

**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 2 July 2024.

**MINUTES**

**There were present:** Dr Holly Canuto (Chair), Dr Robert Abayasekara, Dr David Bainbridge, Ms Belle Chatdokmaiprai (MedSoc President), Dr Colin Crump, Dr Robbie Duschinsky, Dr Steve Edgley, Dr Sarah Fawcett, Dr Mary Fortune, Dr Sandra Fulton (acting Chair up to item 24.7), Prof Dino Giussani, Prof Anna Hollis, Dr Mairi Kilkenny, Dr Hugh Matthews, Dr Paul Miller, Dr Daniel Nietlispach, Dr Gareth Pearce, Dr Milka Sarris, Prof Dee Scadden, Prof Paul Schofield, Dr Suzanne Turner, Dr Erica Watson, Dr Chad Pillinger (secretary).

**In attendance:** Dr Claire Michel, Dr Melissa Rielly and Dr Tim Weil.

**24.21. Apologies**

Dr Cecilia Brassett, Dr Nick Brown, Dr Lee De-Wit, Prof Jane Dobson, Dr Paul Wilkinson.

**24.22. Membership of the Committee**

No items to report.

**24.23. Declarations of interest**

No conflicts of interest were declared.

**24.24. Teaching review**

Melissa Reilly attended the meeting to talk about the University Teaching Review.

The Committee was directed to the teaching review website:

[https://universityofcambridgecloud.sharepoint.com/sites/UoC\\_Education/ServicesProjectDeliveryTeam/SitePages/Teaching%20Review.aspx](https://universityofcambridgecloud.sharepoint.com/sites/UoC_Education/ServicesProjectDeliveryTeam/SitePages/Teaching%20Review.aspx)

Prof Scadden and Prof Williamson had been involved. An initial report would be published in mid-July 2024 concentrating on issues identified around workload and the supervision system. This would detail possible solutions including the pros and cons of these possibilities, and would be further worked on through Michaelmas 2024.

A larger group of fourteen themes with aims and problems statements would be given later, for review by 'Tripos Teams' over Michaelmas 2024. These themes would include concepts such as 'Fragmentation', 'Clarity', 'Purpose', 'Communication methods' and 'Scheduling, along with workload and supervisions.

There were 11 initial recommendations so far, of these the most important were considered to be:

- Extended reflection.
- Revitalisation of DoS Committees.

- Support and guidance for supervisors.
- Boundaries for teaching activities.

The governance would be approving these by July 2024 and it was possible that actions would be proposed for discussion in Michaelmas 2024. It was hoped that final recommendations would be made in Lent 2025 for implementation in October 2025. This would only be done in consultation with the relevant Course Organisers, Teaching Committees, colleges and students; the review group would also be happy to discuss proposals with individuals. It was recognised that feedback could give a distorted view and care needed to be taken in interpreting it.

Different Triposes were affected to different extents by issues around the themes being considered. However it was likely that there would be common strands across Triposes in which good practice could be identified and shared.

The Committee thanked Dr Rielly for attending and briefing the Committee. Slides of the presentation would be made available after the meeting.

#### **24.25. Minutes**

Minutes of the meeting held on 12 March 2024 were circulated and approved.

#### **24.26. Matters Arising**

##### **24.26.1. Access to pre-clinical VLE (24.5)**

Access to pre-clinical VLEs should have been organised for all Course Organisers (with the exception of FAB for Human Tissue Act reasons) – if anyone needed access they should contact the secretary.

#### **24.27. Examination Board balance**

At its first meeting of MVSTIA Senior Examiners it was suggested that there be a more representative gender balance on Examination boards. The Committee was asked to discuss and, if deemed desirable, make a recommendation to the Faculty Board. Dr Bainbridge introduced the item.

It was recognised that whilst the ideal should be for an equal representation of men and women on examination boards, any mandate to require this may inadvertently place an unfair administrative burden on women. The main concern was to ensure that there was an appropriate balance of expertise. It was agreed that no further action was required for this item.

#### **24.28. Request for an additional lecture in CVB**

A paper **MVSTI.24.07** was submitted by Dr Bainbridge requesting an additional lecture in CVB. This would help demonstrate links between clinical and pre-clinical aspects of the subject and would not involve too much extra information for students.

**The Committee approved the request.**

## **24.29. Accreditation visits**

### **24.29.1. General Medical Council (GMC) visit**

An 'Annual Quality Assurance Summary' for the recent GMC visit was circulated as **MVSTI.24.08**.

The GMC assessors had met with a selected group of staff and students involved in pre-clinical teaching of medicine. Some issues had been identified that would need addressing:

- The consistency of teaching provision across different colleges.
- The involvement of students in reviews of medical education.
- The clinical relevance of the pre-clinical course.
- The admissions process.
- EDI enhancements.

