

## ***Unreserved Business***

# ***minutes***

***Board Meeting on 12 October 2010***



**UNIVERSITY OF  
CAMBRIDGE**

Board of Graduate Studies

**Present:** Professor Rallison (Chairman), Professor Cardwell, Professor Ford, Professor Gelsthorpe, Professor Goldhill, Professor Hewett, Dr Hiley, Dr Padman, Dr Sargan, Mr Ward, Mr Younger with Dr Maxwell as Secretary and Dr Biggs, Ms Gannon and Ms Pickard in attendance.

**Apologies:** Professor Bennett, Dr Cook, Professor Heal, Professor Sahakian

Mrs Fage attended for items 3616 and 3617

**3609**      **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 6 July 2010 were approved.

**3610**      **Declarations of interest**

None were made.

**Matters for Report**

**3611**      **Chairman's Report**

The Chairman informed the Board that the Browne report had been published and that its findings and implications for graduate students would be discussed at the next meeting.

**Matters for discussion**

**3612**      **Revised start date for the MPhil in Finance and Economics**  
(Paper 4154)

The Board approved the request to delay the start date for the new MPhil in Finance and Economics to the academic year 2012-13

Action: Education Committee

**3613**      **General Regulations for the MPhil degree in relation to the oral examination for the MPhil in Biological Science**

(Papers 3995, 4155)

The Board received the Degree Committee responses and noted that a minority of students were awarded the MPhil degree following unsatisfactory progress in their PhD studies whilst the majority had been admitted directly to an MPhil course. The Board noted that the MPhil by thesis and oral only was akin to an abbreviated PhD and that many Examiners did not understand why there was no scope for corrections. The Board agreed that if corrections and re-examination of dissertations were permitted for one category of MPhil, it might be necessary to include this provision for all MPhil courses with a thesis component or even to permit re-sits of examinations.

In conclusion, the Board agreed that on the weight of evidence provided, the magnitude of the problem was not sufficient to require a change to the regulations and that Degree Committees should be asked to brief Examiners more clearly.

Action: Secretary

**3614**      **Request to amend special regulations: MPhil in Politics**

(Paper 4156)

The Board agreed that the proposed regulations lacked sufficient detail and agreed to refer the request back to the Degree Committee.

Action: Secretary

**3615**      **Application for a new MSt in Historic Environment**

(Papers 4157, 4158)

The Board approved the proposal for a new MSt in Historic Environment to commence October 2011.

Action: Education Committee

**3616**      **Visiting graduate students**

(Paper 4159)

The Board agreed

- i. To defer further discussion of a possible reduction in the number of visiting students when and if a cap was placed on the number of Certificates of Acceptance for Study (CAS) that the University could issue;
- ii. That to make all parties aware of their responsibilities, guidelines for visiting students should be circulated to all departments.

The Board also noted that students who were visiting for under six months could enter the UK as a student visitor and that Visiting Student visas (tier 4) applied only to those students who were visiting for over six months and for not more than 50% of their total course duration.

Action: Head of the PBI Office.

**3617**      **Update on Points Based Immigration**  
(Paper 4160)

Mrs Fage spoke to this item. The Board noted that:

- i. The University had granted the status of Highly Trusted Sponsor by the UKBA;
- ii. The University's proposed contact points had been endorsed by the UKBA;
- iii. Students who arrive with a visa issued by another Institution are not able to commence study until they had applied for a new visa sponsored by Cambridge;
- iv. Approximately 1700 students had been sponsored for entry in October 2010, of which 50 had made new applications because they had failed to submit complete information and two students were sent home as they had arrived on the wrong visa;
- v. The PBI office was receiving an improved service from UKBA and the FCO for individual cases;
- vi. The government is to undertake a review of student visas;
- vii. The UKBA will undertake a compliance audit of the University (tiers 2, 4 & 5) in January 2011.

**3618**      **Cambridge Home/EU Scholarships Scheme (CHESS) 2010**  
(Paper 4161)

The Board received the report and noted:

- i. The CHESS Committee had agreed that full maintenance awards would be made available to EU students with Research Council funding;
- ii. The decision-making processes would be brought forward in 2011;
- iii. College funding had decreased as compared to the 2009 competition;
- iv. The CHESS Committee hoped it would possible to match funds with Departmental sources in 2011;
- v. The awards administered by the Secretariat had proved too restrictive for co-funding;
- vi. The eligibility of new courses such as the MAST, for CHESS funding was being investigated.

The Board agreed:

- i. although early decision making was desirable, this should be done in the knowledge that many science departments are unable to make early nominations as a consequence of the late announcement of Research Council funding;
- ii. In order to attract the best students it is essential to make funding available from a diverse range of sources;
- iii. It is likely that funding from Research Councils will be reduced significantly and that CUDO should be encouraged to promote fundraising for graduate funding.

The Board thanked the Funding Team and the CHESS Committee

**3619**      **English Language requirements for the Cambridge International Scholarships Scheme (CISS)**

The Board agreed to remove the requirement for the English language condition to be met at the time that the CISS award is offered.

**3620**      **Graduate Student Numbers**  
(Papers 4162, 4163, 4164, 4165, 4166)

The Head of Graduate Admissions explained that there was likely to be an increase of around 9% in the number of graduate students for 2010-11 as compared to 2009-10. She also reported that the emergency control measures put in place by the Board over the summer had proved unpopular with Departments but had helped to prevent the predicted increase of 17%.

The Board noted that:

- i. The Chairman had asked the Heads of House to supply their desired maximum intake of Masters students for 2011;
- ii. The Planning and Resources Committee had advised Schools that the 2011-12 intakes of Masters students should not be significantly above 2009-10 levels, unless the Colleges indicated a larger capacity in which the case, the Planning Round numbers would be adjusted;
- iii. Once the final planning Round figures had been established, the Board's Admissions Office would continuously monitor offer numbers and feedback to Departments and Colleges.

The Board approved the control measures but acknowledged that they would disadvantage Schools that had previously submitted accurate plans and that intended to introduce new courses.

The Board agreed to review the situation once the College returns had been collated.

The Board acknowledged the difficulties associated with late applications and agree to impose an application deadline of 30 June on applicants and a conditional offer deadline of 31 July on departments, with immediate effect.

Action: Head of Graduate Admissions

**3621**      **Graduate College Fee**  
(Paper 4162)

The Board noted that the AHRC and ESRC had declared that they would no longer pay the College Fee for students starting on or after October 2011 and that it was likely that the other Research Councils would announce that the fee was no longer an allowable expense on research grant applications. The Board agreed that where accommodation was offered, the best option would be to reduce fees but increase rent to market rates. The Board was concerned that the University's competitiveness would be decreased if students were asked to find the College fee from their stipend, but agreed that it was necessary to advertise new AHRC and ESRC awards with clear information that this was the likely position for entry in 2011-12.

Action: Head of Graduate Funding

**3622**      **Electronic Data Management: Graduate Admission**  
(Paper 4167)

The Board received the report and noted that the new fully on-line application process would be piloted from April 2011 with full roll-out by September 2011. The Board agreed that a fully electronic application system should be adopted and to increase the application to charge to £50 for on-line applications and £100 to meet increased processing costs for paper applications with effect from September 2011.

**3623**      **Request to amend special regulations: MPhil in Scientific Computing**  
(Paper 4208)

The Board agreed that the proposed regulations were not appropriate or sufficiently detailed and agreed to refer the request back to the Degree Committee.

Action: Secretary