

Open Business

minutes

Board Meeting on 12 February 2008 held at 4 Mill Lane



**UNIVERSITY OF
CAMBRIDGE**

Board of Graduate Studies

Present: Prof WA Brown (Chair), Dr WD Allison, Prof GAJ Amaratunga, Dr GMW Cook, Dr LRR Gelsthorpe, Prof J Heal, Ms KA Linder, Mr LS Liu, Prof RG Osborne, Dr J Runde, Prof BJ Sahakian, Mr MR Younger with Dr K Maxwell as Secretary and Dr LM Biggs, Ms SJ Pickard and Ms S-A Gannon in attendance.

The Registry (Dr JW Nicholls) and the Pro-Vice Chancellor for Research (Prof I Leslie) were also in attendance.

Apologies: Dr CR Hiley

Professor PC Hewett and Professor SK Rankin are on sabbatical leave

3175 **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting on 15th January 2008 were signed as a true record.

Matters requiring discussion

3176 **Fee liability of graduate students: fee for the course** (Agenda refers)

The Board approved the proposal for the introduction of a fee for the course for graduate students for introduction in October 2009. The following recommendations were supported:

Each graduate student would pay a UCF:

- appropriate to his or her residency and employment status;
- at the published annual rate for the course (unless reduced or waived by the BGS under exceptional circumstances, in accordance with Regulation 11e);
- for each and every term up to the minimum number of terms required for the qualification, i.e. 9 terms for the PhD degree

- in three installments in years 1-3 at the prevailing rate for the year: no additional UCF will be payable for a tenth term, but the payment of the full UCF for three years entitles the student to a twelve term (4 year) registration period.

That is:

1. the only terms excluded are those for which a student intermits or comes off the register;
2. the full fee is payable regardless of the place in which the student resides during his or her studies;
3. the full fee is payable whether the student is working in the University and its approved non-University Institutions, or away from Cambridge;
4. the fee charged in any year is based on the same fee whether the course is taken by the part-time or full-time route

If the proposed 'Fee for the Course' model is adopted, then:

1. Composition Fee liability for all students ceases at the end of the minimum research period (e.g. nine terms for PhD students);
2. Entitlement to supervision and use of central facilities for a further year (or until the examination is concluded, whichever is the sooner) is understood to be included in the fee for the course;
3. Local entitlement to facilities in Faculties and Departments would vary according to the nature of the research, but it is expected that students in this situation would not be continuing to undertake original research beyond their ninth term but would simply be working on material gained during those terms and therefore 'writing up';
4. Students are automatically removed from the register at the end of the 12th term but may apply for re-instatement when ready to submit the dissertation;

Exceptionally, and provided that a case is made by the College Tutor and Degree Committee, the BGS will have the authority to permit a student to remain on the Register for an additional and limited period of time (normally one term).

It was further proposed that:

1. Fees should be paid annually and are subject to increase as determined by Grace.
2. Where possible, Colleges should collect the fee annually, at the start of the academic programme and on each anniversary;
3. The UCF will be partially or fully waived if a student transfers to another institution where a fee is payable for each wholly uncompleted term.

3177 Revised regulations for the MPhil in Computational Biology
(Paper 3180 refers)

The Board approved the revised regulations.

3178 Procedure for alleged breach of University or Departments safety policy by a graduate student
(Paper 3183 refers)

The Board requested that further comments and the specific approval of the proposal from the Director of the Health & Safety Division were required the document could be approved for publication on the Board of Graduate Studies website.

3179 Disability Equality Scheme: Annual Report
(Paper 3184 refers)

The Board approved the Annual Report and agreed to undertake the following:

- a) to include an analysis of disability information in the annual report;
- b) to appoint a member to the Joint Committee on Disability
- c) to follow up the graduate student survey by focus group work
- d) to appoint a member of staff to act as a first point of contact for disabled students.

3180 Decrease in the number of Home graduate students
(Paper 3185 refers)

The Board were concerned by the significant reduction in the number of Home graduate students. The Secretary was asked to investigate how Cambridge compared with other Russell Group Universities and for data relating to the first destination of Cambridge undergraduates.

The Board approved the following recommendations:

- (i) All interested parties should be made aware of the problem. Colleges, Faculties and Departments should be encouraged to earmark funds for Home students.
- (ii) The Cambridge University Development Office (CUDO) should identify funding for Home students as a priority fund raising area.
- (iii) The University should be proactive in the recruitment of Home students, e.g. attendance and recruitment fairs and better marketing.
- (iv) The University should increase its contribution to the funding of Home PhD students.
- (v) Increased funding would allow the Board of Graduate Studies to create funding packages and identify the best candidates for awards via the DRS competition.

3181 Points Based Immigration System: Implications for Cambridge graduate students
(Paper 3186 refers)

In response to the proposed implementation of the Points Based Immigration System in January 2009, the Board approved the following recommendations:

Recommendation 1

It is suggested that the cost of the CAS be passed onto the affected students directly as part of the registration fees on the University Composition Fee bills, and that Colleges reimburse the University as per the existing mechanism for Composition fees.

Recommendation 2

For the sake of consistency and efficiency, and mindful of the additional workload involved, it is suggested that the initial registration of students and issuing of a CAS is handled centrally, with the co-operation and support of Colleges.

