Course evaluation - SH2203, VT18

Statistics for the Course Evaluation

Number of students: 17 **Number of Evaluations**: 16

Self reflection

On a personal level, I am dealing with a very heavy workload at the moment. I came back from two years at CERN (serving as the ATLAS Data Preparation coordinator) in October last year, and was immediately thrown into the teaching of the Subatomic physics course (SH2103) which has just ended, coupled with many obligations lingering on from the CERN appointment. Thus my goal was just to use the material from last year I gave the course, of course with updates to the lectures that deal with the front line of research such as the "follow a conference talk" lecture. A consequence of this was that there was not a lot of innovation in the course this year, but since the current form is the result of several years of tweaking my impression is that the course stayed at a good level but did not get significantly better in any sense.

A change in the course this year compared to any of the years I taught it before was that there was a higher fraction of international students (it used to be about 50% KTH students and 50% exchange students whereas this year there was a clear dominance of exchange students) and most significantly there were several students that came from other programs than Engineering Physics. This was noticeable in the level of prior knowledge of the subject this year compared to other years, where this year students started at a somewhat lower level generally (when it came to things like knowledge of quantum mechanics, relativistic physics, and subatomic physics).

One of my wishes for the course is to find a new course book, but I could not pursue that goal during this year due to my time constraints as was described above.

Evaluation of the student feedback

The students were pleased with the course, almost all students are either "very positive" or "quite positive" about the course. For the first time though I had a student just giving it a "neutral" grade, although this student also admitted that his or her primary interest was not in subatomic physics.

On the examination forms of the course (home assignment and student seminar day), the students continue to give these very favourable feedback listing them as much better learning alternatives compared to written exams. Also the procedure of acting as an opponent for another student during the seminar day, and having to hand in a small written report on the chosen topic for the seminar one week in advance of the seminar day rates very highly with the students. Some clarification on the form of the report is requested though (this can easily be accommodated next year). The only complaint, raised by several students, was that the student seminar day became too long given the large number of students taking the course this year. If there are more than ~15 students taking the course, it is probably best to schedule two student seminar days (if that is a possibility given lecture room booking and perhaps rules regarding course planning).

As was also discussed above, a couple of students had no prior knowledge on the subject, a few of those dropped out due to the high workload. These students did not like that the home assignments required them to search for solutions themselves, and would prefer to have the topics discussed in class before.

There was a suggestion to talk more about my research in ATLAS and incorporate that into the course.

And finally, which made my laugh and nod my head in agreement, one student suggests that an improvement to the course would be to have no lectures which start at 8:15.

Notes for next year

The course material is in a pretty good state, there are no outstanding things that needs to be fixed for next year. I still wish to give a broader description of physics beyond the standard model, dedicating a bit more time to that and also hopefully replacing the course literature to a more modern book.