



Date Friday 24 February 2023

Time 11.05am-1.00pm

In attendance Dr Gillian Fraser (Chair), Dr Kate Plaisted-Grant (Faculty Board of Biology rep, Psychology Director of Teaching, PBS Chair of Exams), Prof Marta Mirazon Lahr (Faculty Board of HSPS rep),

Co-opted members: Dr Lee de-Wit (PBS Director), Dr Tom McClelland (HPS rep)

Student representatives: Judy Chen (IA), Christina Tzenios (IB)

By invitation: Josephine Simmonds (Departmental Administrator), Richard Sellens (Teaching Office Manager, Secretary), Alina Wanitzek (Librarian)

At Nick Mackintosh Seminar room, with hybrid option.

PBS Tripos Management Committee Meeting – Lent Term 2023

* 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.

All papers are held on the [Committee Moodle page](#)
(Raven login required).

UNRESERVED BUSINESS

1. **Apologies**
Apologies have been received from Dr Wendy Browne (Faculty of Education), Dr Hannah Clarke (NST Management Committee rep), Dr Emma Weisblatt (Chair of PBS DOS Committee), Prof Richard Holton (Philosophy rep), Prof Claire Hughes (PBS Subject Convenor), Kitty Beck (Part II student representative)
2. **(*)Meeting format**
3. **Members are asked to declare any conflicts of interest in relation to the agenda.**
None declared.
4. **Change of membership and welcome to new members**
 - a. Dr Gillian Fraser was welcomed as the Chair for the remainder of the academic year, covering for Dr Fulton.
 - b. Alina Wanitzek was welcomed as the new departmental librarian.
5. **Approval of minutes of the meeting held in Michaelmas Term (PBSMC23.1)**
The minutes were approved.

6. **Matters arising from the previous minutes (unreserved)**
 - a. **College mock exams (item 7a)**
Action – RS to add item for discussion at the Easter Term meeting

7. **Optional papers**

- a. Members to receive breakdown of PBS student choices in 2022-23 (**PBSMC23.2**) and discuss which optional papers are likely to be available in 2023-24, for which the Committee must give notice before the end of Easter Term. Members are also asked to consider the PBS papers lent to other departments.
 - i. Sociology papers: It has been confirmed that SOC3 will no longer be offered to Part IB students from 2023-24 onwards.
 - ii. (*)Education borrowing arrangements (from July 2022 meeting): LdW, CH and WB would meet to discuss this and report back at the Easter Term meeting. It was anticipated that PBS would be able to borrowed ED3 in 2023-24.

LdW commented that the second year Criminology (CR2) paper had attracted 62 PBS students this year. With the removal of SOC3 as an option next year, it was anticipated that the number of students taking CR2 would increased. KPG had informally discussed this with Caroline Lanskey (Criminology), reporting their keen interest in continuing to offer the paper to PBS. It was recommended that this be raised with Mark Johnson on his return to sabbatical, for him to discuss with Criminology's Head of Department.

Action – KPG/LdW to raise with Mark Johnson on his return from sabbatical, with A dip in the number of students taking Biological Anthropology papers was noted. CT reported anecdotally that some students were unsure of the link between biological anthrpology and psychology, as opposed to social anthropology. Additionally, their IA exams had been run as in-person and closed-book, which may have dissuaded some from continuing the subjects into their second year. GF noted concern if student paper choices were being dictated by the form of assessment and agreed to discuss this informally with KPG.

Action – GF and KPG to discuss informally.

- b. Optional paper timetable/clashes (EW/RS): Further to discussions in the from PBS DoS committee, a process has been devised to collate and share information on timetable clashes between optional papers (PBSMC23.3a-b)

RS outlined the proposal, which was approved by members. GF raised whether a policy non-permissible combinations should be implemented. KPG reflected that this was major issue, that would need monitoring and further consideration

Action – RS to confirm the policy on non-permissible combinations with EQPO.

LdW recommended that the Committee review the optional papers and timetable clashes in Easter meeting. With their approval, the optional papers booklet would be published after the meeting.

