



**DEPARTMENT OF PATHOLOGY  
UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE**

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**Part I Tripos Teaching Committee**

**Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 14 October 2013**

**Present:** Dr Barry Kingston (Chair)  
Dr Ian Brierley  
Dr Nick Holmes  
Prof Colin Hughes  
Prof Andrew Lever  
Ms Jane Duncan (Minutes)  
Prof Ashley Moffett  
Dr Suzanne Turner  
Prof Alun Williams

**Apologies:** Ms Frances McLoughlin (Secretary)

**1. Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 8 July 2013**

The minutes of the meeting were agreed.

**2. Matters arising**

**2.1 Machine Markable Questions for Bacteriology**

The Chair was investigating the possibility of introducing machine-markable questions for bacteriology either this year or next year. The fall-back position for this year would be to restrict the number of words permitted as answers currently varied from 1 to 4 pages in length.

**2.2 Part IB Teaching Costs**

The Virology (VIR) Practical Organiser reported there was no alternative to using chicken blood for haemagglutination assays as chicken blood had a nucleus. It was noted that the cost of 10ml of chicken blood was £54 whereas 1000ml was £1600. The VIR Practical Organiser agreed to investigate and to report back to the Committee.

*Action: VIR Practical Organiser*

**2.3 Copyright issues on CamTools**

The Secretary had raised copyright issues on CamTools at the recent Executive Committee meeting.

## 2.4 Finance

A CO<sub>2</sub> incubator had been purchased and installed.

## 2.5 Part 1A Lectures

Prof Watson had agreed to give the apoptosis and cancer lectures in Part 1A. The Director of Teaching had drafted a letter to send to the Department of Biochemistry explaining that the Department of Pathology was a little concerned that the MIMMS lectures overlapped with the Department's Part IB lectures. An overlap on the antibiotics lectures was also noted and Dr Sargent had produced a document highlighting areas such as sickle cell anaemia and malaria which were duplicated in different courses.

## 3. **Part 1B Pathology Examination**

### 3.1 Senior Examiner's Report

The Senior Examiner made the following recommendations for the Medical and Veterinary Sciences Tripos (MVST) and Natural Sciences Tripos (NST):

- (i) That consideration be given to asking for an enforced final cut-off date for requests for Special Arrangements for practical examinations and for all notifications of disadvantages which needed the Senior Examiner's consideration. The Committee agreed to write to the Secretary of the Board of Examinations to ask for its deadline to be reviewed.

*Action: Chair*

- (ii) That the practical paper be altered to contain five questions instead of four questions where one was currently divided into an immunology and a virology section.
- (iii) That the appointment of an assessor for the Tumour Biology Option be adopted again in 2013-2014. Dr Kingston was the Senior Examiner in 2014 and careful consideration needed to be given to ensuring that enough examiners and assessors were appointed to cover the Biology of Disease (BOD) and NST parasitology essays, the Infectious Diseases and Host Pathogen Interactions (IDHPI) essays and all of the bacteriology practical answers.
- (iv) That senior invigilators who were qualified and adequately briefed to run the examination were appointed for the practical examination at each venue. The Committee agreed to this suggestion.

### 3.2 External Examiner's Report

- (i) The External Examiner was impressed with the procedure and outcome of the examination. The External Examiner suggested that there was still a tendency for open marking to be more skewed towards a wider spread of the lower marks and

students scoring over 70 were more tightly grouped, although he did not consider that this altered the final allocation grades.

- (ii) The Committee agreed that it was particularly important not to change from open marking.

### 3.3 Proposed changes(s) to Part IB examinations 2013-2014

- (i) It was agreed that in Paper BOD2, Biology of Disease Section II (Practical) candidates would be required to answer all questions. The paper would essentially have the same number of questions as in previous years but the numbering for Questions 4a and 4b would be changed to become Question 4 and Question 5. For Paper BOD3, Biology of Disease Section III (essay) paper candidates would be required to answer three questions from a choice of seven. There would be two Immunology questions, and Parasitology and Vascular Disease would each have a separate question rather than being figured in an Either/Or format.
- (ii) A Form and Conduct Notice would need to be published before the end of term. It was agreed to organise this with the Faculty of Biology.

*Action: Chair*

- (iii) It was agreed to assess how this change worked in 2014.

### 3.4 2<sup>nd</sup> MB and 2<sup>nd</sup> Vet MB Biology of Disease

The internal and external examiners' reports for the 2<sup>nd</sup> MB resits in September 2013 were awaited.

