

Course Information Document: Undergraduate

For Academic Year 2025/26

1. Course Summary

Names of programme and award title(s)	BSc (Hons) Astrophysics BSc (Hons) Astrophysics with International Year (see Annex for details) BSc (Hons) Astrophysics with Work Placement Year (see Annex for details)
Award type	Combined Honours
Mode of study	Full-time
Framework of Higher Education Qualification (FHEQ) level of final award	Level 6
Normal length of the programme	3 years; 4 years with either the International Year or Placement Year between years 2 and 3
Maximum period of registration	The normal length as specified above plus 3 years
Location of study	Keele Campus
Accreditation (if applicable)	The UK Institute of Physics (IoP) has accredited this programme until 30th March 2027. For further details see the section on accreditation.
Regulator	Office for Students (OfS)
Tuition Fees	UK students: Fee for 2025/26 is £9,535* International students: Fee for 2025/26 is £17,700** The fee for the international year abroad is calculated at 15% of the standard year fee The fee for the work placement year is calculated at 20% of the standard year fee

Please note that this document applies to Level 5 (Year 2) and Level 6 (Year 3) students only in 2025/26.

How this information might change: Please read the important information at <http://www.keele.ac.uk/student-agreement/>. This explains how and why we may need to make changes to the information provided in this document and to help you understand how we will communicate with you if this happens.

* These fees are regulated by Government. We reserve the right to increase fees in subsequent years of study in response to changes in government policy and/or changes to the law. If permitted by such change in policy or law, we may increase your fees by an inflationary amount or such other measure as required by government policy or the law. Please refer to the accompanying Student Terms & Conditions. Further information on fees can

be found
at <http://www.keele.ac.uk/studentfunding/tuitionfees/>

*** These fees are for new students. We reserve the right to increase fees in subsequent years of study by an inflationary amount. Please refer to the accompanying Student Terms & Conditions for full details. Further information on fees can be found at <http://www.keele.ac.uk/studentfunding/tuitionfees/>*

2. What is a Combined Honours programme?

NB: all students who study a science Principal subject are candidates for the degree of Bachelor of Science (with Honours) (BSc Hons) irrespective of their second Principal subject.

Combined Honours degrees are degrees that are taken in two different subjects, resulting in an X and Y degree title. If you are taking a Combined Honours programme, these will be the two subjects you applied for. These are referred to as your Principal Subjects.

In a Combined Honours degree you must take at least 135 credits in each Principal Subject (270 credits in total), accrued over all three levels of study, with at least 45 credits at each level of study (Levels 4, 5 and 6) in each of two Principal Subjects (90 credits per year). The remaining available credits can be filled with modules from these subjects or other subjects entirely.

As a Combined Honours student you can choose to study just one subject in your final year of study, taking a minimum of 90 credits in this subject. This will result in an X with Y degree title.

3. Overview of the Programme

Astrophysics is the application of Physics to understand how the Universe works. Is there an Earth-like planet around another star? Is there a black hole at the centre of every galaxy? Why is the expansion of the Universe accelerating? These questions present humankind with some of its greatest intellectual challenges. In addition to the subject knowledge, Astrophysics curriculum has incorporated number of transferable skills that can be widely exploited in research, education and in a wide variety of industrial sectors. This is evidenced by the wide range of positions being held by Keele Astrophysics graduates.

The three year Combined Honours Astrophysics programme at Keele aims to cover all of the topics which are defined as "Core Physics" by Institute of Physics (IOP) for all undergraduate Astrophysics degrees in the UK. On successful completion of the Astrophysics programme at Keele, students will be equally qualified and well prepared for postgraduate studies or graduate level employment.

All the required instruction in Mathematics and Computing to study Astrophysics is incorporated within the Astrophysics modules. We operate an open-door policy which enables students to have excellent and flexible access to staff to seek advice or feedback on their work. Activities in year 1 and 2 Laboratories are designed such that students should be able to develop necessary competence in laboratory activities by the end of year 2 and be able to undertake individual project or team project in year 3.

