

Medical Sciences Divisional Board

Approved by the MSD Undergraduate Studies Committee via Chairs Actions on 12th June 2018.

Honour School of Cell and Systems Biology

Brief note about nature of change: Replacement of one unseen written paper with a piece of submitted work, the 'Specialist Review'. Changing the weightings of the marks for the six components of the examination.

Location of change

<http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/examregs/2017-18/hsocandsystbiol/administratorview/>

Effective date

For students starting FHS from MT 2018 (starting Part II in TT 2019).

And

For first examination in TT 2019 (for Part I) and TT 2020 (for Part II)

Detail of change

Honour School of Cell and Systems Biology

A

1. The subject of the Honour School of Cell and Systems Biology shall be all aspects of the scientific study of the development and functioning of living organisms with particular but not exclusive reference to mammals.

2. No candidate shall be admitted to examination in this school unless he or she has either passed or been exempted from the First Public Examination.

3. The examination in this school shall be under the supervision of the Medical Sciences Board, which shall make regulations concerning it.

4. The examination in Cell and Systems Biology shall consist of two parts: Part I and Part II.

5. No candidate shall be admitted to the Part II examination in this school unless he or she has completed the Part I examination in this school.

6. The examination for Part I will take place during Week 0 or 1 in Trinity Term of the candidate's second year. The examination for Part II will take place during Trinity Term of the candidate's third year.

7. For the Part I options provided by the Department of Experimental Psychology, candidates shall be examined by such of the Public Examiners in the Honour School of Experimental Psychology as may be required. For the written papers in Part II ~~which are as specified for the Honour School of Medical Sciences, and the Research Project,~~ [and the Specialist Review](#), candidates shall be examined by such of the Public Examiners in the Honour School of Medical Sciences [and the Honour School of Experimental Psychology](#) as may be required.

8. In addition to the form of examination prescribed below, candidates may be examined *viva voce* in either part of the examination.

9. Candidates for Part I and Part II may offer themselves for examination in one or more of the *Supplementary Subjects*. The *Supplementary Subjects* available in any year will be notified to students annually during Trinity Term. Account shall be taken of a candidate's results in any such subject in the candidate's overall classification in the Honour School of Cell and Systems Biology. Candidates awarded a pass in a Supplementary Subject examination may not retake the same Supplementary Subject examination.

B

PART I

1. Candidates will attend lectures and practicals in options selected from a list published to students by the end of Week 8 of Hilary Term in the year preceding the examination. Each option will have a number of units ascribed to it. Candidates will be required to study options totalling ten units. The handbook for the course will specify how many units are assigned to each option, and which options are ~~required~~ [commended](#) to proceed to particular advanced options in Part II.

2. Two written papers will be set:

(i) Paper I will be a three-hour examination comprising a selection of questions requiring short answers. Candidates will be required to answer those questions relating to their chosen options.

(ii) Paper II will be a two-hour essay paper. Candidates will be required to answer questions from a selection relating to the different options that they have studied.

3. If, in Paper II of the Part I Examination, a candidate presents essentially the same information on more than one occasion, then credit will be given in only the first instance.

4. Candidates will be required to undertake practical work and submit written reports as specified in the course handbook which will constitute part of the examination. On the basis of attendance records and the submitted reports, the Course Director, or a deputy, shall make available to the Examiners, at the end of Week 0 of Trinity Term in which the examinations are held, evidence showing the extent and the standard to which each candidate has completed the prescribed practical work. Practical work cannot normally be retaken. Candidates whose attendance or performance is deemed unsatisfactory will forfeit one quarter of the marks in the Part I examination, the outcome of which will be carried forward to the Part II Examination.

PART II

1. Each candidate must offer ~~timed written examination papers and a project report based on a research project~~ three timed written examination papers, a project report based on a Research Project, and a Specialist Review.

2. The options of the school shall be published by the Faculty of Physiological Sciences Undergraduate Studies Office not later than noon on Friday of Week 6 of Hilary Term in the year preceding that in which the examination is due to be taken. The impact of the change on candidates will be given due consideration by the Faculty of Physiological Sciences FHS / FHS Part II Course and Examination Policy Committee.

