



Date Wednesday 15 July 2020

Time 2.00pm

To 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), Dr Anna Alexandrova (HPS), Dr David Summers (NST rep), Prof Claire Hughes (PBS Subject Convenor), Dr Emma Weisblatt (PBS DOS Committee), Prof Richard Holton (Philosophy), Ms Heather Sanderson (Philosophy)

In attendance: Ms J Simmonds (Psychology Teaching Administrator)

Actual in attendance: Jo Simmonds, Jeanne Estabel, Lee de-Wit, Kate Plaisted-Grant, Emma Weissblatt, David Summers, Simone Schnall, Cattlyn Amey, Emma Pomeroy, Paul Matthews, Richard Holton, Claire Hughes, The Chair whose Zoom ID was AMF

At Zoom

PBS Tripos Management Committee Meeting – Easter Term 2020

UNRESERVED BUSINESS

1. **Apologies**
Heather Sanderson (Philosophy)
2. **Minutes from the meeting held on Wednesday 5 February 2020** were approved.
3. **Matters arising from the previous minutes**
 - a) Minute 4: Student feedback on problems with supervisions in Philosophy in Michaelmas Term. There have been discussions between Philosophy (Jane Garrison) and Psychology to create a clearer channel between the departments to resolve these problems.
 - b) Minute 4: PBS 2 feedback. LdW has met with KPG and Jeff Dalley. MatLab was difficult for students. Solution to move coding courses to PBS4 when students are more prepared. KPG noted that this would develop PBS second year course in Bio-Psych and offer to lend to NST1A students. First-year course PBS1 would closely resemble the current PBS4.
 - c) Minute 6: Part IB Criminology paper. Agreement has been formalised and this is a popular choice with students.
 - d) Minute 9: AMF noted that the new PBS structure will be coming to a later Committee meeting. KPG noted that she will be having further discussions over the summer. Any changes would need to be agreed within the next academic year if to be

approved for the 2023/24 prospectus. CH noted that deferment rates for students for the next year are lower than at any other time which is something of a surprise.

4. Brief review of Easter Term: online teaching and exams (LDW, SS)

LdW noted that Psychology had wished to join the next Panopto rollout, although this is now redundant due to the current situation. The following should be noted.

- LdW and D. Talmi wrote a document to outline how to use Panopto.
- SS has recorded some lectures for use on Panopto.
- S. Imrie adapted a practical to run online, which involved a full online process, which has worked well and received good feedback.
- LdW wanted to note the work of D. Talmi in preparing the online curriculum for next year.

SS noted that there were no formally assessed exams for Part I. Formative assessment was sent out, for which students will receive feedback for next year. KPG noted that she had prepared a document for students outlining the future examination process and is working with DoSs to fine tune how to work with students. SS thanked KPG for all her hard work.

SS outlined the changes made for Part II (2 questions instead of 3) and thanked CH for her hard work in orchestrating the examining process.

CH noted that Oxford had not established a word limit for their exams which led to overly long answers. The Cambridge approach affected a far higher quality of essay by installing a word limit. SS agreed that the word limit was more in keeping for students for their future lives.

Students achieved 58% 1st class degrees which was a significant jump from previous years. SS noted the safety net had not been the major reason for this increase. P. Matthews pointed out that for PBS next year there will be an average score for classifying results. CH noted that the way that students were examined this year was far closer to the way that students are trained to work throughout the year.

CH explained the process for using Turnitin, noting that one student is currently being investigated for plagiarism. CH noted that Oxford did not use Turnitin as they were concerned it would not catch self-plagiarism.

It was agreed that students will need to be trained in how to avoid plagiarism and be made aware of what is detected by Turnitin.

