

GENERAL BOARD OF THE FACULTIES

COMMITTEE OF MANAGEMENT FOR THE NATURAL SCIENCES TRIPOS

Minutes of a meeting of the Committee of Management for the Natural Sciences Tripos held at **2.15pm** on **Tuesday 25 November 2003** in the Council Room, Old Schools.

Present: Dr J Keeler (Chairman), Dr W Allison, Professor TW Clyne, Mr A Jefferies, Dr R Hardie, Dr P Oliver, Dr K Plaisted, Dr J Riley, Dr S Schaffer, Dr I Wilson, Dr N Woodcock, Mr J Zwart and Dr MG Russell (Secretary).

Apologies: Dr S Hand, Dr N Holmes, Dr K Johnstone, and Dr MG Worster.

168. MINUTES

The unreserved minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 28 October 2003 were approved.

169. MATTERS ARISING

i. Annual Report 2002-2003 (minute 160i)

The Committee received an unconfirmed minute of the General Board's Education Committee (**CM.207**) relating to the Annual Report 2002-2003 and noted the comments made therein.

ii. Marking and classing guidelines: Part IA and Part IB (minute 162, 163)

The Committee noted that the revised marking schemes had been posted on the website and that Directors of Studies had been informed of the changes. It received a digest of email responses (**CM.208**) to the posting and noted the response of the Chairman to one of the correspondents. The Committee noted in particular that the 5% threshold for the award of a third class in Part IB of the Tripos was meant as a guideline to Examiners, and not a prescription, and that the revised marking scheme reflected that intention.

The Committee noted that, on the issue of correlating the results of Part IA NST with Part IA of the Computer Science Tripos, no response from the Computer Science Syndicate had yet been received.

170. MINUTES OF THE STRATEGIC COMMITTEE FOR THE NST

The Committee received the minutes of the meeting of the Strategic Committee held on Tuesday 11 November 2003 (**CM.209**) and noted the following points:

- minute 141: progress was being made on the revision of Part II (General) of the Tripos;
- minute 144: that the Strategic Committee had endorsed the decisions of the Committee relating to classing in Parts IA and IB of the Tripos;
- minute 145: the new appointments to the Committee.

171. GENERAL BOARD CONSULTATION ON EXAMINATION ISSUES

The Committee received a letter, dated 13 October 2003, from the Deputy Academic Secretary regarding a consultation on examination issues (CM.210) and a draft response (CM.211), prepared by the Secretary. It noted that individual Departments were expected to respond to the issues raised in relations to the examinations conducted in their own Departments (*i.e.* individual Part IA and Part IB examinations and Part II and Part III examinations). **The Committee approved the draft response, relating to areas under the remit of the Committee, subject to some minor amendments.**

172. CONSULTATION EXERCISE ON PRACTICAL WORK (minute 141)

At its meeting on 6 May 2003, the Committee noted the variance across practical provision and workload in Part IB of the Tripos and recent discussions at the Biological Sciences Committee. It had agreed that there need not be uniform practice across the Tripos, but that course management committees should ensure that the practical work was appropriate to the subject. It further agreed to review data on practical work and assessment in Parts IA and IB of the Tripos, to establish whether there were serious discrepancies.

The Committee now received the results of such a consultation exercise (CM.216). It noted that there was a wide variation in practice relating to both workload and assessment, but there was no evidence to suggest that the practice in any subject was inappropriate or influencing student choice. It reiterated its decision that uniform practice was not necessarily appropriate. **The Committee agreed that the document could be considered by the Biological Sciences Committee of the Faculty of Biology.**

173. PART IB EXPERIMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY AND PART II PSYCHOLOGY

The Committee received a copy of a letter, dated 24 September 2003, from the Head of Department of Experimental Psychology regarding regulation changes for Part IB Experimental Psychology and Part II Psychology (CM.213) and noted that the proposals had been approved by the Faculty Board of Biology. It also noted that the Board of Examinations had been consulted on the proposals and **agreed to recommend the proposals to the General Board.**

174. PART IB MOLECULAR CELL BIOLOGY/ CELL AND DEVELOPMENTAL BIOLOGY

The Committee received a letter, dated 16 October 2003, from the Secretary to the Faculty Board of Biology, regarding a name change for the Part IB Molecular Cell Biology course (CM.214). **The Committee agreed that the change of name to “Cell and Developmental Biology” was appropriate and to recommend the proposal to the General Board.**

175. FORM AND CONDUCT NOTICE: 2003-4

The Committee approved the complete form and conduct Notice for the Tripos (CM.215).

176. RETIREMENT OF MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

The Committee noted that this was the last meeting for Dr Julia Riley and Mr Jonathan Zwart and thanked them for their contributions to the work of the Committee.

177. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting shall take place at **2:15 pm on Tuesday 3 February 2004** in the Council Room, Old Schools.