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Funding: <http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/offices/gradstud/funding/>
Information for Supervisors, Degree Committees and Examiners <http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/offices/gradstud/admin/>



Code of Practice

Graduate research degrees and certificates of postgraduate studies

(PhD; EngD *research elements*; MSc; MLitt; MPhil '*thesis only*' courses;
Certificate of Postgraduate Studies)

2007–08

This *Code of Practice* sets out the University's guidelines for those courses examined by scrutiny of an extended research dissertation and an oral examination only. It may also be applied to the research years and thesis examination for the EngD Degree.

There will be a separate *Code of Practice* for those courses for which the Board is responsible in which there is a significant element of taught coursework (MPhil other than '*thesis only*' courses; MSt; Diplomas in Legal Studies, International Law, Economics).

This *Code of Practice* is a guide to good practice based upon the University's Regulations and the reasonable expectations of students and the staff who teach them and of the University generally. The Code applies in all but exceptional circumstances; any departures from the Code by any party require evidence of good reason.

It should be read in conjunction with the University Regulations concerning graduate students and degrees; the relevant *Course Handbook*; any other Department/Faculty guidelines; and the Board of Graduate Studies' *Guide to Examiners*. **The *Code of Practice* provides a gloss on the University's Regulations as set out in the *Statutes & Ordinances* <http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/univ/so/>; it does not supersede the *Statutes & Ordinances*, which should be taken as definitive in case of doubt.**

The Codes of Practice and Guides for students, Supervisors and Examiners can be found on the web at <http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/offices/gradstud/>

This *Code of Practice* is issued to new students starting their course in 2007–08 and applies for the duration of their course. However, the Code is updated annually in August; supervisors and current students should make themselves aware of any amendments and changes in policy between issues. Material changes from the previous edition will be highlighted in the text and a complete set of editions will be available on the Board of Graduate Studies' website.

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1 Introduction

1.1 Status of *Guides, Handbooks, Codes of Practice and Regulations*

This *Code of Practice* is provided by the Board of Graduate Studies for both students and the academic staff who teach and examine them. It

- offers practical advice;
- provides guidance on procedures and good practice relevant to graduate research programmes (there is a separate *Code of Practice* relevant to graduate courses with significant taught elements);
- and sets out the rights and responsibilities of students and staff.

Where necessary, descriptive notes and diagrams are provided to describe the structures and procedures on which the descriptions of good practice are based. It should be read in conjunction with:

- *the University Regulations*, which set out rules that apply across the University and programme-specific regulations;
- the Board of Graduate Studies' Examiners (available online through the Board of Graduate Studies' website <http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/offices/gradstud/>);
- the *course handbook*, which provides guidelines specific to a particular course;
- any other literature provided by Faculties/Departments for guidance.

The *Course Handbook*, the relevant *University Regulations* and this *Code of Practice* will be supplied to students at the start of the course. Students are expected to have read them and refer to them as needed.

Colleges have also provided a description of the provision they make for graduate students (<http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/committee/seniortutors/>). See 2.6.

Supervisors and others involved in guiding and assessing research students should familiarise themselves with these documents and refer to them in case of difficulty.

Students and staff will be deemed to be familiar with these documents in the event of any dispute or review.

The University is required to follow the Quality Assurance Agency's *Code of Practice for Postgraduate Research Programmes*, which is to be found at:

<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/academicinfrastructure/codeOfPractice/section1/default.asp>

1.2 Who does what

Each student is assigned an individual who acts as his or her **Principal Supervisor**. A second person is also appointed to act in a less formal capacity as an additional **Advisor**.

The course is under the jurisdiction of a **Faculty** (in Cambridge, a Faculty is '*a body of persons...for the purpose of furthering the study of a subject or subjects*' – not an individual member of staff). Each Faculty may, or may not, be divided into **Departments** or other **Institutions** specialising in the subjects that make up the overall area of interest of the Faculty. Some of these are 'approved Non-University Institutions' (see *Graduate Studies Prospectus* for a list); the regulations apply equally to students and supervisors in these institutions. Each Department or Institution normally has a **Graduate Education Committee** that oversees the progress of students within its remit, although this may be provided in some cases at Faculty level. This Committee is led by a person with a title such as 'Director of Graduate Education'.

Each Faculty has a **Degree Committee**, made up of academic representatives of the areas of interest of the Faculty, which has oversight of supervision and graduate education and examinations in the Faculty.

Each student and his or her supervisor are embedded in a **supervisory team** within a Faculty or Department, and under the jurisdiction of a single Degree Committee.

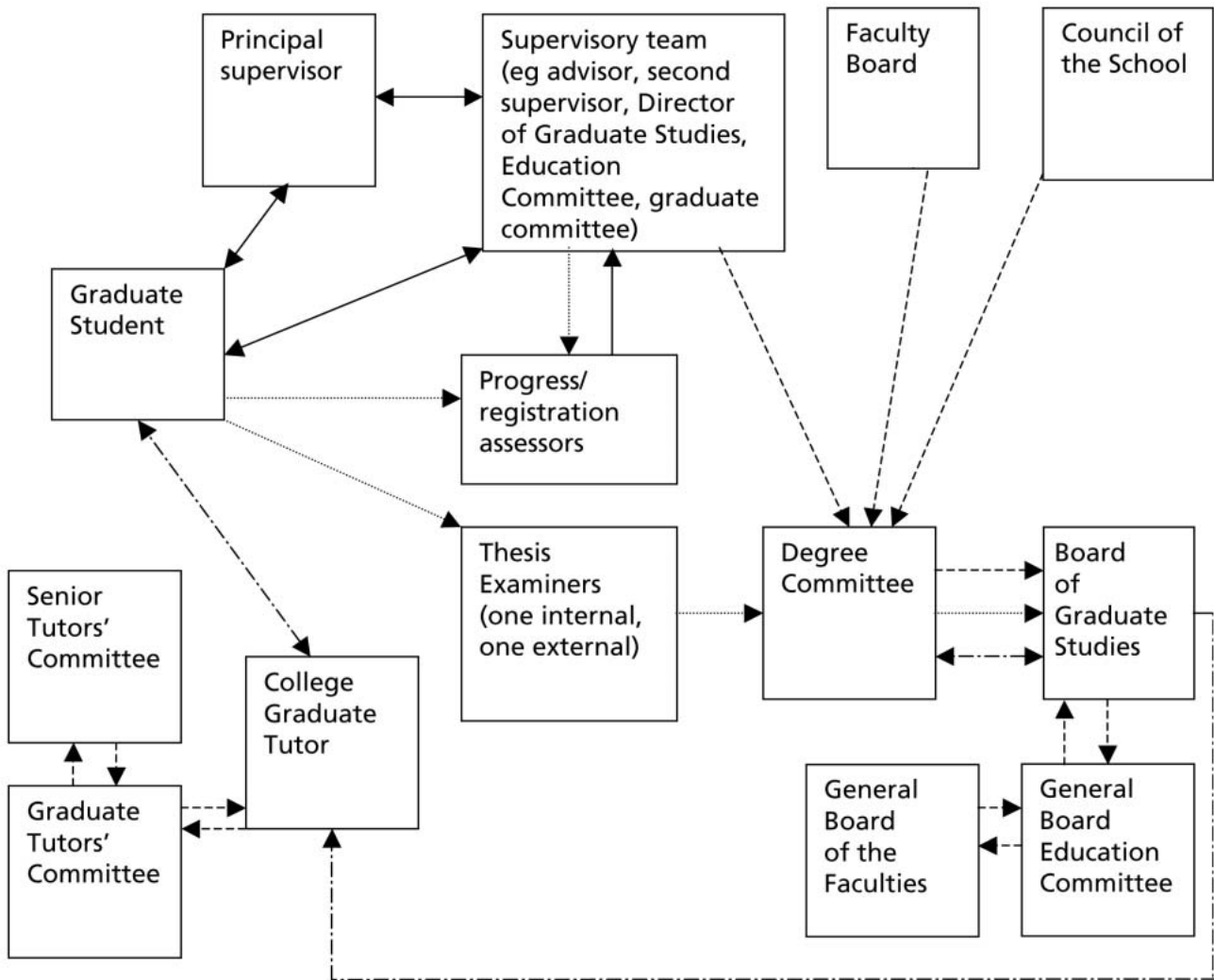
The Degree Committees (of which there are 25) are under the general oversight of the University's **Board of Graduate Studies**, a body of senior academics from a wide range of subject areas, plus a College Graduate Tutor and a graduate student member.

Faculties are grouped into six **Schools**. The Councils of these Schools are responsible for allocation of major resources, and have oversight of the overall academic provision in the Faculties within their jurisdiction.

Graduate studies in the Departments in the Faculties of Biology and Clinical Medicine & Clinical Veterinary Medicine, and in most of the approved non-University Institutions, are supported and co-ordinated by the Graduate School of Life Sciences.

Every graduate student is a member a **College**. Colleges are social and academic communities, offering moral support, companionship and enrichment through intellectual diversity. They also provide some of the key practical services and infrastructure that help students to flourish in Cambridge, such as accommodation and communal meals. These features enable the student to focus on work and to make the most of his or her time in Cambridge. Each graduate student is assigned to a **Graduate Tutor** or equivalent (the title may vary) at the College, who will not necessarily be familiar with the student's subject area, but rather is intended to be a source of personal advice and pastoral care.

1.3 Scheme of relationships between individuals and bodies involved in graduate research degrees



Key to general relationships

———— Teaching, learning, academic advice and support

..... Examinations, progress assessment

----- course governance, resources; College policies

----- pastoral advice; guidance; consultation

This scheme provides a guide only to the interactions between these individuals and bodies. For more detailed information on their relationships with respect to the provision of graduate courses and the admission, progress and examination of students, please see the University's Regulations

2 Responsibilities and mutual expectations

2.1 Graduate students

Any student whose medical or other specific requirements might affect participation in any part of the course must inform their supervisor at the **start** of the course, or, preferably, before it begins.

Each graduate student is expected to:

- take full advantage of the facilities, teaching and supervision offered, and to keep his/her supervisor informed of any circumstances affecting his/her academic performance;
- meet regularly with his or her supervisor keeping him or her informed of progress, and handing in work at the agreed times; students experiencing difficulties in meeting with the supervisor, or other staff members, should contact their Faculty/Department Director of Graduate Education without delay;
- manage submission of his or her **progress reports, dissertation** and, if required, **training log** to an agreed timetable;
- access his or her own supervision reports through his/her CamSIS self-service pages and discuss them with the supervisor (see 10.1);
- manage his or her applications for allowances and for continuation (see Sections 10 & 13); and keep the University apprised of changes in contact details through his/her CamSIS self-service pages;
- take ultimate responsibility for the final quality of all his or her academic work submitted; following the advice and guidance of the supervisor carries no guarantee of success at examination, nor will encouraging advice, or the approval of a piece of work, by a supervisor constitute grounds for complaint in the event of failure in the examination;
- seek advice and help from the sources identified in this *Code of Practice*, should problems arise;
- inform his or her College and supervisor promptly if he or she ceases to attend through ill health or other grave cause, or withdraws from the course;
- pay fees and College bills in a timely manner (See Section 11);
- abide by the University's regulations concerning Graduate Students, including those concerning discipline and avoidance of plagiarism (see 14.10).

2.2 Faculty/Department arrangements for overseeing graduate education

Research degree provision in a Faculty, Department or Institution should be overseen by a **Director of Graduate Education**, or similar role-holder. He or she will usually be supported by a **Graduate Education Committee**, or equivalent body.

Because Faculties, Departments and Institutions vary widely in size and organisation, the titles of these persons and bodies and the details of the arrangements vary. However, the existence of this structure and the roles performed by individuals and committees should be made clear to students through both induction and course literature. For example:

- in the Faculties of Biology and Clinical Medicine, Directors of Graduate Education also have the support of an overarching **Graduate School**; this body is a vehicle for co-ordinating training and promulgating good practice among the constituent Faculties, Departments and non-University Institutions. Only the larger institutions making up the Graduate School also have a separate Graduate Education Committee;
- in some of the smaller Faculties that are not divided into Departments, and in certain non-Faculty institutions, the Degree Committee may perform the functions of a Graduate Education Committee and the Degree Committee Secretary may take the role of Director of Graduate Education

2.2.1 Role of the Director of Graduate Education

The Director of Graduate Education will need to be fully conversant with the codes and regulations relevant to the programme and will need to be aware of the guidance provided by the Quality Assurance Agency for maintaining and enhancing the quality of research training and education (<http://qaa.ac.uk/academicinfrastructure/default.asp>).

The Director of Graduate Education normally:

- arranges for other members of the student's **supervisory team** (at minimum, the **Advisor**, and a second supervisor if appropriate) to be assigned;
- makes necessary arrangements for **academic and administrative facilities** for the research students in the institution;
- ensures that back-up arrangements are made for absent supervisors;
- acts as a first port-of-call regarding any difficulties that cannot be resolved between individuals directly and may act as an intermediary between a supervisor and student when difficulties arise;
- provides advice to supervisors on appropriate **skills training** (see <http://www.epsrc.ac.uk/PostgraduateTraining/JointStatementOnSkillsTraining.htm>);
- ensures that the institution **provides information and training in Health & Safety** for postgraduate research students and/or arranges for central provision with the University's Health & Safety Office (<http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/offices/safety/>);
- makes sure that course literature makes students aware of the importance of acknowledging the work of others and how to avoid plagiarism (see 14.10)
- **monitors** the progress of the institution's research students generally;
- ensures that graduates are represented on a properly constituted **staff/student liaison committee**;
- creates opportunities for **student feedback** on the content, delivery and administration of the programme, and ensures that this input is taken into account;
- **provides relevant information** for the Annual Quality Statement (see <http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/offices/education/quality/qaguide/part2/part2-sec3 1.html>)

He or she (or his/her team) is also responsible for:

- assessing applicants for **admission** and recommending any specific entry criteria;
- providing all **necessary information** about the course, including induction, in the course handbook; keeping the website up to date; and providing any further information and guidance as needed at later stages in the degree;
- overseeing and coordinating periodic strategic reviews of the content and direction of the programme.

2.3 Supervisory team

The supervisory team for a research student consists of a minimum of two persons, the **Principal Supervisor** and the **Advisor**.

The Principal Supervisor is appointed by the Degree Committee. In some circumstances, where the project is interdisciplinary or involves an industrial partner, a **second supervisor** may be appointed by the Degree Committee. The duties of a second supervisor will be similar to those of the Principal Supervisor, and arrangements for payment will be the same, but the main responsibility lies with the Principal Supervisor and it is with him/her that the Degree Committee and Board of Graduate Studies will normally correspond.

Throughout this *Code of Practice*, the term 'Supervisor' should normally be taken to refer to the Principal Supervisor.

The Supervisor(s) and Advisor are supported by the Director of Graduate Education and the Faculty/Department Graduate Education Committee, who may appoint additional persons to the Team as required: for example, **assessors** of written work.

2.3.1 The Principal Supervisor

The person appointed as the Principal Supervisor of a graduate student is expected to

- **be familiar with** the *Code of Practice*, course literature and advice provided by the Degree Committee and Board of Graduate Studies (see Appendix);
- attend **training and support** courses and events for Supervisors as prescribed by the Degree Committee;
- participate in graduate **admissions** as required by the Faculty/Department;
- be aware of any minima for the **number or frequency of supervisions** set down by the Faculty or Department;
- establish an effective means of **communication with the student**; for example making clear the frequency and timings of meetings, making sure that the student knows how to make contact at other times. Supervisors should be aware that some students will not, on the strength of their previous experience, expect to make the first approach to set up a meeting, but will expect the Supervisor to take the initiative. Supervisors are advised to make firm appointments for students at least in the first instance and to be alert to the possibility of misunderstanding if the student does not make contact regularly;
- **respond promptly** and appropriately to requests from students to meet and to comment on work at various stage of development; if a Supervisor is to be away from Cambridge for an extended period, he or she should ensure that students and the Director of Graduate Education are aware of this and should inform them of back-up supervisory arrangements;
- establish the **suitability of the topic** proposed for the degree sought, in the light of resource availability, the University's timescale for submission of the thesis, and the student's background and aptitude;
- **guide the student** in planning, focusing and developing the study by encouraging the student to make a written timetable and plan at a very early stage to ensure that a manageable piece of work is undertaken;
- ensure that the terms of any **sponsorship agreement** and any implications regarding the **ownership of intellectual property rights** are made clear to the student at the outset and are honoured during the course and the examination of the thesis (see 9.6)
- **monitor progress** against the agreed timetable and plan for the work and take appropriate action as laid down in the *Course Handbook* if the student does not keep in contact, or progress is poor (see 10.4);
- **report termly** on the student's progress through **CamGRAD**:

CamGRAD

The Board of Graduate Studies' online reporting system for graduate Supervisors.

These reports, once submitted, are available to the student. They are also read by the Course Director, Degree Committee, College and Board of Graduate Studies, who all take an interest in the student's progress. Supervisors are encouraged to give an honest appraisal of the student's progress but to do so in a manner that can be used positively to provide useful feedback.

