

## ***Unreserved Business***

# *minutes*

Board Meeting on 14 April 2009



**UNIVERSITY OF  
CAMBRIDGE**

Board of Graduate Studies

Present: Prof J Rallison (Chair), Prof RJ Bennett, Prof D Cardwell, Dr GMW Cook, Prof PJ Ford, Prof PC Hewett, Dr CR Hiley, Mr S Mtimbiri, Dr R Padman, Dr DR Sargan, Mr MR Younger with Dr K Maxwell as Secretary with Mrs CHG Daunton and Ms SJ Pickard in attendance.

Apologies: Prof EH Cooper, Prof SK Rankin, Prof BJ Sahakian

Dr LRR Gelsthorpe is on sabbatical leave.

3346 **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting on 10th March 2009 were signed as a true record.

3347 **Expressions of interest**

Professor Hewett expressed an interest in 3349.3. Dr Cook and Hiley declared an interest in item 3349.1. Dr Sargan expressed an interest in item 3349.2.

The Board agreed that it was appropriate for these members to contribute to discussions of the items in question.

**Matters for report**

3348 **Chairman's report**

The Chairman reported on a talk he had prepared for Heads of Departments which highlighted: 1) graduate admissions numbers, trends and resources, 2) funding patterns and Research Council requirements; 3) immigration and supervision issues.

3349            **Straightforward Business**

3349.1        **Proposal for new MPhil strand**  
(Paper 3566 refers)

The Board approved the proposal for a new strand in the MPhil in Biological Science (Option B) backdated to 1<sup>st</sup> October 2008, but agreed that the Degree Committee should be approached with a view to converting the strand into a new MRes degree, as proposed by the Degree Committee, as soon as possible.

Action: Secretary & Education Committee

3349.2        **Proposals for new MPhils**

a)            MPhil in African Studies (Paper 3566 refers)

The Board approved the new MPhil subject to the Degree Committee agreeing to adopt the common marking scheme for MPhil degrees, clarifying the mark required for continuation to the PhD which differs between Faculties and consideration given to extending the course to 10 or 11 months in line with QAA recommendations. The Secretary was given discretion to approve a revised proposal on behalf of the Board.

b)            MPhil in Translational Medicine & Therapeutics (Paper 3586 refers)

The Board approved the proposal for the new MPhil with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> October 2009 subject to the Degree Committee providing the Secretary with evidence regarding the academic standing of qualifications for healthcare professionals who have not obtained a first degree.

Action: Secretary & Education Committee

3349.3        **Amendment to the Special Regulation for the Certificate of Postgraduate Study in Computer Science**  
(Paper 3567 refers)

The Board approved the proposal.

Action: Secretary

3349.4        **Graduate working restrictions**  
(Paper 3568 refers)

The Board received a draft proposal from the Chair of the Graduate Tutors' Committee but were not prepared to accept the proposal in its current form. The Board agreed that the statement was unduly negative

and did not recognise that supervising and related activities provide valuable transferable skills training. The Board agreed that (i) the current limit of a maximum of ten hours of work in total (including preparation) during full term remains appropriate; (ii) the permission of the supervisor and tutor should be obtained if a student wishes to exceed this limit and (iii) that this should be incorporated within the Regulations for admission as a graduate student. The Board also requested that the Chair of the Graduate Tutors' Committee should be approached to redraft the statement in consultation with the Secretary.

Action: Secretary

3349.5 **English for Academic Purposes: proposed revision of charges for initial assessments and in-session support**

(Paper 3569 refers)

The Board approved the proposed charges for both initial assessments and in-session support and agreed that it was acceptable for the cost of the initial assessment to be passed on to the applicant.

Action: Secretary

3349.6 **Payment for English for Academic Purposes (EAP) language courses**

(Paper 3575 refers)

The Board noted the 2007 decision of the Resource Management Committee, and for its part agreed that (i) if attendance at an in-session course is a BGS admissions condition the student should be liable for the charge unless the department agrees at that stage that it will meet the charge; (ii) if attendance at an in-session course is not conditional and occurs at the request of the department, then the department should be liable for the charge.