4. Aims of the programme

The broad aims of the programme are to enable you to:

- achieve a knowledge and understanding of the fundamentals of Astrophysics and be able to apply this knowledge and understanding to solving problems;
- develop competence in the application of mathematics and computing to physical problems;
- develop competence in laboratory activities by the end of year 2 and have undertaken project work both individually and within a team by the end of year 3;
- acquire a range of subject-specific skills including how to formulate and tackle problems in Astrophysics; how to plan, manage, execute and report the results of an investigation; how to use mathematics to describe the physical world; and how to deploy these skills to tackle issues within the subject;
- acquire a range of cognitive, generic and transferable skills including problem-solving skills, investigative skills, analytic skills, communication skills, IT skills, time management skills and interpersonal skills.

5. What you will learn

The intended learning outcomes of the programme (what students should know, understand and be able to do at the end of the programme), can be described under the following headings:

- Subject knowledge and understanding
- Subject specific skills
- Intellectual skills
- Key or transferable skills (including employability skills)

Subject knowledge and understanding

The subject knowledge in the Combined Honours Astrophysics programme is underpinned by a core (astro)Physics curriculum as set out by the Institute of Physics and includes the fundamentals of classical and quantum mechanics, electromagnetism, optics, thermodynamics, solid state, atomic and nuclear physics, together with the mathematics that is used to describe them.

Successful students will be able to demonstrate:

- knowledge of the fundamental principles of Astrophysics and competence in applying these principles to diverse areas of the subject;
- the ability to solve problems in Astrophysics using appropriate mathematical tools including the ability to make sensible approximations;
- the ability to execute, and analyse critically, an experiment or investigation and draw valid conclusions. You will be able to estimate the level of uncertainty in your results and compare these results with expected outcomes, theoretical predictions or with published data. You will be able to evaluate the significance of your results in this context;
- If you specialise in Astrophysics, via major honours, in your final year you develop a wider knowledge and understanding of advanced topics and their applications and acquire skills in the critically reading and understanding published work in Astrophysics.

Subject specific skills

Successful students will have:

- the ability to work safely in a laboratory and to have a knowledge and awareness of standard safety procedures;
- a sound familiarity with laboratory apparatus and techniques;
- competent use of appropriate IT packages/systems for the analysis of data and the retrieval of information;
- an ability in numerical manipulation and estimation and the ability to present and interpret information graphically;
- an ability to use mathematical techniques and analysis to model physical behaviour;
- an ability to record and communicate scientific information, in particular through clear and accurate scientific reports;
- an ability to question, learn and assimilate knowledge and to evolve your views of the world in response to that new knowledge;
- an ability to contribute through research to the development of knowledge in Astrophysics;
- (if you Major in Astrophysics in your final year) an ability to acquire knowledge and understanding of science for yourself, and to work productively on scientific problems on an individual basis.

Intellectual skills

Successful students will be able to:

- analyse and solve problems;
- evaluate evidence and make critical judgements;
- interpret and critique text;
- interpret and critique mathematical and numerical information;
- abstract and synthesise information;
- develop a reasoned argument;
- assess contrasting theories, explanations and policies;
- take responsibility for your own learning and critique that learning.

Key or transferable skills (including employability skills)

Successful students will have the opportunity to develop:

- the ability to manage your own learning and to make appropriate use of text books, research-based materials and other learning resources;
- the ability to find information and make responsible use of it;
- the ability to listen;
- the ability to make effective written and oral presentations;
- the ability to work with numerical data;
- the ability to make sensible estimates;
- an awareness of the costs and benefits of your actions the ability to work effectively with a variety of types

- of Information Technology;
- the ability to plan, manage, execute and report an investigation;
- the ability to learn and gain understanding;
- the ability to work effectively both as an individual and as part of a team;
- the ability to sustain motivation for an extended period of time;
- a recognition of your responsibilities as an individual and as part of a team, an organisation.

The Keele Graduate Attributes

The Keele Graduate Attributes are the qualities (skills, values and mindsets) which you will have the opportunity to develop during your time at Keele through both the formal curriculum and also through co- and extra-curricular activities (e.g., work experience, and engagement with the wider University community such as acting as ambassadors, volunteering, peer mentoring, student representation, membership and leadership of clubs and societies). Our Graduate Attributes consist of four themes: **academic expertise, professional skills, personal effectiveness, and social and ethical responsibility**. You will have opportunities to engage actively with the range of attributes throughout your time at Keele: through your academic studies, through self-assessing your own strengths, weaknesses, and development needs, and by setting personal development goals. You will have opportunities to discuss your progress in developing graduate attributes with, for example, Academic Mentors, to prepare for your future career and lives beyond Keele.

