



23 June 2017

RECORDS MANAGEMENT SECTION

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Mr Travers

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Dear Mr Travers

### **Freedom of information request**

Thank you for your email of 27 May 2017 requesting information about undergraduate Physics assessment.

The University of Edinburgh is a global university, rooted in Scotland. We are globally recognised for our research, development and innovation and we have provided world class teaching to our students for more than 425 years. We are consistently ranked in the world's top 50 universities and we are the largest university in Scotland. In 2015/16, our annual revenue was £890 million, of which over 254 million was research income. We have over 37,000 students and over 9,300 full-time equivalent staff. We are a founding member of the UK's Russell Group of leading research universities and a member of the League of European Research Universities.

The School of Physics and Astronomy, recognised for its teaching and research excellence, is led by world-leading scientists in well-resourced research support facilities. It forms one half of Physics at Edinburgh and St Andrews (PHYESTA), founded in 2010, which merged two of Scotland's leading Physics and Astronomy departments into a single research centre, enhancing the quality and output of both. PHYESTA was ranked first in Scotland and fourth in the UK in the last Research Excellence Framework (REF-2014), as judged by the 'Research Power' index. The combination of this world-class research and our top-rated teaching provides a rich University experience for our students, in which they are equipped with the skills they'll need to function at the very highest level in modern research or industrial environments. Further information about the School of Physics and Astronomy is published on our website at:

<http://www.ph.ed.ac.uk/>.

The University's Taught Assessment Regulations govern how programmes are assessed, and can be found on our website at <http://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/policies-regulations/regulations/assessment>. These Regulations also include links to the University's Common Marking Scheme which is applied to all assessed work, including examinations. The University's Degree Regulations and Programmes of Study contains further information about study, assessment and awards, and can also be found on our website at <http://www.drps.ed.ac.uk/>.

UNIVERSITY SECRETARY Ms Sarah Smith

The University of Edinburgh is a charitable body, registered in Scotland, with registration number SC005336

## **Undergraduate physics exam papers**

You asked for copies of all past exam papers taken by undergraduate physics students, from 2010 to 2016, as well as copies of model answers.

The majority of our physics exam papers are published on our website at <http://www.ed.ac.uk/information-services/library-museum-gallery/exam-papers>, whilst sample solutions and 'Exam Feedback Forms,' which provide general comments on exam questions, are published on the School's Student Information wiki at <https://www.wiki.ed.ac.uk/display/pastudentinfo/Sample+Solutions+for+Past+Papers> and <https://www.wiki.ed.ac.uk/display/pastudentinfo/Exam+Feedback+Forms>.

Although the University holds information about further papers and solutions, supplying you with these would prejudice the examination process. This is because examinations are intended to be a test of knowledge and skill on a particular day at a particular time, and the papers and solutions in question are reused by the School. If some or all of the students for a particular subject have seen the questions and solutions in advance the exam process would be prejudiced. An unfair advantage would be given to the students who had seen the questions and solutions, which would undermine and harm the examination process. The Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 does not require us to provide this sort of information as it is exempt under section 30(c).

This exemption is subject to the public interest test. There is clear public interest in the transparent operation of public authorities, particularly with regard to the examination of students, and this is why we publish our Assessment Regulations, Marking Scheme and Degree Regulations. However, there is also significant public interest in the University being able to teach and assess students fairly and without prejudice. In this case, the University considers that the public interest in withholding this information outweighs the public interest in releasing it.

You also asked for 'examiners' reports.' I have interpreted your request as asking for the informational content of external examiners' reports, which I have enclosed. You will notice that parts of the document have been blacked out. I have removed personal information including home addresses and the names and contact details of junior staff. Disclosing this information would be unfair to the individuals concerned and would breach the data protection principles of the Data Protection Act 1998. This material is personal data and exempt from disclosure under s 38(1)(b) of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 as its release would constitute a breach of the data protection principles.

## **Technical exemption**

Please note that as most of this information is available to you through the University website, it is technically exempt from the University's obligation to answer requests for information under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002. The information is exempt under section 25 of this Act, because it is available to you by another route. This exemption is a technical matter only and does not affect your ability to obtain the information.

If you do not have access to the Internet or would prefer to receive information in hard copy please let me know and I will arrange for printouts from the appropriate web pages to be sent to you.

## **Copyright statement**

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## **Right to review**

If you are dissatisfied with this response, you may ask the University to conduct a review of this decision by contacting the University's Records Management Section ([www.ed.ac.uk/records-management/about/contact](http://www.ed.ac.uk/records-management/about/contact)) in writing (e.g. by letter or email) or in some other recorded form (e.g. audio or video tape). You should describe the original request, explain your grounds for dissatisfaction, and include an address for correspondence. You have 40 working days from receipt of this letter to submit a review request. When the review process has been completed, if you are still dissatisfied, you may appeal to the Scottish Information Commissioner using the guidance at [www.itspublicknowledge.info/Appeal](http://www.itspublicknowledge.info/Appeal). If you do not have access to the Internet, please let me know and I will provide a copy of the relevant web pages.

Yours sincerely

**Lorraine Peters**

Information Compliance Officer

Enc: University of Edinburgh external examiners' reports in relation to physics programmes, 2010/11 to 2015/16

**If you require this letter in an alternative format, such as large print or a coloured background, please contact the Records Management Section on 0131 651 4099 or email [recordsmanagement@ed.ac.uk](mailto:recordsmanagement@ed.ac.uk)**