**PBS Tripos Management Committee Meeting – Lent Term 2024**

* Starred agenda items were approved without discussion. Members had the opportunity to ask for items to be unstarred at the start of the meeting.

**UNRESERVED BUSINESS**

1. **Apologies**
   Apologies were received from Dr Tom McClelland (HPS rep) and Prof Richard Holton (Philosophy rep). Dr Wendy Browne (Education rep), Prof Amy Milton (PBS Chair of Examiners) and Josephine Simmonds (Departmental Administrator) joined during the meeting.

2. **Members are asked to declare any conflicts of interest in relation to the agenda** *(University's Conflict of Interest Policy)*.
   None declared

3. **Membership**
   a. **Welcomes to new members**
      - Dr Sandra Fulton was welcomed back as Chair
      - Dr Matthew Harper was welcomed as the Faculty Board of Biology rep
Dr Jose Tomas Labarca was welcomed as the POLIS rep
Aryan Misra was welcomed as the Faculty of Biology Psychology student rep

b. (*)Sociology rep: The HSPS Faculty Board were unable to appoint a Sociology rep for this academic year and planned to appoint for 2024-25.

c. Review of membership categories
RS proposed a review of the membership categories to better represent the members required for the committee. It was agreed to review this at the Easter Term meeting.
Action: RS to bring a proposal to the Easter Term meeting

4. Approval of minutes of the meeting held on 1 November 2023 (unreserved business) (PBSMC24.01)
The minutes were approved.

5. Matters arising from the previous minutes (unreserved business)
   a. Part II supervision signup methods (item 7c)
The use of Moodle Scheduler had been introduced in Lent Term and was being used by the majority of supervisors. This would be reviewed following the end of the term. The chair suggested that the committee could recommend consistency in the methods used for supervision signups.
   b. Part II SSD distribution for supervisions (item 8)
The added work for students to self-disclose SSDs to Part II supervisors was discussed with the ADRC. Due to the number of variables in terms of students’ paper choices, choices of topics within each paper and choosing specific supervisors per topic, it had been agreed that the complexity of the situation warranted students to self-disclose their SSD requirements to their supervisor at the point of booking a supervision slot. It would not currently be possible for the Department to coordinate this process without creating an onerous workload. The department would continue to review the process and investigate other potential ways to support students, to minimise extra work for students with SSDs.

WB joined the meeting

6. Optional papers
Members received:
   a. A breakdown of PBS student choices in 2023-24 and borrowing numbers from other Triposes (PBSMC24.02)
   b. For discussion, a draft list of the optional papers likely to be available for PBS to borrow in 2024-25, pending discussion with the departments and Committee approval at the Easter Term meeting (PBSMC24.03)

The proposed borrowing of SOC 3 with a cap of five students was discussed. DS reported that many students were interested in sociology and would appreciate the choice of an additional paper.

It was noted that SOC 13 would be allocated to HSPS students before PBS and therefore the wording around this paper would need to be clear.
Action: EW to advise DoSes about the caps on sociology papers
Action: LdW and RS to confirm borrowing arrangement with Sociology.

c. For discussion, a draft list of PBS papers that would be available for other Triposes to borrow in 2024-25, pending discussion with the departments and Committee approval at the Easter Term meeting (PBSMC24.04)

d. A draft timetable for 2024-25 (PBSMC24.05)

The proposed PBS01 practical class slot on Wednesday afternoon was identified as not ideal, the committee was advised that this was a backup slot depending on room availability and that the Thursday morning had been identified as an alternative if required.

Following the meeting, the Teaching Office would contact the departments with whom PBS has borrowing arrangements to confirm their intentions for the 2024-25 academic year. For papers borrowed by PBS, the following information would be requested:

- Code, title and blurb
- Course organiser, examiner and administrative contacts
- Any number caps
- Any optional elements
- Assessment methods
- Supervision arrangements

Author note: Following discussion in item 13c.ii. (reserved business), departments would also be asked to confirm any optional sessions that formed part of their paper.

**AW and DT joined the meeting**

7. **Examinations 2023-24**

It was reported that some exam venues may not have the facility to ensure every student had access to a plug socket. The Committee agreed that this was concerning and posed a high risk of increasing student stress and exacerbating any inequities a student using an older device may already be facing.

**Action: AM to contact the chair of the Faculty Board to raise the concern that a plug socket may not be available to every student sitting an exam.**

SF noted that the NST Management Committee had recently confirmed their update exam data retention policy to meet the Office for Students’ new requirements. The policy for PBS would be reviewed at the Easter Term meeting.

**Action: RS to add review of script retention policy to the Easter term agenda**

RS reported that the Department decision had been made to mark written exam scripts outside of Inspera. This followed the central University’s recommendation.

**AM joined the meeting, CT left the meeting**

8. **Course organiser responses to Michaelmas Term 2023 student feedback (PBSMC24.06)**
LdW noted that there were recurrent issues reported in Part I, as neuroscience had a steep learning curve and PBS 4 had lectures with dense material. EW had advised DoSes to note these factors in supervisions.

Students gave mixed feedback on Part II supervision signups and course organisers amended the process for Lent term.

It was noted that there were fewer responses than expected and that students would be approached to discuss engagement.

9. **Comments from student members**
   a. **Part IA**
   
   DS reported that students felt the lectures were good and complementary in the material covered. Students had requested the PBS 2 statistics answer sheet in advance of the workshops, EW reported that the answer sheet would be provided 24 hours in advance.

   DS advised that students requested that those who had taken optional papers in IA be prioritised for those subjects in IB.

   **Action:** EW to reinforce to DoSes that they should encourage their students to think carefully about IB papers if the students were considering a subject that they had not studied in IA.

   **Action:** Teaching Office to report on trends of IA and IB optional paper take up for Easter Term meeting

   b. **Part IB**

   ES advised that students stated that they continued to struggle when lectures are back-to-back and that neurobiology and PBS 4 have been reported as less difficult in Lent Term compared to Michaelmas.

   **Action:** DoSes to highlight timetabling considerations when optional papers are being selected

   c. **Part II**

   CT would provide feedback by circulation.

10. **PBS student wellbeing**

LdW reported that the student wellbeing survey would be extended to NST and Education students to enable a comparison across Triposes. Diverse testing methods were being considered by the working group and students would be consulted with possible options.

**Thanks was given to the student reps, who left the meeting before the Committee discussed reserved business.**