School of Chemistry – Unit Survey Feedback

Semester One 2014/15

LEVEL 4 COURSE UNITS

Unit Code: CHEM40211		
Unit Title: Advanced Instrumental Methods		
Unit co-ordinator: Peter Gorry		
No of students taking unit: 28		
Other teaching staff: Andrew Horn, Nick Lockyer, Perdita Barran, Roy Goodacre		
General University Questions	**Response**	**Mean score**
Overall, I would rate this unit as being excellent	29% (8/28)	4
The feedback that I received on my work was helpful	29% (8/28)	2.75
This unit was well organised	29% (8/28)	4.38
The eLearning resources provided in this unit enhanced my learning experience	29% (8/28)	3.88

Student comments and responses

The problem with feedback on such a small number of replies is that it is difficult to determine specific trends in the comments. Often the same feature gets good and bad comments!

Gorry: Good feature "detailed Slides", Bad feature "..lecture slides were difficult to understand"

Horn: "Good notes on the visualiser", "Dr Horn's writing during lectures is very hard to understand".

Such opposing views feature in several other comments. However, one suggestion made by several students was to include more workshops. The lecture course is made up of 4x6 slots. One part, Goodacre, has a formal experimental/workshop component – the others incorporate an example class in their 6 lectures. We can investigate if some of these could take a workshop format.

Finally, "recording of lectures would have been very useful". This is carried out centrally and should have occurred automatically (unless opted out by a lecturer). It may be that the small rooms used for teaching the course was not equipped with recording hardware.

Unit Code: CHEM40261

Unit Title: Biophysical Chemistry

Unit co-ordinator: Perdita Barran

No of students taking unit: 39

Other teaching staff: Nick Lockyer, Roy Goodacre, Robin Prichard, Richard Henchman

General University Questions	Response	Mean score
Overall, I would rate this unit as being excellent	26% (10/39)	3.60
The feeback that I received on my work was helpful	26% (10/39)	2.80
This unit was well organised	26% (10/39)	4.01
The eLearning resources provided in this unit enhanced my learning experience	26% (10/39)	3.9

Student comments and feedback:

- Class tests or extra workshops would have been useful where we could practise exam questions

We will make sure all lecturers offer office hours close to the exam. Several did this year. This will allow students to ask questions about the course close to examination.

- Don't try to cram so much in, within the 3 lectures for each section, hard to know what to take from it all.

This course is actually quite light on examinable material. We will consolidate more in the workshops.

- I think the workshops could be improved. Although it is interesting to read papers around the topic, our knowledge is not as in depth to fully understand them. More example questions could also have been given in preparation for the exam.- I would prefer the workshops to go over practice exam questions.

More mock questions and also some more workshops based around question and answer sessions and exam practice.

This final year course is not only about the exam, it is about teaching biophysical chemistry. Many positive comments were received about the workshops and we will retain the format. We will add example questions to all.

Richard Henchman needs to give examples and applications because I found it really difficult to understand what the concept is and why you use it.

- Not taught in a way that chemical engineers could understand

Chem engineers did not have enough knowledge to understand the concepts and no help from any

lecturers on what we need to read

Prerequisites and reading material were made available and will continue to be. The course had a 4 lecture non-examinable introduction.

- Too many different lectures

Don't agree with a complete compulsory exam and the mixture of topics

There was some choice and lots of consolidated learning. We will retain the format. Biophysical chemistry is a multidisciplinary subject in practice. The exam format and the workshops were aimed at conveying this.

Some of the lecturers covered too much material, making it difficult to learn it all efficiently. Some had about 100 slides for 3 lectures worth of material.

We will make sure the amount of material is consistent.

- The unit seemed badly, with the first three lectures proving introductory material that was non-examinable. However the background provided here could have been made accessible to students to read in there own time and I felt it had been covered in previous years. The workshops also seemed slightly odd, reading papers to discuss, with the objective to be able to pick out information. The module finished in week 10, the whole module just seemed to lack organisation.