~~The options of the school shall be:~~

~~A Neuroscience~~

~~B Molecular Medicine~~

~~C Cardiovascular, Renal, and Respiratory Biology~~

~~D Infection and Immunity~~

~~E Cellular Physiology and Pharmacology~~

~~as specified for the Honour School of Medical Sciences.~~

3. Each candidate must offer ~~three~~^{four} written papers: Paper 1 for two chosen options, Paper 2, and Paper 3 as specified for the Honour School of Medical Sciences, ~~except that Paper 1 for the second chosen option will require candidates to answer two questions in two hours.~~

4. The Research Project

~~The research project will normally be carried out in the Trinity Term of the candidate's second year and the Michaelmas Term of the candidate's third year.~~

(i) Form, subject, and approval of the project

The project shall consist of original experiments carried out by the candidate alone or in collaboration with others (where such collaboration is, for instance, needed to produce results in the time available).

Each project shall be supervised, and the topic and supervisor shall be approved on behalf of the Medical Sciences Board by the Course Director, or a deputy. A list of approved project titles and their supervisors shall be published no later than Friday of Week 1 of Hilary Term in the academic year preceding the examination, and allocation of these projects to candidates shall be carried out through the Faculty of Physiological Sciences Undergraduate Studies Office.

As an alternative to the allocation process, a candidate may apply to undertake a project that is not on the approved list. Such application must be made no later than Friday of Week 8 of Hilary Term in the academic year preceding the examination. The candidate must submit the title of their proposed research project, provide a brief outline of the subject matter and supply details of supervision arrangements. The decision on the application shall be made by the Course Director, or a deputy, and shall be communicated to the candidate as soon as possible, and work should not start on the project until approval has been given. Candidates should allow at least one week for the process of approval, and should bear in mind that an application may be referred for clarification or may be refused.

(ii) Application to change title of project

If required, candidates may apply to change the title of their project through the Faculty of Physiological Sciences Undergraduate Studies Office on one occasion and no later than noon on Friday of Week 4 of Hilary term in the academic year in which they intend taking the examination.

(iii) Submission of the Project Report

The length and format of the Project Report shall be according to guidelines published by the Medical

Sciences Board. Material in a candidate's Project Report must not be duplicated in any answer given in a written examination paper. Project Reports previously submitted for the Honour School of Cell and Systems Biology may be resubmitted. No Project Report will be accepted if it has already been submitted, wholly or substantially, for another Honour School or degree of this University or for a degree of any other institution.

Project Reports must be submitted via WebLearn (according to the instructions set out in the letter to candidates from the Chair of Examiners), not later than noon on the Friday of Week 8 of the Hilary Term in which the candidate intends to take the examination. Each Report shall be accompanied by a certificate of authorship indicating that the research project is the candidate's own work~~(three copies must be sent to the Chair of Examiners, Honour School of Cell and Systems Biology, Examination Schools, High Street, Oxford, not later than noon on the Friday of Week 8 of Hilary Term in the academic year in which the candidate intends to take the examination. The copies shall be accompanied (in a separate sealed envelope) by a certificate signed by each candidate indicating that the research project is the candidate's own work.~~ In the case of work that has been produced in collaboration, the certificate shall indicate the extent of the candidate's own contribution.

In exceptional cases, where through unforeseen circumstances a research project produces no useable results (i.e. not even negative or ambiguous results), the candidate may apply through his or her college to the Course Director, or a deputy, for permission to submit a concise review of the scientific context and the aims of the work that was attempted, in place of the normal Project Report. Such an application must be accompanied by supporting evidence from the supervisor of the project. The concise review to be submitted in such circumstances should be comparable in length to the Report of a successful research project, will be presented orally to the examiners, and will be examined *viva voce* in the usual way for a research project. The examiners will be advised that substantive results could not be produced.

The examiners shall obtain and consider a written report from each supervisor indicating the extent of the input made by the candidate to the outcome of the project and also any unforeseen difficulties associated with the project (e.g. unexpected technical issues or problems in the availability of materials, equipment, or literature or other published data).