- **if a student is in danger of failing an assessment or examination, or is not likely to make the standard for progression to the next stage**, it is important to say so in the report providing this can be done in a way that does not cause the student to lose heart. In such circumstances, Supervisors should not wait till the termly report is due to make this apparent but should take

action earlier to try to remedy the situation (see 10.4). Supervision reports will be considered by the Degree Committee and Board of Graduate Studies in evaluating any applications for examination allowances or in cases of dispute;

- make sure the student has **access to resources** required to complete the projected work; any plan that envisages the use of resources beyond what can reasonably be made available must be discouraged;
- advise the student on **relevant literature, methodology and academic conventions** pertaining in the field (in particular, how to avoid **plagiarism** – see 14.10)
- **read and comment on draft chapters**; most Supervisors will specify that they wish to see at least some draft chapters at an early stage, as they are written, so that the student has the opportunity to incorporate any feedback into subsequent writing;
- provide an **academic commentary on students' applications** for allowances, such as: leave to work or reside away from Cambridge; intermission of studies; deferral of submission of the thesis; restriction of access to the thesis; and for funding etc;
- make sure that a Research Council or other major sponsor is informed promptly if a student's work is delayed or seriously affected by illness or other grave cause;
- where relevant, advise on **ethical and safety implications** of the work;
- advise on **personal development planning and skills development**;
- encourage students to attend **training** provided (and may *require* them to do so in the case of Health & Safety training);
- advise on **publication** of the research and offer advice on **further study or careers** in the specific research area;
- respond promptly to reasonable requests for **references** for his or her students.
- A Supervisor must not participate in formal examination or assessment of work submitted by his or her student as part of a registration exercise or for the degree.

2.3.2 The Advisor

The Advisor is appointed by the Department or Faculty. He or she need not be in exactly the same research area as the student and Supervisor, nor necessarily in the same Department or Faculty, but should be able to bring sufficient expertise to the team in order to carry out the following:

- act as a second point of contact for academic advice for the student;
- make him/herself available to read work and discuss progress as reasonably agreed with the student;
- provide supervisory cover in the absence of the Principal Supervisor.

The Advisor may participate in the formal assessment of progress and registration exercises but, in the case of a PhD student, would not normally be appointed the internal Examiner for the student's thesis.

The Advisor is *not* normally expected to:

- provide regular, formal supervision;
- write supervision reports in CamGRAD;
- provide pastoral support for the student or Supervisor, or act as go-between for them, although he or she may offer advice to either party if asked to do so.

2.4 Faculties, Departments and other institutions

The Head of the institution

- is the 'line manager' of staff within the institution with respect to **personnel** matters and may expect to be involved in resolution of any difficulties that fall into this category between staff and students at a local level;
- considers applications from University Staff within the institution who wish to study for a research degree and decides whether their request can be supported for either full- or part-time study;
- in those faculties for which the Degree Committee oversees a number of different institutions, the Head of each institution confirms, when giving his or her consent to the admission of a research student, that any reasonable resources envisaged at the outset as being necessary for the study are available, either within the institution or by arrangement elsewhere, and that suitable supervision is available.

2.5 Degree Committees and the Board of Graduate Studies

The conduct and governance of each course is under the oversight of the Degree Committee for the Faculty concerned. The Degree Committee reports to the Board of Graduate Studies in the following respects:

With respect to research students:

- Recommends candidates for admission and setting suitable entry criteria, special conditions etc (on recommendation of Head of institution);
- Monitors students' progress;
- Recommends continuation to a research degree from a masters other course;
- Recommends registration of a probationary research student for a PhD, MSc/MLitt or MPhil degree or Certificate of Postgraduate Studies;
- Recommends/comments on applications for allowances (such as intermission, or leave to work outside Cambridge) and exemptions;
- Recommends candidates for a qualification (on recommendation of the Examiners).

With respect to Supervisors and Examiners

- Appoints Supervisors, bearing in mind the existing load carried by the individuals concerned see 7.2.1);
- Ensures that **new Supervisors** attend an induction event and that Supervisors in general are aware of, and encouraged to attend, courses for Supervisors;
- Registers new Supervisors on CamSIS/CamGRAD;
- Manages students' progress through their registration and other reports;
- Exercises **academic** 'line-management' with respect to Supervisors, including resolution of academic problems between students and Supervisors if not resolved at a more local level;
- Appoints **Examiners** (in some Faculties, on recommendation of Head of institution) and provides them with advice and all documentation as required;
- Investigates and responds to complaints about examinations, supervision etc, (this may be carried out at the request of the Board of Graduate Studies, or not, as part of the local stage of the relevant complaints/review procedures)

With respect to Administration

- Deliberates on, and responds to consultations by the Board of Graduate Studies and others, on matters of policy for graduate education in its field;
- Brings to the Board proposals for modification of existing courses, suppression of existing courses or provision of new ones (on recommendation of the Faculty and School concerned);

- Ensures that communications from the Board of Graduate Studies regarding policies and process are disseminated appropriately among the institutions for which the Degree Committee is responsible.

The ultimate responsibility for these graduate qualifications lies with the Board of Graduate Studies and, through them, the General Board.

2.6 Colleges

The 31 Colleges have agreed and adopted their own Code of Practice with regard to graduate students, <http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/committee/seniortutors/>, which sets out the common core of provision that all Cambridge Colleges make for their graduate students. It explains how this provision works in the college setting, indicating at the same time the diversity that is built into the system. The document also sets out the responsibilities of graduates as members of colleges.

3 Courses

3.1 QAA descriptors of the qualifications

The QAA *Framework for HE Qualifications*

(see <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/academicinfrastructure/FHEQ/EWNI/default.asp#annex1>)

provides the following descriptors for masters and doctoral qualifications that illustrate the outcomes that graduate students should be able to demonstrate at the end of their study:

A) Masters degrees are awarded to students who have demonstrated:

- i a systematic understanding of knowledge, and a critical awareness of current problems and/or new insights, much of which is at, or informed by, the forefront of their academic discipline, field of study, or area of professional practice;
- ii a comprehensive understanding of techniques applicable to their own research or advanced scholarship;
- iii originality in the application of knowledge, together with a practical understanding of how established techniques of research and enquiry are used to create and interpret knowledge in the discipline;
- iv conceptual understanding that enables the student:
 - to evaluate critically current research and advanced scholarship in the discipline; and
 - to evaluate methodologies and develop critiques of them and, where appropriate, to propose new hypotheses.

Typically, holders of the qualification will be able to:

- a deal with complex issues both systematically and creatively, make sound judgements in the absence of complete data, and communicate their conclusions clearly to specialist and non-specialist audiences;
- b demonstrate self-direction and originality in tackling and solving problems, and act autonomously in planning and implementing tasks at a professional or equivalent level;
- c continue to advance their knowledge and understanding, and to develop new skills to a high level;

and will have:

- d the qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring:
 - the exercise of initiative and personal responsibility;
 - decision-making in complex and unpredictable situations;
 - and the independent learning ability required for continuing professional development.

B) Doctorates are awarded to students who have demonstrated:

- i the creation and interpretation of new knowledge, through original research or other advanced scholarship, of a quality to satisfy peer review, extend the forefront of the discipline, and merit publication;
- ii a systematic acquisition and understanding of a substantial body of knowledge which is at the forefront of an academic discipline or area of professional practice;
- iii the general ability to conceptualise, design and implement a project for the generation of new knowledge, applications or understanding at the forefront of the discipline, and to adjust the project design in the light of unforeseen problems;
- iv a detailed understanding of applicable techniques for research and advanced academic enquiry.

Typically, holders of the qualification will be able to:

- a make informed judgements on complex issues in specialist fields, often in the absence of complete data, and be able to communicate their ideas and conclusions clearly and effectively to specialist and non-specialist audiences;
- b continue to undertake pure and/or applied research and development at an advanced level, contributing substantially to the development of new techniques, ideas, or approaches;

and will have:

- c the qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring the exercise of personal responsibility and largely autonomous initiative in complex and unpredictable situations, in professional or equivalent environments.

QAA 2001

3.2 PhD, MSc, MLitt, MPhil (examined by thesis and oral only), CPGS

These courses may be taken by full-time or, in most Faculties and Departments, by part-time study, but applicants should note that not all Faculties, nor all their constituent Departments, offer part-time research and not all Colleges admit part-time students; the *Graduate Studies Prospectus* sets out the extent of part-time provision;

the course extends over a minimum period as set out in the chart in Section 3.4.3;

the PhD, MSc or MLitt dissertation must be submitted within a one term plus the vacation following of the end of this minimum period, or an extension must be sought by the candidate;

the MPhil or CPGS dissertation must be submitted by the end of the minimum research period unless an extension has been granted;

all PhD candidates are expected to submit within one year of the end of the minimum full-time research period (i.e. by the end of the 4th year) or within 2 years of the end of the minimum part-time research period (i.e. by the end of the 7th year);

candidates who do not submit by the final deadline may be removed from the Register till such time as they are ready to submit; (see 10.5.3)

the examination is by scrutiny of a thesis by two examiners and oral *only* (see Section 14);

skills training is required for **all** research students; assessment of skills during progress reviews may play a formative part in the course but are not part of the summative examination for the degree;

the **MSc, MLitt and MPhil** degrees may be taken from the outset of the student's registration as courses **in their own right** or may be used as **alternatives** if a candidate for a higher level (and longer) research degree cannot, for whatever reason, complete the course or achieve the standard required for the higher degree.

3.3 Eng D (currently offered in Materials Science & Metallurgy only)

This is a Professional Doctorate, in which doctoral training is delivered through vocationally orientated advanced study and research. It is of specific relevance for those expecting to pursue or who are already pursuing, a career in industry, and is not primarily intended for those seeking a career in higher education.

The EngD is intended to enable a student to develop a combination of a high level of technical expertise and well-developed skills in problem solving, teamwork, and the design and implementation of research projects. The EngD is a four-year, full-time, programme, involving approximately 25% taught course-work and 75% research project work.

The residence requirement for the EngD is the same as for the full-time PhD.

The taught element

- equates, in volume and level, to a one-year Master's course (see also the *Code of Practice for Graduate Courses with Significant Taught Elements* for details)
- includes the development of management and technical skills as well as more general training in research.
- may include a single research project or a coherent portfolio of smaller, related, projects; this is formally assessed (see the *Code of Practice* for courses with taught elements).
- may be delivered at another institution (an approved EngD Centre) approved by the Board of Graduate Studies

The research element

- is undertaken at both the university with which the student is registered and a collaborating organization;

- students spend between 50% and 75% of their time working with collaborating companies on projects which meet each company's particular needs;
- the QAA descriptors for the PhD apply (see 3.1); in addition, students should have gained knowledge of areas relevant to the research project, of the role of research in an industrial context, of product development and of project management, teamwork, and communication skills;
- the thesis is expected to be equivalent to a Ph.D. dissertation in scope and quality and would need to demonstrate that the work represents a significant contribution to the field within which it falls;
- the degree would be awarded on the basis of a satisfactory outcome of an examination of the thesis, and an oral, conducted by two Examiners (Section 14).

3.4 Terms, Residence, Research

3.4.1 Terms

- The University year consists of three Terms (for Term dates, see <http://www.cam.ac.uk/cambuniv/termdates.html>).
- candidates for research-only courses normally start in October, but may start in January or April, subject to the approval of their Degree Committee;
- any allowances (to work away from Cambridge, or intermit – see sections 9.5 & 13.2) and exemptions are made in whole numbers of terms.

3.4.2 Residence

- no **full-time** student can be a candidate for a Cambridge degree unless he or she has spent at least three terms **resident in Cambridge**; for a term to be 'kept' a student has to reside in Cambridge for a minimum number of nights (59 each for the Michaelmas & Lent Terms and 56 for Easter Term);
- **research** students, however, are expected also to attend between Terms, except during periods of holiday agreed with their Supervisor, not normally exceeding 8 weeks in a 12-month period;
- graduate students who have been undergraduates in Cambridge for at least a year have already met the residence requirement;
- however, all **full-time** graduate students are expected to live **within 10 miles** of the centre of Cambridge while carrying out research in the University. Students who have good reason to live further away must have the agreement of their Supervisor that this will not impair their ability to study and to attend the University as required, and the consent of their College (this is not the same as 'Leave to work away' from Cambridge – see next section).
- **part-time** students have no residence requirements but are required to attend the University on a regular basis as prescribed by the Degree Committee (see 3.4.4).

3.4.3 Research terms

- all research students must undertake a certain number of terms of **research in the University** or one of its approved non-University Institutions (NUIs, see Section 1.2) to be of standing to submit their dissertation; the requirement for each qualification is set out below;
- students whose studies require research facilities located outside the University may apply to spend some time working away from Cambridge (see: **Leave to work away** from Cambridge; this is not the same as applying to live outside Cambridge – see above) providing at least a minimum period of research is carried out **in the University of Cambridge or one of its NUIs** as set out below:

Minimum research terms and submission deadlines

	Qualification	Full-time	Part-time
minimum number of terms of research (earliest date thesis may be submitted is first day of Term shown)	PhD/EngD* MSc/MLitt MPhil/CPGS	9 6 3	15 10 5
minimum number of terms of research required in Cambridge or approved NUI **	PhD/EngD/ MSc/MLitt/ MPhil/CPGS	3	5
submission of thesis deadline last day of the vacation <i>following</i> the Term shown (eg 4 January, three years and one term after an October start); ***by last day of Term shown	PhD/EngD* MSc/MLitt MPhil/CPGS ***	10th term 7th term 3rd term	16th term 11th term 5th term
final submission deadline last day of vacation <i>following</i> the Term shown (eg 30 September, four years after an October start)	PhD/EngD	12th term	18th term
exemptions/allowances – maximum number of terms that can be exempted or allowed for previous research or research preparation (see 10.3)	PhD/EngD/ MSc/MLitt	3	5

* special arrangements exist to accommodate 4-year research programmes – ie the EngD and a small number of PhD programmes in Medicine and Developmental Biology of specifically four years' duration.

** 'leave to work away' may be sought for the remainder (see 9.5)

3.4.4 Part-time study

The PhD, MSc, MLitt and CPGS may all be taken by part-time study. However, not all Faculties and Departments or Colleges participate in the scheme.

The EngD and the MPhil are not available by part-time study (as at 1 October 2007).

The arrangements for part-time research and a list of participating institutions can be found at: <http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/offices/gradstud/admissions/pt/>

This is not a distance-learning option. Although there is no requirement to reside in Cambridge, part-time research students must **attend** the University on a regular basis for supervision, study and skills training according to minimum levels set by the Board, or higher requirements specified by the Faculty or Department (see section 7.2.7). Candidates should contact the Part-time Degree Co-ordinator for the Faculty or Department to find out what these requirements are.

It is generally not possible for a candidate to register for a part-time degree if

- he or she requires a student visa to remain in the UK; student visas cannot be obtained for part-time study. However, a candidate who is classified as 'overseas' by virtue of nationality and visa status, but who is employed in the UK with a work permit, or an overseas candidate who is an accompanying dependant of such a person, may be able to register for a part-time degree, providing the extent of the visa is greater than the duration of the course applied for;

- if he or she resides more than a few hours' travelling time from Cambridge. The Board reserves the right to reject applications where insufficient evidence has been given of a candidate's willingness to engage as fully as possible with the academic life of the Faculty, Department and College. The Board will not normally approve an application for part-time study requiring travel of more than four hours' total journey time to meet the basic attendance requirements.

All part-time research students must keep a progress log and submit this for routine monitoring of progress.

3.5 Routes to the PhD

In only a few Faculties is it still possible to embark on a course of doctoral study straight after a first degree. In most Faculties, a candidate is expected to have completed one year of postgraduate study, normally on a research preparation masters course, prior to starting on the PhD; in most cases, therefore, the overall programme is known as '1+3'.

Various routes to the PhD are possible; the main ones are:

Pathway	On entry	Year 1	Registration/Progress examination/assessment			
			Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	further progress assessment
1 Direct entry 3-year course +3	Normally has research masters or equivalent	probationary or CPGS	PhD (CPGS counts towards research terms)	PhD	'Beyond Terms' see 3.4.3	
2 Direct entry 4-year course 1+3 or 4-year PhD	Normally has research masters or equivalent	probationary or CPGS or MPhil	PhD (CPGS/MPhil Do not count towards research terms)	PhD	PhD	
3 MPhil + PhD 1+3	Does not have appropriate research masters	MPhil	PhD	PhD	PhD (If thesis ready before end of year, may seek exemption of up to three research terms (10.3.3))	

Progress examination possible outcomes

- candidate passes and does not wish to continue*; awarded qualification where suitable one available (CPGS, MPhil) and comes off register;
- candidate passes but not at high enough level to be allowed to proceed to research (or other conditions are not met eg availability of a supervisor, funding required)*; awarded qualification (CPGS, MPhil) and taken off register;
- candidate passes and continues*; awarded qualification (MPhil, cases 2 or 3);
- candidate passes and continues*; not awarded interim qualification if it is counting in totality towards PhD (in almost all cases of the CPGS);
- candidate fails to obtain the award sought, does not continue*; taken off register

See 10.2 for further details regarding **progression**.

3.6 Staff undertaking research degrees

Persons employed by the University (for example, as Research Assistants) may apply for admission as a Graduate Student in order to study for a research degree.

The following combinations of employment and registration are recognised by the Board of Graduate Studies subject to the rules set out in the notes:

- a) Full-time employee pursuing a full-time research degree¹
- b) Full-time employee pursuing a part-time research degree^{2,3}
- c) Part-time employee pursuing a full-time research degree¹
- d) Part-time employee pursuing a part-time research degree^{2,3}

- 1) registration for a **full-time research degree** is acceptable only if the subjects of the research and the daily work of the candidate match, and no more than 6 hours per week are spent on other, related, work such as teaching or administration; the candidate's Head of Department will be asked to confirm this condition is met when recommending the staff member for admission as a full-time graduate student;
- 2) part-time research degrees are expected to occupy time equivalent to 60% of a working week;
- 3) for candidates who wish to study **part-time**, a reduced fee rate will apply only if there is a direct link between the subject of the candidate's research and his or her employment.

Providing the employment by the University institution is at least 40% full-time, a person who has been admitted for any of the qualifications covered by this *Code of Practice* (subject to the conditions above) is eligible to pay the University Composition Fee at the staff rate for the duration of their employment by the University. The Staff Fee is at present approximately one-third of the Composition Fee for Home and EU postgraduate students, regardless of the candidate's liability to pay fees at the overseas or UK/EU rate

(see <http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/offices/gradstud/funding/costs/courses/>).

