

**SEN14D006**

**Title:** *Course Approval - Physics*  
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**Issue**

To seek the views of Senate, to re-launch a degree in Physics with four variants which would include one new award (Master of Physics - MPhys).

**Recommendation**

Recipients are asked for their views to inform the final decision of the VC.

**Resource Implications**

The additional student numbers arising from this proposal form part of the business plan in support of the new STEMM teaching building. These are currently estimated as an intake of 25 students per annum. This will generate fee income (£9,000 per annum for a Home/EU student) plus additional HEFCE funding.

**Risk Implications**

Should the proposal not be supported the assumptions as laid out in the business plan for the new STEM Teaching Building will be at risk.

**Equality and Diversity**

There are not anticipated to be any impacts on students with protected characteristics as a result of this proposal.

**Timing of decisions**

On the 15<sup>th</sup> September, members of ET approved the re-launch of Physics as a specific discipline and subject to the views of Senate will be re-launched for 2016 entry. In order to meet the deadline of the prospectus, final approval will be required no later than mid-November 2014

**Further Information**

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## Background

The Faculty of Science has recently secured approval for the release of £18M from University funds for a new STEM teaching building. The business plan to support this investment was a growth in student numbers from 2016 onwards; in part from the re-launch of Physics programmes. As such, a commitment has already been made by ET and Council to support growth of Physics.

Physics was previously offered under the School of Mathematics and Physics (MAP), with the last group of students having their degrees conferred in 1999. UEA would be the only HE provider in the region to be offering Physics, for which there is already a nucleus of resource available within the Faculty to enable this to be delivered with minimal additional requirements.

These students are expected to be high tariff, with good progression rates and whom we expect to achieve good honours. At steady state we expect Physics to recruit a minimum of an additional 25 students' pa studying for up to four years.

## Discussion

Market research undertaken demonstrates an excess of demand over supply from students wanting to study Physics at bachelors level, leading to a growing pool of high quality applicants to Physics courses who do not find places. UCAS data reported a total increase of 10,933 in applications into the Physics subject group between 2008 and 2013, an increase of 64.3%. The total number of accepted applicants over the same period rose by 43.5%.

Year	Applications	Accepted
2008	16,998	3,330
2009	18,202	3,566
2010	20,368	3,672
2011	24,046	4,100
2012	35,851	4,351
2013	27,931	4,780

Physics would be based within the School of Natural Sciences, the degree of which was re-launched in 2006. There is already a strong foundation and track record of delivering Physics modules to a high standard within Natural Sciences and it is notable that those students electing to study the Physics modules are also high tariff.

Contact with the Institute of Physics shows that we are almost in a position to make an application for accreditation: we would only have to provide one further module in Physics and three practical laboratory modules to complete the provision (which the course profile will deliver). Physics modules are already offered in the School of Chemistry, the School of Environmental Sciences and the School of Mathematics and there are synergies with recently launched Engineering degree. The new Physics degree will draw upon modules from these key areas.

The student market for Natural Sciences and Physics is similar. However, the very fact that we have a Physics degree (demonstrating our continued commitment to this expanding area), and what with the better facilities expected from the new STEM teaching laboratory building, we are expected to attract more students back into Natural Sciences. We expect the total intake from both pathways to exceed Natural Sciences numbers alone, and the market research supports this assumption.

43 other UK HEI's offer single honours Physics with most that offer BSC also offering MPhys (the equivalent of an Integrated Masters).