

**FACULTY BOARD OF BIOLOGY
MEDICAL SCIENCES TRIPOS AND VETERINARY SCIENCES TRIPOS
PART I MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE**

There was an online meeting of the MVST Part I Committee at 2.00pm on
Tuesday 29 November 2022.

MINUTES

There were present: Dr Robert Abayasekara, Mr Yusuf Adia (MedSoc), Dr David Bainbridge, Dr Cecilia Brassett, Dr Nick Brown, Dr Holly Canuto (Chair), Mr Kieran Cullen (MedSoc), Dr Steve Edgley, Dr Sarah Fawcett, Dr Mary Fortune, Dr Gillian Fraser, Dr Pooja Harijan, Dr Adrian Kelly, Dr Mairi Kilkenny, Dr Hugh Matthews, Dr Paul Miller, Dr Daniel Nietlispach, Dr Kate Plaisted-Grant, Dr Milka Sarris, Dr Paul Schofield, Mr Daniel Silverthorne (CUVS rep), Dr David Summers, Dr Erica Watson, Prof Alun Williams, Dr Chad Pillinger (secretary).

In attendance: Mrs Jess Joseph, Dr Claire Michel, Dr Jessica White.

22.32. Apologies

Prof Dino Giussani, Dr Gareth Pearce, Dr Paul Wilkinson.

22.33. Membership of the Committee

Dr Rob White has stepped down from the Committee, Dr Milka Sarris replaces him as Course Organiser for IA Histology.

Miss Athena Ham is replaced by Mr Kieran Cullen as MedSoc President.

Mr Nihal Basha is replaced by Yusuf Adia as Academic Officer.

The Committee also wished to offer its congratulations to Dr Robert Abayasekara on his appointment as Chair of the Directors of Pre-clinical Sciences.

22.34. Declarations of interest

No conflicts of interest were declared.

22.35. Minutes

Minutes of the meeting held on 5 July 2022 were circulated and approved.

22.36. Matters Arising

There were none.

22.37. PfPC

The Course Management Committee was considering some amendments to PfPC. Dr Harijan introduced the item and invited comments and discussion.

Addition of a formative assessment previously considered had now been rejected. Dr Harijan was grateful for the involvement of Directors of Studies in these conversations too.

The aims of the current proposal were to increase involvement with disability medicine whilst the complementary medicine teaching were moved to other parts of the clinical course. There would be an increased focus on the patient experience and on the qualitative literature and would also aim to improve reflective learning. It would also pilot an arts-based course work project that had already been implemented in other institutions.

The proposed changes therefore were to:

- Move to looking at patient experience of living with a disability.
- A mandatory course work assessment consisting of a literature review and a written report. This should be no more demanding of students' time than the current assessment.
- An optional additional assessment consisting of a piece of artwork.
- A debriefing session with Directors of Clinical Studies.

The Committee sought assurance that guidance would be provided on how reflective assessments should be written – Veterinary Medicine issued such guidance to its clinical students and would be happy to offer assistance. Seminars were given on how to write a reflective piece of work, and there were some models albeit with some limitations especially relating to analysis. Assessment templates would be useful.

It was commented that the optional nature of the piece of artwork may reduce student engagement. Dr Harijan clarified that the intention was to offer this as an optional pilot, to see if it could be extended as an option students could use (partially) in place of the other assessments. There were examples of relevant artwork currently displayed in the School of Clinical Medicine and online. Appropriate training would be given, and consideration made as to whether it was possible to assess this type of material.

Recruitment of patient volunteers would be done on the basis of their condition, rather than whether they had a disability, mental, physical or chronic illness. There had been issues with volunteer recruitment in the past for other PFP courses, but there had been discussions with the therapy leads and it was hoped this would lead to a good base for recruitment.

Dr Harijan thanked the Committee for their comments and would report back to those working on the proposal. A full proposal, should this be made, would be brought back to the Committee in due course.

22.38. Examinations 2023

Dr Dee Scadden was unable to attend the meeting but Dr Fraser was able to brief the Committee. Examinations for pre-clinical MedST and VetST students would, for the majority of papers, be run using Inspira. It was anticipated that departmental facilities would be used, and timetabling for the Lent and Easter term was being looked at with the Student Registry.

Demonstration examinations were expected to be available to students around the end of Michaelmas term. Inspira scan paper would also be available for students to trial use in the demonstration examinations.

Colleges would be contacted shortly with further information about mock examinations. Training would also be offered to them along with guidance, and visits to colleges would also be carried out. This should allow colleges to set up their own mock examinations. The Committee were glad to hear that mock examinations would be available.

Training would be offered to Administrators and Examiners, and an 'Exam HQ' would be set up in Zoology where it was intended all material for scanning would be sent. This should hopefully improve the time it took to get full sets of script material to Examiners for marking. It was also hoped this would prevent scripts going missing or confirm whether a candidate even produced a script.

The Inspira team were grateful to departments that had offered rooms and staff to run the examinations – if departments wanted to continue having online examinations then departmental facilities would need to be used. At present there were no central University facilities that could conveniently host Inspira examinations.

The Committee felt that the examination timetable should be spread out over a longer time period than previously – this would reduce stress on the students. Dr Scadden and Dr Fraser were working with the Student Registry on the timetable and departments would be consulted.

The Faculty of Veterinary Medicine were interested in using Inspira for their clinical examinations, but it did appreciate this could not happen for 2022-23.

Candidates sitting examinations in colleges for 2021-22 used the browser version, which could not be invigilated as rigorously as the portal. It was expected that a new version of Inspira should mean the portal would not suffer as much from compatibility issues such as those experience with Mac laptops. There was also more confidence that the platform-related invigilation was not necessary now that all examinations were in person and had invigilators present in the room, including college locations.