3.7 Working while studying

Full-time research students on courses of more than one year's duration may undertake up to 6 hours of work **related to their studies or career progression** per week.

Contributing to the **teaching** of undergraduates through, for example, supervising laboratory sessions and small-group teaching ('supervision') is a valuable transferable skill. Graduates who teach should receive appropriate support in developing their teaching skills. All graduate students who wish to teach should undergo basic instruction. The Graduate Development Programme offers opportunities both through Departments/Faculties and centrally (see <http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/offices/personnel/staffdev/graduates/>)

Exceptionally, up to 10 hours' of such work (including preparation time) may be allowed with the agreement of the Supervisor that the work is beneficial to the academic progress of the student. Supervisors may consult the Board of Graduate Studies in case of doubt.

Full-time students should not undertake any other work (except for the case of Research Assistants as set out above). It is not possible for a graduate student to 'work through University' (see Section 11).

Any student who takes other forms of work or exceeds the maximum hours must recognise that to do so may impair the progress of his or her studies and that they have done so against the express advice of the University.

Supervisors should not ask students to undertake work beyond the limits set out above.

Part-time students are not restricted in the hours they can work, but their admission interview will explore the extent to which they will be able to manage their work and study and the Supervisor is asked to keep the balance between these elements under review.

Full-time or part-time candidates who wish to take a break to take up **full-time employment** during their research should normally come off the register to do so. Being employed full-time is normally incompatible with holding full-time student status (except in the case of Research Assistants employed by the University). Students and Supervisors should be aware that Research Councils do not recognise employment, even in the subject area of the thesis, as good reason for over-running and will not take account of this when calculating submission rates.

3.8 Taking courses at other Institutions

The Board of Graduate Studies requires, as a condition of admission, that any candidate for admission to a full-time degree who is already registered at another institution must show evidence that he or she has completed the other course or withdrawn from it, or has permission from that institution to intermit from the course.

An exception would be made for a PhD student at another university who seeks to **spend up to a year** studying in Cambridge as a '**Visiting Student**' while remaining registered at their own institution; in which case they would pay the normal fees and enjoy all the privileges of a Cambridge Graduate Student, but would not normally be registered for any Cambridge qualification.

It is not permitted to follow a course at another institution at the same time as studying for a full-time Cambridge degree. A full-time student who, once admitted to the University, takes up a course of study at another institution will be removed from the register until such time as the other courses has been completed.

Courses taken at other institutions cannot normally be counted towards a Cambridge degree, except in special circumstances, such as:

- for the taught elements of the EngD degree;
- PhD students who transfer mid-course to Cambridge with their Supervisor.

The University does not participate in joint degree arrangements, such as the 'co-tutelle', in which a candidate registers at two universities, receives co-supervision and writes one thesis, which is then examined for the degrees of both institutions. However, study at other institutions may be possible under 'leave to work away' arrangements (see 9.5).

Students who are studying, or intending to study, part-time in Cambridge are not normally expected to pursue a course at another institution simultaneously, but exceptions may be made providing the Degree Committee is satisfied that the arrangements will not hinder the candidate in pursuit of the Cambridge degree.

4 Admission

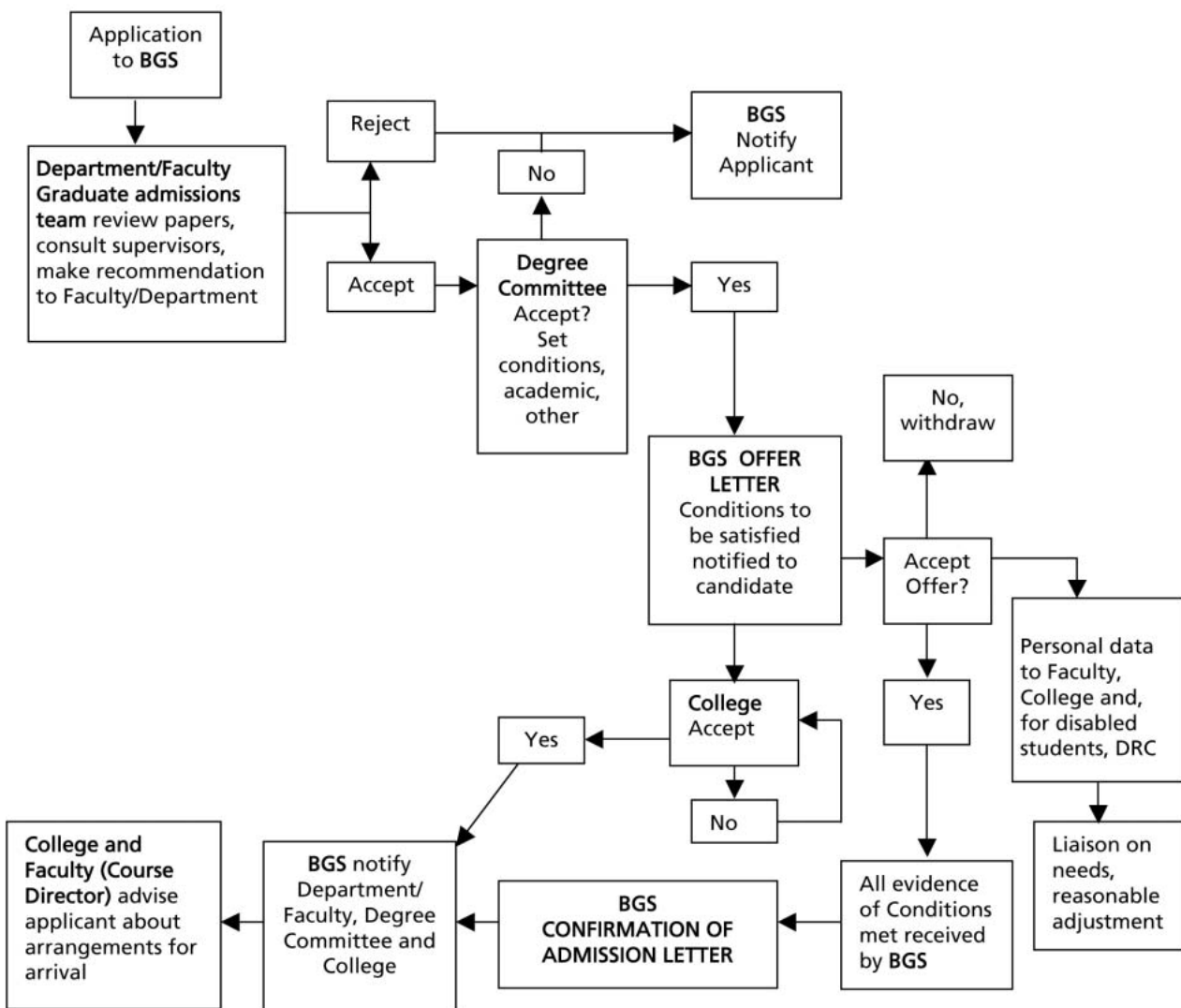
The University graduate admission process is co-ordinated by the central office of the Board of Graduate Studies, which also exercises vigilance over academic standards. Academic decisions are made by the Faculty/Department graduate admissions team.

When an offer of admission is made, conditions are set that must be met by the candidate before admission can be confirmed.

One condition for which the candidate is not responsible is the admission of the candidate to a College; this is arranged centrally, taking into account, so far as possible, any preference expressed by the candidate.

Continuation from a one-year masters degree to a research degree follows the same basic process as first-time admission and the same form (GRADSAF) is used.

4.1 Scheme of Graduate Admissions Process



4.2 Responsibilities of the Faculty, Department or Institution

The Faculty should ensure that

- the admission process is transparent and consistent;
- each application is processed in a timely manner;
- each application is given consideration by more than one academic member of staff, one of whom may be the Director of Graduate Studies or equivalent;
- each application is judged on **academic** merit in the context of
 - whether a suitable Supervisor is available;
 - the number of students already assigned to the Supervisor; the QAA requires that the University 'ensure that the quality of supervision is not put at risk as a result of an excessive volume and range of responsibilities assigned to individual supervisors' (see *QAA Precept 14*);
 - the number of applications expected;
 - the resources available either in the institution or that can be arranged elsewhere (eg by fieldwork or by access to specialist collections or equipment in other institutions);
- decisions may either be deferred until a closing date has passed, or applications may be reviewed as they are received, and candidates for major funding competitions may be considered in a separate competition from other candidates; whatever the mode of dealing with applications, this should be made clear in the course literature;
- all candidates are considered without regard to ethnicity, colour, religion, sex, disability, age, or factors other than academic matters - see **equal opportunities**: <http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/offices/personnel/policy/equal.html> and section 4.7
- all candidates *to whom offers are likely to be made* should be **interviewed** by some means wherever possible (if not in person, then by video conference, or by 'live' email sessions or telephone if there are means of confirming the identity of the respondent);
- candidates for admission to **part-time research** degrees **must** be interviewed and a **checklist** of topics should be explored, relating to their ability to attend the University as required and to sustain the necessary level of study, given their particular circumstances (see Section 3.4.4);
- the **availability of funding** should *not* be taken into account when considering the academic merits of an application for admission. However, many Departments and Faculties combine their funding and admission procedures, so decisions to recommend admission to the Board of Graduate Studies may be made in conjunction with the awarding of studentships. If the Board offers admission, the taking up of the studentship depends on all other conditions of the offer being met;
- where the applicant will be working in collaboration with others in a manner that gives rise to joint creation of intellectual property, or interdependent intellectual property, and the student will be required to assign intellectual property to the University or place the results in the public domain without restriction (See 9.6), the Head of Department should indicate this when agreeing to admit the candidate;
- for a candidate who is a member of staff of the institution, the Head of the institution must be satisfied that it is possible for the candidate to combine the duties of his or her post with graduate study (see 3.5)
- any special academic conditions required above those normally set by the Board of Graduate Studies (eg 'first class degree') must be specified on the coversheet;
- any special requirements pertaining to the course (e.g. funding for field trips, starting before 1 October, etc) must be specified; NB any **additional costs** students might incur because of **compulsory** components of the course or **bench fees** must have been notified to the student at the time the offer was made and cannot be added after the course has begun. All such details must be made clear in the institution's admissions literature and notified to the Board of Graduate Studies for inclusion in the checklist of financial conditions to be met.

- All candidates from outside the EEA (including Switzerland) seeking to study for research degrees in certain science and technology subjects must now apply for ATAS (Academic Technology Approval Scheme) clearance in order to obtain a visa; candidates to whom this applies will be informed in their offer letter. Faculties concerned will need to supply a short description of the topic of research at the point of offer.

4.3 Responsibilities of the Degree Committee

The Degree Committee takes responsibility for recommending admission to the Board of Graduate Studies; in doing so, it ensures that the Faculty or Department has discharged its duties as set out above.

The Degree Committee should:

- review applications and makes recommendations in a timely manner; this process may be delegated to one or more officers of the Degree Committee except where the Degree Committee also assumes responsibility for overseeing the balance of offers between courses run by the Faculty;
- propose the conditions of the offer including the general area of research (on the recommendation of the Head of the institution);
- appoint the Principal Supervisor and
 - determine whether or not he or she is a **new** supervisor and if so,
 - consider what **training** he or she should be required to attend;
 - ensure that he or she is registered for use of CamGRAD (see 2.3).

4.4 Responsibilities of the Board of Graduate Studies

The Board is responsible for the oversight of quality in graduate admissions and in this role sets the baseline for the conditions applied to offers:

- required levels for academic and English language attainment;
- by reference to the cost of living, the minimum level of funding a candidate will need in addition to fees;
- each candidate's fee status, by reference to nationality, residence and (if relevant) staff status.

These baseline requirements are set out in the Board's *Graduate Studies Prospectus*.

The Board has power to question and decline a Degree Committee's recommendation to make an offer to any candidate who does not meet these criteria.

The Board is the deciding authority on the adequacy of the entry qualifications of candidates for all courses covered by this *Code of Practice*.

The Board undertakes to keep confidential any information provided on the Personal Data sheet during the academic decision-making process, unless specifically asked by the candidate to disclose this to the Faculty/Department before the decision is made on academic grounds whether or not a place can be offered. However, personal information is made available after this decision to both the Faculty/Department and the College(s) considering membership in order for them to take into consideration any special circumstances, and to the Disability Resource Centre if relevant (see 7.2.8)

4.5 Responsibilities of the candidate

Each candidate is required to:

- Apply by the deadlines advertised and according to the instructions set out in the Prospectus;
- Take responsibility for updating information through his or her online self-service;
- Provide information as requested by the Board with integrity;
- Ensure that the information requested is submitted, and only this information; however, a candidate who wishes to draw attention any **special circumstances** affecting, for example, past examination performance, should provide supporting evidence (see following section);

- Provide evidence of conditions met by the deadlines concerned or inform the Board of any delay;
- If a candidate for a part-time degree, provide at interview a realistic assessment of his or her ability to sustain the level of commitment to study, given his or her circumstances;
- If admission has been confirmed with a condition outstanding (for example, final transcript for a qualification completed in September, or satisfactory attendance at the pre-session English classes), provide evidence of having fulfilled the outstanding condition within six weeks of the start of the course.
- Apply in good time for English language tests, ATAS clearance (see 4.2) and a visa, if appropriate. Candidates seeking continuation from a masters degree to a PhD are advised that they will have to apply for ATAS clearance for the PhD even if they previously applied for clearance for the masters degree.

In some Faculties, candidates for research are expected to have made contact with a prospective Supervisor and discussed their intentions prior to making an application. This requirement, where it exists, should be made clear in the admissions literature of the institution.

4.6 Admissions appeals and complaints

The Board of Graduate Studies **cannot provide feedback** on admissions decisions. Faculties are not obliged but may agree to do so and should be contacted direct.

Any candidate who thinks he or she has been wrongly assessed for **fee status** may seek a review by submitting a self-assessment questionnaire and supporting documents.

A candidate who thinks he or she has been treated **unfairly** (through prejudice, bias, inadequate assessment, or because certain special circumstances were unknown to the selectors, or through procedural irregularity) may write to the Board of Graduate Studies to seek a review of the circumstances.

The Board will not consider an appeal against an **academic decision** by Faculty staff, save in special circumstances as set out above.

4.7 Personal data

The Board collects information on **ethnicity, disability and accompanying family members** on a separate datasheet which is NOT made available to the Department or Faculty during the academic consideration of the application. Data on disability are, however, taken into account when an offer is to be made, in order to consider any reasonable adjustments that will be required; for further details see Section 7.2.9.

Information on declared disabilities and accompanying family members is made available to Colleges considering membership, as this may have a bearing on accommodation requirements. Ethnicity data are collected for statistical purposes only.

5 Induction

Many graduate students take some time to become accustomed to the culture of the University and the town, and, in many cases, of the academic expectations of the UK university system, which may be very different from those of the institution in which they did their first degree.

Faculties, Departments and Colleges provide induction sessions for graduate students. The University also provides induction in some specialist areas centrally.

Faculty/Department induction sessions should aim to

- provide an overview of the institution and support services available, both at the course/Department/Faculty level (eg Library opening hours and borrowing arrangements) and at the University level (eg Computing Service, University Library);
- introduce the academic staff who will form part of the supervisory team;
- explain the way in which the course is organised, who to refer to in case of difficulty, and the arrangements for student representation;
- make certain that any specific Health and Safety requirements are made clear;
- introduce the learning and working environment and resources available, including any possibilities for auditing other courses and skills development;
- draw attention to the *Code of Practice*, the *Course Handbook*, and any other relevant documentation;
- provide information on the academic and ethical conventions and requirements pertinent to the field of study and draw attention to any compulsory training elements;
- provide an opportunity for students to ask questions.

College induction sessions should aim to:

- explain the system of pastoral support within Colleges;
- inform students how to access medical and other support facilities in Cambridge, such as the Counselling Service (see Appendix);
- introduce facilities Colleges provide for learning support (eg Computing facilities and libraries) and skills development;
- set out arrangements for payment of fees and other bills;
- introduce new students to each other, to senior members and to a network of current graduate students in the College.

University central provision includes safety courses (see 9.4).

The **International Office** offers an orientation session at the beginning of October for new graduate students coming to the UK for the first time (see 8.1). The Language Centre's pre-session English for Academic Purposes course includes orientation and induction (7.2.3).

6 The Course Handbook

Before the start of the course, all students should receive a handbook specific to graduate students in the Faculty, Department or Institute, which they are expected to read and refer to as needed throughout the course (the '*Course Handbook*' – the title may vary providing the intention is clear); this may be in hard copy, or be entirely or partly web-based.

Among other things, the course handbook should contain information about:

- **course structure**, including a timetable for induction and training ;
- the **teaching approach**, for example, the role of lectures, seminars, supervision;
- the types of **learning strategies** relevant to research students in the subject area;
- the University's rules on **plagiarism** and the conventions specific to the subject for the acknowledgement of the work of others;
- the **methods of assessment**, including:
 - the timing and status of any **informal** assessment of academic progress and skills training;
 - timing and status of **formal** assessment of progress and registration for the degree;
 - word limits and stylistic requirements for dissertations;
 - reference to the University's procedures for reviewing the results of examinations for postgraduate qualifications.
- **academic support services and facilities** available to students;
- **other types of support** available to students, including advice on who to contact in case of need;
- arrangements for **student representation and feedback**;
- advice on how to resolve **problems** or make a **complaint**, both in the first instance and if this proves insufficient, giving contact details of any Faculty/Department Director of Graduate Studies and a description of his or her role; reference to the University's complaints procedures;
- reference to other **key documents** such as the Degree Regulations, the University's *Student Handbook*, and the relevant *Code of Practice*.

7 Services and support for students

7.1 Student self-service online – CamSIS

The University manages student records (admissions, registration, progress, examination, transcripts) through a web-based system known as CamSIS.

