

Medical Sciences Divisional Board

Approved by Chair of MSD Audit Sub-Committee 12th July 2016

Preliminary Examination in Biomedical Sciences

Brief note about nature of change: Changes to the titles and format of papers in the examination, according to academic decisions taken by the Course Steering Committee based on student feedback.

Effective date

For students starting from MT 2016

And

For first examination from 2016-17

Location of change

In *Examination Regulations* 2015-16 <http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/examregs/2015-16/peinbiomscie/administratorview/>

Detail of change

1. In 1.1:

The ~~subjects of the~~ Preliminary Examination in Biomedical Sciences shall consist of five written papersbe:

2. In 1.2:

(1) ~~Body, Brain and Behaviour: Papers 1A and 1B~~ Multiple choice questions

3. In 1.3:

~~(2) Cells, Molecules and Genes: Papers 2A and 2B~~

(2A) Body and Cells (essay questions)

(2B) Genes and Molecules (essay questions)

(2C) Brain and Behaviour (essay questions)

4. In 1.5:

Candidates shall be deemed to have passed the examination if they satisfy the Moderators in all ~~three subjects~~ five papers.

5. In 1.6:

Candidates must offer all ~~three subjects~~ five papers at their first examination attempt.

6. In 1.7:

A candidate who fails one or two of the five papers ~~comprising subjects 1-3~~ will be permitted one further attempt at the failed paper or papers, at the first available opportunity.

7. In 1.8:

A candidate who fails three or more of the five papers ~~comprising subjects 1-3~~ shall be deemed to have failed the examination.

8. In 1.9:

The Moderators may award a Distinction to candidates of special merit who satisfy them in all ~~three subjects~~ five papers at their first examination attempt.

9. In 1.10:

~~For each of subjects 1 and 2, two written papers will be set. Papers 1A and 2A will each be of one hour and thirty minutes' duration. Papers 1B and 2B will each be of two hours duration. Paper 1 will be of two hours and fifteen minutes' duration. Papers 2A, 2B and 2C will each be of ninety minutes' duration. For subject 3....~~

10. In 1.15 to 1.22:

~~1. Body, Brain and Behaviour~~

~~a. Body: cardiovascular; respiratory; renal and gastrointestinal systems~~

~~b. Brain: introduction to neuroscience; neuroanatomy overview; sensory; motor; neural development; learning and memory; sleep, dreams, and consciousness~~

~~c. Behaviour: memory; language; awareness and attention; decision-making and rationality; disorders; social; genetics of diseases~~

~~2. Cells, Molecules and Genes~~

~~a. Cells: cell division and cell cycle; inter- and intra-cellular signalling; excitable tissues; membrane transport; general principles of pharmacology~~

~~b. Molecules: DNA/RNA structure; protein structure; lipids and membrane structure; energy metabolism~~

c. Genes: fundamentals of genes; molecular biology techniques

1. Body and Cells

a. Body: cardiovascular; respiratory; renal and gastrointestinal systems

b. Cells: cell division and cell cycle; inter- and intra-cellular signalling; excitable tissues; membrane transport; general principles of pharmacology

2. Genes and Molecules

a. Genes: fundamentals of genes; molecular biology techniques

b. Molecules: DNA/RNA structure; protein structure; lipids and membrane structure; energy metabolism

3. Brain and Behaviour

b. Brain: introduction to neuroscience; neuroanatomy overview; sensory; motor; neural development; learning and memory; sleep, dreams, and consciousness

c. Behaviour: memory; language; awareness and attention; decision-making and rationality; disorders; social; genetics of diseases

11. In 1.23:

34. Introduction to Probability Theory and Statistics (as specified for the Preliminary Examination in Psychology, Philosophy, and Linguistics)

Explanatory Notes

It had come to the attention of the Biomedical Sciences Year 1 committee in Hilary Term 2016 that recent results from the Student Barometer Survey revealed disappointingly low scores for the organisation of the first year of the course. In order to obtain more detailed feedback on this matter, Dr Wilkins asked the Student Representative for the cohort of second year students to consult amongst his peers. This consultation revealed that one reason for such a perception might be that students view the paper divisions in the Preliminary Examination to be rather odd; in particular there is a lot of perceived overlap between the Body and Cells threads which currently appear on different papers. It was, therefore, suggested that by dividing the threads into three papers (Body and Cells; Genes and Molecules; Brain and Behaviour), this would not only give them greater coherence, but also streamline the allocation of examiner duties.