

Unreserved Business

minutes

Board Meeting on 8 June 2010



**UNIVERSITY OF
CAMBRIDGE**

Board of Graduate Studies

Present: Professor Rallison (Chairman), Professor Bennett, Professor Cardwell, Dr Cook, Dr Gelsthorpe, Professor Ford, Professor Heal, Professor Hewett, Dr Kingston, Dr Miller, Dr Padman, with Dr Maxwell as Secretary and Dr Biggs, Ms Gannon, Ms Harcourt and Ms Pickard in attendance

Apologies: Professor Goldhill, Dr Sargan, Professor Sahakian, Mr Younger

3543 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 4 May 2010 were approved.

3544 Declarations of interest

Professor Cardwell declared an interest in minute 3549 and was invited to speak to this item.

Matters for report

3545 Chairman's report

The Chairman reported that the Postgraduate Admissions Committee had discussed the increase in graduate student numbers and that the minutes would be discussed at the next Board meeting. He also reported that EPSRC were no longer permitting the College fee to be paid from research grants and that although the flexibility inherent in NERC and EPSRC Doctoral Training Grants meant that the College fee could be paid (albeit at the expense of studentships and consumables) this may not be the case if ESRC and AHRC adopted this rule. The Chairman informed the Board that it was likely that the new government would put the Newton Scholarships into abeyance.

3546 **Graduate Continuation and Scholarship Application Form**
(Paper 4022)

The Board agreed that it would be helpful for funding applications to include the requirement for a second reference in the scholarships section.

Action: Head of Graduate Admissions

3547 **Standing Advisory Committee on Student Matters: annual review of complaints procedures**
(Paper 4023)

The Board received the report and endorsed the recommendations that (i) there is a key need for timeliness in raising and progressing complaints and new time limits for the completion of various stages of the processes; (ii) there is a need to encourage informal resolution of complaints and (iii) clear and accessible information should be available through the website and the Student Handbook.

Action: Secretary

Matters for discussion

3548 **Application for a new MPhil: Financial Economics**
(Papers 4047, 4048, 4049)

The Board received the proposal and was concerned that (i) the new MPhil may divert resource from both undergraduate teaching and research effort; (ii) the difference in fee between the proposed MPhil and the MPhil in Finance required further consideration; (iii) there appeared to be considerable overlap with the MPhil in Finance; (iv) the changes to the course requested by the Judge Business School appeared to be reasonable and (v) ideally the course would be run as a collaborative effort between the Faculty of Economics and the Judge Business School given the branding implications for prospective students.

The Board agreed that a co-ordinated strategy was required both in relation to the two Schools involved and also its potential implications for undergraduate teaching in Economics, and that a working group should be formed in conjunction with the Education Committee to examine in detail the concerns arising from the proposal.

Action: Chairman and Education Committee

3549 **Application for a new MPhil in Energy Technologies**
(Paper 4024)

The Board approved the introduction of the new MPhil with effect from 1 October 2011.

Action: Education Committee

3550 **External Examiners and employment checks**
(Paper 4025)

The Board was concerned by the UK Border Agency's requirements that employment checks should be made for all Examiners, particularly given the small sums of money involved and agreed that a protest should be lodged via Universities UK. It agreed that it was not possible to guarantee that an expert Examiner could be found within the EEA and that it was desirable to continue to appoint the best qualified Examiners irrespective of their nationality. The Board proposed that the MP for Cambridge should be alerted to this issue. It also noted that there potential implications for the Colleges and that they should be made aware of this issue.

The Board agreed that the Secretary should pursue this matter with the Human Resources Division and the Legal Services Office.

Action: Secretary

3551 **Graduate Admissions Pilot: Faculty of Music**
(Paper 4026)

The Board acknowledged that given the current financial situation, most departments would need to utilise existing staff members and small units may find it difficult to absorb the extra work required for the devolution of admissions. It was possible that administrative units within departments could amalgamate for this purpose, or the work could be undertaken by graduate schools. It agreed that the implementation of the fully electronic application system in 2011-12 would reduce the amount of work required, although some Faculties may still choose to circulate documentation in hard copy. It noted that the Board uses Grade 3 staff for the initial stage of the application process whilst it was likely that departmental staff would have additional, related responsibilities which would require a higher grading. The Board was interested to understand how the Faculty had arrived at a figure of £3391 for the non-recurrent grant and agreed otherwise to refer this matter to the Graduate School of the Arts and Humanities.

Action: Secretary

3552 **A review of Graduate Schools in the UK**
(Paper 4027)

The Board received the UK Council for Graduate Education's report of its 2009 survey of Graduate Schools. It noted that:

1. 76% of UK HEIs have at least one Graduate School as compared to 67% in 2004;

2. Roles and responsibilities of Graduate Schools have become more harmonised since 2004 with the key focus on research student training, quality assurance and increasing student satisfaction;
3. All Graduate Schools serve PGR students, but PGT provision is more variable especially amongst post 1992 institutions.

The Board agreed to refer the report to the Schools/Graduate Schools for their information.

Action: Secretary

3553 **The Bologna Process and the European Credit Transfer Scheme (ECTS): Master's course**
(Paper 4028)

The Board agreed that the proposal was an acceptable interim solution and approved the letter.

Action: Secretary

3554 **Annual quality update**
(Paper 4030)

The Board agreed that the questions asked in last year's update were acceptable but that Departments should be asked to differentiate between taught masters and research students in their response. Any additional questions would be submitted to the Secretary.

Action: Secretary

3555 **Admissions statistics**

The Board noted that as of 1 June 2010, the Admissions Office was now very close to exceeding the number of conditional offers made for the previous year.

3556 **AHRC Block Grant Allocation**
(Paper 4031)

The Board received the report on the second (of five) Block Grant allocations and noted that from October 2010 it was likely that the University would be required absorb much of the administration currently undertaken by the AHRC. The Head of Fees and Funding reported that the AHRC had visited the University in May when the possibility of increasing the flexibility of the subject discipline of awards had been discussed and it seemed likely that in the future it would be possible to vire awards between departments. The Board was concerned to note that other Institutions had introduced very early acceptance of offer dates which had disadvantaged the University and was unfair to

students. It supported the idea, currently operated by STFC, that there should be a sector-wide deadline for students to accept their offer of funding.

Action: Secretary

3557 **Common marking scheme for the MPhil degree**
(Paper 4050)

The Board received the letter from the Institute of Criminology. In response, to their concerns the Board noted that it would be possible to rescale their existing marking scheme as many other Faculties had done. The Board also wished to remind the Institute that the introduction of the common marking scheme was a General Board decision that would promote modularity and course sharing between Faculties.

Action: Secretary

3558 **Changes to the Statutes and Ordinances**

Application to rename the MPhil in Social Anthropological Research.

The Board approved the proposal that the MPhil in Social Anthropological Research as the MRes in Social Anthropology with effect from 1 October 2011.

Action: Secretary

MPhil in Technology Option A

The Board approved the request to amend the Special Regulations for the MPhil degree in Technology Policy Option A, with effect from October 2010 so as to require the publication of the list of mandatory and optional modules to be published not later than the end of the Michaelmas Term next preceding the examination.

Action: Secretary