

QUALITY ASSURANCE IN THE BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES

Biology in the Natural Sciences Tripos involves a large number of interdepartmental courses. Biological subjects in the Tripos are managed as follows:

Course Management Committees

The responsibilities of Course Management Committees are:

1. day-to-day running of the subject
2. devising the detailed syllabus
3. organising timetables
4. nominating lecturers
5. receiving student feedback
6. receiving and responding to Examiners' reports
7. for interdepartmental courses, approval of lists of nominations of Examiners prior to submission to the Faculty Board.

Members include the Course Organisers and others involved in delivering the teaching. Reporting arrangements for interdepartmental courses vary, but in general, Course Management Committees report to one or more Departmental Teaching Committees.

Biological Sciences Committee

The Biological Sciences Committee is responsible for advising and making recommendations for action to the Faculty Board on matters relating to biology in Natural Sciences Tripos. Areas of responsibility include:

- (a) reviewing the quality, delivery and assessment of teaching in the NST (including departmental/course responses to External Examiners' reports) and making recommendations to the Faculty Board for action;
- (b) reviewing the balance and spread of teaching in biology in the NST and making recommendations for action to the Faculty Board;
- (c) recommending to the Faculty Board the approval or otherwise of new courses or significant changes to the content of existing courses;
- (d) keeping under review the regulations for the Tripos and making recommendations for any necessary amendments to the Faculty Board and NST Management Committee;
- (e) approving Form and Conduct Notices on behalf of the Faculty Board;
- (f) advising the Council of the School on the allocation of FTEs between departments contributing to interdepartmental courses;
- (g) considering any other educational matters referred to the Committee by the Faculty Board.

Although the Committee are primarily concerned with parts IA and IB of the Tripos, it has a role to play in advising the Board on general issues relating to Part II and Part III, including proposals for new courses, and for monitoring the arrangements for interdepartmental Part II or Part III courses.

The membership is:

- (a) Chairman appointed by the Faculty Board from among its members. This person might also be a member in one of the other categories.
- (b) One representative from each of the nine departments. This person might be the department's teaching officer, chair of the departmental teaching committee, or other person delegated by the Head of Department to have responsibility for undergraduate teaching
- (c) One Director of Studies appointed by the College Biological Directors of Studies. This person might also be a member in one of the other categories.

- (d) the undergraduate NST student member of the Faculty Board
- (e) up to three co-opted members
- (f) Chairman of the Faculty Board *ex officio*

The Biological Sciences Committee is serviced by an officer from the Faculty office.

The Committee is a sub-committee of the Faculty Board of Biology, and is responsible to the Board. However, it works closely with the individual course management committees (in particular those for inter-departmental courses), and with the NST Management Committee. Course Organisers are invited to attend meetings when their course is on the agenda.

Natural Sciences Tripos Committee of Management

The NST Management Committee, in consultation with the relevant Faculty Boards, advises the General Board on the regulations for the Tripos, and is responsible for co-ordinating the administration of the Tripos, general timetabling issues, certain examination arrangements, and promotion of the Tripos. The Faculty Board of Biology nominates three members, one of whom is the chair of the Biological Sciences Committee. The Council of the School of the Biological Sciences nominates a fourth member. The undergraduate NST student member of the Faculty Board is *ex officio* a junior member of the committee.

This committee is serviced from within the Education Section of the Academic Division.

Faculty Board of Biology

The Faculty Board is responsible, by Statute, to the General Board for ensuring the provision of appropriate instruction and adequate facilities for research in the subjects in the Faculty of Biology, for preparing the teaching programme of the Faculty and for ensuring that the teaching given is of a high standard (Statute C, IV, 9)

The Faculty Board

1. nominates Examiners for the Tripos for appointment by the General Board
2. oversees the BSC Committee's review of Examiners' reports and takes appropriate action;
3. with the NST Management Committee is jointly responsible for approval of Form and Conduct of exams on recommendation of the Biological Sciences Committee;
4. is responsible for approval of new subjects or major changes to the curriculum.