CamSIS was first introduced in 2004–05 and is fully-functional in the central bodies (eg Board of Graduate Studies) and for CamGRAD, the electronic supervision reporting system. In due course, CamSIS will be extended to all Departments, Faculties and Colleges.

All students have access to their own student record through their online Self-Service. This service will already be familiar to most graduate students from their admission.

Students are responsible for managing various aspects of their interactions with the University and its staff through their Self-Service. For example:

- notification of changes in contact details (these are especially important around the time of the examination);
- applying to the Board of Graduate Studies for allowances, special permissions;
- requesting deferral of submission, appointment of Examiners, etc
- applying for graduation;
- viewing their own supervision reports submitted through CamGRAD;
- requesting transcripts;
- voting in student elections.

The Self-Service should be used by students in conjunction with the explanatory notes and supplementary information set out on the **Board of Graduate Studies' website**, <http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/offices/gradstud/current/>, where details of the range of allowances, permissions etc, and how to apply for them, are explained.

7.2 Academic support and skills development

7.2.1 Supervision

Each student is assigned to a Principal Supervisor. This is the person who assumes responsibility for guiding the student in his or her studies and writing a termly report on progress for the Board of Graduate Studies. For more details of the Principal Supervisor's duties, see 2.3.

All research students and their Supervisors are, however, supported by other individuals, who make up the **supervisory team**: an **Advisor** and members of the Graduate Education Committee. (It *may* include a **Second Supervisor** in the University, an Institute, in another University, in an industrial setting, or where fieldwork is undertaken). These other members of the team offer advice and support, and may be assigned to make assessments of the student's progress according to a timetable set by the Degree Committee in consultation with the Department or Faculty.

The regularity with which graduate students meet with their Principal Supervisor varies widely according to subject. In the arts, humanities and social sciences, students may work alone for sustained periods and may meet their Supervisor only at formal supervisions. However, in the sciences and technology, **group research** may be the norm and a Supervisor, his or her students and post-doctoral researchers work alongside each other on a daily basis; in some cases, students *may be supervised on a day-to-day basis by postdoctoral members of the team* while the Head of the team takes the formal role of the Principal Supervisor.

The frequency of meetings will also change over time and are likely to be more frequent to start with, during the planning stages, and during the writing-up phase. In any case, the Board recommends that formal progress meetings ('supervisions') take place between the Principal Supervisor and the student at *least twice a term*.

Students and Supervisors should agree

- the pattern of formal meetings;
- what will be required at a meetings (for example, discussion of written work);
- who is expected to initiate a meeting.

Many faculties and departments specify their expectations for the frequency and form of supervisions in their *Handbook*; students and Supervisors are advised to make themselves aware of these expectations.

If a student requests a formal meeting with the Supervisor, he or she should not be kept waiting more than a week before a meeting is arranged. If it is not possible for the Principal Supervisor to fulfil this commitment, another member of the supervisory team should make him or herself available.

7.2.2 Study skills

Departments/Faculties should provide additional information, support and training in academic skills to help students to complete their degrees. Much of this training takes place informally, as an integral part of coursework, supervision or tutorial support. Formal training in social sciences is provided by the Joint Schools initiative <http://www.jsss.group.cam.ac.uk/>

Graduate students are expected to be proactive and self-directed in all aspects of study and to make independent use of library and other available resources including laboratory facilities where appropriate.

7.2.3 English language tuition

Students whose first language is not English are required to pass an English test at a high level prior to their admission being confirmed. The requirements of the University of Cambridge are among the highest in the UK. The University believes that it is in the student's interest that his or her language skills are at a very high level **before** he or she embarks on a course and adherence to this requirement is strict, especially for candidates on one-year courses.

Students must be able to communicate in English at a level and in an idiom suitable to the subject. The entry requirements vary across courses; the pass marks required are specified in the course's admissions literature.

Some candidates who have very narrowly missed the required level for entrance may be offered a **pre-sessional** English for Academic Purposes course in lieu of retaking the test again before entrance (see <http://www.langcen.cam.ac.uk/courses/courses.php>). Attendance on this course (for which there is a charge) or retaking the test and passing at the required level is essential before the student can be admitted.

If further English support is needed, a student may be recommended by their Supervisor to be assessed further by the staff of the Language Centre <http://www.langcen.cam.ac.uk/>. If remedial **in-sessional** English Language training is recommended, the student is strongly advised to attend and may be at a disadvantage if he or she declines to do so.

Where in-sessional training is taken following the pre-sessional course, it is free of charge. In the case of other students requiring in-sessional EAP training, the Language Centre accepts students who are recommended by their Department or Faculty; by doing so, the Department or Faculty agrees to pay the fee. Students who have attained the English Language entrance requirements who are not supported by their Department or Faculty for in-sessional training may take the course if they pay the fee themselves (see the EAP website).

7.2.4 Library resources

Faculties and Departments must ensure that students receive suitable direction in the use of library facilities and those admitting part-time research students must ensure that library access is appropriate to the reasonable expectations of these students.

7.2.5 Computing resources

Faculties and Departments must ensure that adequate computing facilities are available for the course. Supervisors should ensure that students receive appropriate training. This training should cover the means of access to these facilities and essential components of their usage, as relevant to particular degree programmes and courses.

All students are registered with the University Computing Service. Students are expected to be, or to undertake training to make themselves, fully competent in computer word processing, data analysis (if required), use of the web and communication by e-mail.

7.2.6 Accommodation for research

The requirements for accommodation and general research resources will be specific to the subject of research. The Department undertakes to provide basic accommodation (such as, for scientists, bench space) according to the needs of the subject; this is likely to be in a mixture of private and shared study and recreational areas.

Students can expect private study space and basic facilities to be provided in combination by their Department/Faculty and their College, e.g. they have use of a college library and, in most cases, a study-bedroom in College or a College house to supplement their private or shared graduate work space in the Faculty or Department.

Please see section 9.2 regarding reasonable expectations of specific research resources.

7.2.7 Transferable skills

The Research Councils require their studentship holders to receive transferable skills training. The University has extended the skills training programme to **all** research students. The organisation of appropriate training is devolved to the Faculties and Departments with central support principally from the Board of Graduate Studies and Staff Development.
<http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/offices/gradstud/current/skills/>

Some transferable skills, such as effective communication in writing and in oral presentations of work, may be built up informally over the course: opportunities to develop communication and presentation skills, by making formal presentation to other graduate students or to an audience with no background in the subject, arise through activities organised by Departments/Faculties and Colleges. More formal training in other types of transferable skills is available through the **Careers Service, Language Centre, Computing Service, Counselling Service** and **Staff Development** (see 3.7 regarding training for graduates who wish to teach undergraduates and Appendix for contacts).

Supervisors are responsible for assessing the skills training needs of their students, taking into account the subject area and the background and previous training of the individuals concerned.

Students are expected to undertake the training agreed with their Supervisors as required and/or desirable for their particular course of studies. The use of a progress log is recommended to record attendance and outcomes (for an example, see <http://www.biomed.cam.ac.uk/gradschool/current/log.html>); the keeping of such a log is a requirement for progression in some Faculties and in all cases for part-time research students.

7.2.8 Part-time students

A Faculty or Department wishing to admit part-time research students must apply to the Board of Graduate Studies to do so, setting out their provision of facilities and training to the minimum standards set by the Board or above. These standards are set out in the Board's *Guide* for Faculties, Departments and Institutes offering part-time research: http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/offices/gradstud/ptstudents/bgs_pt_research_guidance.pdf

Part-time research students have non-standard attendance and work patterns. However, the same research and training requirements apply as for full-time students, with *pro rata* time commitment. A **Co-ordinator of Part-time Studies** is appointed in each participating institution. He or she is

available to advise part-time students encountering difficulties with access to research and training provision; he or she is expected to ensure that facilities are available at appropriate times.

Departments and Faculties will be expected to make a realistic assessment of the ability of the candidate to attend regularly in Cambridge and should be aware that the Board reserves the right to decline applications where the journey times involved exceed reasonable limits. Research degrees are not available by distance-learning.

Colleges have agreed the provision that they will make for part-time students.

Guidance for candidates contemplating part-time research is to be found at: <http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/offices/gradstud/admissions/pt/>

7.2.9 Disabled students

Each candidate for admission is asked to disclose any disability on a personal data sheet. This information is **not** considered when making the academic decision on whether to make an offer of admission, but is taken into consideration by a Disability Advisor and by the relevant officers in the Faculty/Department and College once this decision has been made, to see what reasonable adjustments can be made for the candidate to attend and undertake the course.

The **Disability Resource Centre** (<http://www.cam.ac.uk/cambuniv/disability/>) can provide information and advice to Course Directors, staff and students. The staff of the DRC can advise on helping students to access a range of support provisions including study skills support, specific examination/assessment arrangements and support for non medical personal assistants such as proof readers, library help etc

If a student has a specific disability which might need to be taken into account during his or her studies or examination, he or she is strongly encouraged to disclose this on the Personal Data sheet and to inform the Supervisor and College Tutor. If prior disclosure has not been made to these persons, this should be done **as soon as possible** following arrival. They may draw on the expertise of the Disability Resource Centre and should consult the Board of Graduate Studies' website regarding special arrangements for examinations – <http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/offices/gradstud/current/examination/special.html>.

Advice for staff teaching and examining disabled students can be found at <http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/offices/education/learning/disability/>

8 Pastoral support

Students may experience cultural, health or personal problems during their studies. It is particularly important for students on short courses to act **immediately** if they are experiencing difficulties.

Colleges provide the main pastoral support for students. The Graduate Tutor is the College officer designated as a student's first port-of-call for most types of confidential advice and help. Students should familiarise themselves with the College's provision for pastoral care and take full advantage of opportunities to meet with their Tutor. Other support mechanisms will assume that the student has first availed him or herself of the College's provision with respect to any personal difficulties before taking further action.

A College Graduate Tutor will treat matters in confidence, but may seek the student's consent to discuss the matter with other staff if he or she feels it is necessary (for example, the Course Director, a medical practitioner, counsellor or other health worker). Further information is available in the Colleges' document on Graduate Provision (see 2.5).

However, some pastoral matters are difficult to distinguish from academic problems. The Supervisor or other members of the supervisory team should be prepared to offer help in circumstances that affect the student's attendance or performance on the course. These persons may consult the student's College Graduate Tutor, but this is normally done only with the student's consent.

For details of what a student should do if illness or other grave cause hinders preparation for, or taking of, an examination, see section 15.

The University's **Counselling Service** <http://www.counselling.cam.ac.uk/> is available to all students, who may refer themselves to the service or be referred by their Graduate Tutor

The **Graduate Union** <http://www.gradunion.cam.ac.uk/> also offers confidential advice, as well as providing representation and a range of other services for graduate students

8.1 International students

More than half of the University's graduate students come from outside the UK. College and Faculty communities are a diverse mix of ethnicities, cultures, beliefs and views. Students should make the most of the opportunity to interact with fellow graduate students from all parts of the world.

It is our experience that many students from overseas find it difficult to adjust quickly to student life in Cambridge and need help, especially in the early weeks; some of the student induction programme is designed with this in mind. Colleges are particularly aware of the needs of overseas students and students are expected to avail themselves of this support. For example, many research students from overseas leave their immediate family at home and can experience severe homesickness, and for those who do bring their families, the costs of housing and childcare can be extremely demanding.

There are serious implications if students fail to renew visas before they expire. The time this takes can be quite long and students are advised to seek help well in advance of the visa expiry date.

It is important for students to note that, by law, the provision of **immigration advice** is regulated and this can only be provided by specific named people who meet the required competencies and work in accordance with the Code of Standards as defined by the Office of Immigration Services Commissioner. Students should contact the **International Office** <http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/offices/international/> for immigration advice. Please note, however, that the International Office **cannot offer pastoral support** or other advice that would normally be dealt with by the College.

The International Office runs an **orientation day** at the beginning of October and invites all new students coming to the UK for the first time; separate sessions are run for new graduate students.

Useful information for overseas students may be found on the website of the Council for International Education, UKCOSA: <http://www.ukcosa.org.uk/pages/advice.htm>

For advice on English Language Tuition, see 7.2.3.

Students from overseas, especially if currently suffering from a medical complaint, are strongly advised to bring with them a letter by their doctor about their medical history for the information of the medical authorities in the UK and to ensure **before arrival** that their College is aware of their condition.

Overseas students can get treatment from the National Health Service (NHS) and will not have to pay for hospital treatment. However, there are charges for some dental treatment and there is a standard charge for medicines prescribed by a doctor, depending on income. This also applies to accompanying dependants, except that children under 16, or under 19 and in full-time education, do not normally have to pay for treatment.

The University does not insure individual students against illness, or personal risk or death through accident (but see 9.5 regarding travel insurance).

9 Postgraduate Research

A research degree involves a practical or investigative project or an extended piece of scholarship in which a student has the opportunity to study in depth a topic chosen on the basis of the student's own interests, the staff available to supervise, and the feasibility of the topic proposed in the light of resources and time available. It must demonstrate the qualities set out in the relevant QAA descriptors in order to qualify the candidate for the degree sought (3.1). The output is an extended piece of written work, the dissertation (9.7)

The milieu in which graduate students undertake research varies widely between subjects. Students in some subjects will find themselves engaged in highly individualistic, largely solitary, investigations and may meet their Supervisor and other scholars only at fixed times and in seminars, while students in other areas will be embedded in busy laboratory research groups, working in day-to-day contact with their Supervisor, postdoctoral researchers and other graduate students. The challenges the students and their Supervisors have to meet vary accordingly, but all research students are subject to the same basic rules and guidelines for the conduct of their research and examination.

9.1 Appointment of the Supervisor

The Principal Supervisor is appointed by the Degree Committee normally on the recommendation of the Head of the institution, although the Board of Graduate Studies may question an appointment.

A candidate for admission to a research degree may specify in his or her admission if he or she wishes to study with a particular Supervisor. Due regard will be given to the candidate's wishes in attempting to identify a Supervisor who has specific expertise in the field or topic chosen, and is available and willing to support the student for the full duration of the period of study.

Candidates should note that an offer to study with a given Supervisor is made in good faith, but his or her availability cannot be guaranteed. **If the assigned Supervisor leaves** before or after the student starts the course, alternative arrangements will be considered and offered if possible. If a Supervisor leaves towards the end of a student's studies, the University may make arrangements for the student to transfer to another institution with the Supervisor while remaining a candidate for the Cambridge degree. Alternatively, a new Supervisor may be sought to allow the candidate to remain in Cambridge; this might involve an external Supervisor if one cannot be found internally, providing a member of University staff is appointed as part of the supervisory team to attend to matters on a day-to-day basis. Each case will be considered on its own merits.

Degree Committees should also note that:

- members of staff whose contract is known to end before the end of the minimum period required for the candidate's course should not normally be appointed to supervise, unless special arrangements are likely to be made for them to continue to supervise after the end of the current contract; (only those students supervised by an academic member of staff **currently employed** by the University or by one of the Colleges can be included in the annual HEFCE Research Activity Survey);
- due regard should be given to the **load** the proposed Supervisor is already carrying (number of graduate students currently supervised, and other duties, such as undergraduate and masters teaching loads);
- the QAA advises that a member of staff will normally be Principal Supervisor to **no more than about eight** doctoral students at any one time; this may be exceeded under arrangements for working in a research team with the day-to-day oversight of postdoctoral researchers, as described above and in 7.2.1;
- **new Supervisors** should attend induction and support sessions at the earliest opportunity (see <http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/offices/personnel/staffdev/> for details of courses); Degree Committees are asked to confirm that an induction session has been booked when registering a new Supervisor for CamGRAD;

- **experienced Supervisors**, especially those **new to Cambridge**, and **post-doctoral researchers** should also be made aware of this provision and encouraged to attend appropriate sessions.

9.2 Research topic and resources

A candidate who chooses a dissertation topic outside the immediate area of interest of the supervisors available, or which is not considered feasible given the time allowed for the degree and resources available in the University or by arrangement elsewhere, cannot be admitted to a research degree. A candidate who wishes to change their topic once admitted, or at the point of continuing from a masters degree to the PhD, so that it falls outside the limits of what the Degree Committee judges can reasonably be provided, may not be allowed to continue. A candidate whose funding is tied to a particular research topic (for example, by the terms of a sponsorship agreement) will have little scope to change.

Candidates admitted after having carried out research towards a doctorate at another University and wishing to pursue the same topic at Cambridge must declare that the work has not and will not be submitted at the other University for any qualification; verification may be sought from the other institution (see 3.8). Although the candidate will have been accepted on the basis that the topic of work can be supported by the Department or Faculty, (s)he must be prepared to allow the research to be guided by the Cambridge Supervisor and to observe the academic conventions that pertain in the new Department or Faculty.

The Faculty, Department or Institute is responsible for providing the basic requirements appropriate to the general subject area and for the agreed research topic. The institution must attempt to deliver the course of study it has offered **within reasonable expectations**. Due consideration must therefore be given to the nature of the project offered at admission and approved at progress assessments.

Equally, candidates must bear in mind that they cannot expect by right to receive resources to follow any particular line of study they desire, unless a specific technique or requirement has been specifically agreed with the institution at the outset.

At a very early stage, the student and Supervisor should agree on a short written proposal, which indicates the aims and justification of the dissertation, the main research questions, literature and investigative work to be covered, and a very provisional outline of chapter titles and sub-headings. There should also be a **written plan or timetable** indicating how the work is going to be undertaken and identifying critical points when the Supervisor and student should meet or otherwise be in contact with each other.

