

Core Hours Policy for Physics and Astronomy

As a department, we operate a core-hours policy. These hours are **9.30am to 4pm** Monday to Friday, excluding university closure days and public holidays. This policy allows those with caring commitments, and those who work flexibly, to maintain a healthy work-life balance, while ensuring they can participate fully in departmental life.

Our policy is that regularly scheduled get-togethers (for example; committee meetings, staff meetings, research group meetings, colloquia, seminars) should be arranged to start and finish within these hours. This will ensure that the maximum number of people can attend these key events, ensuring widespread dissemination of critical information and avoiding unintended exclusion of some staff.

Meetings should also be scheduled wherever practicable with respect for the working pattern of part-time staff. This means on a normal working day for part-time staff, or so that the day of a particular meeting rotates to permit part-time staff to attend regularly, if not on all occasions.

Ad-hoc meetings that need to be arranged outside of these core hours should be at times that are agreed by all attendees.

Email Policy for Physics and Astronomy

Our core-hours policy also extends to e-mail (and similar electronic communications), which means that:

- Members of the department should not be expected to read and reply to emails outside of the core hours. Similarly, individuals should not expect replies to emails outside of the core hours. While some staff may prefer to read / send emails out of core hours due to their working pattern, this does not put the onus or expectation on the receiver that they should do likewise.
- When an email requires a response, it should be sent, wherever possible, with a long enough lead-time to allow those on part-time or flexible arrangements a chance to respond.
- Members of the department are encouraged to set up an out-of-office message if they are likely to be away from the office and out of email contact for extended periods.

Finally, members of the department are not expected to have their email on at all times, and are not expected to read/respond to email immediately. The concept of replying “by return” should not be used.

The department is also supportive of the email charter, <http://www.emailcharter.org/>