

**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 30 November 2021.

MINUTES

There were present: Dr Robert Abayasekara, Mr Nihal Basha, Dr Cecilia Brassett, Dr Holly Canuto (Chair), Dr Robbie Duschinsky, Dr Steve Edgley, Dr Gillian Fraser, Miss Athena Ham, Pooja Harijan, Dr Adrian Kelly, Dr Mairi Kilkenny, Dr Hugh Matthews, Dr Paul Miller, Miss Emily Moon, Dr Gareth Pearce, Dr Kate Plaisted-Grant, Mr Daniel Silverthorne (CUVS rep), Dr David Summers, Dr Anne Swift, Mr Boyan Wang, Dr Erica Watson, Dr Rob White, Dr Paul Wilkinson

In attendance: Dr Claire Michel.

21.27. Apologies

Dr David Bainbridge, Dr Nick Brown, Dr Marc de la Roche, Prof Dino Giussani, Dr Maria Goodall, Miss Elizabeth Stephenson.

21.28. Membership of the Committee

Mr Rudi Bruijn-Yard and Mr Daniel Silverthorne join the Committee as first year reps for CUVS.

Miss Athena Ham and Mr Nihal Basha join the Committee as MedSoc president and MedSoc Academic Officer respectively.

Dr Kate Plaisted-Grant replaces Dr Becky Lawson as Psychology representative.

21.29. Declarations of interest

No conflicts of interest were declared.

21.30. Minutes

Minutes of the meeting held on 6 July 2021 were circulated and approved.

21.31. Matters Arising

21.31.1. Curriculum Review for MedST and VetST (21.17.1)

Dr Michel attended the meeting for this item and reported on the Discovery Phase. Papers **MVSTI.21.05** (Discovery phase report) and **MVSTI.21.06** (working group memberships) were circulated to the Committee.

There were nine main recommendations arising from the discovery phase:

- 1) To appraise potential course structures.
- 2) To write Intended Learning Outcomes for each teaching session, review the level of detail taught, and clarify what course content is considered essential.

- 3) To review clinical integration in the course and create a new role for clinicians.
- 4) To review assessment of the course.
- 5) To provide central training and academic support to students.
- 6) To create a central oversight structure for the Med/VetST.
- 7) To provide centralised support for teaching.
- 8) To improve equality, diversity and inclusion in all aspects of the course, its delivery and its assessment.
- 9) To engage more closely with College teaching.

Training offered would include courses to facilitate a structured timetable and online lectures.

In the next phase of the review 10 new working groups would be set up looking at the following areas:

- 1) Course structure appraisal
- 2) Intended Learning Outcomes
- 3) Assessment
 - a. Online assessment.
 - b. Standard setting.
 - c. Diversifying assessment.
 - d. Preparation for assessment and remediation.
 - e. Awarding gaps.
- 4) Student training
- 5) Teaching staff support.
- 6) Collaboration with colleges.

Further reports would be made to the Committee as the review progressed.

The Committee felt that very good work was coming out of the review, and congratulated Dr Michel and all who had been involved.

21.31.2. Education Monitoring (21.20)

Dr Summers reminded the Committee that the University was seeking to replace existing teaching review structures with a system that was hoped to be more data-driven. A pilot of the new education monitoring system was to be run on the Natural Sciences Tripos course, but as yet there were no plans to involve the MedST/VetST.

The Committee wondered if, given the disruption to teaching in 2021-22, it might be more useful to run a pilot in a year in which teaching was more or less back to normal.

21.32. Teaching and Examinations 2021-22

Dr Michel reported on this item. A meeting had been held with the student representatives. Information on the format of the 2021-22 examinations had been sent out, but given the possible changes in situation this was not comprehensive. It did let students know that their examinations would continue to be held online and the lengths of the examinations would follow those of previous years – any differences to format would be

communicated to students by Course Organisers. More information would be available at the start of term.

Much teaching being currently delivered was being done so in-person. In Lent term in-person lectures would be possible for BoD and MoDA alongside the other courses delivering in-person teaching in Michaelmas. In the case of BoD due to the size of the class it had been necessary to split the medics and vets to teach them separately.

During Michaelmas several students or their DoS had contacted the Faculty Office to say they had difficulty attending practicals and then attending subsequent online lectures or seminars (or *vice-versa*). This was a particular problem for students in out-of-town colleges, as they did not have time to return to their college after practicals to get online for seminars and other online teaching. The Faculty Office arranged for spaces in Downing site locations to be made available for students but there had not been much take-up of this – for example the Babbage had only two students attending, and no students took up the opportunity in the facilities provided by the Department of Biochemistry.

A survey of students had been run near to the end of term but not many responses had been received. Part IA students seemed keener to have such facilities available but it was hard to gauge what the demand might be in the Lent term. Perhaps a single small room might be sufficient. It was hard to find rooms for this purpose so it was disappointing that the take up of the provision was so low. It was suggested that the room availabilities be noted on the online timetable so that students would have a further avenue for being informed of this. It may be possible to arrange this but it would need to be made clear that students did not have to attend these spaces at these times. Although take up was low, those students that did use the spaces were likely to have appreciated the provision. There was some indication that vets had been told rooms would only be available from Lent – it was uncertain where this communication had come from.