9.3 Good practice in research

All research students are expected to comply with the conventions that pertain in their subject with respect, for example, to scholarly writing, use of archives and collections, integrity in collecting and analysing data, health and safety, ethical matters and intellectual property rights. Particular attention should be given to the matter of proper attribution of the work of others and the avoidance of plagiarism (see 14.10)

Supervisors and Faculties/Departments/Institutes are expected make sure that students are made aware of the requirements relevant to their research. This may be delivered by a combination of individual supervision, seminars, training and the course literature, and central provision (for example, of safety training).

Any requirement for compliance with a professional code of practice must be taken into account in planning a research project and any guidelines published by sponsoring bodies should be referred to (for an example, see the Medical Research Council's statement on good research practice http://www.mrc.ac.uk/pdf-good_research_practice.pdf).

Where the research project is likely to involve **working with children or vulnerable adults**, the Supervisor and student should make themselves aware of the relevant University policy (see http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/cam_only/offices/personnel/policy/protection/) and ensure that they have taken appropriate advice in the Department or Faculty before proceeding. Any supervisor intending to offer admission to pursue a research programme which will involve the student in regular and unsupervised personal contact with children or vulnerable adults, should note that a Criminal Records check may be necessary (see inside covers for contacts).

9.4 Health and Safety

Everyone in the University has duties concerning health and safety. As a legal minimum, staff and students must take reasonable care for their own safety and that of others who may be affected by their actions. The University has a duty to provide health and safety training for its staff and students. The Health and Safety Division provides a range of courses that are open to all

(see <http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/cam-only/offices/safety/training/courses/list.shtml>)

Institutions may wish to make use of a Personal Safety Training Record as a means of ensuring that all students have received the necessary training and information; the record is intended primarily for use in laboratories but can be adapted for any research environment (http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/offices/safety/training/hsd_training_record.pdf)

Graduate research students must be in no doubt about the safety requirements of the environment in which they conduct their research. Departments, Faculties and Institutes must make sure that these requirements are made clear to the students through induction and training. Students are obliged to abide by any rules set down for their safety. Failure to comply with safety regulations and procedures can result in the temporary suspension of a student and, if, after due warning, the failure persists, a student may be moved to another research environment or, if no alternative exists, removed from the register (see 10.4.1)

See 8.1 regarding health arrangements for international students.

9.5 'Leave to work away' from Cambridge

For many students the research project will require extended visits to other places in order, for example, to consult archives, to make use of specialist collections or equipment, or to gather data in the field.

Where this work cannot be carried out except by absence from Cambridge for a whole term or more, '**leave to work away**' should be sought by making an application through CamSIS. The Supervisor will be required to make a supporting statement to show why the leave is necessary in the overall context of the research programme.

Leave to work away is granted for a specific period of time, after which the student is expected to return into residence in Cambridge. These terms count towards the minimum number of terms of research required for the degree. A maximum of 6 terms out of 9 (for a full-time PhD) will be granted. Part-time research students seeking leave to work away should consider whether a change of mode to full-time might be appropriate for a period of fieldwork; the number of terms allowed towards the total research requirement will be calculated by the Board of Graduate Studies accordingly.

Practice varies according to subject: most Degree Committees do not permit candidates to work away from Cambridge until the first-year assessment and registration has taken place; some other Degree Committees, in which extended fieldwork is the norm, do not carry out the assessment and registration exercise until the fieldwork has been completed.

Students granted 'leave to work away' are considered still to be under the active supervision of their Cambridge Supervisor unless alternative arrangements have been approved. Degree Committees should satisfy themselves that adequate **supervisory cover** is available for students working away from Cambridge and may think it appropriate to appoint a second Supervisor locally who can monitor and guide the student.

Students funded by one of the Research Councils or the Cambridge Trusts must **inform the sponsor in advance** of their plans to work outside the University.

Currently, no fee is payable for terms for which leave to work away is granted; this is under review. Where a fee is payable to another institution, the Board will not collect a fee in addition to this, but in appropriate circumstances may collect the usual fee from a funding body and pass it to the other institution.

Students should note that 'leave to work away' will not be granted as a means of avoiding fee payment. Leave to work away during the minimum research requirement period will not be granted for 'writing up at home' (see 3.4.2 concerning residing outside Cambridge and 13.3 for exemption of terms through illness or other grave cause).

9.5.1 Fieldwork

The Health and Safety implications of working away from Cambridge, particularly 'in the field' or overseas must be explored with students by their Supervisor or other suitable adviser as part of the planning of their research. A formal risk assessment must be carried out for fieldwork and the need for suitable insurance established.

Students who are employed by the University and eligible to pay fees at the staff rate, are covered by the University's travel insurance while on fieldwork. Other research students conducting fieldwork in which they are actively supervised in the field by their Cambridge Supervisor can also be covered under travel insurance arrangements for departmental field trips. NB this cover does not extend to periods of holiday taken in association with the field trip. See <http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/offices/insurance/travel/>

The cost of medical treatment overseas can be high and students should take all reasonable steps before departure and while in the field to minimise the risk of illness or injury. Supervisors should consult the Health & Safety Division in cases of doubt.

If a student is working at another institution, he or she must abide by the rules of conduct pertaining in the host institution.

9.6 Intellectual Property (IP)

The University's IP policy allows it to fulfil its duty of care to employees and students by requiring disclosure, setting conditions for ownership of intellectual property arising from collaborative environments, and specifying a dispute resolution procedure to which all parties within the University have access.

9.6.1 University policy on ownership of IP

The full text of the policy, from which the following is an extract, is to be found at

<http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/reporter/2004-05/weekly/6001/17.html>

[Section 14] The entitlement to intellectual property rights in material created by a student rests with the student, with the following exceptions:

- a) *Where a **student is sponsored by a third party**, a condition of sponsorship may be that the sponsor may own any intellectual property developed during the period of sponsorship. Sponsored students are, therefore, advised to check the terms of their sponsorship agreement.*
- b) *Where a student is working on a **sponsored project** as part of her or his course-work or research, the sponsor may own any intellectual property that the student develops. This will be specified in the research contract and the supervisor or Department should inform students if this is the case as early as possible in the admissions process and in any case prior to start of their research.*
- c) *Where a student is working in **collaboration with others** in a manner that gives rise to joint creation of intellectual property, or interdependent intellectual property, the student may be required to assign intellectual property to the University or place the results in the public domain without restriction. He or she will be treated in the same way as University staff under these regulations. If this case is likely to arise, students should be so informed at the offer of admission where practical, and in any case prior to the start of their research.*

A student who believes that clause (c) has been inappropriately applied may make an application to the University Technology Referee.*

*A sponsorship agreement may also place a requirement on the student and her or his Examiners to undertake to **keep results confidential** while steps are being taken to protect intellectual property or to establish exploitation arrangements. The student may also be required to submit the dissertation to the sponsor for scrutiny before submitting it for examination. Any confidentiality agreement whose purpose is to delay public disclosure for the purpose of protection should usually not have effect for longer than three months from the time the sponsor is notified of intent to publish. When the University obtains an assignment of student-created intellectual property, it undertakes to provide the student with a share in such financial returns from the exploitation as there may be on the same basis as that applying to University staff.*

**For details of the Technology Appeal Tribunal, see Section 35 of the report.*

9.6.2 Group research

Heads of Institutions are asked to indicate, when recommending admission, whether or not a candidate's work arrangements are likely to come under clause c) concerning group research; the Board will make this known to the candidate in the offer of admission.

In the course of almost any research project, a student and Supervisor will exchange ideas such that it is often very difficult in retrospect to ascertain to whom any given idea belongs. If a student or Supervisor or other member of a research group feels that misunderstanding may arise in future over the ownership of an idea or piece of work, he or she should make notes (whether in a laboratory notebook or other progress log) at the time and ask the other person or persons concerned to confirm their agreement.

The appropriate acknowledgment of the contribution of co-workers and others is an essential part of the candidate's research training; Supervisors should make this clear to students. Examiners will expect the original contribution of the candidate to be made plain in the dissertation (see 9.7.1 & 14.10) and may explore any areas of doubt in the oral.

See also 9.7.3 regarding restriction of access to the dissertation after examination.

Particular care is needed if a candidate's sponsor is not the same as the group's principal sponsor: there may be conflicting claims on IP and special arrangements for confidentiality may be needed. **To avoid any possible misunderstanding, students and Supervisors should make themselves aware of any conditions attached to sponsorship agreements and arrangements for participation in group research.**

9.7 The Dissertation

The Board of Graduate Studies provides information for candidates and Examiners on the requirements for the thesis and its examination in online guides (see Appendix). The Officers of the Board also participate in live question-and-answer sessions with groups of graduate students who are approaching their submission deadline; these sessions are arranged by Faculties and the 'Joint Schools' initiative (see 7.2.2)

9.7.1 What is a dissertation?

A research dissertation must have at its core a clear research **thesis**, that is, a '*proposition laid down or stated, esp. as a theme to be discussed and proved, or to be maintained against attack*'. (OED)

The work must be **focused**, with definable objectives and boundaries, achievable in the time and word limit available. It requires investigation, analysis, comprehension and critique at a high level.

Students, Supervisors and Examiners should be aware that the **masters** dissertation is not intended to be a medium for the presentation of research outcomes to public and peers, whereas the **doctoral** dissertation should generate material of a standard for publication (it is not, however, expected that a PhD dissertation is publishable in its existing form, although parts of it may be).

Material included in the dissertation will vary according to subject, but may include: critical review; reworking of existing material, providing the provenance of such material is clearly identified (this may include data collected by the candidate during a research-preparation masters degree); and the results of original investigation carried out during the course. **Published papers** may be presented as an integral part of the dissertation providing the work is set in the context of an overall thesis, with suitable introductory and concluding passages to link them to the rest of the work.

The candidate must make clear in the preface, in notes or in a bibliography:

- the sources from which information has been derived;
- the extent to which use has been made of the work of others; this is particularly important for students working in research groups where several individuals may contribute to the same experimental work and intellectual property may be shared; where collaborative work has been

carried out, it must be clear to the Examiners exactly what the candidate has contributed to the research;

- any material included in the dissertation that the candidate has previously submitted or is submitting for any other qualification at this or any other institution (a thesis will not be accepted if it is substantially the same as one submitted for another qualification).

Conventions for doing this will vary according to the subject area and should be made clear in the *Course Handbook*.

The Board's guidelines and the *Course Handbook* set out the formal requirements for the dissertation such as word length, style, structure, format, deadline and arrangements for submission. Submission of material that varies from these requirements is at the discretion of the Degree Committee and candidates should apply well in advance of submission. Currently, all dissertations must be written in English, except for quotations and proper names that would normally be rendered in the original language.

For further details see <http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/offices/gradstud/current/submitting/>

9.7.2 Responsibility for submission of the dissertation

A student and Supervisor should together consider drafts of the dissertation and confer on the state of readiness for submission.

Where a Supervisor is unable to comment, for good reason, on drafts of the work in reasonable time, the assistance of other members of the supervisory team should be drawn upon by the student.

However, where it is not possible, for whatever reason, for the Supervisor and student to come to a mutual decision about the readiness of the work for examination, the candidate has the right to submit without the Supervisor's consent and if he or she does so, is responsible for that decision.

Ultimate responsibility for the academic quality of the dissertation and the timing of submission lies with the student.

9.7.3 Access to the dissertation during and after the examination

The University requires that each dissertation approved for the PhD, MSc, MLitt, together with its summary, shall be available for consultation in the University Library and that photocopies shall be made available by the Library to those who wish to consult them elsewhere. To protect the interests of students, the staff of the University Library, before allowing a dissertation and summary to be consulted, require each person wishing to consult it to sign a declaration that he or she recognises that the copyright of the dissertation and summary belongs to their author, and that, in accordance with the **Law of Copyright**, the dissertation or a substantial part of it may not be copied without the author's written consent. In addition, the dissertation and summary themselves, and any photocopy supplied by the Library, will contain a prominent notice drawing attention to the same points.

The University Library is also authorised to make available copies of dissertations for those wishing to consult them elsewhere, including microfilming for the British Library inter-library loan service. The dissertation will be considered to be in the public domain as soon as it has been catalogued by the University Library, unless the Board has granted restricted access.

A candidate having good reason for not wishing the dissertation and summary to be generally available for consultation must apply for restricted access in writing to the Secretary of the Board **at the point of submitting the dissertation for examination**. The Supervisor must support the application.

The candidate and Supervisor must familiarise themselves with any terms of a **studentship or project sponsorship** that might affect the release of the dissertation to third parties. If necessary, the candidate and Supervisor should apply in good time for **restriction of access** to the thesis or for the Examiners to sign a **confidentiality agreement** for the duration of the examination and any period of restriction thereafter (see 9.6).

The Board is not obliged to approve an application for restriction and indeed is obliged under the **Freedom of Information Act** to make theses available if requested. The Board will therefore not normally agree to restrict access to a dissertation unless:

- there is a contract with a sponsor that specifies restriction; or
- the Supervisor confirms that arrangements for the exploitation of IP are under way;
- publication would cause the student or third parties mentioned in the text to be open to legal challenge or racial, political or other type of persecution.

The Board expects candidates to make every effort to **publish** the results of their work and regards the preparation of work for publication as an integral part of the training for a research degree. They will not normally therefore accept limiting the scope for other scholars to publish on the subject of the thesis as a valid reason for restricting access to the thesis after the degree is approved and would not agree to more than a few months' restriction if this were the only reason given for restriction.

If an application for restricted access is approved, it usually covers a **limited period only** (typically up to two years from the deposition of the dissertation in the Library); the dissertation and summary would then become generally available unless the student applies to the Board for the period of restriction to be extended and the Board has approved the application prior to the expiry date.

10 Progress

10.1 Supervision reports - CamGRAD

Each Term, up to and including the Term in which the thesis is submitted, the Supervisor is required to make an **open** report on the progress of his or her students through CamGRAD, the University's online reporting system. These supervision reports are available to be read, as soon as they have been submitted, by the student and by his or her Course Director, the Degree Committee, the College and the Board of Graduate Studies, all of whom monitor the student's progress.

Students should proactively seek to read their supervision reports and to discuss any concerns with their Supervisor. Not having read the reports will not be accepted as a reason for ignorance of their contents in cases of dispute.

Faculties, Departments and Institutes have local requirements for feasibility reports and progress reports at certain points during the course; students must be made aware of this timetable and will be expected to organise their work to meet the deadlines set.

10.2 Registration (*'transfer'* from probationary status)

The main routes to research degrees are set out in the table in Section 3.5.

All candidates for a PhD, MSc or MLitt are admitted on a **probationary** basis. They may be registered in the first instance for a Certificate of Postgraduate Studies, for an MPhil by research only, or may not be registered for any qualification. (The arrangements for continuation from a research-preparation masters course to a PhD will be set out in a forthcoming *Code of Practice* for graduate courses with significant taught elements.)

At the end of the first year (or second year for a part-time student), a formal assessment of progress will be made:

- if the candidate has been registered for a qualification in the first year (CPGS or MPhil), the examination may form part of the assessment for continuation; candidates should be aware, however, that **a pass in the examination is not in itself sufficient** to guarantee continuation, as the academic requirements for continuation are invariably higher than a basic pass and include other requirements such as an acceptable research proposal and availability of a suitable supervisor and resources to support the research;
- for certain candidates continuing after a masters degree or certificate, a further year of probation will be required; in which case, a further formal assessment for the purposes of registration for the PhD will take place at the end of the probationary period;
- if the candidate has not been registered for any qualification in the first year, a formal assessment will be carried out of a piece of written work, which sets out work in progress and includes a proposal for further research. The manner of the assessment varies according to local practices, but will be carried out by at least two **assessors**, *neither of whom is the Principal Supervisor*. Where the norm is for students to be embedded in research groups, at least one assessor should be from outside the candidate's immediate group. A **report** will be made by the assessors on the outcome of the assessment, their recommendation on registration/progression, and any feedback they wish to provide for the student and Supervisor.

The **Supervisor** should comment on the candidate's progress in the light of the assessors' feedback and make his or her own recommendation on the outcome through CamGRAD as a 'registration report'.

The Degree Committee considers the assessors' reports together with the Supervisor's recommendation and, on the strength of these, recommends the outcome to the Board of Graduate Studies.

If the recommendation is favourable:

- where a financial guarantee has not already been made to cover the whole period of the research degree, continuation will be made subject to further evidence of finances being provided;
- where a candidate has been admitted on condition that a certain level of English language ability must be reached before registration, proof will now be required by the Board;
- when all conditions have been met, the Board will register the candidate accordingly.

If the recommendation is unfavourable:

ie that the candidate should **not** be registered for the degree sought, the Degree Committee should consider whether the candidate should:

- be registered for a lower degree in the first instance with the possibility of further assessment in a year's time with a view to upgrading in due course (eg a student seeking a PhD may be registered for the MSc/MLitt or MPhil at this stage); or
- be allowed to revise and resubmit their registration report after a defined period (normally not more than one year) for a second assessment; or
- be removed from the register of graduate students.

In the last case, the Degree Committee will need to make a full case to the Board of Graduate Studies, who shall be the deciding body on removal from the register (see below).

10.3 Allowance and exemption of terms of research

The Board of Graduate Studies may, on the recommendation of the Degree Committee, agree to allow or exempt a student a certain number of terms of research. These decisions should always be made on academic grounds only (although special arrangements can be made in cases of extreme difficulty such as illness – see 13.3)

10.3.1 Effects of an allowance or exemption of terms

The minimum research requirements for the PhD are 9 full-time terms (3 years) or 15 part-time terms (5 years).

An allowance or exemption effectively **backdates the start of the course** and so makes it possible for a candidate to **submit the thesis early**, before the normal end of the minimum research period (see section 3.4.3). However, this also **brings forwards the deadline** for thesis submission. Supervisors and Degree Committees should be aware of the possible effect on faculty or departmental submission statistics of granting an allowance or exemption of terms.