(iv) Oral Assessment of Project-based Written Work

In addition, each candidate shall make a brief oral presentation of their project to a group of two examiners (or examiners and assessors appointed to ensure an adequate representation of expertise), after which, the candidate shall be examined *viva voce* on the project. The form of the presentation to the examiners shall be specified in guidelines published by the Medical Sciences

Board.

5. The Specialist Review

(i) Form and subject of the specialist review

The length and format of the specialist review shall be according to guidelines that will be published by the Medical Sciences Board.

The subject matter of a candidate's specialist review shall be within the scope of the school. The review may relate to any of the themes taught in the options of the school.

A specimen list and/or a list of review titles registered by students in previous academic years will be made available by Week 5 of the Trinity Term of the academic year preceding that of the examination, to assist candidates in the choice of topic or general field for the review.

(ii) Registration

No later than noon on Friday of Week 8 of Michaelmas Term in the academic year of the examination, every candidate must submit via WebLearn a completed specialist review registration form. A decision on the application shall be made by the Course Director, or a deputy and shall be communicated to the candidate.

(iii) Application to change title of specialist review

If required, candidates may apply to change the title of their review through the Faculty of Physiological Sciences Undergraduate Studies Office on one occasion and no later than noon on Friday of Week 8 of Hilary term in the academic year in which they intend taking the examination.

(iv) Authorship

The review must be the candidate's own work. Candidates' tutors, or their deputies nominated to act as advisors, may discuss with candidates the proposed field of study, the sources available, and the method of treatment, but on no account may they read or comment on any written draft. Every candidate shall submit a certificate to the effect that this rule has been observed and that the review is their own work; and the candidate's tutor or adviser may be asked to confirm that, to the best of their knowledge and belief, this is so.

(v) Submission

Specialist reviews must be submitted via WebLearn (according to the instructions set out in the letter to candidates from the Chair of Examiners), not later than noon on the Friday of Week 0 of the Trinity Term in which the candidate intends to take the examination. Each review shall be accompanied by a

[certificate of authorship as specified in the preceding paragraph.](#)

~~65.~~ If, in the Part II Examination, a candidate presents essentially the same information on more than one occasion, then credit will be given in only the first instance.

~~76.~~ The weighting of marks for the five ~~componentsexercises~~ required of each candidate shall be ~~205~~ per cent for the ~~Project Report based on the Rresearch pProject~~, ~~165~~ per cent for each of Papers 1, 2, and 3, ~~and 12 per cent for~~ ~~except that Paper 1 for the second chosen option the Specialist Review will carry 10 per cent of the marks~~. Marks carried forward from the Part I examination will account for the remaining 20 per cent of the candidate's overall result for the Honour School of Cell and Systems Biology.

Explanatory Notes

A recurring theme in feedback from Biomedical Sciences students has been concern about the structure of the FHS Part II examination (taken at the end of the third year). The problem reported by the students is that, compared to the FHS Medical Sciences students, they have additional material to study throughout the year (either a 'minor' Physiological Sciences option or an EP Advanced Option), and an additional written paper on this material for which to revise. As their exam scripts are marked alongside those of candidates in FHS Medical Sciences and FHS Part II Experimental Psychology according to shared criteria, they feel that their marks in their written papers are compromised by having a heavier workload during the academic year, additional material to revise, and one additional written paper to sit during the exam period.

The current arrangements also feature disparities between the weightings of individual elements of the examination for the Cell and Systems Biology cohort and the Neuroscience cohort. For example, for CSB students, the mark for Paper 2 makes up 15% of their overall weighted mean mark; whereas for Neuroscience students, it is 13.75%.

The changes to the examining arrangements take into account the changes being made in parallel to reform the size and shape of the Advanced Options delivered by the Faculty of Physiological Sciences. There will be 9-10 four-theme options in the new model. One of the new options will be made up of four themes provided by the Department of Experimental Psychology (four of the Advanced Options available to Part II EP students).

The new piece of coursework to be undertaken by students at Part II will be called the 'Specialist Review'. The exam regulations, teaching arrangements and examining arrangements will be identical to those for the Submitted Essay as specified for FHS Medical Sciences.