5. Student Feedback

a) Lent and Easter Term Feedback 2020 (2a-b)

Limited UTO responses to Lent Term feedback were circulated, alongside feedback from Easter Term. There was very little feedback due to Covid predicament, which is typical across the University. KPG has circulated a document that encourages academics to record data as teaching is ongoing. The ongoing and instant feedback will be useful for today's challenging circumstances. CA felt that physical questionnaires were more effective than online. SS used Panopto to generate feedback thanks to the recording of lectures.

b) National Student Survey

The NSS closed on Thursday 30 April 2020. Only 13 PBS students had responded (22.4%), which does not meet the threshold for publication. The Committee lamented the lack of feedback, but felt that it was hard to address for this year due to the unusual circumstances.

c) Student Barometer Survey (4)

The Committee received results from this survey, with comments sorted into themes. It was noted that there were a lot of generous comments including those describing friendly staff and atmosphere. CH brought up a point in regards to the consistency of supervision, recommending the Department held regular meetings for supervisors. Workshops run by staff to share ideas had proven to be effective for those who turned up. The Committee agreed it would like to see this as an expectation for supervisors to attend. It was recommended that this should be passed onto the DoS Committee. KPG stated that she planned a direct channel of communication between supervisors, lecturers and course organisers to address a number of issues, as well as to create effective coordination.

6. Response to University request for information for 2020-21 (5)

AMF noted that the University had requested information by 10th July for teaching arrangements next year. Psychology's response was provided. It was noted that a number of borrowed courses on PBS will not be running this coming year but that these changes were not COVID related. The reasons included the Department ceasing to borrow Education papers, the reduction requested by the School to two examination papers in NST Part 1B (PBS4). PBS3 would no longer be available to PBS Part II – this had been a one-off in 2019-20 for a particular student. JS and EP would follow up the specific titles of the BioAnth papers.

7. List of optional papers for PBS Tripos in 2020-21 (6)

The Committee approved the list of optional papers for publication in the Reporter. A new CR1 paper had been added to PBS IB, as had SOC2. SOC3 was still available but now had a cap. Students can now take two BAN papers in the final year (BANX and BANY).

8. Comments from student members

a) Part IA

CA reported that in general, people were happy with the course. MatLab in PBS2 was a concern and students had hoped for revision sessions before the examinations, which did not happen. KPG offered an online revision session in preparation for Part 1B and CA thought this would have a good take-up. Jeff Dalley would be asked to set this up. CH pointed out that the Department has paid for a Gorilla licence, which is a useful resource.

b) Part IB – no IB rep was present.

c) Part II

PM asked whether it is possible to be able to provide feedback on their dissertation and dissertation supervisors. KPG answered that the online survey has a section on dissertations which hopefully addresses this. PM asked whether the difference in weighting for PBS and NST projects has any impact on the time spent on them. KPG

answered that there is a tiny difference (20% for NST and 25% for PBS) but the marking criteria are the same, and in the long-term this discrepancy will be removed. PNB has different arrangements.

PM reported that typing answers has been a very positive experience. There had been variation in the time principal supervisors were available to students. KPG made a note of this, to follow up.

PM asked whether rankings based on percentages could be provided. SS answered that there will be no official provision for this information. KPG answered that individuals will know their percentage mark. The question of providing ranking is being discussed at university level. It was noted that at Oxford a 'congratulatory first' letter who had achieved 1st class marks across the board and that ranking is important for study in America thus such prizes provide this evidence of exceptional work. KPG asked PM to feed back that this information can be provided to individuals.

PM provided feedback from students that communication could have been better, especially around exam dates and about when exam results would be provided. KPG acknowledged that students have been through tremendous stress but staff have also been working in the most trying circumstances as well and this should be kept in mind. The timing had been due to the information not being available any earlier.

RESERVED BUSINESS

12. Dates of meetings in 2020-21 academic year

Michaelmas	Wednesday 4 November 2020	2.00pm	Zoom
Lent	Wednesday 5 February 2020	2.00pm	Zoom
Easter	Wednesday 6 May 2020	2.00pm	Zoom