

How to Write PHYS 4311 Homework Solutions

You should extend the same care to written homework solutions as you would to writing an expository essay. The intention is identical, to explain a line of reasoning in the hopes of convincing an intellectually honest reader of the merits of your ideas. Painful experience has shown that many, even most, students have no clue about what is an acceptable format for submitted physics homework. Here are guidelines for PHYS 4211. **Failure to adhere to them will probably result in your homework being tossed and a score of zero issued.**

- Please understand that another human being has to evaluate your work. This other human being does not have access to your mind's interior. The grader can only evaluate homework based on what is actually written on the page.
- Cheating and plagiarism seem common at SMU. **Convincing evidence of solutions simply copied from internet will likely cause me to fail you.**
- Write legibly and neatly, and print your name at the top of the first page.
- Paginate and staple your solution pages together. Label the solutions on page 1 as "Homework 5" or "Homework 21" or something similar. **Print** your name on page 1 at its top.
- Do **NOT** submit scratch pad work. Your answer(s) should have a logical flow and contain, if appropriate, some words of guidance to the reader. Notice your textbook uses words along with equations. Why do you think that is?
- You need not show *every* step of a calculation, although it is perfectly acceptable if you do. You can, say, skip every other line or even more if your mathematical steps are straightforward or are not extensive. Words can guide the reader (aka "the grader").
- Each page has 1 column. Not 2, 3, ...
- **Box** your final answer. This means draw a box around **BOTH** the right hand side of an equation **and** the left hand side of your result. Final answers need to have the same general form:

$$\boxed{\text{quantity} = \text{some math stuff}}$$

For some weird reason, most students only feel compelled to box the right hand side of an equation, when they box at all, and omit what the right hand side is equal to.