

DEPARTMENT OF BIOLOGY

BIOLOGY UNDERGRADUATE EXAMINATIONS COMMITTEE

Terms of Reference

Remit

The Biology Undergraduate Examinations Committee is responsible for (a) formulating examinations policy, for approval by the Biology BoS, (b) organising the setting of finals examination papers (c) developing and up-dating marking guidelines for finals papers and other examinations, (d) vetting first- and second-year examination papers.

Reporting Structure

Reports to: Biology BoS and Biology BoE

Minutes noted by: Biology Undergraduate Studies Board (BUSB)

Membership

Nine members of staff with combined expertise covering the whole width of biology, as taught in the Department. Within the eight members there is a Chair and a Secretary. The Chair/Secretary of the Biochemistry Undergraduate Examinations Committee is a member of the Committee.

Meetings and Business

The Committee meets a minimum of five times a year, the main business for each meeting being as follows.

Summer Vacation. Joint meeting with BUSB; this is an open meeting to which all academic members of the BoS are invited. The main aim is to review all matters relating to final-year assessment (as raised, for example, in external examiners' reports or in the final-year feedback) so that recommendations may be made to the October BoS meeting and changes indicated in the documentation to the new final-year students.

November. Vetting short-answer and essay questions set for Term 7 module examinations.

December/January. Vetting questions for the Open Essay, Methods & General and Problem finals papers.

February. Vetting short-answer and essay questions set for Term 8 module examinations.

June. 'No-names' meeting to consider the finals class list, and to assist the External Examiners by making recommendations regarding the drawing of borderlines, suggesting possible *viva* candidates and identifying students with special circumstances. Minutes of this meeting are sent to External Examiners and academic staff, and are considered at the final BoE meeting.

In addition to these formal meetings, members of the Committee, review first- and second-year examination papers and arrange the setting and testing of the finals Comprehension & Criticism and Problem papers. They also ensure that all exam-related information is maintained on the Departmental web-site and, where appropriate, in written documentation.

Examinations Committee takes account of equality of opportunity in its work.

Minutes of the joint Examinations Committee/BUSB meeting, and other *ad hoc* policy meetings of the Examinations Committee, are available within the Department of Biology.

These Terms of Reference were agreed by Examinations Committee on 3 October 2007 and are subject to modification in the light of experience.

Dr Geoff Oxford