6. How is the programme taught?

Learning and teaching methods used on the programme vary according to the subject matter and level of the module. They include the following:

- Lectures
- Tutorials
- Laboratory Classes
- Exercise/Problem-Solving Classes
- Individual Progress Interviews
- Problem Sheet Assignments
- Group and Individual projects
- Directed Reading and Independent Study
- Use of e-learning/the Keele Learning Environment (KLE)

Apart from these formal activities, students are also provided with regular opportunities to talk through particular areas of difficulty, and any special learning needs they may have, with their Academic Mentors or module lecturers on a one-to-one basis.

These learning and teaching methods enable students to achieve the learning outcomes of the programme in a variety of ways.

7. Teaching Staff

The Physics/Astrophysics academic staff exhibit a research profile with two main areas of expertise; astrophysics and condensed matter physics. Keele performs internationally renowned work in the fields of exoplanets, stellar physics (both observational and theoretical), high energy extragalactic astrophysics and in the study of soft condensed matter such as polymers and biological molecules. All research-active staff play a role in teaching and most also undertake administrative roles, either within our teaching or research activities. The teaching and research profiles of the staff that currently deliver the Physics with Astrophysics programme can be found at <http://www.keele.ac.uk/physics/people/>. Timetabled teaching is always lead by academic staff.

The University will attempt to minimise changes to our core teaching teams, however, delivery of the programme depends on having a sufficient number of staff with the relevant expertise to ensure that the programme is taught to the appropriate academic standard.

Staff turnover, for example where key members of staff leave, fall ill or go on research leave, may result in changes to the programme's content. The University will endeavour to ensure that any impact on students is limited if such changes occur.

8. What is the structure of the Programme?

The academic year runs from September to June and is divided into two semesters. The number of weeks of teaching will vary from programme to programme, but you can generally expect to attend scheduled teaching sessions between the end of September and mid-December, and from mid-January to the end of April. Our degree courses are organised into modules. Each module is usually a self-contained unit of study and each is usually assessed separately with the award of credits on the basis of 1 credit = 10 hours of student effort. An outline of the structure of the programme is provided in the tables below.

There are two types of module delivered as part of your programme. They are:

- Compulsory modules - a module that you are required to study on this course;
- Optional modules - these allow you some limited choice of what to study from a list of modules.

Language modules: You are able to take up to 60 credits across your degree programme as Faculty Funded additional Modern Language modules in order to graduate with the Enhanced Degree Title. [Please see [link](#) for more information on Enhanced degree titles.]

For further information on the content of modules currently offered please visit:

<https://www.keele.ac.uk/recordsandexams/modulecatalogue/>

A summary of the credit requirements per year is as follows, with a minimum of 90 subject credits (compulsory plus optional) required for each year across both of your Principal Subjects. This document has information about *Astrophysics* modules only; please also see the document for your other subject.

Year	Compulsory	Optional	
		Min	Max
Level 5	60	0	0
Level 6	30	30	30

In year 3 there is the option to choose to specialise in one of your subjects, taking a minimum of 90 credits in this subject rather than taking modules from both subjects.

Module Lists

Level 5

Compulsory modules	Module Code	Credits	Period
Quantum Mechanics	PHY-20006	15	Semester 1
Optics and Thermodynamics	PHY-20027	15	Semester 1
Stellar Astrophysics	PHY-20002	15	Semester 2
Statistical Mechanics and Solid State Physics	PHY-20026	15	Semester 2

Level 6

For students specialising in this subject at Level 6, a minimum of 90 credits must be taken in this subject (see the lower tables of compulsory and optional modules below). For students specialising in another subject, the first list should be used.