Action – RS to note for the Easter Term agenda

8. **Examinations**
 - a. **Examiner Report 2021-22: PBS Chair of Examiners (PBSMC23.4)**

KPG informed members that her report focussed on reviewing student attainment gaps based on protected characteristics data provided by the University, and that she recommended that this continue to be reviewed over the years as more data was gathered. She also noted a review of the examining workload by each paper, which was used to inform the allocation of examiners and assessors going forward.

b. (*)Updated examination rota 2022-23 (PBSMC23.5)

9. Responses to MT22 student feedback (PBSMC23.13)

LdW noted much higher response rates than for previous surveys and gave his thanks for the students for this. The course organisers had reflected on feedback and implemented small changes during the academic year where possible. The following larger points of feedback were identified:

- PBS 5 (research dissertation): LdW reflected on the need to be clearer on expectations and timelines for individual projects for data collection
- The balance of students workload across terms remained a consistent issue, particularly in Part II where supervisions had ended up bunching at the end of term.
- External lecturers: it was suggested that they should be briefed more on the core paper elements and what had been previously covered to reduce duplication of materials and increase consistency in approach.

10. Comments from student members

GF recommended that student representatives submit collated feedback prior to the meeting, to help facilitate discussions and allow for quicker answers and resolutions where possible.

Action – RS to note for future meetings

a. Part IA (JC)

JC reported the following feedback:

- PBS 1: the structure of the lecturer discussion sessions were not clear. It was recommend students be given the opportunity to pre-plan and/or submit questions to encourage discussion and debate during the session. KPG commented that the lecturers could facilitate this and it would be beneficial in developing the students' discussion skills.

Action – LdW to raise with PBS 1 course organiser

- PBS 2: some students who had not taken Maths or Biology A-level were struggling with pace and content of the paper. JC recognised the benefits of statistics drop-ins and asked whether similar sessions could be run for biology. She also suggested implementing additional support in the summer before students started, similar to the NST supervision 0 programme.
- PBS 2: JC asked if the announcement of formative R project could be earlier. LdW noted the difficult timeline in the context of the summative report and exam period and that he would look into this for future years.

Action – LdW to review timeline for PBS 2 written reports

- PBS 2: some of the statistics sheets had errors in them.

CH joined the meeting at this point.

b. Part IB (CT)

CT submitted the following points by the Teams chat due to microphone issues:

- Overall, students were very content with the PBS3 material and lectures
- PBS 4:
 - Some concern was raised about the practical classes, with some students feeling confused about the links between the class and lecture contents. She proposed providing an overview and summary of each class so students could better understand its aim.

Action – LdW to raise with PBS 4 course organiser

- Some concern was raised about the multiple changes to the PBS 4 practical class timetable. It was noted that these were due to industrial action, which was outside of the department's control.
- Students requests more qualitative research method practical class as the focus appeared to be on quantitative research.
- Concerns were raised about exams being in-person and closed-booked this year as some students would not have sat an exam in this format since before the pandemic. KPG thanks CT for this feedback and agreed that the department would run a guidance session for students. GF and RS confirmed that the Inspira team would also run bootcamp sessions.

Action – KPG/RS to arrange closed-book exam guidance sessions for the Part I students

- Students greatly appreciate the efforts of the Careers Service. Some asked for more guidance on career prospects that are not clinical psychology or consulting, and it was suggested that a portal could be created to share the availability of internships and research assistant posts. LdW confirmed that the Department was in continual conversation with the Careers Service about their provision.

c. Part II (KB)

KB had submitted the following points in advance of the meeting:

- Several students had enquired about when they would know exam dates, especially for PBS 7, and when they would find out the questions for the PBS 7 presentations. Several students had also enquired about whether Moodle or Inspira will be used for the written exams
 - The central exam timetable would be released by the Student Registry in April.
 - LdW confirmed that he and RS were creating PBS 7 guidance for circulation to the students in due course.
- Some students highlighted that the supervision system had caused some stress, and felt that future years would benefit from having clearer guidance about how many supervisions they should sign up for per term. The sign-up system used in PBS 7 and Michaelmas Term PBS 6 modules where students selected specific time slots to attend supervisions was very successful and worked well, and it was suggested that this system could be expanded to other papers.
 - CH noted that she had received additional support for PBS 6 in Michaelmas Term from Caoimhe Dempsey, acting as a teaching coordinator. This help

had been invaluable and she recommended that similar support for other papers be investigated by the Department.

Action – KPG/LdW to raise with Mark Johnson on his return from sabbatical

- **Action – LdW and RS to discuss Part II supervision sign-up process with Deborah Talmi, informed by data from the above action**
- Some student had expressed a preference for modules to be run for two to three lectures per week for four weeks, rather than one lecture per week for eight weeks such that supervisions covering the whole course can be conducted sooner in term.
 - This would be reflected on by the teaching team.
- The publication of the PBS 6 Autism module reading list had been delayed.
 - AW reported this had been raised with module organiser. CH agreed to email the individual lecturers. **Action - CH**

GF gave thanks to the student representatives for their constructive feedback.