

GENERAL BOARD OF THE FACULTIES

COMMITTEE OF MANAGEMENT FOR THE NATURAL SCIENCES TRIPOS

Confirmed minutes of a meeting of the Committee of Management for the Natural Sciences Tripos held at **2.15pm** on **Tuesday 3 February 2004** in the Council Room, Old Schools.

Present: Dr J Keeler (Chairman), Dr W Allison, Professor TW Clyne, Dr R Hardie, Dr S Holden, Dr N Holmes, Mr A Jefferies, Dr K Johnstone, Dr P Oliver, Dr S Schaffer, Dr MG Worster and Dr MG Russell (Secretary).

Apologies: Dr K Plaisted, Dr I Wilson and Dr N Woodcock.

180. MINUTES

The unreserved minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 25 November 2003 were approved.

181. MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMITTEE

The Committee welcomed Dr Sean Holden, representing the Computer Science Syndicate, to his first meeting. It noted that no names had yet been forthcoming for the member appointed by the Admissions Forum, or for student representatives.

182. MATTERS ARISING

i. Marking and classing guidelines (minute 169ii)

The Committee noted that it had not yet heard from the Computer Science Syndicate about the proposals for a joint marking scheme.

ii. Consultation exercise on practical work (minutes 172, 141)

The Committee noted that the summary produced was under consideration by the Biological Sciences Committee.

iii. Changes to regulations (minutes 173, 174)

The Committee noted that the proposed changes to regulations agreed at the last meeting (for Part IB Molecular Cell Biology, Part IB Experimental Psychology and Part II Psychology) were approved by the General Board.

183. REPORTED AND STRAIGHTFORWARD BUSINESS

i. Preliminary Reading List for the Natural Sciences Tripos

The Committee received the revised reading list for information (**CM.217**) and **agreed to ask the course organiser for Biology of Cells to review the topics listed in their entry.**

ii. Natural Sciences Open Days 2003

The Secretary reported that the Open Days would be held on 1-2 July 2004 and that he had met with officers of the Cambridge Admissions Office. The Admissions Office would be taking on the responsibility of organising the Open Days, which would become more Departmentally-focussed; the Admissions Office would be contacting Departments regarding the arrangements in due course, which would include requesting that each Department be open to visitors (at least for the afternoons) and put on appropriate talks and demonstrations.

The Committee agreed to ask the Admissions Office to ensure that Colleges and Departments were fully appraised of the arrangements in good time and that they should consider seriously the logistics of students travelling to a number of Departments, covering a wide geographical area.

184. CHANGES TO REGULATIONS

i. Part IA Geology; Part IB Geological Sciences A and B; Part II Geological Sciences; Part III Geological Sciences

The Committee received a letter, dated 8 December 2003, from the Administrator of the Department of Earth Sciences regarding the incorporation of fieldwork requirements into the regulations, and a draft Notice (CM.218) and noted that the changes were required to ensure formal accreditation by the Geological Society. It further noted the obligations that the embedding of fieldwork in the regulations would place on the future funding of these activities by the School of Physical Sciences. **The Committee agreed to support the proposals and the required changes to regulations to the General Board, along with a recommendation that they consult with the Council of the School of Physical Sciences before the changes to regulations were approved.**

ii. Part II History and Philosophy of Science

The Committee received a letter, dated 21 January 2004, from the Chair of the Board of History and Philosophy of Science regarding an increase in the number of papers offered at Part II, and a draft Notice (CM.219) and noted that the changes were to take account of changes in the teaching and research interests of staff of the Department and were partly the result of the recent General Board review of the Department. **The Committee agreed to support the proposals and the changes to regulations.**

iii. Part III Biochemistry

The Committee received a copy of a letter, dated 12 November, from the Head of Department of Biochemistry regarding the removal of the requirement of a prepared essay, and a draft Notice (CM.220) and noted that the changes were a result of concluding that the essay added no value to the overall assessment of candidates. The Committee further noted that the proposal had not yet been approved by the Faculty Board of Biology.

The Committee were concerned that the requirements for the examination would become two written papers and the submission of a report on a research project of not more than 8000 words, and that this was out of step with other Part III examinations; it was also unclear what proportion of the course was a result of the research project. **It agreed to ask the Department and Faculty Board for clarification of these points.**

185. EXAMINATIONS 2003: REPORTS OF THE CHAIRMEN OF EXAMINERS

i. Part IA

The Chairman of Examiners for Part IA, Dr Oliver, noted that the meeting was straightforward and there were no matters to report to the Committee.

ii. Parts IB, II, II (General) and III

The Committee received a report from the Chairman of Examiners for Parts IB, II, II (General) and III, Dr Hardie, on matters arising from the first meeting of the Senior Examiners (CM.221). The Committee noted the matters raised regarding class distribution and advised the Chairman to exercise appropriate discretion, as outlined in the marking and classing document.

186. REVIEW OF THE REGULATIONS

The Committee received a paper, prepared by the Secretary, regarding the revision of the regulations for the Tripos and the Preliminary examination (CM.222). **It agreed to review the regulations in forthcoming meetings.**

187. UCAS CODE FOR THE TRIPOS

The Committee received a copy of an email from the Cambridge Admissions Office, regarding the UCAS code for the Tripos (CM.223). It noted that the Admissions Office was proposing that the University consider having two course codes for the Tripos; one for physical sciences and one for biological sciences. The Chairman reported that this proposal had received objections from the Head of the Student Records and Statistics Section. The Committee concurred with the views of the Head of Student Records and Statistics, adding that any such division was inappropriate for the Tripos and the students.

188. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting shall take place at **2:15 pm** on **9 March 2004** in the Council Room at the Old Schools.