22.39. Practical set allocation

Papers **MVSTI.22.12a** and **MVSTI.22.12b** were circulated with a proposal to change the set allocation method for medical students alongside a view from the Faculty Office. Dr Jessica White will introduced this item.

Any changes would affect the entire MedST and VetST cohort. There was support from the Directors of Pre-clinical Studies (DoPS). It had become more difficult for colleges to arrange supervisions since the introduction of afternoon lectures. Students had been consulted at the Student Focus group – they valued mixing of students from different colleges, but would be ok to reduce (not entirely eliminate) this if it led to earlier supervisions. The question of whether supervisions should be scheduled in timetabled teaching should be raised at DoPS.

Some restrictions on making the sets were present. In particular students admitted when they were under 18 needed to be placed in sets that would not have patient contact until they turned 18. The Chair would raise the issue of admitting under 18s to the course. This

was not a consideration for the Natural Sciences Tripos. It was noted that if a minimum age requirement was brought in that meant under 18s could not be admitted some students may need to take a gap year before they started at Cambridge.

The Committee were generally supportive of the proposals but the Chair would work with the Faculty Office on feasibility of implementation.

ACTION: Chair to raise admission of under 18s with the School of Clinical Medicine.

ACTION: Chair to liaise with Faculty Office on set allocation.

22.40. Curriculum review

Dr Claire Michel updated the Committee.

There had been further meetings of the working groups, although the Course Structure group was paused awaiting the outcome of the focus group.

The Course Structure focus group was looking at NST as well as MedST/VetST. It was anticipated that a paper would be ready before Christmas.

The Intended Learning Outcomes (ILO) group had carried out a consultation on draft ILOs and deadlines for this were soon.

The Standards Setting group had initially thought of piloting new standards setting methods with BoD and MoDA, but subsequently it was discovered that first question setting would need to be addressed. This would take between 2-3 years and to start things off a questions setting workshop had been set up for 6 January. Invites for this would be sent out soon.

The Awarding Gaps group had redesigned the introductory session for pre-clinical students and this had received positive feedback following its first running in October 2022.

The Teaching Staff Support group had held discussions with Course Organisers. The Collaboration with colleges group was proposing guidance and training courses.

The Student Support group was looking at what was needed for the first few weeks of students' time at the University. An initial meeting of the Online Assessment group had been held.

David Bainbridge left the meeting.

Additional projects involved looking at communications, and also holding annual away days. A project on 'Reimagining Undergraduate Education Support' was also underway focusing on provision of teaching administration support across the School.

The Committee queried that with the move to online learning should minimum requirements be specified for devices that could cope with the format of the material being given?

In spite of there being a mix between NST and MedST/VetST there should be no danger of one course driving the development of the other.

Erica Watson left the meeting.

Prof Williams stated that he would be happy to support anyone who needed assistance in developing ILOs. The current ILOs were more appropriate to the end of the course rather than the end of Part I. Course Organisers should have their own ILOs available to look at. They should reflect what is actually being taught, and this may not be reflected in all the current ILOs. There were complex issues and the Committee looked forward to further discussion in the working groups being reported.

22.41. Senior Examiner reports

A summary of Senior Examiner reports received was circulated as **MVSTI.22.13**. Full versions of reports could be downloaded from <https://www.biology.cam.ac.uk/exams/MedVetSTexams/mvst> or requested from the secretary.

22.42. Student Topics

A meeting of the Med/VetST Student Focus Group had been held on 21 November. The meeting was well attended by many student representatives and the Committee was glad to see that it provided an opportunity for students to raise concerns from their perspective.

Organisation of supervisions was one issue raised, with some students finding it difficult to organise these with their supervisors and other students. The Chair would liaise with the DoPS Committee.

ACTION: Chair will liaise on supervision organization with the Chair of the DoPS Committee.

Students were assured that they would be given training in using the Inspira system before the examination period. Issues with the Lent term 2022 examinations had been experienced but actions had been taken to ensure these were mitigated in the 2022-23 year. More training was also being provided to colleges, students and departments.

Gillian Fraser left the meeting.

Another concern raised was access to Moodle sites by previous years' students. In theory a IB student should be able to access the Moodle sites of the IA course he/she attended. Some students were finding that videos were not available on older Moodle sites, as it was standard policy to remove video content from archived sites. The point was made that videos should only be used as support for learning and revision, and their exclusion from Moodle sites for previous students did not represent a total loss of material from them. However, in the past two years online videos were the principal source of learning, and their sudden absence was disconcerting for students who experienced this.

Daniel Silverthorne left the meeting.

ACTION: The Chair would talk to the Deputy Head of School for Undergraduate Teaching about this issue.

22.43. Items for report

22.43.1. Form and conduct notices

Changes to the form and conduct of examinations previously approved via email circulation were circulated as **MVSTI.22.14.**

22.44. Any Other Business

22.44.1. Dr David Summers

The Chair brought to the Committee's attention that this would be the last meeting attended by Dr David Summers in his capacity as Chair of the Faculty Board of Biology. The Committee thanked Dr Summers for his service to the Committee for over 10 years and wished him a happy retirement.

22.44.2. Student Liaison Administrator – Mrs Jess Joseph

The Chair drew the Committee's attention to Mrs Jess Joseph who was attending the meeting in her capacity as Student Liaison Administrator. Mrs Joseph was responsible for much of the timetabling of the pre-clinical course as well as organising practical sets.

22.44.3. Format of future meetings

Most of the Committee supported retaining the online format, this would be reviewed periodically.

22.45. Dates of Meetings for 2022-23

The meetings of the MVST Part I Committee in 2022-23 were scheduled for 2pm for the following dates:

Tuesday 7 March 2023

A date TBC in July 2023