



Date Wednesday 1 November 2023

Time 2.00-4.00pm

Present Dr Matthew Harper (Chair [Department of Pharmacology]), Dr Lee de-Wit (Faculty Board of Biology rep, Psychology Director of Teaching), Dr Mark Dyble (Faculty Board of HSPS rep), Prof Amanda Sferruzzi-Perri (NST Management Committee rep), Dr Emma Weisblatt (Chair of PBS DOS Committee).

Co-opted members: Dr Wendy Browne (Education rep), Dr Tom McClelland (HPS rep)

Student representatives: Destiny Snow (IA), Emily Shaw (IB), Christina Tzenios (II)

Secretary: Richard Sellens (Teaching Office Manager)

By invitation: Dr Greg Davis (Head of Undergraduate Student Engagement), Prof Claire Hughes (PBS Subject Convenor), Josephine Simmonds (Departmental Administrator), Kate Limond (Teaching Administrator, minute-taker)

At Nick Mackintosh Seminar room, with hybrid option.

PBS Tripos Management Committee Meeting – Michaelmas 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.

UNRESERVED BUSINESS

1. **Apologies**
Apologies were received from Alina Wanitzek (Librarian). Josephine Simmonds (Departmental Administrator) and Prof Amy Milton (PBS Chair of Examiners) would be delayed in joining the meeting.
2. **Members are asked to declare any conflicts of interest in relation to the agenda.**
None declared
3. **Change of membership and welcome to new members**
 - a. Dr Matthew Harper was welcomed, acting as Chair for Michaelmas Term 2023 in place of Dr Sandra Fulton.
 - b. Prof Amanda Sferruzzi-Perri was welcomed as the NST Management Committee rep, covering for one year.
 - c. Dr Mark Dyble was welcome as the Faculty Board of HSPS rep.
 - d. Prof Amy Milton was welcomed as this year's PBS Chair of Examiners.

- e. Dr Greg Davis was welcomed as the Head of Undergraduate Student Engagement.
- f. Kate Limond was welcomed as the Teaching Administrator and minute-taker.
- g. Destiny Snow, Emily Shaw and Christina Tzenios were welcomed as this year's student representatives.

4. Annual review of Committee Terms of Reference and membership (PBSMC23.29a-b)

Members received the papers and confirmed their approval of the proposed changes, namely the removal of the 'Director of the PBS Tripos' from the membership as this role no longer existed in the department. It was noted that Sociology would provide a rep for 2024-25.

Author note: *Post-meeting, it was agreed to approach the Faculty Board of HSPS to nominate a rep from POLIS for the remainder of the academic year.*

Action: RS to update the Terms of Reference and submit to the Faculty Board

5. Examinations

a. Examiner Reports 2022-23: PBS Part I external, PBS Part II external, PBS Chair of Examiners (PBSMC23.30a-c)

The Committee received the examiner reports.

LdW noted feedback from the NST IB (PBS 4) external examiner stating that assessors experienced a tight turnaround completing their marking and that other departments noted there can be pressure to get marks to PBS. Moving the examining board to later in the term is being investigated. The examiners provided positive feedback on oral assessments, particularly with regard to the structure of the exam. It was discussed that the use of oral exams and vivas could be beneficial to reduce the risk of the use to AI in coursework.

EW suggested that MVST colleagues could be approached for advice on managing the volume of vivas. AM had submitted her thoughts prior to meeting, including a recommendation to formalise the moderation guidelines. LdW advised that Deborah Talmi was reviewing the standardisation of moderation practices, to be ratified by the Teaching Committee at their Lent Term meeting.

b. Examinations details for PBS papers in 2023-24 (PBSMC23.31)

The Committee received the paper.

c. Examiners and Course Organisers for 2023-24 (PBSMC23.32)

LdW informed the Committee that there had been a late swap between NST IB (PBS 4) and NST II (including PBS 9 and PBS 10) Senior Examiners.

6. (*)PBS 5 Dissertation titles offered (PBSMC23.33)

The Committee received the paper.

7. Comments from student members

a. Part IA

DS reported that students had provided feedback that some borrowed papers required a higher time investment and that students felt that they were not able to focus enough on their PBS papers. LdW stated that the new Tripos next year would shift this balance and EW asked DW to advise students to speak to DoSes about their workload.

Action: DW to advise IA students to speak to the DoSes if they are struggling to balance their workloads

Action: Teaching Office to pass on DW's feedback to DoSes

b. Part IB

ES reported positive feedback on the quality of lectures and wide range of topics in Michaelmas Term. It was noted that some lectures clustered around lunchtimes, for both PBS and borrowed papers.

Action: RS and LdW to note for consideration within the new Tripos timetable.

ES stated that the PBS 4 Audition lectures felt rushed as did the supervisions. EW advised that the material was spread across four lectures previously, rather than three at present.

Action: EW to flag the challenges of PBS 4 Audition content to DoSes who can advise supervisors.

c. Part II

CT reported the following:

- Students felt that there was a good choice of psychology options and that the weekly bulletin email was well received.
- There was a notable variance in supervision sign-up systems, which made the process difficult. The general consensus was that Moodle sign-up was the preferred method. It was agreed that the supervision sign-up methods should be reviewed.

Action: KL to review the Part II supervision signup methods

- Supervisions varied in quality and depth of the material covered, with inconsistency across and within topics. Specific feedback was given about the PBS 6 supervisions, which had moved to a new two-track model (combining essays and oral presentations).

Action: LdW to liaise with Varun Warriar to draft a statement to students explaining the PBS 6 supervisions process

- CT noted the complexity for students with an SSD to request adjustments for supervisions. It was confirmed that the SSD process is general was being reviewed.
- CT also advised that some students did not have access to the Stats course and reading lists. It was confirmed that the Stats course was self-enrolled and students should contact the Teaching Office if they did not have access.

Action: KL to raise PBS 9 and PBS 10 reading list access with AW

- CT asked if students could have access to their previous year's examiner reports. RS confirmed that these would be published, the date of which had been delayed due to the marking and assessment boycott.

8. PBS student wellbeing

LdW reported on the student wellbeing survey results from Lent 2023, stating that 36 students responded. The lack of consistency of supervisions was noted and LdW advised that there has been new training for supervisors in Michaelmas 2023. Student reps were asked to promote the survey in Lent 2024 and a IA student was requested to join the working group.

ASP advised that there was a wellbeing issue with Part II PDN and asked that DoSes encourage students to disclose any issues with tutors and DoSes so that departments can ensure students are better supported.

Action: KL to add CT's comment in item 7c regarding SSD distribution processes to Student wellbeing working group agenda

Action: KL to add ASP's point to the PBS DoS Lent 2024 agenda

9. Careers events (RS)

It was reported that careers events would take place in all three terms.

DS, ES and CT left the meeting.