

**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 4 July 2023.

MINUTES

There were present: Dr Robert Abayasekara, Dr Cecilia Brassett, Dr Holly Canuto (Chair), Dr Robbie Duschinsky, Dr Steve Edgley, Dr Sarah Fawcett, Dr Gillian Fraser, Dr Pooja Harijan, Dr Adrian Kelly, Dr Mairi Kilkenny, Dr Hugh Matthews, Dr Paul Miller, Dr Daniel Nietlispach, Mr Joshua Sebastine, Dr Erica Watson, Dr Chad Pillinger (secretary).

In attendance: Dr Catrin Darsley, Mrs Jess Joseph, Ms Funmike Ifie, Dr Claire Michel, Dr Dee Scadden, Dr Tim Weil.

23.16. Apologies

Dr David Bainbridge, Dr Nick Brown, Dr Mary Fortune, Prof Dino Giussani, Miss Emily Moon, Dr Gareth Pearce, Dr Kate Plaisted-Grant, Dr Paul Wilkinson, Prof Alun Williams.

23.17. Membership of the Committee

Dr Adrian Kelly will be replaced by Dr Colin Crump as Course Organiser for the Biology of Disease subject for 2023-24. The Committee thanked Dr Kelly for his service on the Committee.

23.18. Declarations of interest

No conflicts of interest were declared.

23.19. Minutes

Minutes of the meeting held on 7 March 2023 were circulated and approved.

23.20. Marking and assessment boycott and other GBEC discussions

Dr Tim Weil updated the Committee. The General Board's Education Committee (GBEC) had calculated that approximately 30% of examination candidates were able to graduate, another 30% had some kind of provisional mark and the remainder had no marks at all.

For the pre-clinical medics and vets, in common with many other IA and IB courses provisional marks had been released.

With respect to 2nd MB/Vet MB resits, September resits would run as normal for most papers, but for those where no approved marks were released in Easter (MIMS and BoD) options were being discussed.

Marking would hopefully be resumed in October, but this assumed that the marking and assessment boycott was not extended beyond the end of September. It was uncertain how soon finalised class lists could be produced once the boycott was concluded – it would depend on the state of the marking for particular papers. There were no University-imposed

deadlines for publication of results and class lists once the boycott had finished.

It was agreed that holding a MIMS resit at the end of Michaelmas was not good from a college point of view; early Lent was currently being discussed.

Examiners for 2022-23 would be allowed to continue in these roles into the 2023-24 academic year to allow the signing of class lists. This included Examiners who would be on sabbatical in 2023-24, retiring or other situations which would normally bar them from examination duties. Examiners who were unable to continue on into the 2023-24 year could be replaced or removed from the list of Examiners as necessary.

An extension to the boycott would require an additional mandate from union members. If an extension were made it may in theory be possible for the University to have another vote on implementing procedures to mitigate impacts of the boycott. However no plans were in place at the time of the meeting, and any such extraordinary procedures would need to bear in mind the need to maintain good relations among staff.

The NST Part II allocations were being done on the basis of Part IA marks instead of Part IB marks.

With respect to the reading week the General Board have delayed a vote on this until further work is carried out to determine possible impacts. The University will be balloted in due course.

It was noted that Jane Clare had been appointed as interim head of the Education Quality and Policy Office (EQPO).

Guidance on staff/student relations would be issued soon.

There was a proposal likely to go through GBEC for self-certification of extensions to deadlines for course work submission. This was in response to recent communications from the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA). The University were keen to push this through but some problems were anticipated that needed to be raised. However there had not been much (if any) consultation with faculties and departments. It may be that departments will end up moving their deadlines if too many students take advantage of this new procedure. The implications of this policy on MedST/VetST and 2nd MB/Vet MB subjects needed to be considered. It was noted by the Committee that students did not have to give any reasons for their self-certified extensions, and there was no mechanism of challenge other than being able to specify a maximum number of times a student may use self-certification. The latter would require some kind of monitoring process that could be time consuming.

The Committee thanked Dr Weil for the update, and requested that he be invited to further meetings for similar updates.

23.21. Sustainability teaching

Catrin Darsley attended the meeting to brief the Committee on Cambridge Zero. The Biological Sciences Committee had also been briefed in March but there were updates since then.

Currently Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs) with a mind to how these might fit with Cambridge Zero. Teaching and learning days were also being considered. In the School of Physical Sciences a review was being undertaken of study skills.

Dr Darsley would be happy to discuss activities of Cambridge Zero with individual members, and would also like to support Course Organisers in the School of Biological Sciences who would like guidance – it might be possible to nominate a lead in SBS who could work with a counterpart in the School of Clinical Medicine. The latter were already being liaised with by Cambridge Zero along with climate change leads.