There was a query about the timetable for the roll-out of Inspira training. Dr Weil and Dr Scadden and the School's Learning Technologists had attended training sessions. There was no information on when training would be made available to Examiners and others involved in the examination process, but further details would be released soon.

21.33. Proposal for changes to PfPC

Dr Harijan reported to the Committee a proposal for changes to the examination for PfPC. This module was for students to produce a report on two placements, one at a complementary medicine practice and another at an alternative medicine practice.

There were three aspects to the proposal being considered:

- To change the patient group to those with a range of disabilities.
- Should assessment be formative or summative?
- Should DoS be involved in delivery and assessment of the course?

Other departments had tried involving colleges in normalizing assessments e.g. with NST practicals. It didn't really work out due to heterogeneity across colleges. However, in the case of PfPC it was intended to use

clinical DoS who were already involved in assessment and with knowledge of the subject area.

Would having formative assessment keep students engaged? It was not clear at the moment but other courses with purely formative assessment have been looked at. It should be clear to students the importance of engaging with assessment – could any formative assessment be mandatory or should summative assessment be retained? These were questions for further consideration.

The Committee were supportive of the change to incorporate patients with disabilities. A paper on changes to assessment should be brought to the Committee for further discussion. Any gaps in teaching of complementary and alternative medicine could be covered in other parts of the PfP course or in the clinical component of the course.

The Committee were happy with the approach so far.

ACTION: Dr Harijan to bring paper to next meeting.

21.34. Reading week

The University was consulting on a proposal to include a mid-term reading week in Michaelmas and Lent terms. It was proposed to keep the same number of teaching days by bringing forward the start date for term and pushing back the end date. The proposal was circulated as **MVSTI.21.07**. A response to the proposal from the Cambridge Graduate Course (CGC) Organisers was circulated as **MVSTI.21.07a**.

The response for the CGC Course Organisers was clear that insertion of a reading week would make the course undeliverable. The current timetable was already very tight with only small breaks (two weeks in the case of the long vacation) between pre-clinical teaching/examinations and clinical placements. This would put even more pressure on students for what was already a very challenging course. It would not be possible to exempt CGC students from the reading week as they took the same timetable as the standard course students, and duplication of lectures would be very difficult, if not impossible, to arrange.

Some student views had been gathered informally. In summary, although some students were in supportive of the idea of having a break during term, it was recognised that it would be difficult to overcome practicalities in the implementation of a reading week. There were also some concerns about the extra expense for accommodation. The student representatives would explore this further by consulting with a wider cohort, and a survey was currently being conducted by the students in order to do this.

The Committee agreed that a reading week would not address the workload concerns or relieve the pressure from the amount of learning material - perhaps there were other ways of addressing these issues other than inserting a reading week. For example, the current curriculum review which was being undertaken.

There was also concern expressed by some students that some colleges might use the reading week to insert more supervisions. With the

extension of term there were also implications for admissions interviews which were held in the week after the end of Michaelmas term.

A reading week might be more useful for Part II students where they could use the time to get up to speed with literature for their project or dissertation – but it would not be a break for them. A lot of pressure came from the students themselves – would a reading week put more pressure on them? There were also the difficulties of rearranging the timetable.

For the vets a particular issue would be ensuring that students could complete their extra-mural studies (EMS) with the earlier starts/late ends to term. It was further noted that the Department of Veterinary Medicine opposed a reading week for the clinical component of the veterinary medicine course.

The Medical Education Committee (MEC) would discuss the proposal at its 9 December meeting.

The deadline for the School to submit the survey was 10 January. The School would submit a single response for the MedST, VetST and NST biology subjects. This Committee would send their views to the School; the student representatives were urged to send any results of formal student surveys to the secretary or Chair by 10 December.

A response to the proposal would be made from the Committee to the Faculty shortly after 10 December.

The Committee did not support the proposal for a reading week, but agreed that it would include comments from the student survey in the response to the School.

ACTION: Chair and secretary to send a response to the School after student feedback is received.

21.35. SECHI Prizes

Dr Duschinsky reported on a proposal to award a prize to students who scored highly in the SECHI examination. The shift to course work had been considered for a number of years. The Course Organiser felt this was an opportunity to consider awarding a prize to high-performing candidates for the submitted coursework.

The SECHI seminar leaders were in favour of prizes. It was acknowledged that there may be changes due to the ongoing curriculum review, but in spite of this it would still be good to have something in place.

The SECHI course sometimes struggled to keep the engagement of students and colleges. A prize would acknowledge the achievement by the students; the conditions for its award would have to be exceptional, and it was being considered whether the submitted material should be of publishable quality to be eligible for the prize. The prize should provide motivation for students and improve the status of the SECHI course among college DoS.