This was the first year of this module in this format. The introduction was appreciated by many (and some wanted more!). Whilst the material was not examinable directly the knowledge was required for all the exam questions. We always encourage student to read in their own time. The aim of the workshops was to consolidate material with practical examples.

Unit Code: CHEM40271

Unit Title: Surface & Interface Chemistry

Unit co-ordinator: Sven Koehler

No of students taking unit: 31

Other teaching staff: Andrew Horn, Rob Dryfe, Lu Shin Wong, Melissa Denecke

General University Questions	**Response**	**Mean score**
Overall, I would rate this unit as being excellent	45% (14/31)	3.5
The feeback that I received on my work was helpful	45% (14/31)	2.86
This unit was well organised	45% (14/31)	3.21
The eLearning resources provided in this unit enhanced my learning experience	45% (14/31)	3.57

Please summarise the main themes from students' comments:

CHEM40271 is a new, optional 4th year course, and while the student evaluation and comments were generally positive, some glitches are to be expected for a new course. As a new course, the lack of previous exam papers to practise has been highlighted, but that was counteracted by having mock exams in most/all modules, and should naturally be less of a problem the more often the course is taught.

Some students liked the breath of material presented, and how it all linked together, while others felt that there was too much material in the course.

Feedback on student comments:

The organisation of the introductory 12 lectures will be improved for next year, and the breadth of material in each module will be reviewed; the exam paper format and duration will also be examined in the annual module review.

Unit Code: CHEM40311

Unit Title: Nuclear & Radiochemistry

Unit co-ordinator: Francis Livens

No of students taking unit: 82

Other teaching staff: Sarah Heath

General University Questions	**Response**	**Mean score**
Overall, I would rate this unit as being excellent	32% (26/82)	4.73
The feeback that I received on my work was helpful	32% (26/82)	3.42
This unit was well organised	32% (26/82)	4.42
The eLearning resources provided in this unit enhanced my learning experience	32% (26/82)	4

Student comments and feedback:

The scheduling of lectures is difficult. The academics involved have commitments outside Manchester which are set many months in advance, and we have to set the lecture schedule around these. The difficulty was compounded this year by a very late change to the timetable, which made it very difficult to schedule the lectures.

Since many of the notes are new or modified, it is not surprising there are some minor errors in them, but these will be corrected

Unit Code: CHEM40411		
Unit Title: Advanced Organic Synthesis		
Unit co-ordinator: Andrew Regan		
No of students taking unit: 47		
Other teaching staff: Daniele Leonori, Michael Greaney		
General University Questions	**Response**	**Mean score**
Overall, I would rate this unit as being excellent	34% (16/47)	3.31
The feeback that I received on my work was helpful	34% (16/47)	3.13
This unit was well organised	34% (16/47)	3.31
The eLearning resources provided in this unit enhanced my learning experience	34% (16/47)	3.5

Industrial placement students asked for access to previous third-year course notes for background. The retrosynthesis notes were made available, but we will look into arranging access to the pericyclic notes from semester two.

In parts of the course, students felt that there was too much content to learn. We will review the quantity of material, and bear this in mind for next year's course.

It was felt that the section on asymmetric synthesis was delivered at too fast a pace. The content of this section will be extensively revised for next year, and the pace will be reduced.

Students valued the podcasting of lectures, and this will be continued next year.

Unit Code: CHEM41521

Unit Title: Organometallic Chemistry

Unit co-ordinator: Michael Greaney

No of students taking unit: 60

Other teaching staff: Frank Mair, Peter Quayle

General University Questions	**Response**	**Mean score**
Overall, I would rate this unit as being excellent	35% (21/60)	3.67
The feeback that I received on my work was helpful	35% (21/60)	3.29
This unit was well organised	35% (21/60)	3.95
The eLearning resources provided in this unit enhanced my learning experience	35% (21/60)	3.81

Student comments and responses:

In parts of the course, students felt that there was too much content / pace was too fast. We will review the quantity of material in each lecture series for next year's course with this in mind.

Printed handouts will be available for all parts of the course

Workshop questions and answers will continue to be included in the lectures / handout material.