An allowance or exemption of terms **does not necessarily shorten the period of time for which a candidate is required to pay fees.**

A fee is payable for each term up to and including the one in which the thesis is submitted (but see 10.5.2)

10.3.2 Allowance of terms

Candidates who have been carrying out research **in the University** prior to starting a course of research (for example, having worked as a Research Assistant) may seek to have up to three full-time terms or five part-time terms **allowed** to count towards the minimum number of research terms required for the PhD, MSc or MLitt. For each term so allowed, a fee must be paid at the appropriate rate.

10.3.3 Exemption of terms

The Board expects the pattern of study will, for full-time study for the PhD, be 3 (or, in some cases, 4) years. However, a student who has completed an MPhil, MSt or one of the Diplomas in Economics, Legal Studies or International Law may seek to **incorporate some of the work** carried out for their Masters/Diploma dissertation into the PhD degree providing the status of the work is clearly acknowledged in the PhD dissertation and there is sufficient additional work at doctoral level to warrant the awarding of a further degree.

Applications for an exemption of terms on the strength of research done for the masters degree or diploma should be made retrospectively at the point of submission of the PhD dissertation. Such applications will be considered only if the dissertation is ready to submit before the first day of the term required to complete the minimum number of research terms for the degree (eg earlier than the first day of the 9th term of a full-time PhD, or the 15th term of a part-time PhD). The maximum exemption is three full-time terms (5 part-time terms); the number of terms required to make up the minimum research period will be exempted.

The only exception to this will be:

- a candidate who has **begun a PhD at another institution** and who wishes to transfer his or her registration to Cambridge may apply, on admission or at any stage thereafter, for an exemption of up to three full-time terms of research on the strength of the work done in the previous institution. A candidate who has paid fees at the other institution will not be expected to pay fees for a period exempted at Cambridge. Most students in this situation will be those seeking to transfer to Cambridge with a supervisor taking up a post in the University.

See 11.4 for information on funding for continuation.

10.4 Unsatisfactory progress

The Supervisor should alert the Director of Graduate Education at any point if he or she is concerned about the progress of a student. If the Director of Graduate Education feels it necessary, a meeting with the student should be set up with the Supervisor and the Director of Graduate Education or another member of the student's supervisory team. Advice should be sought at this stage from the Degree Committee Secretary.

The concerns should be put to the student and possible remedies explored. Notes should be taken of the meeting and a record of the meeting given to the student. If deadlines have been set for work to be submitted, or patterns of required attendance set out, or any other reasonable requirements stated, these should be specified **in writing**. The consequences of non-compliance should be made clear (these may range from a warning that the candidate is in danger of failing the examination, through to the possibility of removal from the register of graduate students, depending on the severity of the problem).

If it is evident that the student is suffering from ill health or other personal difficulty, he or she should be referred to the College Graduate Tutor, who may then work with the Supervisor to try to help the student's progress. In some circumstances, the University's Occupation Health Service or Counselling Service may be consulted (see also Section 13).

Reasonable time should be allowed for improvement. However, should unsatisfactory progress or non-compliance with the reasonable requests of the supervisory team persist, the Director of Graduate Education should assemble full documentation of the problem and inform the student that the matter will be referred to the Degree Committee with a recommendation that he or she should

not continue on the course. The student concerned should be invited to respond in writing to the case made by the Director of Graduate Studies. The student's response should be submitted with the other material to be considered by the Degree Committee.

10.4.1 Permanent removal from the register

Students should be aware that Board of Graduate Studies has power to remove a student from the register if the Degree Committee have satisfied the Board:

- (i) that the student has not been working to their satisfaction; or
- (ii) that the student has not complied with the conditions laid down in his or her case; or
- (iii) that, in their opinion, the student is 'not likely to reach the standard of the MSc, MLitt, MPhil, or of any other qualification for which he or she might be registered as a candidate.'

(Regulation 10e of the General Regulations for the Admission of Graduate Students, *Statutes & Ordinances* 2007 p 413).

In view of the third of these provisions, Degree Committees must consider whether the research student might be re-registered for a lower qualification than the one currently sought (including, where available, the MPhil by research or CPGS), before making a case to remove him or her from the register. A student may at this point be re-registered permanently or, if the Degree Committee considers that there are prospects for improvement, on a probationary basis.

A student who is taken off the register loses his or her student status. If the student considers that he or she has been unfairly treated, provision exists for representations under the Student Complaints Procedure (see 12.3).

10.5 Overrunning

10.5.1 Extending the deadline for submission

A candidate who is not ready to submit by the first day of the 11th term (full-time study) or 17th term (part-time study) will need to apply for an extension to the Board, unless the dissertation is submitted within 21 days of the deadline. While the Board will accept late dissertations for which no application for an extension has been received, candidates should be aware that timely progression to examination is dependent on examiners being aware of the timetable for submission; candidates are therefore advised to seek an extension (if needed) before submitting their work.

Application is made through CamSIS self-service; it must be supported by the Supervisor and must propose a date by which submission will be possible. Candidates and Supervisors are asked to be realistic about this estimate.

Extensions of up to **nine months** after the first deadline are normally straightforward, however, the Board will expect the writing up of the thesis to be prioritised during this period.

It is expected that no further experimentation or gathering of original data will occur after the end of the minimum number of research terms (ie beyond the 9th term for a full-time PhD). An extension for the purpose of carrying out further original research, especially if this will not form part of the thesis, will not be approved unless the circumstances are exceptional.

An extension **beyond the end of the 12th term (full-time) or 21st term (part-time)** will be granted only where there is good reason, with full support from the Supervisor and/or a tutorial case for extension, and will be granted for no more than 12 months at any one time.

Where a candidate does not submit by this deadline and has not been granted further extension, the Board will ask the Degree Committee to recommend whether or not the candidate should be **removed temporarily from the register** pending the completion of the thesis (see 10.5.3 below). This does not prevent the candidate seeking in future to come back onto the register when the work is complete in order to be examined.

Students and Supervisors must be aware that Research Councils, HEFCE and other funding bodies collect statistics on four-year submission rates and seven-year completion rates (and the equivalent for part-time degrees), the results of which may have a bearing on future funding. Faculties and

Departments therefore take very seriously the task of encouraging students to submit promptly. NB taking a student off the register prior to the four-year deadline will NOT stop the clock for these purposes, although intermission for medical or other grave reason will do so – see 13.2.

10.5.2 Fees

The University Regulations currently require that a fee be paid for every term up to and including the term in which the dissertation is submitted; PhD candidates who have not submitted by the end of the 9th full-time term or 15th part-time term, but are no longer making significant use of University facilities may apply for relief from full fee payment.

Full fees will be collected for candidates whose sponsorship continues beyond the end of the 9th full-time term (for example, 4-year studentship programmes) to the end of the sponsorship or submission of the thesis, whichever is the earlier.

N.B. The Regulations for fees are likely to be revised in 2007-08 to make provision for a 'fee for the course' covering the minimum number of research terms regardless of whether a student is carrying out the research in Cambridge or elsewhere, with an automatic waiver at the end of the minimum research period. Details of these changes, and the timetable for their introduction, will be made clear by the Board in due course.

10.5.3 Temporary removal from the register

In most cases where a student has overrun the 'four-year' or 'seven-year' deadline (see above), the Degree Committee will normally recommend that the candidate is taken off the register until such time as he or she is ready to submit the dissertation.

The effect of removal from the register

The candidate pays no further University fee and has no further right to:

- receive supervision;
- use the University's facilities;
- he or she may also be denied use of College facilities.

He or she also **loses student status** and will

- no longer be eligible for a student visa (if relevant)
- be liable to start repayments on any educational loans.

Where a candidate is very near to submitting the thesis, or would suffer disproportionately from these changes, a Supervisor or College Graduate Tutor may make a case to keep the student on the register for a further short extension.

Candidates taking up full-time employment should normally come off the register.

Faculties and Department should note that removal from the register does **not 'stop the clock'** for the submission deadline, but leaves the time-frame open. It cannot therefore be used to avoid a penalty for non-submission by a Research Council deadline. (Compare the effects of 'intermission' see 13.2)

10.5.4 Restoration to the register

This is not a matter of course; each application is judged on its own merits.

A candidate who has **completed** the minimum number of terms required for the degree and is seeking to come back onto the register **for examination** will be expected to submit evidence of readiness of the dissertation for examination. This evidence will be scrutinised by a member of the supervisory team. The outcome of this scrutiny cannot be taken to indicate that success in the examination is assured, but only whether the work is likely to be examinable for the degree sought. Candidates who come off the register for a long period before submitting should be aware that, in some areas, research may go out of date very quickly and not meet the criteria for the degree without considerable further work.

A candidate who has **not completed** the minimum number of terms required for the degree will similarly be required to submit work for scrutiny before being allowed to rejoin the course. In some cases, however, the time that has elapsed since the student deregistered is so great and/or the progress made by the student before deregistering so slight, that the Degree Committee may decide that the applicant should not be reinstated but given leave to *reapply for admission* instead (that is, to apply in competition with other first-time applicants to begin the course afresh).

A candidate who has an outstanding debt to the University or College will not be restored to the register unless the debt is cleared.

10.6 Discipline

The University's Regulations regarding discipline and its provisions for dealing with breaches of these regulations are set out in the Statutes & Ordinances 2005 pp193-202 and in the *Student Handbook*: <http://www.cam.ac.uk/cambuniv/studenthandbook/univ/discipline>.

The University will treat any breach of its disciplinary codes very seriously and may prosecute a student in the University's Courts. Students who are suspected of breaking the law will be referred, by their Senior Tutor, to the police.

All students and staff are expected to be aware of the University's codes of practice regarding **bullying and harassment**, which applies equally to students and to staff (<http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/offices/personnel/policy/bullying.html>), The Personnel Division's *Dignity at Work* guidelines and procedures are also relevant to graduate students as well as to staff.

Staff and students are also required to abide by the rules laid down for the **health and safety** of themselves and others (see 7.4).

Students are also required to be aware of the University's rules regarding academic integrity, including on **plagiarism**, and to abide by these – see section 14.10.

10.6.1 Students who are employed by the University or an approved non-University Institution

An employee who registers for a research degree will be subject to the codes of conduct that apply to members of staff as well as having to observe the academic requirements for their course of study. Faculty/Department/Institute staff dealing with disciplinary matters should bear in mind the dual status of such persons when considering the appropriate course of action; they should consult the Personnel Consultant for the School (or the Institute's Human Resources adviser) and the Board of Graduate Studies in cases of doubt.

11 Financial matters

11.1 Financial undertakings

The Board of Graduate Studies sets as a condition of admission for all graduate students the requirement that the candidate provides a written undertaking that sufficient funding is available to pay the full fees for the duration of the course and (for full-time students) a sum for the cost of living (for 2007-08, living costs are estimated to be a minimum of £8,764 for a 12-month period, plus £325 settling-in sum for students from outside the UK). Additional costs are specified if a candidate is to be accompanied by dependants and for any course for which there are compulsory additional costs. See the *Graduate Studies Prospectus* at <http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/offices/gradstud/funding/costs/>

All graduate students have been admitted on the basis that these sums are available specifically to pay the costs of the course and living expenses and the Board of Graduate Studies has received a copy of financial undertakings (from the candidate, or from his or her sponsors, or both, as appropriate) in respect of these sums.

All students will therefore be expected to be able to pay their fees and bills to the College and not to require further financial assistance of any sort from the University or College for their course. **The Board will expect the financial undertaking to be honoured.**

All fees, and any living costs incurred in College (rental of College accommodation, food taken in College) are collected by the College; the College will make clear to students how these payments are to be made and by what deadlines. Some Colleges collect the fees for the whole year at the beginning of the course and may require some payments for rent of College accommodation in advance. The Board of Graduate Studies reserve the right to deduct the University and College fees for the whole year from any government educational loan (eg US federal loans) before paying any balance to the student.

Students should be aware that non-payment of fees constitutes grounds for removal from the register.

If a student's financial support breaks down, he or she should consult the College Graduate Tutor as soon as possible. He or she should be aware that, in all but the most exceptional circumstances, it will not be possible for the University or College to provide funding to help to make up the deficit. Documentary evidence will be required for the failure of a sponsor to honour the commitment.

If fees have not been paid and the Graduate Tutor considers that a financial undertaking has been made in bad faith, the College may recommend to the Board of Graduate Studies that the student is removed from the register.

In genuine cases of unforeseeable hardship, the Graduate Tutor will evaluate the magnitude and merit of the problem and may seek help from other bodies to help the candidate. However, all students should be aware that it is most unlikely that a candidate who runs out of money early in the course can be helped sufficiently to enable him or her to complete the course. He or she may be advised to leave the course and go out of residence.

11.2 Paid employment

It is not possible to 'work through' a full-time degree at the University, except as a Research Assistant whose research employment activity matches that of the research degree. See section 3.4.6.

11.3 Refund of fees after withdrawal from course

The Board of Graduate Studies will not consider refunding fees for terms for which a fee is due except in very exceptional circumstances. Any candidate who thinks that he or she may have a case should consult his or her College Tutor.

However, a candidate who withdraws within 21 days of the start of a Term may seek a refund of the Fees for that Term; this is arranged through the College Bursary. (For Term dates, see Appendix).

Any pre-paid fees due to be refunded that have been derived from US federal loans will be repaid by the University direct to the lender.

Students should be aware that any **stipend** paid by a sponsor (eg a Research Council) for a period of study that is not completed may have to be repaid to the sponsor.

11.4 Funding for continuation to another course

Details of funding available for PhD and other research courses at the University may be found on the Financial Aid section of the Board of Graduate Studies website: <http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/offices/gradstud/funding/aid/>

Students should also discuss funding opportunities in their particular subject with their Supervisor. Some Colleges also offer studentships.

Students are advised that deadlines for application for funding for PhD research fall early in the academic year. For example, the Overseas Research Studentships (ORS) deadline falls in December.

12 Problems and complaints

There are two principal rules for solving problems:

- Do not delay – try to sort the problem out at the earliest opportunity;
- Try the most direct approach possible in the first instance

Most problems can be resolved quickly by simple discussion with the right person, who might be able to solve the problem direct or offer suitable advice about how to proceed.

Note that some types of problem are dealt with by separate procedures:

- Problems associated with the taking of an **examination** or the result of an examination, are dealt with by two different procedures – see Section 13 for matters relating to ill health, bereavement or other severe disruption to studies or in the preparation for or taking of the examinations, or Section 15 for complaints about the conduct of an examination;
- If the problem falls within the definition of **harassment**, the student should consult the Harassment Advisor for the College or the Faculty (depending on the context in which the harassment is alleged to be taking place – see 10.6).

Any matter **not** covered by the above procedures may be dealt with through the University's **Student Complaints** procedure, which is to be found in the **Student Handbook** <http://www.cam.ac.uk/cambuniv/studenthandbook/complaints/procedure/>

This complaints procedure applies to all students, whether undergraduates or graduates.

This *Code of Practice* offers guidance on how a research student might proceed in their particular circumstances.

The various processes available in the case of complaint, hindrance in the preparation for or taking of examinations, and examination failure are summarised in diagrammatic form in the Appendix.

12.1 Discussion and advice

This is the first stage of the University's **Student Complaints Procedure**. Students are expected to have made reasonable attempts to resolve matters in this way before further steps are taken.

A graduate student's first port-of-call will vary according to the nature of the problem:

- If an individual student has a problem with the **course** (with facilities, supervision or with the student's ability to make suitable progress), he or she should discuss the matter with the Supervisor, Director of Graduate Studies, or other members of the supervisory team, as appropriate.
- If the problem is **general to the course or to a group of students** rather than an individual, it should be approached through the **student representative** on the course management committee (or equivalent).
- If a student has a problem with **College** provision, or, if the problem involves staff or other students of the College, the student should follow the College's guidelines for resolving the problem.

12.2 College Graduate Tutor as general adviser and advocate

The College Graduate Tutor is a key person in the University's procedures for helping graduate students to solve personal problems.

More generally, however, the College Graduate Tutor can offer **informal advice** to students about how to tackle problems on the course or in the Department/Faculty.

The College Graduate Tutor should be consulted about how to approach unresolved problems on the course: if, after consulting the Course Director/Supervisor, the matter is not resolved to the student's satisfaction, or if the student is dissatisfied with the support available from these persons, or if he or she feels unable to talk to them for any reason, the College Graduate Tutor should advise the student where next to take the problem or may agree to act as an advocate or go-between.

Furthermore, the College Graduate Tutor (or his or her Senior Tutor) is the only person who can make an application to the Board of Graduate Studies for an examination allowance on behalf of a student who has been hindered by illness or other grave cause in the preparation for or taking of an MPhil examination (see section 15).

If a student feels dissatisfied with the advice offered by the College Graduate Tutor, he or she may wish to consult the Senior Tutor of the College or the Graduate Union.

12.3 Complaints

12.3.1 Informal Process

If a problem has not been resolved through discussion, the student or his or her Graduate Tutor may contact the **Board of Graduate Studies** for advice.

NB students should be aware that the Board's Officers are frequently called upon to advise Supervisors, Directors of Graduate Education and College Tutors about student problems. The Board's Officers do not normally offer confidential advice to students other than to direct them to the appropriate person or form of guidance; **they will assume that attempts at local resolution have been made before their advice is sought and will advise students to explore these routes if they have not done so already**. They will generally then work together with appropriate Department/Faculty and/or College officers to resolve the matter.

The Board adopts the following role in complaints:

- to co-ordinate attempts at solving the problem,
- to advise the various parties of the University Regulations pertaining to the case,
- to monitor the outcome of these attempts;
- and, wherever possible, to seek to achieve a resolution that is in keeping with the University Regulations, congruent with the *Codes of Practice*, and fair to the student. In doing so, the Board will have regard to the rights and fair treatment of members of staff.

In every case of complaint against an **individual**, the person complained against will be made aware of the nature of the complaint.