Prize essays would be available to view by other students if appropriate permissions were given. The essays could even be published open to the public so that the good practice could be shown nationally. It could also improve awareness among trainee doctors of SECHI issues.

The SECHI subject was therefore asking for the following:

- 1) A prize for the top student(s).
- 2) Making the prize essay available for other students and others to see, to facilitate teaching.
- 3) To publicise the essay more widely to improve awareness of SECHI.

The Committee was broadly in favour of a prize and felt it would be good for the SECHI course. There was a question however of what the prize should be? Publication of the winning essay(s) would have to be done – would this be by the assessors?

The form of the prize was being thought about. The SECHI organisers felt that they should see how the new assessment ran in Lent 2022, with submitted essays instead of a written paper. This would allow the SECHI assessors to decide how the format went and what feedback types would be useful for candidates to receive. A pass/fail feedback was often insufficient, and alternatives needed to be thought through.

There was only a small budget for SECHI but it was felt that the size of any prize was less important than the sense of recognition and achievement a student would have in being awarded a prize. In fact there was support for there being no physical prize as such (cash or otherwise) but if the prize appeared on the student's examination transcript that would be sufficient award.

The Committee supported the proposal in principle.

ACTION: Dr Duschinsky to consult with others and bring a paper to the next meeting.

21.36. Proposal for changes to PBS

A proposal for changes to the Psychological and Behavioural Sciences Tripos (PBS) was circulated as **MVSTI.21.08**. Some medical and veterinary students take PBS as their Part II and therefore the Committee was asked to review and comment on the proposed changes.

Dr Plaisted-Grant from the Department of Psychology spoke to the Committee. Several other departmental/Faculty teaching Committees had already approved the proposals and now it was necessary to consider the potential impacts on medical and veterinary students who might choose PBS at Part II. Currently, some medics and vets applied to study PBS directly, others chose to study psychology via Part II Psychology.

The proposal put forward by the Department of Psychology would remove NST Part II Psychology. The teaching of psychology at Part II would instead be offered solely by PBS. The new PBS course would be offered to medics and vets, along with NST students, with the same number of spaces as currently offered for Part II Psychology. At Part IA and Part IB the Department of Psychology would continue to teach as currently for NST and MedST/VetST.

Medics and vets taking Part II PBS would transfer to the PBS Tripos and they would have an opportunity to take a project.

Students would be made aware well ahead of time of the new routes to study psychology at Part II.

The Committee were grateful to Dr Plaisted-Grant for outlining the proposals and answering the Committee's questions and in particular for considering the medics and vets. The Department of Psychology were hoping to improve teaching for these students in the new PBS Part II structure.

The Committee were happy with the proposals for PBS, as long as good communications were kept up with students about the options available.

The Committee approved the proposed changes to PBS.

21.37. Form and conduct notices

A list of form and conduct notices was circulated as **MVSTI.21.09**. These were approved. It was noted that the notice for NAB/NHB was a minor detail that would not be formally published (confirmed with EQPO), but students would be informed of the change by the Course Organisers.

ACTION: secretary to arrange for publication of form and conduct notices via EQPO.

21.38. Course Management Committee minutes

No Course Management Committee/Student Consultative Committee minutes had been received for this meeting to discuss. Course Organisers were asked to forward any Management Committee minutes/student consultative Committee minutes to the secretary for report to the next meeting.

ACTION: Course Organisers to send Course Management Committee/Student Consultative Committee minutes to the secretary.

21.39. Student Topics

Items recently raised at a recent Med/VetST Student Focus Group had already been discussed under item 21.32.

21.40. Items for report

There were none.

21.41. Any Other Business

21.41.1. Accessibility of timetable

Due to the MIMOSA software previously used to generate the timetables for MedST/VetST being no longer available, the Faculty Office, at short notice, had been required to switch to a new timetabling software package, TermTime. Unfortunately, at present it was not possible to configure TermTime such that a generic timetable could be

downloaded and posted on the Faculty website, as was possible with MIMOSA. The only way to view a timetable was to download it to the calendar, and this could only be done for specific students, by specifying their CRSID. This was a useful workaround but still not ideal, as different students were assigned to different practical sets and therefore one student's timetable may not be the same as another's'. This was quite frustrating for DoS who had to keep track of their students' timetables.

The Faculty Office was working on a solution to this situation and hoped that something would be in place by next term. It was requested that any such solution be platform 'agnostic' so it would work with any other software. It was also queried if a simple .pdf could be uploaded for each course.

ACTION: secretary to feedback to Faculty Office.

21.41.2. Course feedback

Following a query, it was clarified that any feedback relating to specific courses should be sent to the relevant Course Management Committee/Student Consultative Committee.

Course representatives had not yet been appointed for some courses. Course Organisers and student representatives were asked to contact students and encourage them to come forward for these important roles.

21.42. Dates of Meetings for 2021-22

It was noted that further meetings of the MVST Part I Committee in the 2021-22 academic year were scheduled for the following dates (all at 2pm):

Tuesday 8 March

Tuesday 5 July