Probably the most difficult part would be to harmonise processes and provision across colleges and doing this in such a way that perceptions of unequal provision could be addressed. Some supervisors were perceived to be better than others, especially where a Course Organiser acted as a supervisor.

Perceptions of differences between college supervisions revolved around the numbers and quality of supervisors, the organisation of mock examinations, the essays set during supervisions and many others. Some students felt they had too much supervision, others too little – how much was desirable or necessary?

There was not too much hard data on variability of supervisions across colleges, other than differences in resources and some qualitative assessments on quality of supervision. Some variability would have to be accepted. Provision of extra resources to colleges that had less might help mitigate differences but could not be expected to entirely eliminate them.

It was difficult to convey the complexity of the Cambridge system to regulators. They could be satisfied for now with the knowledge that an extensive review of pre-clinical education was underway, but at some point action would have to be demonstrated.

### **24.29.2. Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS) visit**

The Chair briefly reported on a recent visit by the RCVS. It was noted that the location for the visit was not optimal as attendees had difficulty hearing each other. A report would be available for consideration soon.

## **24.30. Curriculum review**

### **24.30.1. Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs) for pre-clinical medicine and veterinary medicine**

Course organisers had fed back on which ILOs were introduced, Progressed, Achieved or Not Covered. Paper **MVSTI.24.09** indicates the responses received. Columns B and C indicate the highest level achieved across the Part I MedST and Part I VetST respectively.

It was noted that the Committee had approved these ILOs and had been mapped to all subjects other than PAM – Gareth Pearce would be contacted soon about this. 'Deep dives' were being undertaken in FAB,

HOM, VAP and MoDA. In HOM, adjustments to lectures had been made and guidance for supervisors produced. In MoDA ILOs had been mapped and a detailed review of content was being undertaken. In VAP objectives were being drafted for ILOs.

Other activities included a student survey had been carried out and analysis of this was ongoing. There was an MVMCR away day scheduled for September – Committee members were encouraged to contribute with talks or to ask colleagues to contribute.

The Committee expressed its thanks to Dr Michel.

#### **24.30.2. Example essays**

Following the example of MoDA, a proposed process to collate essays written in exam conditions and to provide exemplar essays to students was circulated as **MVSTI.24.10**.

It was envisaged that Teaching Administrators would retrieve essays, which Course Organisers could then annotate before being uploaded to Moodle sites. A second annotator could be used to check, but marks should not be changed.

It was clarified that this policy was only for essay papers – MCQ and practical papers were not expected to be made available. Students would need to access sample MCQ/practical papers. The questions for these could not be released for various reasons, including the need to reuse questions, and that the move to criterion referenced standards setting would mean that questions would have to be reused across years. Using sample question would create more work for departments but these should only need to be generated once with only occasional updates to reflect changes in content.

#### **24.31. Cambridge Medicine admissions requirements**

Dr Abayasekara and the Chair introduced this item. The admissions requirements for medical students, without any consultation (neither the Medical Education Committee or the Senior Tutor's Committee), had been changed to require three science A levels. Concerns were raised by the Senior Tutors Committee, and the changes were reversed. This change only came to the attention of DoPS after it had been implemented. The reason for the change was stated as being to reflect that 90% of actual admissions had three science A levels, and was implemented halfway through the A level cycle.

The changes were advertised briefly on the Cambridge Admissions Office website before being taken down.

It was possible that the changes to require three A level sciences would be proposed at some point in the future, but hopefully with appropriate consultation.

#### **24.32. Student Topics**

Issues raised at a meeting of the Student Focus group meeting on 1 July were considered.

Students were concerned at the examination timetable with subject papers scattered over the examination period making it difficult to revise. There was previously a timetable that was used before lockdowns, but the Student Registry could not use this due to the move to online invigilated examinations. The Student Registry would be contacted to work on a better timetable for 2025.

Some examination results were released on Saturday – this was a problem as college support was not always available over weekends. The results did not always specify pass/fail marks, and failed students did not always get an opportunity to talk to their DoS or tutor.

***ACTION: examination results not to be released on Saturday.***

It was mentioned that revision resources for practical papers were not as useful as for other formats, or in some cases were not available at all. There were concerns that the questions in section II papers did not correspond with what was taught on the course. Some supervisors had more knowledge of the content of the practical papers than others.

**24.33. Course Management Committee reports**

A summary of Course Management Committee/student feedback meetings was circulated as **MVSTI.24.11** and noted.

**24.34. Any Other Business**

Two late papers relating to timetable changes for FAB and BoD would be considered over the Long Vacation via circulation.

**24.35. Dates of Meetings for 2022-23, 2023-24**

The meeting dates for 2024-25 were detailed below (all at 2pm):

3 December 2024  
11 March 2025  
8 July 2025