Compulsory modules	Module Code	Credits	Period
Electromagnetism	PHY-30012	15	Semester 1
Astrophysics Group Project and Science Communication - ISP	PHY-30006	15	Semester 1-2

Optional modules	Module Code	Credits	Period
Binary Stars and Extrasolar Planets	PHY-30024	15	Semester 1
Data Analysis and Model Testing	PHY-30027	15	Semester 1
Particle Physics and Accelerators	PHY-30033	15	Semester 1
Cosmology	PHY-30001	15	Semester 2
Life in the Universe	PHY-30025	15	Semester 2
Quantum Mechanics II	PHY-30029	15	Semester 2
General Relativity, Black Holes and Gravitational Waves	PHY-30035	15	Semester 2

If you choose to specialise in this subject in your final year you will study the following modules:

Compulsory modules	Module Code	Credits	Period
Electromagnetism	PHY-30012	15	Semester 1
Astrophysics Group Project and Science Communication - ISP	PHY-30006	15	Semester 1-2
Dissertation	PHY-30017	15	Semester 1-2

Optional modules	Module Code	Credits	Period
Binary Stars and Extrasolar Planets	PHY-30024	15	Semester 1
Data Analysis and Model Testing	PHY-30027	15	Semester 1
Particle Physics and Accelerators	PHY-30033	15	Semester 1
Flexible Work Placement (Level 6)	NAT-30008	15	Semester 1-2
Professional Experience in Education	NAT-30012	15	Semester 1-2
Cosmology	PHY-30001	15	Semester 2
Life in the Universe	PHY-30025	15	Semester 2
Quantum Mechanics II	PHY-30029	15	Semester 2
General Relativity, Black Holes and Gravitational Waves	PHY-30035	15	Semester 2

Level 6 Module Rules

Students specialising in this subject can choose one of NAT-30008 and NAT-30012.

9. Final and intermediate awards

Credits required for each level of academic award are as follows:

Honours Degree	360 credits	You will require at least 120 credits at levels 4, 5 and 6 You must accumulate a minimum of 135 credits in each Principal Subject (270 credits in total), with at least 45 credits at each level of study (Levels 4, 5 and 6) in each of two Principal Subjects (90 credits per year). Your degree title will be 'subject X and subject Y'. If you choose to study one Principal subject in your final year of study a minimum of 90 credits in that subject is required. Your degree title will be 'subject X with subject Y'.
Diploma in Higher Education	240 credits	You will require at least 120 credits at level 4 or higher and at least 120 credits at level 5 or higher
Certificate in Higher Education	120 credits	You will require at least 120 credits at level 4 or higher

International Year option: in addition to the above students must pass a module covering the international year in order to graduate with a named degree including the 'international year' wording. Students who do not complete, or fail the international year, will be transferred to the three-year version of the programme.

Work Placement Year option: in addition to the above students must pass a non-credit bearing module covering the work placement year in order to graduate with a named degree including the 'work placement year' wording. Students who do not complete, or fail the placement year, will be transferred to the three-year version of the programme.

10. How is the Programme Assessed?

The wide variety of assessment methods used on this programme at Keele reflects the broad range of knowledge and skills that are developed as you progress through the degree programme. Teaching staff pay particular attention to specifying clear assessment criteria and providing timely, regular and constructive feedback that helps to clarify things you did not understand and helps you to improve your performance. The following list is representative of the variety of assessment methods used on your programme:

- **End of module examinations** test the ability of the student to describe, explain, and critically discuss the principles of the subject and to demonstrate competence in applying these principles to applications and to solve problems from appropriate areas of the discipline
- **Assessed Problem Sheets** assess the student's skills in solving numerical and other problems within the discipline by drawing on their scientific understanding and knowledge, and experience of experimental techniques
- **Laboratory and Project Reports** - structured proformas and full lab reports are formal summaries of work carried out in the laboratory and test students' understanding of the practical aspects of the programme and develop the skills necessary to enable students to present and analyse their results
- **Observation of laboratory skills and laboratory notebooks:** Throughout the extensive laboratory and other practical work in this programme, many types of assessment are utilised to achieve the learning outcomes. Notebooks are used to communicate the results of work accurately and reliably and to encourage good working practice, including managing risk assessments and following safe working practices
- **Oral and/or Poster presentations on project work** demonstrate the ability of the student to present complex concepts and information in a clear and concise manner, to interact and communicate effectively to a wide range of professional environments, including to both scientific and non-scientific audiences
- **In-class exercises and tests** taken either conventionally or online via the Keele Learning Environment (KLE) assess students' subject knowledge and their ability to apply it in a more structured and focused way
- **Individual or group oral presentations** assess individual student's subject knowledge and understanding. They also test their ability to work effectively as members of a team, to communicate what they know orally and visually, and to reflect on these processes as part of their own personal development