Where the complaint is against a **Supervisor**, or an **Examiner**, the matter will be referred to the Degree Committee, the body responsible for their appointment. The Board will normally seek the assistance of the Chairman of the Degree Committee in investigating and resolving complaints of an academic nature. Other matters will normally be referred to the Head of the institution. If the person complained against is the Chairman of the Degree Committee, his or her Head of Department will normally be asked to act and *vice versa*. In the exceptional case that these are all the same person, the Chairman of the Board or his/her deputy will act.

The Board will generally seek the assistance of the Degree Committee in resolving difficult problems with the student's **course of study**. The Degree Committee has general oversight of the course content and structure.

The Board will inform the student of the outcome of these attempts at resolution.

12.3.2 Formal process

Complaints for which informal routes of complaint appear to have been exhausted may be considered formally by a Panel. The Panel may make recommendations as to the remedies, if any, to be adopted. The Chairman of the Panel shall have power to terminate the proceedings, to determine that a complaint is to be rejected as vexatious or frivolous, or to refer the complaint for informal resolution. Full details of this process may be found in the Student Complaints Procedure.

12.3.3 The Independent Adjudicator

If the complainant is not satisfied by the outcome of the above process, he or she will be advised that this concludes the University's procedures open to him or her. He or she may ask the national Independent Adjudicator to review the matter. This service is free to students. There are time limits for applying, and some limits as to what can be reviewed. Information about the service is given at <http://www.oiahe.org.uk/>

13 Illness and special circumstances during the course

Candidates whose disability or chronic illness is likely to affect their progress and performance on the course and who have not disclosed their circumstances at admission, must do so by discussing their case with the Course Director and their Graduate Tutor as early as possible after arrival.

If a student is unwell or suffers any other personal disruptions due to maternity, bereavement or other serious cause such that he or she is unable to complete the work according to the timetable, he or she should discuss with the **Supervisor** what the consequences of the loss of time are likely to be.

The College **Graduate Tutor** may be called upon to support an application for an allowance (see below and Section 15) or make the application for the student. It is most important, therefore, that a student who is ill or otherwise hindered informs his or her Graduate Tutor (or authorises a medical practitioner, college nurse or counsellor, to do so). A Tutor may refer a student to the Counselling Service, Occupational Health or a medical practitioner if necessary.

In every case, a student applying for an allowance or intermission is expected to provide **evidence** (for example, a letter from a medical practitioner or counsellor regarding illness, or from the Supervisor regarding disruption of laboratory facilities) specifying the nature of the difficulty and the timing and duration of the hindrance.

13.1 Extensions to deadlines

It is particularly important that candidates on one-year research courses who have been hindered in their progress by illness or other grave cause and who need an extension to the deadline make a case in good time.

Any such student who believes he or she has good reason for seeking an extension must present the case, with supporting **evidence**, to the Course Director before the deadline. If the reason is hindrance during the preparation of the dissertation, for example by illness, he or she should also inform the Graduate Tutor and ask him or her to support the case.

The deadline for the submission of **dissertations** is determined by the Board of Graduate Studies; requests to extend the deadline for a masters thesis will normally be considered by the Board under the regulations for examination allowances (see 15.1) and will therefore be referred to the Degree Committee for advice on the extra time to be granted.

The Degree Committee, in considering the length of an extension, will seek to allow for the time lost while bearing in mind fairness to other candidates who submitted within the time.

See also Section 10.5.1 concerning the late submission of PhD dissertations.

13.2 Intermitting

Where the disruption causes the student to lose all or most of a term, he or she may apply to the Board of Graduate Studies for **intermission**.

A student applies for intermission through his or her CamSIS self-service page. Full instructions on how to proceed with the application are provided with the form. If a student is unable through illness to do this, the Graduate Tutor may do so on his or her behalf. However, the Board will normally seek to confirm the student's intentions by direct contact if possible.

13.2.1 Consequences of intermission

While intermitting, a student remains on the register of graduate students. He or she may therefore continue to use the University Library and certain other facilities. However, students who are intermitting are expected **not to carry on studying** through the period of intermission and will normally be encouraged to go out of residence.

- A student visa will normally remain valid during this period. However, overseas students who entered the UK on a one-year student visa will need to make arrangements in good time for returning to study

- Repayment of a student loan can remain in abeyance during a period of approved intermission
- Terms for which intermission is granted **do not count** towards the terms of residence or research required for the qualification. Candidates are expected to come back to Cambridge to complete the course on a specific date if they have not yet completed the minimum requirements for the course (see also 13.2.3).
- No fee is charged for any term of intermission. If a fee has already been paid, it may be retained to pay for a term to be taken in the following year.
- However, a candidate will need to be aware that the cost of living for the extra time spent in Cambridge will need to be found by his or her sponsor or from his or her own resources.
- A student who is funded by a Research Council or other sponsor must inform the sponsor **immediately** if it is likely that he/she will need to intermit. The sponsor may agree to suspend the award for the period of intermission and resume it in the following year, but it is the duty of the student and his or her Supervisor to discuss this matter with the sponsor and find out the exact arrangements for funding.

13.2.2 Intermission or temporary withdrawal from the register?

Compare the consequences of **intermission** and **coming off the register** (Section 10.5.3)

When illness is chronic and/or of uncertain duration, College Graduate Tutors and Supervisors should consider carefully the relative merits of intermission and temporary withdrawal, by consent, from the register.

Intermission is normally granted for a maximum of three terms at any one time. More than three terms of intermission in total may sometimes be granted during a student's career, but candidates with longer illnesses may be encouraged to consent to withdraw temporarily from the register. Some candidates find an open-ended arrangement of this sort helpful, while others would not, or might view it negatively as a withdrawal of support. However, some candidates respond well to deadlines for returning to study and so would find a further period of intermission helpful. Supervisors and Graduate Tutors may consult each other and the officers of the Board about which is more appropriate in cases of doubt.

Running out of money or taking up employment will not normally be accepted as acceptable reasons for applying for intermission (see 10.5.3 regarding coming off the register and Section 11 on financial matters).

Intermission 'stops the clock' for the purposes of meeting 4-year submission deadlines. However, Faculties and Departments should note that the Board will not approve an intermission intended simply as a device for avoiding the submission deadline; medical or other similarly material hindrance to progress must be demonstrated for intermission to be granted.

13.2.3 Returning from intermission

A student who has intermitted for medical reasons will not be permitted to return to studies unless a letter has been received by the Board of Graduate Studies from a medical practitioner or counsellor, dated not earlier than one month before the student is due to resume his or her studies, stating that the student is fit to resume the course.

The Degree Committee, College or Board of Graduate Studies may impose other conditions (for example, confirmation of the arrangements for funding), which will be stated at the time the allowance is granted. Candidates who have outstanding debts to the University or College may not be allowed to return from intermission until arrangements have been made to the satisfaction of the College for the payment of the debt.

A candidate who has already completed the minimum number of terms required for the degree will not normally be expected to return into residence after intermission; a return into residence 'beyond terms' is at the discretion of the Department and College. Candidates in this category should discuss their plans with the Supervisor and College Tutor.

13.3 Cancellation or Exemption of terms as a result of illness

The Board of Graduate Studies may, on the recommendation of the Degree Committee, agree not to count a term or terms towards the requirement for the degree. Where the reason is illness or other grave cause, the support of the College Tutor is required. This allowance has the same effect as intermission, except that the start date of the course may be changed where the candidate has been deemed to have made a false start.

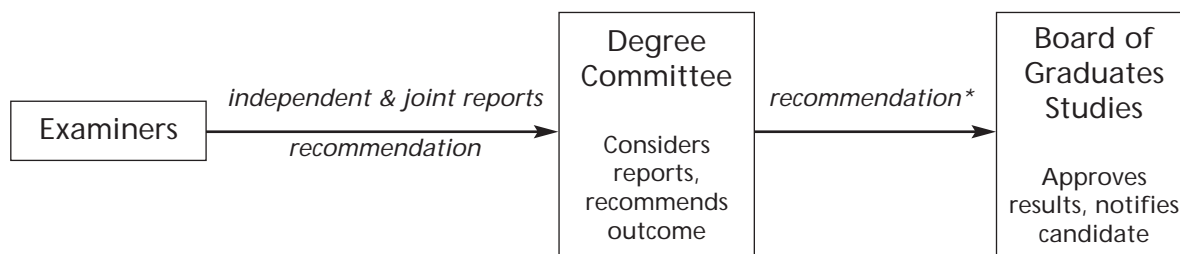
Where a student cannot complete the required terms of research in Cambridge through illness or other grave cause and needs to come off the register before the terms have been completed, an allowance of terms may be granted under the arrangement described in Section 10.3.2. The College Tutor should make a case to the Board of Graduate Studies and a medical certificate or letter from a counsellor provided if appropriate.

14 Assessment and Examinations

Supervisors, Directors of Graduate Education and Degree Committees are expected to be familiar with the requirements set out in the Regulations for the Degrees as set out in the *Statutes & Ordinances* as follows (2007 page references):

MPhil: pp 468-504 PhD, MSc & MLitt: pp 504-508 CPGS: pp 535-540

14.1 Outline scheme of bodies involved in examination of the dissertation



*see 14.7

14.2 Appointment of Examiners

The Degree Committee appoints two Examiners for research degrees:

- an **External Examiner** (for a definition, see External Examiner, below);
- an **Internal Examiner**, to co-ordinate the examination; the appointment of an internal person as the second examiner is highly desirable but not essential and, where no suitable internal Examiner can be found, a second external Examiner shall be appointed;
- where the candidate is a member of staff of the University, both Examiners must be external to the University;
- neither Examiner should be a Supervisor of the dissertation (see 14.2.1);
- for the CPGS, both Examiners are normally internal to the University.

These individuals will normally be expert in one or more aspects of the thesis. It is not expected that either will be expert in the whole field covered by the thesis; the Examiners' expertise will normally be complementary. An Examiner need not him/herself hold a doctorate; if this is not the case, the Degree Committee should consider whether or not the appointee would be recognised by peers as being of equivalent academic standing.

The Degree Committee should seek information from any person nominated as an Examiner who has not previously been appointed by the Degree Committee about his or her previous experience of examination of doctoral theses. An Examiner who has not examined for the University before should be paired with an experienced Examiner.

The Degree Committee will normally consult the Head of the institution concerned about the suitability and availability of Examiners. He or she may in turn consult the Supervisor.

The candidate may not choose the Examiners, but should be informed at the earliest opportunity of the identity of those who have been nominated to examine the thesis. If he or she has **good reason** to object to any given individual as an Examiner, he or she should make this known and the Degree Committee should consider any such objection on its merits when making an appointment.

The Degree Committee will make available to the Examiners as soon after submission as possible: the dissertation; the Board's *Guide to Examiners*; and the relevant forms for recommendations and fee payments. If any confidentiality agreement is required (see 9.6), the Degree Committee shall arrange this as part of the conditions of appointment of the Examiner; a *pro forma* letter is available.

The Degree Committee Secretary or his or her administrator will be the Examiners' main point of contact throughout the examination period.

14.2.1 Internal Examiner

An Internal Examiner should not have been the Supervisor (or second Supervisor) of the candidate. However, an Advisor, or an assessor of an earlier progress report, would not be precluded from examining the dissertation providing the Degree Committee is satisfied that their involvement in the development of the thesis was not so great as to prejudice their role as Examiner.

The Internal is expected to organise the oral examination by contacting both the candidate and the External about their availability. The date for the oral should be fixed as soon as possible after submission and the examination held, if possible, within six to eight weeks.

The Internal also takes responsibility for making sure the External is aware of the requirements for the examination and for ensuring that reports are sent to the Degree Committee promptly after the oral.

If no suitable Internal Examiner can be found and a second External is appointed, the Degree Committee Secretary should adopt the role of advising the Examiners of their duties and arranging the oral examination.

If the candidate is a member of staff of the University, another member of staff of the University shall not be appointed as Examiner. A member of staff of an approved Non-University Institution might be appointed if the Degree Committee deem it appropriate, or two External Examiners should be appointed.

14.2.2 External Examiner

The Board of Graduate Studies expects the External Examiner to:

- provide an external view of the merits of the thesis and its defence in the oral;
- set the thesis and its examination in the context of the standards for the degree in the UK.

The External Examiner should therefore not have a recent significant connection (such as employment or a College Fellowship) with the University of Cambridge nor with its approved non-University institutions. The Degree Committee should consult the Board of Graduate Studies in case of doubt.

The appointment of an Examiner from **outside the UK** will normally be permitted by the Board of Graduate Studies only if:

- there is no suitable Examiner in the UK;
- it is clear that the Examiner is aware of, and is willing to work to, the conventions of the PhD as it is understood in the UK with respect, in particular, to the length of the course and the format and status of the dissertation as an unpublished document.

The Board of Graduate Studies should be consulted before an Examiner from **outside the EU** is to be appointed in order to ensure that the travel costs are within reasonable limits. For payments to Examiners and Assessors, see *Statutes & Ordinances* (2007 p 230-233).

14.3 Scrutiny of the Dissertation

Candidates should consult the Board of Graduate Studies examination *Guide* well before the thesis is due to be submitted to ensure they know what is required: <http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/offices/gradstud/current/submitting/>

Examiners should refer to the relevant Board of Graduate Studies' *Guide to Examiners*: <http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/offices/gradstud/examiners/>

Examiners should satisfy themselves that the thesis is clearly written, that it takes account of previously published work on the subject, and that it represents a contribution to learning appropriate to the level of the degree sought (see the *Guides to Examiners*).

Each Examiner must provide an **independent report** on the dissertation and an **independent recommendation**. That is, he or she must not have read the report of the other Examiner, nor discussed the work with him or her before writing the report. The report should provide the Degree Committee with full technical information about the content of the thesis and be sufficient in length and detail to enable the Committee to make its own assessment of the thesis.

These reports will be supplied as written to the candidate and to his or her Supervisor once the results of the examination have been confirmed by the Board of Graduate Studies.

Once the independent reports have been made and signed, they should be submitted to the Degree Committee together with other documents following the oral.

14.3.1 Confidentiality

Examiners should treat the contents of the dissertation and of their reports as confidential to those immediately concerned with the examination until such time as the results are made known to the candidate. The Examiners may be asked to sign an undertaking of confidentiality for the duration of the examination and for any period of restriction following the examination where this has been specified by a sponsor in the terms of sponsorship.

14.4 The Oral examination

The oral is **compulsory**. It can be waived only in the most exceptional circumstances of illness or other grave cause such that face-to-face examination is impossible. Special arrangements can usually be made for students who have special needs; candidates should make any special requirements known to the Degree Committee. The oral is normally held in Cambridge, but may be held elsewhere if more convenient for all parties.

The candidate and both Examiners of the thesis must be present at the oral. Neither the Supervisor, nor any other additional person, is normally present. However, if the Examiners, for whatever reason, wish for an independent Chair to be present, they should consult the Secretary of the Degree Committee.

The Board of Graduate Studies does not permit video-conferencing as a substitute for a *viva voce* for the PhD, MSc or MLitt degrees unless there is no alternative. In certain cases if all participants concur, the Board may agree to allow a video-conference for an MPhil or CPGS examination providing the Examiners' reports indicate that the result is likely to be straightforward and positive.

There is no convention in Cambridge about the relative roles of the two Examiners in the oral examination; either is free to take the lead as appropriate at any stage.

The **Examiners** may use the oral for a variety of purposes. These may include: seeking clarification of problematic sections; probing the candidate's knowledge of the general area of knowledge within which the thesis falls; establishing the authorship of any parts of the work of which the provenance is unclear (any Examiner who, after reading the dissertation, is worried about possible *plagiarism*, should consult the Board's guidance on how to proceed before writing the report or conducting the oral – see 14.10 and Appendix).

The **candidate** should use the oral to defend his or her thesis and to demonstrate his or her knowledge of the subject area. He or she may also bring to the Examiners' attention any other circumstances affecting the examination of which the Examiners may be unaware.

The Examiners are expressly required **not to take any other circumstances into account** when reaching an **academic judgement** on the value of the work before them. They may, however, bring such matters to the attention of the Degree Committee in their report of the oral and advise the candidate to consult his or her Graduate Tutor.

Because the oral is an integral part of the examination, it is possible that the candidate's performance may not satisfy the Examiners, who may require a further oral to be held.

14.5 After the oral

Following the oral, the Examiners should provide a joint report on the oral, which should be signed and dated, and agree on the outcome (see 14.7).

If the final recommendation differs from the independent recommendation of either Examiner, the Examiner concerned should submit a supplementary report to make clear why his or her recommendation has changed.

If the Examiners cannot agree on the outcome, or if for any other reason a third opinion is needed, the Degree Committee should appoint a **third Examiner**. This Examiner should be external to the

University. The independent reports of all three Examiners should be considered by the Degree Committee. If, for any reason, the Degree Committee agrees that more than one additional opinion is necessary, the Board must be consulted.

14.6 The outcome

Examiners are asked to recommend the result as follows:

- a) The thesis is satisfactory for the award of the degree sought (**pass**); or
- b) the thesis should be approved subject only to **correction** (ie the thesis is essentially of a standard for the degree sought providing certain matters are put right to the satisfaction of one or both Examiners) (**conditional pass**); or
- c) the thesis requires **revision** such that the Examiners are unable to recommend the award of the degree sought without a fresh examination of a revised thesis. If the revision required is very substantial, the Examiners may indicate that a lower degree might be offered in lieu of revision for the degree sought. ('referral'); **NB there is currently no provision for revision of an MPhil thesis; or**
- d) the thesis can be approved for a lesser degree only or for no degree (**failure**).

Further details on these recommendations may be found in the *Guide to Examiners*.