## 4. **Student Numbers 2013-2014**

- (i) Entry in 2013-2014 had fallen; there were 291 Medical students (this figure included 22 from the Cambridge Graduate Course), 63 Veterinary students and 83 Natural Scientists. The overall total was 437 Part IB students.
- (ii) This compared to the 2012-2013 intake of 294 Medical students (this figure included 22 from the Cambridge Graduate Course), 70 Veterinary students and 94 Natural Scientists. The overall total was 458 Part IB students.
- (iii) It was noted that there were fewer Natural Scientists taking the course than in previous years and when enrolment took place it had proved difficult to accommodate some of the combinations.

## 5. **Histopathology Practical Classes**

- (i) Dr Turner had replaced Dr Arends as the Histopathology Course Organiser. She reported that some Natural Scientists had been unable to attend the histopathology introductory sessions because of timetable clashes with Biochemistry.

- (ii) Consideration was given to providing photographs to the Natural Scientists rather than live bacteria. It was noted that if a bank of photographs was accumulated there would be less concern when organising the examination. It was agreed that the practical examination would remain unchanged in 2013-2014 but this remained an issue. The Chair emphasised the importance of gram staining and considered that most students enjoyed it.

## **6. Biology of Disease/Part IB Pathology**

### **6.1 Update on the 2014-2015 BOD/NST Pathology Course**

- (i) The draft timetable was circulated. Although the options were being abolished this would not result in a bigger course. The existing course would be expanded to 2 full terms and practical classes were aligned with lectures. There would be an extra cancer lecture. There were blanks (pauses) but it was not envisaged that permission would be granted to use these vacant slots.
- (ii) The Medical and Veterinary students would finish the course at the end of Lent Term. The Committee needed to produce an extension for the NST students; it was suggested that the current lectures could be used or Genetics of Diseases could be introduced in the Easter Term.
- (iii) Profs Smith and Hughes would be asking a small group to produce a course. Prof Moffett felt that it was a long time since the Immunology lectures had been reviewed and did not feel that there should be 8 lectures on acquired immunity. The Director of Teaching suggested that Profs Moffett and Trowsdale and Dr Kelly should consider this. Prof Moffett suggested that anaemia should be included in the timetable.

*Action: Director of Teaching*

### **6.2 The future of the Part IB Course Organiser**

The Director of Teaching suggested that the job for the next Part IB Course Organiser would be smaller as a result of the strengthening of aspects of the practical options. It was suggested that some shadowing should take place this year.

## **7. Options**

### **7.1 Infectious Diseases and Host Pathogen Interactions**

Nothing to report.

### **7.2 Tumour Biology**

Nothing to report.

**8. Part I Teaching Budget**

The Secretary was not available to speak on the budget for 2013-2014.

**9. Report from Executive Committee**

Nothing to report.

**10. Any Other Business**

**10.1 Chairs of Examiners**

The Department of Pathology was required to provide Chairs of Examinations on a rotational basis and the Director of Teaching circulated a schedule of Chairs from the Department until 2020-2021. He thanked Dr Holmes for taking on the NST IB/ II / (III) role for 4 years. He would be circulating the schedule to everyone on the list to ensure there were no problems.

*Action: Director of Teaching*

**10.2 Part IB and Part II Examiners**

- (i) The Director of Teaching distributed the proposed list of Part IB and Part II examiners from 2012 - 2016. Dr Turner noted that she was listed as an examiner for both Part IB and Part II in 2014-2015 but was not an examiner in 2013-2014. It was agreed to correct this error.

*Action: Chair and Director of Teaching*

- (ii) Dr Clark and Prof Trowsdale had both been identified as the Deputy Senior Examiner in 2015-2016. The Chair agreed to follow up with Prof Trowsdale.

*Action: Chair*

**10.3 Part IB Students: Library Access**

Some Part IB students had contacted the Teaching Office requesting access to the Departmental Library. The Chair was strongly of the opinion that this should be allowed and would follow up the access arrangements.

*Action: Chair*

**10.3 Committee Membership**

Prof Alun Williams confirmed that he would be the representative for the Department of Veterinary Medicine and Dr Fernando Constantino-Casas would deputise in his absence.

10.4 External Examiner

Prof Charles ffrench-Constant had agreed to be the External Examiner for the next 4 years (2 years as Part IB and 2 years as Part II) commencing in the academic year 2013-2014.

10.5 Practical Classroom

It was reported that two projectors had broken; they had been replaced in September and as a result the quality and definition was greatly improved. The plan was to switch to a better system. A quotation of £20,000 had been received for TV screens and funds were being raised.

**11. Date of next meeting**

Monday 27 January 2014.