Recommendation 3

Given the additional resource required, it is suggested that a permanent Grade 5 post be established, with support for temporary staff during peak periods. These staff would be based at the International Office (IO) and would work closely with BGS, Cambridge Admissions Office (CAO) and Colleges to ensure that certificates are issued on time.

Recommendation 4

It is suggested that the University's 'Authorising Officer' should be a senior University officeholder, with authority for issuing CAS numbers delegated to the Grade 5 post mentioned in Recommendation 3 above.

Recommendation 5

Given the penalties for failure to comply with sponsorship rules, it is suggested that the collection of this additional information should be a streamlined process which is completed by the Level 5 post in the International Office, with support from the Colleges and the BGS.

Recommendation 6

It is suggested that at the undergraduate level, the provision of a photocopy of their passport should be a condition of students' offers. Photocopies will be sent to Colleges, which will then forward these and students' e-mail addresses to the IO. The IO will then take this as confirmation of the student's admittance and intention to take up study at Cambridge, and issue a CAS certificate.

Recommendation 7

It is suggested that at the postgraduate level, the provision of a photocopy of their passport should be a condition of students' offers. Photocopies will be sent to the BGS. Once all of a student's offer conditions have been completed and the student's admission has been confirmed, the BGS will inform the IO, which will issue a CAS certificate.

Recommendation 8

For undergraduates, the IO will request from Colleges a list of all non-EEA, non-Swiss undergraduates who have matriculated at the start of Michaelmas Term and, at the outset, all other non-EEA non-Swiss undergraduates in College. Thereafter, on a termly basis, the IO will request updates regarding authorised and unauthorised absences, and will update the details on the Home Office system as necessary.

Recommendation 9

For post-graduates, it is suggested that the Fee Billing process be brought forward to an earlier point in term, and is used to obtain a list of all non-EEA, non-Swiss students who have arrived in Cambridge. The IO will request details of all other non-EEA non-Swiss postgraduates (i.e. current students) from Colleges. Either the College or the Department will be responsible for reporting unauthorised absences during term time.

Recommendation 10

It is suggested that the following deadlines are implemented for post-graduate admissions: 31 July, 31 October and 31 January for applications for entry on 1 October, 1 January and 1 April respectively; 15 September, 15 December, and 15 March for offers for entry on 1 October, 1 January and 1 April respectively; 31 October, 31 January and 30 April for confirmations for students starting on 1 October, 1 January and 1 April respectively. As is currently the case, the deadline for online applications would be two weeks prior to the published closing dates.

Recommendation 11

It is suggested that the initial registration of these students, and the collection of monitoring information, be handled centrally by the post mentioned in Recommendation 3. This will ensure consistency in the way the University responds and adheres to Home Office requirements.

Recommendation 12

It is suggested that even if admissions processes are devolved to departments, the initial registration of students and issuing of the CAS, should be handled centrally, by the post mentioned in Recommendation 3.

Recommendation 13

If no academic waiver is agreed; the student must defer continuation to a term in which all outstanding conditions can be met before the start of the term.

Recommendation 14

It is suggested that only under exceptional circumstances would a student be permitted to start their course away from Cambridge. Where it is known at the point at which an offer is made, that a student will be working away at the start of their course, it should be a condition of that student's offer that authorization for the leave be granted before admission can be confirmed. For students who are already enrolled, it must be made clear that it is a condition for pursuing the course that leave to work away for a defined period of time must be granted in advance of departure and that failure to do so will result in their absence being reported to the Home Office as "unauthorized" and their visa being revoked. Each application will be processed within one week of receipt and for Overseas students, the post holder identified in Recommendation 3 will be informed.

Recommendation 15

It must be made clear at the point of admission, that it is a condition for pursuing the course that leave intermit for a defined period of time must be granted in advance and that failure to do so will result in their absence being reported to the Home Office

as “unauthorized” and their visa being revoked. Where a student is incapacitated and unable to apply for permission to intermit, an application may be made on their behalf by either the College Tutor or Degree Committee. Each application will be processed within one week of receipt and for Overseas students, the post holder identified in Recommendation 3 will be informed. In accordance with the Code of Practice, intermission should be granted for a maximum of three terms during the student’s career, after which the student should be temporarily removed from the Register.

Recommendation 16

The Fee for the Course should be introduced in October 2009.

3182 MPhil in Management Research: closure of admission to course (Paper 3047 refers)

The Board agreed that the MPhil degree should not be used as a qualification for those students who fail the first year PhD assessment exercise and that the Judge Business School should investigate the possibility of introducing a Certificate of Postgraduate Study.

3183 Board of Graduate Studies meetings: proposed dates for 2008-09

The Board approved the following dates for meetings in 2008-09:

7th October 2008
28th October 2008
25th November 2008
13th January 2009
10th February 2009
10th March 2009
21st April 2009
19th May 2009
9th June 2009
7th July 2009

3183 Proposal for a new MRes degree (Paper 3187)

The Board agreed to approve the proposal for the MRes degree but recommended that it be adopted for all Master’s courses leading to the PhD.

3185 Residence requirements for part-time students (Paper 3195 refers)

The Board discussed at length the issues surrounding residence and attendance requirements of part-time students. It was agreed that further information was necessary and in particular it was important that a comparison was made with other Universities.