

**Date** Wednesday 5 February 2020

**Time** 2pm-4pm

**Present** Dr Sandra Fulton (Chair), Dr Kate Plaisted-Grant (Psychology rep), Dr Simone Schnall (Chair of Exams), Dr Jeanne Estabel (Departmental Administrator), Dr Lee de-Wit (Director of PBS), Ms Daniele Campello (Library), Dr Enrico Crema (HSPS rep), Dr Emma Pomeroy (HSPS rep), Caitlyn Amey (PBS Part IA student rep), Alex Jones (PBS Part IB student rep), Paul Matthews (PBS Part II student rep)

**In attendance:** Josephine Simmonds (Psychology Teaching Administrator)

**At** Nick Mackintosh Seminar Room, Main Psychology Building

## **Department of Psychology PBS Management Committee Meeting – Lent Term 2020**

### **UNRESERVED BUSINESS**

#### **1. Apologies**

Apologies were received from: Dr Anna Alexandrova (HSPS), Dr David Summers (NST), Prof Claire Hughes (PBS Subject Convenor), Dr Emma Weisblatt (PBS DOS Committee), Prof Richard Holton (Philosophy), Ms Heather Sanderson (Philosophy), Prof Robert Foley (HSPS), Prof Marta Mirazon Lahr (HSPS)

Dr Enrico Crema and Dr Emma Pomeroy were in attendance as HSPS reps on behalf of Robert Foley and Marta Mirazon Lahr.

#### **2. Approval of minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 2 October 2019 (1)**

The minutes were approved.

#### **3. Matters arising from the previous minutes**

##### **a) \* Psychology Projects**

JS referred the issue to the Biological Sciences Committee and is awaiting an update. LDW & RL to chat with members of MRC CBU to discuss providing Part II project supervisors – possibility of neuroscience projects. An informal report from the BSC was that there was concern about UTO workload and student experience. The BSC will consider whether a limit to projects to supervisor would be desirable.

##### **b) \* Individual Paper Marks for PBS students on NST papers**

Marks per individual exam paper will be provided on CamSIS for NST Part IB Experimental Psychology from 2019-20. For other courses where there is more than one exam, students may request marks per individual exam paper via the Chair of PBS Examinations. A review of the NST Part IB year is ongoing, which will result in two exam papers per course in the second year, one less than is current.

c) **\* Examination Data Retention Policy**

JS contacted Information Compliance Officer James Knapton for clarification. It was confirmed that for any students taking one year over two, all marks, examiner comments and scripts should be kept until one month after the Tripos part has been completed. Otherwise it was preferable for all mark sheets and comments to be deleted one month after the Examiners' meeting, with exam scripts being retained for six months before being destroyed. Final mark books will be retained indefinitely. This will be adopted for the 2019-20 exams.

4. **Student Feedback Michaelmas Term 2019 (2)**

UTO responses to student feedback from Michaelmas Term 2019 were circulated.

LDW and KPG are looking into sabbatical teaching cover. LDW will meet those going on sabbatical next year, and those who will be taking over their teaching. Work done in summer 2019 to reduce the content overlap between papers will be continued in summer 2020.

LDW and KPG will consult PBS 2 Course Organiser Prof Jeff Dalley regarding: the biological content, moving the research design lectures to Michaelmas rather than Lent, creating a glossary or primer for Biology and Experimental Design (to be shared with PBS DOSs and made available on Moodle). The Department of Physiology does this for their NST Part IA course and post meeting note, as does Mathematical Biology. Dr Matt Mason (Physiology) and Dr Nik Cunniffe (Plant Sciences) would have more information.

**ACTION: KPG and LDW will meet Prof Jeff Dalley regarding potential changes to PBS 2.**

PM raised different student abilities in PBS 2 stats supervisions and wondered if supervisions could be streamed. KPG stated that there was a proposal for changes to PBST which was likely to remove this issue.

SF noted that in future students should be warned that the Law lecture on PBS 8 would not have slides or handouts.

Philosophy supervisions had largely been delayed until Lent Term. Dr Tristan Bekinschtein had reported back from the Philosophy Teaching Committee that Philosophy have a number of staff on sabbatical or long-term sick leave.

**ACTION: KPG and LDW will meet with HS to discuss supervision expectations in Philosophy so that this can be communicated to PBS students, and to explore possibilities for finding additional supervisors.**

It was noted that it was good to see that UTOs were reading and responding to the student feedback and finding ways to address the issues raised.

**ACTION: JS to include participation rates on the Lent student feedback document.**

**5. National Student Survey (3)**

Members received a breakdown of responses by department. At the date of the document, 29 January 2020, 1 PBS student had responded. In order for the Department to receive any student comments from this survey, 50% of the cohort will need to participate.

It is more important that students answer the Department's end of term surveys, which give more immediate feedback. There will be surveys in Easter Term for the Part II students which ask about their opinion of the entire course.

Potential students pay a lot of attention to student satisfaction scores when deciding on their preferred university. Where this score was lower for Psychology at Cambridge than Psychology at Oxford or other top-10 universities, students might be less likely to choose Cambridge. It was noted that the number of PBS applications is rising year on year.

**6. Optional Papers 2020-21 (4)**

Members received a breakdown of PBS student choices in 2019-20.

