

Open Business

minutes

Board Meeting on 20 May 2008 at Mill Lane



**UNIVERSITY OF
CAMBRIDGE**

Board of Graduate Studies

Present: Prof WA Brown (Chair), Dr W Allison, Mr W Bortrick, Dr GMW Cook, Dr LRR Gelsthorpe, Prof J Heal, Dr CR Hiley, Ms KA Linder, Mr LS Liu, Prof RG Osborne, Dr J Runde, Mr MR Younger with Dr K Maxwell as Secretary and Mr P Carr, Dr LM Biggs, Ms S-A Gannon, Ms SJ Pickard and Ms J Wilkinson in attendance.

Apologies: Prof GAJ Amaratunga, Prof M Blamire, Prof SK Rankin, Prof BJ Sahakian

The Pro-Vice Chancellor for Research, Prof Ian Leslie was also in attendance.

Professor PC Hewett is on sabbatical leave

3226 **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting on 22nd April 2008 were signed as a true record.

3227 **Expressions of interest**

There were no reported conflicts of interest.

3228 **Matters for report**

3229 **Membership of the Board**

Professor Brown formally announced that he would step down as Chairman of the Board of Graduate Studies in July 2008. The Board expressed their gratitude to Professor Brown.

3230 Pro-Vice Chancellor for Education

The Board were pleased to learn that Professor John Rallison (Trinity) had been elected as the new Pro-Vice Chancellor for Education with effect of 1st October 2008.

Matters requiring discussion

3231 Graduate maintenance rates 2009-10

The Board agreed to increase the annual minimum maintenance requirement by 6% on the 2008-09 rate, i.e. from £9290 to £9874.

Action: BGS Finance & Studentships Officer

3232 Change to University Ordinance: submission date

The Board agreed to recommend that Regulation 7 of the Special Regulations for the Doctor of Philosophy, Master of Philosophy and Master of Letters should be amended as indicated in underscored text.

“A candidate may submit his or her dissertation not earlier than the first day of the term during which he or she expects to complete the requirements of Regulation 1 and not later than the last day of the fourth full year after that in which the student was registered as a full-time candidate for the degree or the last day of seventh full year after that in which the student was registered as a part-time candidate for the degree, provided that, with the permission of the Board, a dissertation may be submitted later than that day. An allowance of terms made by the Council under Regulation 2 and by the Board under Regulation 1(d) shall count in calculating the standing of a student for the purpose of this regulation as shall an exemption under Regulation 1(a).”

Action: Education Committee

3233 Application for the conversion of MSt to part-time MPhil: Latin American Studies

For its part the Board, could see no objection for the conversion of the MSt in Latin American Studies to be converted to a part-time MPhil course. The decision was made in the knowledge that the application was supported by the Council of the School and on the understanding that it would not require any change in resource or course structure

Action: Education Committee

3234 Special academic cases and English language requirements

The Board agreed the following:

- That the policy be re-worded to read: “where a candidate is below the minimum in both English language and academic results, admission will not *normally* be confirmed.”
- If an exception to the policy is requested by a Department, Degree Committee and College, authority to authorise this exception may be delegated to officers of the Board.

- In cases where the Language Centre recommends a straightforward waiver, applicants are considered to have met the University's minimum, and are not therefore covered by the policy.

Action: Head of Admissions

3235 QAA Institutional Audit report

The Board noted the contents of the report and was satisfied with those comments relating to graduate students. In line with the recommendations for action, the Board agreed that all postgraduate students with supervisory or teaching responsibilities should be appropriately trained and sanctioned the Secretary to liaise further with the Staff Development Office.

Action: Secretary

3236 ORS and related awards

The Board recognised that there were issues with top-slicing of nominations for ORS awards and that moderation was required to ensure that small departments were not disadvantaged. It was noted that the quality of the departmental statements of support was variable and in some cases failed to provide any indication of the suitability of the candidate for an ORS award. It was agreed that if the standard of the supporting statements improved they could be used to assess the applications for all nominations and thereby remove the necessity to top-slice nominations. The Board agreed to forward examples of "good" and "bad" statements of support to each department in advance of the 2009 competition.

Action: Studentship Officer

3237 Points Based Immigration

The Board were pleased to note that the reporting requirement for the proposed points based immigration system had been relaxed. The Board noted that the Secretary and Head of Admissions were to meet the MP for Cambridge to discuss the new system and recommended that the MP for South Cambridgeshire should also be approached.

Action: Secretary

3238 Update on Domestic Studentships

The Board noted the contents of the report and were pleased to learn that the Newton Trust had agreed to underwrite the costs for those students who would expect to be funded by the AHRC this year but would be disadvantaged as a result of funding cuts to the AHRC. The Board asked that this information be relayed to Departments.

Action: Head of Studentships

3239 Request to change title of MPhil course

The Board agreed to approve to change the MPhil in Oriental Studies to the MPhil in Asian and Middle Eastern Studies with effect of 1st October 2008.

Action: Education Committee

3240 Application for renewal of Non-University Institution status: MRC Laboratory of Molecular Biology (LMB)

The Board was content to renew NUI status to the MRC Laboratory of Molecular Biology and noted the support of the Degree Committee for the Faculty of Biology and the Director of the School of Life Sciences/

Action: Secretary

3241 Application for a new option within an existing MPhil: Medical Sciences

The Board approved an application from the Degree Committee for the Faculties of Clinical Medicine & Veterinary Medicine to introduce a new option within the existing MPhil in Medical Sciences. The Board noted that the new option is rotation-based and is designed to act as a platform to the PhD degree. It is proposed that the new option will form the first year of a 1+3 programme.

Action: Secretary

3242 Postgraduate Admissions Committee: draft regulations

The Board approved the draft regulations for a Postgraduate Applications Committee (PAC) and nominated the Head of Graduate Admissions, Dr Litsa Biggs, as its representative.

Action: Secretary