Action: Head of Graduate Admissions

3349.7 **Copying and dissemination of MPhil coursework**

(Paper 3497 refers)

After an extended discussion the Board could not agree to support the decision made by the Education Committee

Professor Bennett argued that dissemination of MPhil coursework was a useful learning tool, which if used appropriately, fell within the conventions of fair use. Mr Mtimbiri supported this view. In contrast, Professor Ford argued that the introduction of more transparent marking criteria would prove more helpful to students than having access to submitted coursework.

There was a broad consensus (i) that if copying and dissemination of coursework was to be allowed it should be better regulated; (ii) that students should have access to an appropriate permission and copyright form which provided the right to refuse dissemination of their work; (iii) further consideration would need to be given to electronic and non-electronic storage of material; (iv) dissemination should be limited to work from previous years' cohorts of students; (v) different educational cultures exist between undergraduate and graduate courses which may mean that dissemination of graduate work is appropriate, whereas dissemination of undergraduate work is not.

The Board agreed to refer this matter back to the Education Committee for further consideration.

The Chairman suggested that when student permission had been given, copies of MPhil coursework might be consulted in departmental libraries on the basis that it must not be copied or placed on the web.

Action: Education Committee

3349.8 **PhD completion rates: options for Examiners' recommendations**  
(Paper 3570 refers)

The Board agreed that it was difficult to define what constitute "substantial corrections" or to impose strict deadlines for such corrections, particularly in cases where the examiners' reports and requirements are not clear. Mr Younger informed the Board that the Faculty of Education had recently started a pilot to impose a deadline of eight weeks for the completion of substantial corrections. The Board asked to receive a report on the scheme as soon as possible.

After an extended discussion the Board agreed (i) to amend the guidelines for examiners to make it clear that minor corrections (Option 2) should be such that they could be completed within 2-3 days and (ii) to ensure as far as possible that examiners provide coherent reports which will help students to make their corrections in a timely fashion.

Action: Secretary, Mr Younger

3349.9 **Proposal for electronic submission of the PhD thesis**  
(Papers 3492 & 3493 refer)

The Board received the response of the University Librarian to the Board's issues arising from the meeting held on 13<sup>th</sup> January 2009.

The Board agreed that submission of electronic thesis was a sound principle but recognised that in a number of cases (e.g. those citing poetry, musical composition and illustrations) third party copyright requirements would alter the nature of the dissertation in a manner which may not be desirable. A number of Board members were

unhappy with the legal obligation placed on the student to understand third party copyright and pointed out that compliance with third party copyright agreements may lead to undue expense and delays in submission, especially if third parties did not respond to requests in a timely fashion. The Board agreed that it would be useful to learn how other institutions manage e-thesis submission and issues surrounding third party copyright. The Board agreed that submission of e-theses may be encouraged but should not be made compulsory until issues relating to third party copyright were resolved.

It was agreed that the Chairman would meet the University Librarian and the Legal Service's Copyright Officer to discuss the Board's concerns.

Action: Secretary

3349.10 **MPhil in Bioscience Enterprise: proposal to increase travel costs**

The Board was not prepared to approve the proposal that travel costs are increased by £250 for students admitted in October 2009 at this stage of the admissions cycle.

Action: Head of Graduate Admissions

3349.11 **Graduate Funding**  
(Papers 3587, 3588 & 3589 refer)

- (A) The report on ESRC Postgraduate Training Framework was noted.
- (B) The report AHRC Block Grant was received and the Board noted that formal adoption of the Code of Practice would address most of the issues raised by the AHRC.
- (C) The paper addressing the Funding for EU students was received.
- (D) The report on the 2009 DRS competition was received and the Board approved the proposed change in name to the Cambridge Home EU Scholarships Scheme (CHESS).
- (E) The report on the UK Council for Graduate Education's conference on the future of resourcing of postgraduate study was received.