Marks are awarded for summative assessments designed to assess your achievement of learning outcomes. You will also be assessed formatively to enable you to monitor your own progress and to assist staff in

identifying and addressing any specific learning needs. Feedback, including guidance on how you can improve the quality of your work, is also provided on all summative assessments within three working weeks of submission, unless there are compelling circumstances that make this impossible, and more informally in the course of tutorial and seminar discussions.

11. Contact Time and Expected Workload

This contact time measure is intended to provide you with an indication of the type of activity you are likely to undertake during this programme. The data is compiled based on module choices and learning patterns of students on similar programmes in previous years. Every effort is made to ensure this data is a realistic representation of what you are likely to experience, but changes to programmes, teaching methods and assessment methods mean this data is representative and not specific.

Undergraduate courses at Keele contain an element of module choice; therefore, individual students will experience a different mix of contact time and assessment types dependent upon their own individual choice of modules. The figures below are an example of activities that a student may expect on your chosen course by year stage of study. Contact time includes scheduled activities such as: lecture, seminar, tutorial, project supervision, demonstration, practical classes and labs, supervised time in labs/workshop, fieldwork and external visits. The figures are based on 1,200 hours of student effort each year for full-time students.

Activity

	Scheduled learning and teaching activities	Guided independent Study	Placements
Year 1 (Level 4)	33.8%	66.2%	0%
Year 2 (Level 5)	31%	69%	0%
Year 3 (Level 6)	22.8%	77.2%	0%

12. Accreditation

This subject/programme is accredited by: The Institute of Physics (IoP).

Please note the following:

- Graduates with accredited BSc degrees are eligible for Membership of the IoP and can follow a route to professional registration for Chartered Physicist status.

13. University Regulations

The University Regulations form the framework for learning, teaching and assessment and other aspects of the student experience. Further information about the University Regulations can be found at: <http://www.keele.ac.uk/student-agreement/>

A student who has completed a semester abroad will not normally be eligible to transfer onto the International Year option.

14. Other Learning Opportunities

Study Abroad (International Year)

A summary of the International Year, which is a potential option for students after completion of year 2 (Level 5), is provided in the Annex for the International Year.

Work Placement Year

A summary of the Placement Year, which is a potential option for students after completion of year 2 (Level 5), is provided in the Annex for the Work Placement Year.

Other opportunities

Also there are other opportunities such as Physics Ambassador Scheme and e-mentoring scheme for students to enhance their employability skills.

15. Additional Costs

As to be expected there will be additional costs for inter-library loans and potential overdue library fines, print and graduation. We do not anticipate any further costs for this programme.

16. Annex - International Year

Astrophysics with International Year

Please note: in order to be eligible to take the International Year option your other subject must also offer this option. Please refer to the information published in the course document for your other subject.

International Year Programme
Students registered for this Combined Honours programme may either be admitted for or apply to transfer during their period of study at Level 5 to the Combined Honours programme in both their principal subjects, providing that they meet the progression criteria outlined in this document. Students accepted onto the International Year programme will have an extra year of study at an international partner institution after they have completed Year 2 (Level 5) at Keele. Students who successfully complete both the second year (Level 5) and the International Year will be permitted to progress to Level 6. Students who fail to satisfy the examiners in respect of the International Year will normally revert to the Combined Honours programme without the International Year and progress to Level 6 on that basis. The failure will be recorded on the student's final transcript. Study at Level 4, Level 5 and Level 6 will be as per the main body of this document. The additional detail contained in this annex will pertain solely to students registered for the International Year option.
International Year Programme Aims
In addition to the programme aims specified in the main body of this document, the international year programme of study aims to provide students with: 1. Personal development as a student and a researcher with an appreciation of the international dimension of their subject 2. Experience of a different culture, academically, professionally and socially
Entry Requirements for the International Year
Students may apply to the 4-year programme during Level 5. Admission to the International Year is subject to successful application, interview and references from appropriate staff. The criteria to be applied are: • Academic Performance (an average of 55% across all modules in Semester 1 at Level 5 is normally required. Places on the International Year are then conditional on achieving an average mark of 55% across all Level 5 modules. Students with up to 15 credits of re-assessment who meet the 55% requirement may progress to the International Year. Where no Semester 1 marks have been awarded performance in 1st year marks and ongoing 2nd year assessments are taken into account) • General Aptitude (to be demonstrated by application for study abroad, interview during the 2nd semester of year 2 (Level 5), and by recommendation of the student's Academic Mentor, 1st and 2nd year tutors and programme director) Students may not register for both an International Year and a Placement Year.
Student Support

