	Response	Mean score
Overall, I would rate this unit as being excellent	26% (49/192)	3.47
The feeback that I received on my work was helpful	26% (49/192)	3.73
This unit was well organised	26% (49/192)	3.92
The eLearning resources provided in this unit enhanced my learning experience	26% (49/192)	3.92

Please summarise the main themes from students' comments:

The students were generally happy with the unit. The retrosynthesis part of the course has been well received by students for many years now, and so it will continue to be presented as in the past, to both on-campus and distance learning students. This was the first year that podcasting was implemented, which was designed to aid distance learning students in particular. The students found the MPOC and heterocycle synthesis parts of the course challenging. A number of students commented on the mechanistic links between what they had learned in the dicarbonyl section (ACR) and the further applications exemplified in heterocyclic synthesis. A number of comments indicated that some students appreciated the expectation of being able to translate to later applications themselves.

Feedback on comments:

- The response rate (14%) for comments on this paper was low. Of the comments received, several concerned the inability of students to spot gaps in the handouts. SJW will consider making the gaps even more obvious.
- There were several complaints about podcasts, which were new for 2014/15 – their provision will be re-considered for 2015/16.
- There were a few comments related to mismatch of tutorials timing and content. Although this is beyond the control of course coordinators, we will consider revising tutorials for lecture 1/2 content only or stating clearly on tutorial sheets questions which are revision post-tutorial. Some comments suggested a workshop element on mechanisms may help, and could be addressed by including a problem period within a lecture.

Unit Code: CHEM30441

Unit Title: Advanced Drug Discovery

Unit co-ordinator: Peter Quayle

No of students taking unit: 29

Other teaching staff: Allan Jordan (Paterson Institute), Aleksandra Galetin, Doug Steinke, Christy Hunter (all School of Pharmacy)

General University Questions	**Response**	**Mean score**
Overall, I would rate this unit as being excellent	31% (9/29)	3.22
The feeback that I received on my work was helpful	31% (9/29)	3.22
This unit was well organised	31% (9/29)	3.12
The eLearning resources provided in this unit enhanced my learning experience	31% (9/29)	2.56

Student comments and feedback:

This is a difficult course to put together in that 7 staff are currently involved in its delivery: each staff member has an individual style of presentation and the timetabling arrangements are complex. We will endeavour to streamline organisational aspects for next year. The course aims to provide the student with an insight into the mechanics of drug discovery and validation and includes topics on the synthesis of drug molecules, drug-receptor interactions and evaluation of efficacy.

Some students were of the opinion that some of the lectures were overly lengthy or contained too much material (CRUK) and that Dr Quayle referred to Clayden's book for supplemental material. Dr. Quayle makes no apologies for this: students were directed to specific chapters/pages in Clayden where he thought it appropriate for students to gain additional background material - and even scanned in relevant sections of this text into his notes on Blackboard. Quayle supplied a set of fully annotated notes, revision questions plus answers on his Blackboard page. Some students suggested that a full set of Quayle's handouts should be supplied at the beginning of the course. The Blackboard content of other parts of the module should also be improved.

Actions:

- A post-module debrief will be conducted in February 2015 which will take into account Student's comments and outcomes from the exams;
- The debrief will consider the course content, modes of delivery and content;
- Dr. Quayle will distribute a handout containing all of the material taught in his module at the beginning of the course, rather than a separate handout for each new topic.

Unit Code: CHEM30531

Unit Title: Environmental Chemistry

Unit co-ordinator: Andrew Horn

No of students taking unit: 62

Other teaching staff: Francis Livens

General University Questions	**Response**	**Mean score**
Overall, I would rate this unit as being excellent	27% (17/62)	2.82
The feeback that I received on my work was helpful	27% (17/62)	2.18
This unit was well organised	27% (17/62)	3.35
The eLearning resources provided in this unit enhanced my learning experience	27% (17/62)	2.71

Student comments summary and response:

The comments note that the lecture course provides insight into areas of research in the school and provides information about areas of chemistry of direct relevance to the world around us. Some comments reflect difficulties with both the mode of delivery and of the amount of material in the environmental chemistry section, which may be the result of running the course as 2 x 6 week blocks this year for the first time. This is noted and will be taken into account during the course revision (see below). Individual feedback has been given to the relevant lecturers in order for them to consider the ways in which the lecture notes/support material can be improved.

Substantial syllabus changes will take place in this module for next year as a result of personnel changes. Next year, it is likely that there will be 3 x 4 week units, delivered in sequence by Dr Horn, Dr Law and Dr Pearce. A course review and planning meeting is scheduled over the summer, during which the questions on notes and delivery will be discussed. We also hope to provide e-learning resources in the new course to provide formative assessment and feedback.

Unit Code: CHEM31331

Unit Title: Bioinorganic Chemistry

Unit co-ordinator: David Collison

No of students taking unit: 43

Other teaching staff: Alex Jones, Alistair Fielding, Louise Natrajan

General University Questions	**Response**	**Mean score**
Overall, I would rate this unit as being excellent	23% (10/43)	3.10
The feedback that I received on my work was helpful	23% (10/43)	3.60
This unit was well organised	23% (10/43)	3.70
The eLearning resources provided in this unit enhanced my learning experience	23% (10/43)	3.5

Please summarise the main themes from students' comments:

Good hand-outs, clear and interesting course content, workshops are valuable. Not too much focus on biology. Volume of material and clarity of hand-outs was criticised. Expectation of retaining knowledge from previous core courses was questioned.

Feedback on comments:

We will consider an extra workshop for certain aspects of this course.

The students were directed to material that was examinable and that which was for understanding the wider context of the topic that was not examinable; we will continue this practice.

We will update the material as we do each year, in light of comments and also because this is an advanced optional unit drawing its material from the research literature.