



Date Wednesday 11 May 2022

Time 2.00-4.00pm

In Dr Sandra Fulton (Chair, Director of Education for NST and PBS), Dr Guy Jacobs (Faculty Board of HSPS attendance rep), Dr Hannah Clarke (NST Management Committee rep), Dr Lee de-Wit (PBS Director), Prof Claire Hughes (PBS Subject Convenor), Dr Emma Weisblatt (Chair of PBS DOS Committee).

Co-opted members: Dr Marta Halina (HPS rep)

Student representatives: Ms Ruth Parsons (IA), Ms Kitty Beck (IB), Ms Caitlyn Amey (II)

By invitation: Mr Richard Sellens (Secretary, Teaching Coordinator)

At Zoom

PBS Tripos Management Committee Meeting – Easter Term 2022

* Starred agenda items will only be discussed if there are matters to raise otherwise it will be assumed members will either refer to documents attached where appropriate or there is no update to provide. Members can ask for items to be unstarred at the start of the meeting.

UNRESERVED BUSINESS

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Dr Kate Plaisted-Grant and Prof Simone Schnall. Dr Marta Halina left the meeting early.

2. Members are asked to declare any conflicts of interest in relation to the agenda.

No conflicts of interest were declared.

3. Approval of minutes of the Lent Term 2022 meeting (PBSMC22.9a/b)

The minutes were approved as an accurate record.

4. Matters arising from the previous minutes (unreserved – PBSMC22.9a)

- a. **(*)Proposal for new PBST structure (item 5a.):** The proposal has been approved by the Academic Standards and Enhancement Committee (ASEC). The proposal will be submitted to the General Board's Education Committee (GBEC).

Members gave their thanks for the work of all involved.

5. Student feedback: Lent Term 2022 (PBSMC22.10)

Responses to student feedback from Lent Term 2022 were circulated. SF asked that the number of responses per paper be included.

Action – RS to include number of responses in future feedback papers.

Feedback was generally positive, but only a small number of students responded. Over the summer, the surveys would be reviewed to identify ways to increase engagement. One idea was to integrate them into the last lecture of each paper.

In PBS 2, it had been identified that some students were unfamiliar with using computers and therefore struggled with the classes. LdW would work with Paul Bays to address this for next year. It was recommended that he also speak to Alwyn Scally, the IA Mathematical Biology course organiser, plus look at the guidance from the University Information Services.

GJ noted in BioAnth, coding was covered second year but that they would be introducing sessions in the first year, led by Enrico Crema.

RP noted that some had found what they have learnt in the R class difficult to apply to the written report and so had supplemented their learning with online videos.

LdW confirmed that a short survey for project students would be sent out shortly to canvas immediate feedback. CH was working on the text with Greg Davis and asked CA to provide any suggestions or feedback she may have.

6. Comments from student members

a) Part IA

RP reported that some students were dissatisfied with only being able to take two PBS papers in Part IB. Members noted that current structure was designed to meet BPS requirements, and discussed the potential for a new IB optional paper for non-psychology specific transferable skills, noting that discussions would be in the very early stages. HC identified that there was a similar idea to introduce this in Part II Neuroscience.

Students had asked for more information about volunteering and internship opportunities, with more a variety of those advertised. It was recommended that a link to the Careers Service website be added to the weekly bulletin, along with a link to the careers talks in Moodle. It was agreed that the department could be more proactive in finding and advertising such opportunities, which could be work undertaken by the proposed new Outreach Officer role.

Action – RS to add careers links to the weekly bulletin

Members considered the implication of unpaid opportunities on widening participation, noting that unpaid internships were illegal which had led to a reduction in the number of opportunities due to funding availability. It was discussed what could be done to fund opportunities with one idea being for departmental matched funding through the Grindley Grant Scheme and colleges. It was agreed that this should be raised at the Senior Tutors' Committee

Action – SF to raise this with the Senior Tutors' Committee

b) Part IB

KB reported positive feedback about the optional papers, with the students expressing a strong interest in PBS 6-8. Some students were unaware of the assessment change for PBS 7 and it was recommended that this be communicated.

Action – RS to communicate PBS 7 assessment change to IB students.

KB gave her thanks for the department's responses to the PBS 4 exam changes. She confirmed the boot camps had been useful.

c) Part II

CA reported that the main issues raised were about the discrepancies in dissertation supervision between students. CH noted that where there had been any disruption outside of

everyone's control, it was recommended for this to be discussed with Greg Davis in the first instance.

CA noted that lack of consistency in the exam formats for optional papers, which she acknowledged was outside of the department's control. Members discussed what could be done to better communicate the modes of assessments with students and the following was proposed:

- It was recognised that since the course borrowed papers from across multiple departments it would be helpful to have a central steer on how modes of assessments could be communicated, noting that this should not be the borrowing department's responsibility. It was suggested that a paper be submitted to ASEC.
Action – SF, LdW, EW and GJ to write a paper to ASEC.
- When the Committee considered the optional papers each year, they should also consider the modes of assessment for the current year more closely at the assessments methods from the current year. perhaps look more closely at list of optional papers in frame of exams method
- CA recommended to include a statement about exams being host institution's decision in the handbook
Action – RS to note this for inclusion in next year's handbooks.
- SF noted that modes of assessment document would be completed over the summer. It was usually published in early November.
Action – RS to note to circulate the modes of assessments document to DoSes and students once available
- It was agreed that given the increase in changes to assessments each year, the lines of communication for this should be reviewed and strengthened.

Members gave thanks to the student reps for their input and engagement during their time on the Committee, and wished them a successful exams season and enjoyable summer break.

At this time, NC, KB and CA left the meeting.