Students will be supported whilst on the International Year via the following methods:

- Phone or Skype conversations with Study Abroad tutors, in line with recommended Academic Mentoring meeting points.
- Support from the University's Global Education Team

Learning Outcomes

In addition to the learning outcomes specified in the main text of the Programme Specification, students who complete a Keele undergraduate programme with International Year will be able to:

1. Describe, discuss and reflect upon the cultural and international differences and similarities of different learning environments
2. Discuss the benefits and challenges of global citizenship and internationalisation
3. Explain how their perspective on their academic discipline has been influenced by locating it within an international setting.
4. Engage effectively in academic and scientific discourse in an international setting;
5. Integrate, apply and develop fundamental physical principles to describe and explain phenomena and solve problems within the context of specialised areas of Astrophysics and/or Physics.

Please note that students on Combined Honours programmes with International Year must meet the subject-specific learning outcomes for BOTH their principal subjects.

These learning outcomes will all be assessed by the submission of a satisfactory individual learning agreement, the successful completion of assessments at the partner institution and the submission of the reflective portfolio element of the international year module.

Course Regulations

Students registered for the International Year are subject to the programme-specific regulations (if any) and the University regulations. In addition, during the International Year, the following regulations will apply:

Students undertaking the International Year must complete 120 credits, which must comprise *at least* 40% in the student's discipline area.

This may impact on your choice of modules to study, for example you will have to choose certain modules to ensure you have the discipline specific credits required.

Students are barred from studying any module with significant overlap to the Level 6 modules to be studied on their return. Significant overlap with Level 5 modules previously studied should also be avoided.

Additional costs for the International Year

Tuition fees for students on the International Year will be charged at 15% of the annual tuition fees for that year of study, as set out in Section 1. The International Year can be included in your Student Finance allocation, to find out more about your personal eligibility see: www.gov.uk

Students will have to bear the costs of travelling to and from their destination university, accommodation, food and personal costs. Depending on the destination they are studying at additional costs may include visas, study permits, residence permits, and compulsory health checks. Students should expect the total costs of studying abroad be greater than if they study in the UK, information is made available from the Global Education Team throughout the process, as costs will vary depending on destination.

Students who meet external eligibility criteria may be eligible for grants as part of this programme. Students studying outside of this programme may be eligible income dependent bursaries at Keele.

Students travel on a comprehensive Keele University insurance plan, for which there are currently no additional charges. Some Governments and/or universities require additional compulsory health coverage plans; costs for this will be advised during the application process.

17. Annex - Work Placement Year

Astrophysics with Work Placement Year

Work Placement Year summary

Students registered for this programme may either be admitted for or apply to transfer during their studies to the 'with Work Placement Year' option (NB: for Combined Honours students the rules relating to the work placement year in the subject where the placement is organised are to be followed). Students accepted onto this programme will have an extra year of study (the Work Placement Year) with a relevant placement provider after they have completed Year 2 (Level 5) at Keele.

Students who successfully complete both the second year (Level 5) and the Work Placement Year will be permitted to progress to Level 6. Students who fail to satisfactorily complete the Work Placement Year will normally revert to the 3-year programme and progress to Level 6 on that basis. The failure will be recorded on the student's final transcript.

Study at Level 4, Level 5 and Level 6 will be as per the main body of this document. The additional detail contained in this annex will pertain solely to students registered for the Work Placement Year option.