A report on sustainability teaching across the University was expected to be produced soon, when available this would be circulated to the Committee.

Members were urged to contact Dr Darsley at Catrin.Darsley@admin.cam.ac.uk for further information or discussion.

Dr Darsley left the meeting.

23.22. Biological Sciences Librarian

Ms Funmike Ifie attended the meeting to introduce herself. She had recently been appointed as the Biological Sciences Librarian, and was part of a team of eight librarians in the School of Biological Sciences. This team was there to support all in SBS in research, learning and teaching, along with early career researchers and the overall aims of the School. In particular staff and students were assisted with the process of information finding.

An email would be sent to Course Organisers soon requesting meetings and offering support.

The Committee queried that many departments had their own libraries, and wondered how these fitted in with the overall vision. The departmental libraries would be retained, the only changes would be to ensure that delivery of library services were consistent across departments.

The Committee thanked Ms Ifie for attending and would be happy for her to attend further meetings for updates.

23.23. Matters Arising

There were none.

23.24. Examinations 2023

Dr Scadden attended the meeting to brief the Committee

The examinations had finished for Easter 2023 (although the marking and assessment boycott meant some process would need to be carried into 2023-24) and those run on Inspira had gone reasonably smoothly.

The student experience was good, much improved from last year. It was agreed that student engagement with training should be made mandatory – the candidates who experienced problems this year were those who had not attended any of the training sessions offered.

To make running of the examinations on Inspira more straightforward the Student Registry were being asked to end the practice of having some papers back to back.

Engagement was needed by colleges to support candidates sitting in colleges, but more support was needed for this. Training for college tutorial offices would be continued but Directors of Studies also needed to be engaged.

The requirement for multi-factorial authentication caused some issues where candidates did not have an appropriate device. Senior Tutors needed to discuss this, there was the possibility of providing a 'dongle' to all students for MFA purposes.

Processes run by the Examinations Office in support of Inspira needed reviewing and in particular more resource needed to be provided.

It was requested by some on the Committee that the yellow and pink sheets be reinstated, so it could be quickly determined whether candidates had withdrawn. Dr Scadden would check this with the Student Registry.

'Fit-to-sit' examinations could be run. Demonstration examinations had been run in the past and it was possible with these to determine who had attended. The Part IB medics had the lowest attendances of the bootcamps run for the 2022-23 examinations – communications needed to be considered. This issue was being discussed by the central University, and also at the School/Faculty level.

Online sessions on examinations were being scheduled. The FEBP subject had organised mock examinations, and it was hoped that more subjects would be able to offer this.

Feedback issues were mainly to do with colleges due to a lack of support. Extra training and communications with colleges were required. Students that needed the most support tended to those that engaged the least – how could engagement be encouraged? Some consideration was being given to sending technicians to non-engaged colleges. The Titan room training for students was well attended.

The discontinuation of the browser version of Inspira was considered a good thing. In theory if enough technical support was available a browser version could be completely done away with. Having examinations run purely on the portal made things much easier for Examiners. However it was likely that the browser version would still be retained for use as a back up.

Revision sessions with mock examination questions were available for FAB in the browser version – these could instead be run in the portal but there needed to be a consistent approach across departments. There was a new feature in Inspira that would allow mock examinations to be re-run continuously by candidates.

There was more guidance on paper writing and this would be made available to departments. The Committee queried who would be doing paper checking in the future following the transfer of responsibility for Inspira to the Student Registry. Administrators in departments should be able to perform this role, and would get better at this in time.

The Committee thanked Dr Scadden for all her work on Inspira.

23.25. Additional lecture for HR

Paper **MVSTI.23.06** was circulated with a request for an additional lecture on contraception that would replace a revision lecture. This was in response, in part, to requests from students. The Course Organisers were aware of the general requirement to keep workload down, but noted that there would only be four lectures in the Easter term.

The Committee agreed to the additional lecture.

23.26. Change in assessment method for PfPA

It was proposed to change the assessment of the PfPA module as follows:

‘Currently students submit 2 reflective essay assignments, each 600 words. The proposed new format will involve the submission of 1 essay assignment of 1,200 words. Additionally the questions will be slightly revised and the marking schedule altered.’

Dr Harijan addressed the Committee stating that the emphasis of this module was reflection. A change to the proposed format would allow more assessors to be recruited. A more detailed marking scheme had been developed for the proposed format.

Feedback offered to students would be less under the proposed format, but would be in line with that offered for the other PfP modules.

The Committee agreed to the proposed format change for PfPA assessment.

