

Unreserved Business

minutes

Board Meeting on 14 October 2008 at Mill Lane



**UNIVERSITY OF
CAMBRIDGE**

Board of Graduate Studies

Present: Prof J Rallison (Chair), Mr W Bortrick, Dr GMW Cook, Prof EH Cooper, Prof PJ Ford, Dr LRR Gelsthorpe, Prof PC Hewett, Dr CR Hiley, Mr S Mtimbiri, Prof SK Rankin, Mr MR Younger with Dr K Maxwell as Secretary and Dr LM Biggs, Ms S-A Gannon and Ms SJ Pickard in attendance.

Apologies: Prof D Cardwell and Prof BJ Sahakian

Prof G Amaratunga, Prof M Blamire, Prof J Heal, and Dr W Allison are on sabbatical leave

3288 **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting on 8th July 2008 were signed as a true record.

3289 **Expressions of interest**

There were no reported expressions of interest.

3290 **Straightforward Business**

Board Membership

The Board welcomed Professor Rallison, Professor Cooper and Professor Ford.

3291 **Matters requiring discussion**

3291.1 **Application for a new MPhil** (Paper 3408 refers)

The Board approved the application for a new MPhil in Multidisciplinary Gender Studies with effect from 1st October 2009.

Action: Education Committee

3291.2 **Application for renewal of Non-University Institution status: MRC Human Nutrition Research**
(Paper 3387 refers)

The Board agreed to renew NUI status to the MRC Human Nutrition Research.

It was agreed that the Secretary would compile guidelines and a *pro forma* application form to be used by Institutes when applying for NUI status.

Action: Secretary

3291.3 **Proposed change to Special Regulations: MPhil in Politics**

The Board approved, retrospectively, the proposed change to the Regulations with effect from 1st October 2008.

Action: University Draftsman

3291.4 **Report on PhD viva voce examination held by video conference**
(Paper 3374 refers)

The Board was pleased to receive the report and thanked Dr Dodgson of the Computer Laboratory. It was agreed that the Secretary would draw up guidelines based on the recommendations made within the report which should be applied to any *viva voce* examination to be held by video conference.

Action: Secretary

3291.5 **Recommendation from the Review Committee: Guidelines for examiners**
(Paper 3373 refers)

The Board agreed that it was unreasonable to expect examiners to retain reports for extended periods but that examiners should be advised to submit any material that they felt should be kept in addition to their reports, to the Degree Committee for safe-keeping.

Action: Head of Graduate Examinations

3291.6 **Registration status of students admitted to the PhD programme**

The Board agreed that it was reasonable to register all students as PhD at the outset and therefore eliminate the requirement for overseas students to meet the cost of extending their visas after one year. However, the Board recognised that Regulation 9 would require amendment to formalise the requirement for a first year progression exercise and that in order to ensure good practice throughout the University, the Degree Committees would need guidelines relating to the assessment procedure.

It was agreed to consult the Degree Committees before taking any further action.

Action: Secretary

3291.7 **Email references from @cam addresses**

The Board approved the request to accept electronic copies of references originating from valid @cam email addresses *in lieu* of signed, originals for all admission and continuation applications with immediate effect.

3291.8 **Application to admit part-time research students**

(Paper 3375 refers)

The application from the Department of Medical Genetics to admit part-time research students for the PhD and the MPhil in Medical Sciences (Option Medical Genetics) was approved with effect from Michaelmas Term 2008.

Action: University Draftsman

3291.9 **External Examiners report: MPhil in Chinese Studies**

(Paper 3416 refers)

The Board was concerned that the External Examiner had not received adequate guidance and agreed to refer the report to the Degree Committee for comment.

Action: Secretary

3291.10 **AHRC, ESRC and DRS Studentships 2008**

(Paper 3417 refers)

The Board was pleased to receive the report. It was noted that the University received 54 fewer AHRC awards as compared to the 2007 competition and that an increased contribution from the Newton Trust and the University had allowed 25 additional students in AHRC subjects to be funded through the DRS scheme. An AHRC block grant application has been submitted and it predicted that Cambridge University will be awarded at least 138 awards in 2009.

The Board was pleased that a high proportion of Colleges had made contributions to the DRS scheme. The Board wished to thank the DRS Committee and the Studentships Office at the Board of Graduate Studies for administering the competition.

3291.11 **Funding for overseas students**

The Board noted that HEFCE had withdrawn funding for the Overseas Research Studentship (ORS) Awards Scheme with immediate effect and that the University in collaboration with the Cambridge Overseas and Commonwealth Trusts has introduced the Cambridge International Scholarships Scheme (CISS) which would offer fully-funded packages to the very best overseas students. It was agreed that Departments should be asked to indicate whether or not additional funding was available for each student nominated for a CISS award.

Action: Head of Studentships