- a) The following departments will continue to offer the same papers to PBS in 2020-21: BioAnth, HSPS, HPS, NST, Criminology, and Philosophy (retaining cap of 12 students per year).
- b) From 2020-21, HSPS will put a cap of 7 PBS students on the Part IB paper SOC 3 Modern Societies II: Global Transformations (usually 16-20 PBS students selected this paper). HSPS would randomly select from the list of interested PBS students in May.
- c) HSPS's Part I require one year's notice of making changes to our borrowed HSPS Part I papers (i.e. by the start of the Michaelmas Term in the preceding academic year).
- d) Neurobiology can still be borrowed in 2020-21. There is an ongoing NST Part IB examination review, which has changed the exam load. Course Organiser David Parker will continue to consider how this will affect PBS.
- e) Students can borrow either any two or any four BioAnth half-papers at PBS Part II. Any two of these half papers will make up PBS option BAN X, and any two additional half papers will make up BAN Y.
- f) Borrowing between the PBS Tripos and the Education Tripos will cease from 2020-21.

CA noted that students would be disappointed to have a capped Sociology paper and no Social Anthropology at all in the second year, and that this might force students towards NATSCI or BioAnth papers. JS stated that PBS requests a second-year Social Anthropology paper on an annual basis but it has not been possible to borrow one so far. HSPS were additionally prepared to offer PBS SOC 2: Social Theory. The Committee were in favour of borrowing SOC 2.

PBS has been offered a Criminology paper for Part IB: Foundations in Criminology and Criminal Justice. The Committee were in favour of borrowing this paper, noting that it would likely be very popular and KPG suggested that in further discussions with the Course Organiser (Caroline Lanskey, Criminology) LDW should offer for PBS DOSs to arrange supervisions for PBS students. The Department should ask students in advance to indicate whether they would be interested in this Criminology paper to get an idea of its popularity. It might be necessary to limit students to either Sociology or Criminology in order to allow everyone to have the opportunity to access a Social Science. Student representatives agreed this would be fair when places are limited. It was agreed if courses with limited places were oversubscribed that places should be allocated randomly, subject to the restriction above.

**ACTION: LDW and JS will formalise borrowing agreements for second-year papers SOC 2: Social Theory and Foundations in Criminology and Criminal Justice.**

## **7. Comments from student members**

### **a) Part IA – CA**

- i. Students had noted the inconsistency of handouts and slides in PBS 1 and PBS 2. KPG will check this on Moodle.
- ii. PBS 2 lectures sometimes overrun, which is a problem for students taking the Philosophy paper that runs immediately afterwards across town. Course Organiser Prof Jeff Dalley has already reminded lecturers not to overrun, but LDW will ask him to do so again.
- iii. Students would have liked a third lecture on Free Will in PBS 1. KPG noted the comment and pointed out that PBS 1 will be reviewed in general over summer 2020.
- iv. PBS 1 lectures sometimes listed experiments rather than giving more grounding in theory first. KPG agreed that this is a shift from A-level Psychology but this is how students will be taught.

### **b) Part IB – AJ**

- i. Students found the distribution of PBS 4 jarring (three lectures per week throughout Michaelmas and the first half of Lent, then no further lectures). KPG noted that this structural difficulty will be addressed in the future plans for PBS. It was confirmed that NST students take an additional exam.
- ii. Philosophy supervisions had been discussed earlier in the meeting.
- iii. Students would like lecture capture. While Prof Claire Hughes had trialled this independently on PBS 6 last year, it was too resource-heavy for the Department to pursue further. On the University side, lecture capture software had been installed in the Mill Lane Lecture Theatres but was not ready for use. The Lecture Capture Board are due to report on progress this term. Lecture capture will probably be rolled out gradually. General points raised in this meeting were: lecturer must give

permission for recording, IP belongs to the lecturer, recordings should be destroyed at the end of the academic year, recordings can't be downloaded, recordings are searchable, it is possible to play recordings back at double speed, there is word recognition for transcription, and usage statistics would be available to lectures.

**ACTION: LDW will contact the Lecture Capture Board and ask for the Psychology Department Lecture Theatre and PBS Tripos to be involved in the initial roll-out, given the broad scope of the Tripos across the sciences and social sciences, and wide variation of Triposes who borrow our papers.**

**c) Part II – PM**

- i. An email had been sent to students implying that the Psych Sanctuary should be reserved for staff before 10.00am. JE confirmed that this was not the case and that the room was available to everyone at all times. JE is looking at other plans to allow staff to have somewhere to have lunch, which was the main issue. The Psych Sanctuary was originally designed as a student room for the NST Part II Psychology students (before the creation of PBS), so space was limited now that the Psychology Department has their own Tripos students.
- ii. Postgraduate medics had been using the Psychology Library, which also has limited space and is a popular study location. DC would not be able to refuse entry to any students, and was working with JE on removing shelves to create more study space.
- iii. Clashes had been reported for rearranged lectures during the strike period in Michaelmas Term. Students were worried that this would happen again with the planned industrial action at the end of the Lent Term. KPG will instruct lecturers for Psychology courses not to reschedule their lectures and that any lectures that do not go ahead during industrial action would be lost and therefore not examinable. As last term, an email will go out to students and PBS DOSs to confirm these details. Introductory lectures would be provided next year to cover missed material that should be built on year-on-year. For optional papers, students should follow the guidance from the individual departments.
- iv. It was reported that students felt there was a disparity in workload on third-year projects. Some students felt unable to approach their day-to-day supervisors and felt awkward about approaching the main supervisor instead. KPG encouraged students to approach the main supervisor, who will be able to advise on appropriate workload and activities per project. Some variation in workload is inevitable due to the nature of the individual projects. If students had significant difficulties about which they did not feel comfortable approaching either of their supervisors, they could contact: Project Co-ordinator Dr Greg Davis, KPG or LDW.
- v. A student on CR1 had been confused about who marked this exam paper. All optional papers are set and marked by their respective department, and all PBS papers are set and marked in Psychology.

## RESERVED BUSINESS

### 9. Dates of meetings for 2019-20

Easter	Wednesday 6 May 2020	2.00pm	Nick Mackintosh Seminar Room, Second Floor, MB
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