23.27. FTEs for MedST/VetST subjects

Following a request to departments a revised FTE distribution for the course’s subjects was circulated as **MVSTI.23.08**.

The Committee approved the revised FTE.

ACTION: secretary to forward to the Secretary of the Faculty Board.

23.28. Course Management Committee reports

A summary of Course Management Committee/student feedback meetings would be reported on at the next meeting.

23.29. Curriculum review

Dr Michel gave a general update of the reviews that were ongoing, which encompassed the MVMCR (MedST/VetST review), the BNSCR (biological NST review) and the reimagining undergraduate education support (Teaching Administration).

Four broad areas were being looked at:

- Course structure
- Assessment
- Student development
- Education delivery (staff)

Future work would look at intended learning outcomes and course structure (with a membership to include Gillian Fraser, Dee Scadden, Sarah Millington-Burgess and David Bainbridge). A draft paper with potential proposals for the MedST/VetST course structure was being prepared.

Thanks were expressed to Jess Joseph for her work on the timetable. It was queried if room booking approvals could be done earlier next year – this should be possible.

23.29.1. Updated MVMCR policy proposal on standards-setting

Following feedback from members of the MVST Part I Committee at the last meeting, the Standard-Setting working group updated its proposed policy and delivered a series of talks on standard-setting to examiners and course organisers.

The MVMCR Steering Committee approved the updated policy on 27/06/23, circulated as **MVSTI.23.09**.

The working group would look into potential methods that could be used. For some standards setting questions needed to be in certain formats – if this had to follow the School of Clinical Medicine's format then it may not be appropriate for pre-clinical examinations. Examples of question types would be provided the Committee agreed that it would be useful to see these.

There was concern among some members of the Committee that the paper seemed to mandate the use of clinical style questions, and that this was not acceptable for use in pre-clinical examinations. Whilst the overall objective of standards setting was supported, the use of mandated question formats was not. The reference to question setting, the specific questions that might not be appropriate and the reference to named individuals who will guide question setting were not thought to be appropriate for pre-clinical examinations.

The Committee agreed that there needed to be a separation of the question setting and the standards setting.

Dr Matthews and Dr Edgley agreed to look further at the proposal and suggest modifications that would make it more acceptable to the Committee. The amended document would then be circulated for approval by the Committee.

Post meeting update: a revised policy was circulated and approved by the Committee on 12 July.

23.29.2. MVMCR discussion paper on study skills

The Student Training working group produced a discussion paper (circulated as **MVSTI.23.10**) on study skill provision in the Med/VetST, which was strongly supported by the MVMCR Steering Committee on 27/06/23.

The paper noted that study skills sessions organised within colleges were susceptible to possible variation. A draft timeline of different skills that were being taught was being produced. If a more consistent approach were desired an academic would need to take on the role of study-skills coordinator. There could be overlap with some of the sessions organised for NST students. It would need to be ensured that students engaged with these sessions. The Directors of Studies for Pre-clinical Sciences (DoPS) would be consulted. It needed to be adequately resourced to encourage engagement, if it was run badly then students would be put off attending.

The Committee supported the paper but resourcing would need to be investigated before implementation.

23.30. University Open Days

The University would run its 2023 Open Days on Thursday 6 July and Friday 7 July. A stand for the medical course would be present in the Student Services Centre. Attendees will be directed to some of the sample lectures offered as part of the NST.

Members were encouraged to attend the information stands as time permitted.

23.31. Student Topics

A meeting of the student focus group was held on 27 June. Topics discussed included:

- The marking and assessment boycott,
- The timing of PfPC placements,
- The format of the course handbook
- Information on individual SECHI Essay marks
- Timing of 2nd MB/Vet MB resit examinations
- Exam operations

23.32. Items for report

There were none

23.33. Any Other Business

23.33.1. Education Monitoring Review (EMR)

It was expected that EMR for Part IA and Part IB courses would be carried out in Lent 2024. However no communication had been sent out from the Education Quality and Policy Office (EQPO). Further information was being sought.

23.33.2. Panopto auto-archiving

Auto archiving of Panopto recordings would take place on 4 September. Recordings that needed retaining would have to be manually restored.

Earlier in the year there were indications that alternative dates for auto-archiving were being considered, but this seems to have been dropped.

Some support was being considered for those departments that needed a lot of material retaining – the University Information Service (UIS) should be in contact with relevant departments. It was noted that it should be possible to decide which folders or sites get archived.

23.34. Dates of Meetings for 2022-23, 2023-24

Dates for 2023-24 were scheduled for 2pm on the following dates:

Tuesday 28 November 2023

Tuesday 12 March 2024

July 2024 date TBA