Work Placement Year Programme Aims

In addition to the programme aims specified in the main body of this document, the Work Placement Year aims to provide students with:

1. Personal development as a student, and a researcher, with an appreciation of the work placement and applied dimension of physics/astrophysics
2. Experience of work in a work placement setting with the associated academic, safety and professional requirements

Entry Requirements for the Work Placement Year

Admission to the Work Placement Year is subject to successful application, interview and references from appropriate staff. Students have the opportunity to apply directly for the 4-year 'with work placement year' degree programme, or to transfer onto the 4-year programme at the end of Year-1 and in Year-2 at the end of Semester 1. Students who are initially registered for the 4-year degree programme may transfer onto the 3-year degree programme at any point in time, prior to undertaking the year-long work placement. Students who fail to pass the work placement year, and those who fail to meet the minimum requirements of the work placement year module, (* or equivalent, work placement), will be automatically transferred onto the 3-year degree programme.

* We recommend where possible students undertake a placement of between 9 - 12 months on a full-time basis to maximize academic and personal growth. However, the Faculty of Natural Sciences Work / Professional Placement Year mandates a minimum of 24 weeks in duration, ideally on a full-time basis, but no less than 21 hours per week. This enables those undertaking an unpaid placement to work on a part-time basis alongside their placement.

The criteria to be applied are:

- A good University attendance record and be in 'good academic standing'.
- Academic Performance (an average of 50% across all modules in Semester 1 at Level 5 is normally required. Places on the Work Placement Year are then conditional on achieving an average mark of 50% across all Level 5 modules. Students with up to 15 credits of re-assessment who meet the 50% requirement may progress to the Work Placement Year. Where no Semester 1 marks have been awarded performance in 1st year marks and ongoing 2nd year assessments are taken into account)
- Students undertaking work placements will be expected to complete a Health and Safety checklist prior to commencing their work experience and will be required to satisfy the Health and Safety regulations of the company or organisation at which they are based.
- (*International students only*) Due to visa requirements, it is not possible for international students who require a Tier 4 Visa to apply for direct entry onto the 4-year with Work Placement Year degree programme. Students wishing to transfer onto this programme should discuss this with student support, the academic tutor for the work placement year, and the Programme Lead. Students should be aware that there are visa implications for this transfer, and it is the student's responsibility to complete any and all necessary processes to be eligible for this programme. There may be additional costs, including applying for a new Visa from outside of the UK for international students associated with a transfer to the work placement programme.

Students may not register for both an International Year and a Work Placement Year.

Student Support

Students will be supported whilst on the Work Placement Year via the following methods:

- Regular contact between the student and a named member of staff who will be assigned to the student as their University supervisor. The University supervisor will be in regular contact with the student throughout the year, and be on hand to provide advice (pastoral or academic) and liaise with the Placement supervisor on the student's behalf if required.
- Two formal contacts with the student during the placement year: the University supervisor will visit the student in their placement organisation at around the 5 weeks after the placement has commenced, and then visit again (or conduct a telephone/video call tutorial) at around 15 weeks into the placement.
- Weekly supervision sessions will take place with the placement supervisor (or his/her nominee) throughout the duration of the placement.

Learning Outcomes

In addition to the learning outcomes specified in the main text of the Programme Specification, students who complete the 'with Work Placement Year' option will be able to:

1. Apply the theories and laboratory skills learnt to real situations in the workplace to design, plan, risk assess, and critically evaluate practical investigations.
2. Develop key professional skills in the accurate documentation of information; the analysis of various types of data; and the planning and execution of the tasks safely.
3. Develop employability skills in the presentation and communication of data; the writing of reports; and the ability to work effectively, individually, and as part of a team
4. Explain how their perspective on physics/astrophysics has been influenced by working within the work placement setting

These learning outcomes will be assessed through the non-credit bearing Work Placement Year module (PHY-30043) which involves:

1. An oral presentation on the placement year
2. A placement portfolio containing a reflective diary on the students work and experience, an evaluation of the students' performance by the placement host, and a report on the work done.

Regulations

Students registered for the 'with Work Placement Year' option are subject to programme-specific regulations (if any) and the University regulations. In addition, during the Work Placement Year, the following regulations will apply:

- Students undertaking the Work Placement Year must successfully complete the zero-credit rated 'Work Placement Year' module (PHY-30043)
- In order to ensure a high quality placement experience, each placement agency will sign up to a placement contract (analogous to a service level agreement).
- Once a student has been accepted by a placement organisation, the student will make a pre-placement visit and a member of staff identified within the placement contract will be assigned as the placement supervisor. The placement supervisor will be responsible for ensuring that the placement experience meets the agreed contract agreed with the University.
- The placement student will also sign up an agreement outlining his/her responsibilities in relation to the requirements of each organisation.

