

Date Wednesday 2 November 2022

Time 2.00-4.00pm

To Dr Sandra Fulton (Chair, Director of Education for NST and PBS), 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), Dr Hannah Clarke (NST Management Committee rep), Dr Emma Weisblatt (Chair of PBS DOS Committee).

Co-opted members: Dr Lee de-Wit (PBS Director), Prof Richard Holton (Philosophy rep), Prof Claire Hughes (PBS Subject Convenor), Dr Tom McClelland (HPS rep)

Student representatives: Ms Judy Chen (IA), Ms Christina Tzenios (IB), Ms Kitty Beck (II)

By invitation: Ms Josephine Simmonds (Departmental Administrator), Mr Richard Sellens (Teaching Office Manager, Secretary), Dr Wendy Browne (Faculty of Education), Mrs Katherine Leiser (Teaching Administrator)

At Nick Mackintosh Seminar room, with hybrid option

PBS Tripos Management Committee Meeting – Michaelmas 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**
No apologies were received.
2. **Members are asked to declare any conflicts of interest in relation to the agenda.**
No conflicts of interest were raised.
3. **Change of membership and welcome to new members**
 - a. Ms Judy Chen, Ms Christina Tzenios and Ms Kitty Beck were welcomed as this year's student representatives.
 - b. Dr Tom McClelland was welcomed as the HPS rep, covering for one year.
 - c. Katherine Leiser was welcomed as the new Teaching Administrator, acting as minute-taker.
4. **Annual review of Committee Terms of Reference (PBSMC22.25)**
Members considered and approved the amendment to the Terms of Reference to increase the number of co-opted members from four to five, to allow the inclusion of a representative from the Faculty of Education.

Action – RS to submit to the Faculty Board for their approval

5. Examinations

a. Examiner Reports 2021-22: PBS Part I external, PBS Part II external, PBS Chair of Examiners [pending] (PBSMC22.26a-c)

The Committee received the external examiner (EE) reports.

Part I: The EE recommended training and mentoring for new examiners, which KPG and LdW would provide.

Part II: The following points were discussed:

- The EE suggested that discussions between dissertation markers to resolve discrepancies could be made available to all markers. It was agreed that the current process was robust, noting that the EE was not suggesting that they were not, and that the proposal would increase workloads during an intense marking period. Relatedly, the Teaching Committee has proposed meeting with dissertation markers to discuss marking expectations and best practice.
- The EE recommended clearer University guidance for how to judge borderline cases. It was confirmed that each subject examination board had autonomy over their marking and classing criteria; this differed to practice in the EE's home institution and so it was recommended that this be fed back to the EE for future reference.
- The EE asked for paper examiner reports to be submitted prior to the final meeting. Members agreed that this would not be feasible due to the tight turnaround time for Part II marking. KPG would note this to manage the EE's expectations for the current year.
- The EE gave specific thanks to RS for his support during the process, and the Committee endorsed this and also noted the work of all examiners in the tight turnaround for Part II marking.

b. Examiners and Course Organisers for 2022-23 (PBSMC22.27)

Members received the list. It was agreed that this would be circulated in the end-of-year meetings in the future.

Action – RS to move standing item to end-of-year meetings

At time of publication, the PBS 3 and PBS 8 examiner roles were pending confirmation. KPG confirmed that these would be filled by Dr Varun Warriar and Prof Pasco Fearon respectively.

Action – RS to update the examiners list

c. Form and Conduct of Examinations notices for PBS papers in 2022-23 (PBSMC22.28)

- The Committee were presented Form and Conduct notices for PBS 1, PBS 2, PBS 3, PBS 6, PBS 7 and PBS 8. The Committee was asked to consider the notices. To note: PBS 4, PBS 9 and PBS 10 are

borrowed from NST. PBS 5 Research Project was unchanged from 2021-22.

LdW noted the changes to the PBS 2 written reports.

- The Education Quality and Policy Office (EQPO) had confirmed that departments did not need to provide Form and Conduct notices for the Easter 2023 examinations as the University was still in a transitional year within the Framework for Assessment. Therefore, the notices in the paper would be for internal use only.

d. (*)Part II examinations in 2024: The Committee were advised that for Part II examinations in 2024, the Biological Sciences Committee had asked departments to discuss any changes they would prefer to the arrangements for this year (5 hour, open-book). Departments were asked to report by May 2023. This would be included in the Lent Term agenda.

6. PBS 5 Dissertation titles offered (PBSMC22.29)

SF noted that a large number of titles were offered, with RS confirming that the paper listed those offered, not the number allocated to students. This would be clarified for future iterations. It was acknowledged that a large number of titles were offered due to inflated cohort numbers in Part II, with the Department required to provide titles for PBS, NST and PNB students. It was noted that the number of projects allocated per person should continue to be monitored to ensure best arrangement for both staff and students

7. Comments from student members

a. Part IA

JC reported that the year had started well overall.

- NS1 (Evolution and Behaviour): some colleges were running mock exams. JC noted that this was not consistent across all Colleges; EW explained that this would be at the Colleges' discretion. Some members raised concerns about whether this would become more common practice, and therefore impact on student workload and wellbeing without concrete evidence of the benefits of running these types of assessments. It was also noted that University initiatives were more closely looking at managing assessments and workload through a more centralised approach. It was however agreed that formative practice for a summative assessment may be helpful for students. EW agreed to raise this at the PBS DoS Committee.

Action – EW to raise at the PBS DoS Committee

KPG encouraged JC to discuss any concerns with her DoS and College.

- JC observed a variance in supervision workload, depending on the College. She was encouraged to discuss this with the other student representatives so that this could be discussed at the Staff/Student Committee.

b. Part IB

CT reported:

- PBS 4: the guidance for written reports had not been published yet. LdW confirmed that it would be published shortly.
- Supervisions: there had been delays in arranging supervisions for SOC 2 and PBS 3. In such cases, students were encouraged to raise this with their DoS.
- Borrowed papers: some students were disappointed that a second year Social Anthropology paper was not offered. LdW reported that the Department had discussed this with Social Anthropology, who were unable to offer the paper to PBS students. CT asked if the Part II Criminology paper would be capped. LdW confirmed that there was no plan to do so at the moment.
- CT asked whether the Department would consider introducing a study abroad option to the course. CH noted that this could be discussed but would need very careful consideration because of the impact on admissions and student numbers.

c. Part II

KB reported that overall students were happy with their dissertation title allocations and the allocation process. They were also pleased with continuation of their exam formats.

- PBS 7: some students had asked about when the exam questions would be released.
- PBS 8: the majority of students had not been contacted by supervisors yet. KPG encouraged students to contact the course organiser and their DoS.

RESERVED BUSINESS

8. Dates of meetings for 2022-23

Note the additional end of year meeting.

- **Lent Term 2023:** Wednesday 8 February 2023, 2-4pm
- **Easter Term 2023:** Monday 8 May 2023, 2-4pm – members noted the change of day from Wednesday to Monday
- **End of year:** Wednesday 5 July 2023, 2-4pm – the meeting would be provisionally booked for this date. Once the exam administrative schedule was confirmed, this would be revisited as required.