14.7 The Degree Committee and Board of Graduate Studies

All decisions regarding the awarding of qualifications are made at meetings of these bodies and may not be delegated to officers. Examiners and candidates should therefore be aware of the schedule of meetings. The dates of meetings of the Degree Committees and of the Board of Graduate Studies and the corresponding Congregations may be found at <http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/offices/gradstud/current/calendar/>

The **Degree Committee** will consider the reports at a meeting at which a quorum of members is present and voting. The Degree Committee will make a recommendation regarding the outcome and will forward its recommendation, together with a complete set of the documents considered at the meeting, to the Board of Graduate Studies. In all cases, the Degree Committee should submit all reports to the Board of Graduate Studies and, if necessary, provide a commentary on the way in which the decision was reached.

The **Board of Graduate Studies** is the deciding authority on all recommendations of the Degree Committee concerning the award of these qualifications (except that, from 2007-08, authority to approve degrees may be devolved to Degree Committees, in the first instance to those in the Faculties of Biological Sciences, Clinical Medicine and Veterinary Medicine). Examiners' reports are scrutinised by officers of the Board. The Board cannot award a degree when the Degree Committee has not recommended it be awarded, nor can it refuse a degree when approval has been recommended by the Degree Committee without giving the Degree Committee an opportunity to explain the reasons for its recommendation. The Board may, however, agree to question the Degree Committee about a decision or the circumstances of an examination and suggest a remedy if appropriate.

Candidates will be informed of the outcome by the Secretary of the Board of Graduate Studies by letter immediately following the meeting of the Board. The Examiners' reports will be forwarded to the candidate and to his or her Supervisor.

Candidates are asked to ensure that the address to which the result is to be sent is correct by updating their contact address in CamSIS through their self-service (see 7.1).

14.8 Revision and Re-examination ('referral')

Only one attempt at revision is allowed; a revised thesis can be passed; or passed subject to corrections; or failed (in which case, a lower qualification may be offered, if appropriate).

The candidate is provided with the Examiners' revision advice by the Board of Graduate Studies. The candidate must not ask an Examiner to comment on any redrafting prior to the second examination unless the Examiner is not to be appointed to examine the revised work; the Supervisor or other

member of the supervisory team should provide this advice. Candidates are advised that attention to the revision advice is necessary, but is not in itself sufficient, for success; the revised work must be of sufficiently high quality to satisfy the Examiners.

The same Examiners will normally conduct the re-examination, and, if they are satisfied with the revised work, no oral need be held. However, if there is doubt about the outcome, a further oral must be held.

If one or two **new** Examiners are appointed to examine the revised work, the revision advice will be made available to the new Examiner(s). A new Examiner is advised that additional requirements should not be introduced other than corrections. An oral is almost always necessary when either or both Examiners are new. Examiners should consult the Degree Committee in case of doubt.

If the candidate is not approved for the degree sought at the second examination, he or she may be offered a lower degree. If the candidate fails to obtain the degree sought, he or she has recourse to the review procedure (see 15.2).

14.9 Graduation

All matters concerning graduation are dealt with by the candidate's College.

Candidates for degrees should note that:

- the title cannot be used until the degree has been conferred (which may happen at a Congregation or in the absence of the candidate);
- a College will expect a candidate for a degree to be of good standing and may decline to present a candidate who has an outstanding debt to the College.

14.10 Plagiarism and use of unfair means in examinations

Plagiarism (the passing off of the work of others as your own), is, depending on the intention of the writer, either poor scholarship or cheating. In either case, the work of both the student and the original author is severely devalued and, if plagiarism is detected by the examiners, the outcome of the examination will be in serious doubt.

Cheating by deliberately plagiarising or by falsifying data is an offence against University discipline and will be treated very seriously. The University's statement regarding the Use of Unfair Means in examinations can be found in the *Statutes & Ordinances 2007* p196 (Regulation 6).

Information on the nature of plagiarism and how to avoid it, together with guidance for examiners on how to deal with cases of suspected plagiarism and other resources can be found at <http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/offices/exams/plagiarism/>

Supervisors must make sure that their students are aware of the both the requirement for scrupulous honesty in presenting their research and the conventions required for acknowledging the work of others in their particular subject. These requirements should be made clear in the *Course Handbook* and during induction.

Students are required to comply with these conventions. Ignorance of the rules will not be accepted as a defence, unless it is demonstrated that the relevant information has not been made available. The University reserves the right to require the submission of work in both electronic and paper format and to submit work to examination with plagiarism detection software.

The University strongly disapproves of the activities of commercial 'ghost-writing' services and 'essay banks'. The submission of material purchased from these sources for examination will be regarded as use of unfair means. Graduate students should be aware that the university will regard supplying such material as collusion in potential plagiarism.

15 Examination allowances and Review of examinations

A candidate who fails to be approved for the qualification sought will be advised of the two main types of provision that exist in the University's Regulations for reviewing the outcome of an examination:

- **Examination allowances** (in cases of hindrance in the preparation for or taking the examination; NB this allowance applies to the research MPhil and CPGS only)
- **Review of the results of examinations** (in cases of failure where the candidate believes he or she has been unfairly treated)

Students, Supervisors and Examiners should be aware that there is **no provision in the University's Regulation for questioning the academic judgement of the Examiners**; only cases involving extenuating circumstances or alleged unfair treatment will be considered.

The various processes available in the case of examination failure or hindrance are summarised in diagrammatic form in the Appendix.

15.1 Examination allowances

Where a candidate for the MPhil or CPGS suffers hindrance in the **preparation for or taking the examination**, his or her Graduate Tutor may apply to the Board of Graduate Studies for an examination allowance (*Statutes & Ordinances* 2007 p 414, Regulation 12 of the General Regulations for Graduate Students). The Board will consider cases based on medical, personal, cultural (including religious observance) and compassionate grounds, and academic matters relating to demonstrable deficiency in supervision or resource provision.

NB any candidate who feels they have been **unfairly treated** should refer instead to the

- *Review Regulations*, if they have failed the examination (section 15.2);
- *Student Complaints*, in other circumstances (section 12)

15.1.1 Making an application for an examination allowance

A candidate who has been hindered in preparing for or taking an examination, should inform his or her College **Graduate Tutor** immediately and provide documentary evidence of the nature of the hindrance, the exact dates of the period affected and the consequences for the examination. Where the reason is illness or accident, a doctor's letter must be supplied. If a student is unable through illness to initiate an application, the Graduate Tutor may do so on his or her behalf. However, the Tutor should normally seek to confirm the student's consent to the application.

The College Graduate Tutor will consider whether there is a case to support and, if so, will apply to the Board of Graduate Studies for an examination allowance under Regulation 12, setting out the case and enclosing the evidence.

The application can be made at any time but it is in the candidate's interests that it be made as quickly as possible, preferably **before** the results of the examination are considered at a meeting of the Board of Graduate Studies. If the application is made after the meeting of the Board, the candidate may be told that he or she has failed the examination and there may be a delay before the allowance can be considered.

15.1.2 Consideration of the application

Information about hindrance will not be taken into account by the Examiners. Even if they are aware of the circumstances of the candidate, they are expressly required only to consider the work before them. They may, however, forward a note of their awareness of the circumstances with their reports.

If any special circumstances are brought to the attention of the Degree Committee, these must not be taken into account in arriving at an academic recommendation. However, the Degree Committee

may indicate in a letter to the Board of Graduate Studies that they are aware of special circumstances and would be willing to discuss matters further should an application for an allowance be made by the College Tutor.

If a tutorial case for an allowance is received before the meeting of the Board of Graduate Studies at which the results are considered, it will be considered alongside the results and recommendation of the Degree Committee. If the case is received after the relevant Board meeting, it will be considered at the next available meeting. The candidate's supervision reports will be considered at the same time. If the Board is satisfied that there is a case for an allowance, they will inform the candidate and will then discuss the appropriate remedy with the Degree Committee.

15.1.3 Outcome

If an allowance is granted, then, depending on whether or not the examination has already taken place, the candidate may be *examined* at a later date (ie the deadline for submission of the thesis is to be *deferred*) or *re-examined*. The *conditions* and *timing* of the remedy are determined by the Board on the recommendation of the Degree Committee. (Regulation 12b, *Statutes & Ordinances* 2007 p 414).

15.2 Review of the results of examinations for postgraduate qualifications

For the full text of the Regulations concerned, see *Statutes & Ordinances* 2007 p 415-417 (<http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/univ/so/>)

These Regulations pertain only if a candidate has failed to be approved for the qualification for which he or she was examined. This is not an **appeal** procedure, but a **review** of the candidate's examination. That is, the review process cannot change the outcome of the examination, but may, if a case is upheld, lead to a remedy that might include re-examination under different circumstances.

Candidates who fail are sent a copy of the Review Regulations and advised to consult their College Graduate Tutor if they think they may have a reason to seek review. There is a six-month time limit for seeking review, timed from the date of the Board's letter to the candidate giving the outcome of the examination.

The procedure works on the same principle as the Student Complaints procedure: attempts are made to reach a resolution at the lowest possible level and, only if the candidate is not satisfied with the outcome may the case be referred to a higher level.

The various processes available in the case of examination failure are summarised in diagrammatic form in the Appendix.

15.2.1 First stage (Review Regulations 1-4)

The candidate makes a case in writing to the Secretary of the Board of Graduate Studies; the College Graduate Tutor may do this on behalf of the candidate. The candidate should give reasons for seeking review and provide evidence to support the claim. Students should not expect staff of the course, the Faculty, the Degree Committee or the Board of Graduate Studies to offer advice on the merits of their case.

The Board will consider the case presented by the candidate (or the Tutor) at the next available meeting. In some cases, the Board may decide that the problem should be dealt with under other Regulations, such as General Regulation 12 concerning examination allowances, and will proceed accordingly.

The Board is obliged to consult the Degree Committee on the matters raised by the candidate and may ask the Degree Committee to address specific questions. Where there is no meeting of the Board scheduled within two months of the representations being received, the Chairman of the Board may, under vacation powers, agree to consult the Degree Committee without first taking the representations to a meeting of the Board.

In preparing their response to the Board, the Degree Committee will normally consult any persons they deem necessary. Candidates should be aware that persons named in the representations will be given a copy of those parts of the representations concerning themselves.

The Degree Committee will send its findings to the Board of Graduate Studies, who will consider the representations and the findings of the Degree Committee at a meeting.

If, having considered the representations and the response of the Degree Committee,

- the Board recognises that the complaint is **justified**, it will seek a remedy. The details of the remedy will be worked out in consultation with the Degree Committee. In exceptional cases in which a remedy cannot be agreed, the Board may itself, after consulting the Degree Committee, wish to refer the matter to the Review Committee;
- the Board is satisfied that the examination was properly conducted and the complaint is **unjustified**, they will inform the candidate accordingly.

15.2.2 Second stage (Review Regulations 5-10)

If the candidate is not satisfied with this decision, he or she may ask for the complaint to be referred to a **Review Committee**, the membership of which is specified in the regulations.

The candidate must send a letter to this effect to the Secretary of the Board of Graduate Studies within six-month of the date of the Board's letter giving the outcome of the first stage.

The Secretary of the Board will forward the representations (both the representations made in the first stage and the letter seeking referral) to the Secretary of the Review Committee.

The Review Committee shall consider any representations referred to them which in the judgment of the Committee constitute a complaint on one or more of the

following **grounds**:

- a) that there existed material circumstances relating directly to the examination (excluding circumstances relating to the candidate's course of research or course of study – see Section 12) of which the Examiners were not aware;
- b) that procedural irregularities occurred in the conduct of the examination, which were of such a nature as to cause reasonable doubt as to whether the Examiners would have reached the same conclusion had the irregularities not occurred;
- c) that there is demonstrable evidence of prejudice, bias, or inadequate assessment in the examination process.

If the Review Committee are of the view that the complaint does not fall within any of the grounds specified above, they shall dismiss the complaint and shall inform the complainant and the Board of Graduate Studies accordingly.

15.2.3 Hearing (Review Regulations 11-13)

The Secretary of the Review Committee will arrange for the full statement of complaint and the grounds on which it is based, and any written statements made in response to the complaint by the Board of Graduate Studies, Degree Committee, the Examiners and any other person or body specified by the Review Committee, to be made available to all parties.

A **hearing** will be arranged at the earliest opportunity. The complainant is entitled to be present and may be accompanied by not more than two advisers, each of whom must be either a representative of the Graduate Union or a member of Regent House. One of these representatives is permitted to act as the complainant's representative and to speak on his or her behalf.

15.2.4 Outcome (Review Regulations 14-15)

The Review Committee shall have power to dismiss the complaint or, if they consider it justified:

- a) to require the Board of Graduate Studies or the Degree Committee to reconsider their earlier decisions on the particular case;
- b) to require the Examiners to re-examine the candidate;
- c) if the candidate has not been examined orally, to require the Examiners to hold an oral examination;
- d) if the candidate has been examined orally, to require the Examiners to hold a further oral examination;
- e) to permit the candidate to submit a revised dissertation or other exercise, to be examined by the same Examiners;
- f) to require the Degree Committee to appoint one or more additional Examiners to make an independent report or reports on the work submitted by the candidate;
- g) to require the Degree Committee to appoint new Examiners to replace the Examiners previously appointed, and to permit the candidate to be re-examined by the new Examiners or to submit a revised dissertation or other exercise, to be examined by the new Examiners;
- h) to require the Examiners (either the Examiners previously appointed or new Examiners, as the case may be) to set fresh examination papers or other exercises, as appropriate, to be taken by the candidate under arrangements specified by the Review Committee.

Should the candidate be re-examined and fail a second time, he or she has recourse to these regulations for review of the second examination.

15.2.5 Further processes

The Review Committee's decision is final; this concludes the University's procedures.

If the complainant is not satisfied by the outcome of the review process, he or she may ask the national Independent Adjudicator to review the matter, this service is free to students. There are time limits for applying, and some limits as what can be reviewed. Information about the service is given at <http://www.oiahe.org.uk/>

NB the Independent Adjudicator will not consider complaints about matters of **academic judgement** about a candidate's academic performance.

16 Course evaluation and feedback

16.1 Quality assurance

The University's 'Guide to Quality Assurance' covers, among other things, the procedures for appointing External Examiners and dealing with their reports. It can be found at <http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/offices/education/quality/qaguide/>

The officers of the University's Education Section support Faculties and Departments in their quality assurance and enhancement procedures. Each Faculty or Department has a designated contact in the Education Section who will offer advice and support on quality issues and facilitate liaison with other parts of the central administration, such as staff training and development; provision for disabled students; careers advice; using new technologies, etc. The Education Section will also foster dissemination of good practice between Faculties and Departments.

All Faculties, Departments and other University institutions are required to produce an **Annual Quality Statement** in association with an officer of the Education Section, who will visit the Faculty or Department to conduct a meeting to discuss quality assurance procedures. Details of this procedure are to be found at <http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/offices/education/quality/qaguide/part2/part2-sec3-1.html>

16.2 Student Feedback

Student feedback provides valuable input to the review and development of both course content and programme organisation. This feedback is collected at Course and Faculty/Department level. Different arrangements pertain in different subjects, but mechanisms include representation on relevant committees, exit questionnaires, module evaluations, electronic 'fast feedback' facilities, open meetings.

Each Faculty and/or Department should have a committee consisting of both staff and students (including representatives of both Masters and PhD students) at which issues concerning teaching and learning (amongst others) can be raised. A constitution and remit for the committee should be drawn up. It should meet formally at least once a term and report to the Degree Committee or Faculty Board. Minutes of the meeting should be kept. The line of responsibility should be clear for responding to matters raised at the committee, including feedback to students on any actions taken.

It is recommended that each institution arranges for the election of a student representative, who can raise academic, welfare, resource, and any other matters of general and particular concern on behalf of class members individually or severally, either informally with the Director of Graduate Studies or through the staff/student committee.

The University provides, through CARET, an **online student feedback** tool (CamTOES <http://www.caret.cam.ac.uk/services/studentfeedback.html>) by which questionnaires may be created and sent to students, who automatically receive an email to ask them to fill in the feedback form. The system automatically collates responses into a report. All the students' responses are anonymous. Departments and Faculties are encouraged to consider making use of this facility.

The University also participates in the Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES) run by the Higher Education Academy <http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/offices/gradstud/current/pres.html>

16.3 External Examiners' reports

The University attaches great importance to the feedback given by External Examiners. The Board of Graduate Studies scrutinises all Examiners' reports and will ask the Degree Committee to follow up any matters of concern.

16.4 Course Review

All degree programmes in the University are included in reviews of Faculties and Departments, which take place, on average, every six years. These are carried out under the auspices of the University's General Board, and include a member from another University in the UK. The most common type of review in the University is Learning and Teaching Review, which concerns itself with only those activities. However, in exceptional circumstances, an in-depth review of all of an institution's activities, including learning and teaching, research and resources may be carried out. It may be called for as a result of a Learning and Teaching Review, or may be requested by an institution, a School or the General Board.

Faculties are also expected to review their courses and programmes annually, in order to ensure that the aims and outcomes of the course are being achieved, that the course remains current and relevant, and that resources to run the course remain adequate.

As part of this process it is recommended that Faculties review data relating to student attainment on courses, such drop-out and failure data, 4-year submission statistics, numbers of appeals or complaints, recruitment profiles, employment destinations.

The Faculty is responsible for ensuring that its own website and literature are kept up to date regarding course availability and content and for providing accurate copy for the Board's Graduate Prospectus.

16.5 Approved 'non-University Institution' ('NUI') status

Certain Research Council and equivalent institutions within a 15-mile radius of Cambridge are approved by the Board of Graduate Studies as places at which research students may carry out the entire course of study for a Cambridge PhD degree. 'NUI' status is approved on the basis of the academic research record, facilities, overall research environment; and Health and Safety arrangements of the institutions concerned and is subject to review every five years by the Board of Graduate Studies. The review criteria include drop-out, submission and pass statistics.

Appendix

Graduate student complaints, exam allowances and review processes

