Professional Skills I

Pro Skills occupy the whole of the first term and the first weeks of the second term. The primary aim of this course is to develop practical skills useful to physicists, including the ability to communicate in an effective manner, and the ability to work in teams. You will hopefully find these skills easily transferable to whatever career path you choose to take.

The best way to acquire and develop these skills is through practise. There will be 3 major components to the course:

- **A group project.** This exercise will occupy most of the first term. Working in groups of ~5, you will select a topic to present, research it and then prepare and deliver a 10-minute verbal presentation to the rest of the class. In addition you will also prepare a poster presentation and deliver a portfolio to: describe how the group has organised its working; identify the source material used in your research; and perform a short review evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of the presentations.

- **A CV and cover letter writing exercise.** This involves learning how to write a CV and covering letter to apply for an internship / Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program position

- **A topical review.** The last part of the professional skills course teaches you the skills needed to summarise an article and review a subject. Everyone will be given a research article by the tutor and asked to write a 500 word review outlining the context of the research, its purpose and the advance it makes.

Part way through term 2, Pro skills then becomes a series of tutorials on Problem Solving. Here you will learn techniques to enable you to break down real problems into workable physics – e.g. dimensional analysis, and order of magnitude calculations.