Students will be expected to behave professionally in terms of:

(i) conforming to the work practices of the organisation; and

(ii) remembering that they are representatives of the University and their actions will reflect on the School and have an impact on that organisation's willingness (or otherwise) to remain engaged with the placement.

Additional costs for the Work Placement Year

Tuition fees for students on the Work Placement Year will be charged at 20% of the annual tuition fees for that year of study, as set out in Section 1. The Work Placement Year can be included in your Student Finance allocation; to find out more about your personal eligibility see: www.gov.uk

Students will have to bear the costs of travelling to and from their placement provider, accommodation, food and personal costs. Depending on the placement provider additional costs may include parking permits, travel and transport, suitable clothing, DBS checks, and compulsory health checks.

A small stipend may be available to students from the placement provider during the placement but this will need to be explored on a placement-by-placement basis as some organisations, such as charities, may not have any extra money available. Students should budget with the assumption that their placement will be unpaid.

Eligibility for student finance will depend on the type of placement and whether it is paid or not. If it is paid, this is likely to affect student finance eligibility, however if it is voluntary and therefore unpaid, should not affect student finance eligibility. Students are required to confirm eligibility with their student finance provider.

International students who require a Tier 4 visa should check with the Immigration Compliance team prior to commencing any type of paid placement to ensure that they are not contravening their visa requirements.

18. Annex - Programme-specific regulations

Programme Regulations: BSc (Hons) Astrophysics

Final Award and Award Titles	BSc (Hons) Astrophysics BSc (Hons) Astrophysics with International Year (see Annex for details) BSc (Hons) Physics with Work Placement Year Year (see Annex A for details)
Intermediate Award(s)	Diploma in Higher Education Certificate in Higher Education
Last modified	November 2024
Programme Specification	https://www.keele.ac.uk/qa/programmespecifications

The University's Academic Regulations which can be found on the Keele University website (<https://www.keele.ac.uk/regulations/>)[1] apply to and regulate the programme, other than in instances where the specific programme regulations listed below over-ride them. These programme regulations list:

- *Exemptions* which are characterised by the omission of the relevant regulation.
- *Variations* which are characterised by the replacement of part of the regulation with alternative wording.
- *Additional Requirements* which set out what additional rules that apply to students in relation to this programme.

The following **exemptions, variations** and **additional requirements** to the University regulations have been checked by Academic Services and have been approved by the Faculty Education Committee.

A) EXEMPTIONS

The clause(s) listed below describe where an exemption from the University's Academic Regulations exists:

For the whole duration of their studies, students on this Programme are exempt from the following regulations:

- **No exemptions apply.**

B) VARIATIONS

The clause(s) listed below describe where a variation from the University's Academic Regulations exists:

Variation 1: Condonement

This programme varies from Regulation D5.

Due to the accreditation requirements of the Institute of Physics, the PHY-30006 Astrophysics Group Project and Science Communication module in Level 6 requires a minimum pass mark of 40% and cannot be condoned.

Additional Requirements

The programme requirements listed below are in addition to the University's Academic Regulations:

There are no additional requirements.

[\[1\]](https://www.keele.ac.uk/regulations/) References to University Regulations in this document apply to the content of the University's Regulatory Framework as set out on the University website here <https://www.keele.ac.uk/regulations/>.

Version History

This document

Date Approved: 05 March 2025

Previous documents

Version No	Year	Owner	Date Approved	Summary of and rationale for changes
1	2024/25	JOANA MARIA OLIVEIRA	22 August 2024	
1	2023/24	ARUMUGAM MAHENDRASINGAM	18 January 2023	
1	2022/23	ARUMUGAM MAHENDRASINGAM	09 June 2022	
1	2021/22	ARUMUGAM MAHENDRASINGAM	08 February 2021	
1	2020/21	ARUMUGAM MAHENDRASINGAM	12 December 2019	
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