

Open Business

minutes

**Board Meeting on 3 October 2006 held in
Seminar Room G, 17 Mill Lane**



**UNIVERSITY OF
CAMBRIDGE**

Board of Graduate Studies

Present: Professor WA Brown (Chair), Dr GMW Cook, Dr LRR Gelsthorpe, Professor GP Hawthorn, Dr PC Hewett, Professor ML Jacobus, Professor RG Osborne, Professor SK Rankin, Dr J Runde, Professor BJ Sahakian (from Item 1088.5), Ms B Bowers, with Dr LE Friday as Secretary, Dr N Tooke and Ms SA Gannon.

Apologies were received from Professor LF Gladden, Dr K Maxwell, Ms CL Burton and Mrs L Whitebread.

Ms Gannon was welcomed to her first meeting as an Officer of the Board.

1075 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 July 2006 were signed as a correct record.

Matters for report

1076 Membership of the Board

The Board welcomed Dr Cook's re-election by the Council to 31 December 2010.

1077 Relationship between the MPhil and PhD Degrees (Paper 2453 refers)

The Board noted the likely financial effects of limiting exemption of terms to those candidates who complete the PhD early and had previously completed an MPhil. It was agreed to support any means of supporting self-funding candidates and the Cambridge Trusts in the transition to the new arrangements.

1078 MPhil in Management Science (Paper 2454 refers)

The Board was satisfied with the response of the Course Director.

1079 ESRC review of 1+3 studentship provision

(Paper 2471 refers)

The recent consultation on '1+3' studentships was noted. Dr Gelsthorpe informed the Board that a report would be forthcoming from ESRC in January 2007 and this would feed into a general review of the recognition exercise.

1080 AHRC review of studentship competition
(Paper 2472 refers)

The summaries of the consultation process and the timetable for further work were noted.

Matters requiring discussion

1081 University Composition Fees for University employees undertaking research degrees
(Papers 2438 and 2439 refer)

The Board approved the draft Notice and Grace, together with an explanatory note, and agreed to forward these to other relevant committees for consideration.

1082 Proposal for a new MPhil in Land Economy Research and suppression of the MPhil in Land Economy (Option B)
(Paper 2440 refers)

The proposal was considered with a view to the new arrangements starting in October 2007. The Board queried the extent to which the new course relied on training delivered through the Joint Schools initiative and asked for equivalent data for other research training courses. It was also noted that a new course specification would be required in due course.

1083 Proposal for a new MSt Degree in Social Enterprise and Community Development and suppression of the MSt in Community Enterprise
(Papers 2441, 2442 & 2443 refer)

The Board broadly supported the proposal to transfer the 'academic and administrative leadership' of the existing MSt in Community Enterprise to the Institute of Continuing Education under the new course title. However, the Board agreed that a properly constituted Joint Academic Degree Sub-Committee would be needed firmly to embed the course in the activities of the Degree Committee for Business and Management and vice versa.

The Board also reviewed the data on the three cohorts of the existing MSt and noted the high drop-out rate. They accepted that this reflected to some extent the problems faced by mature students who are in full-time employment, but agreed to seek comparative figures from other courses. They further noted that candidates who do not progress to the second year would be considered for a postgraduate diploma of the ICE and agreed that *registration in the first instance* for a postgraduate diploma might provide a better structure for candidates who may leave after one year.

1084 MPhil in Archaeology (Option B: Archaeological Heritage and Museums)
(Paper 2451 refers)

The amendment to the practical arrangements for the degree was accepted as uncontroversial.

1085 Proposal for a new MPhil Degree in Politics
(Paper 2470 refers)

The Board was satisfied with Professor Hawthorn's response regarding the balance between undergraduate and graduate teaching and the provision of additional teaching capacity to support the course.

1086 MPhil Degree in Computer Speech, Text and Internet Technology
(Paper 2452 refers)

The original proposal considered by the Degree Committee and a new course specification were not available and the Board agreed to seek further details.

1087 Classification of MPhil courses for HEFCE: MPhil in Environment, Society & Development
(Paper 2455 refers)

The Board noted that the new course structure fitted the HEFCE definition of a research degree and agreed to reclassify the course forthwith as PGR.

1088 Examinations for the Faculty of History
(Paper 2462 refers)

The Board considered three letters from the faculty of History concerning a range of graduate matters:

1088.1 Certificate of Postgraduate Studies in History

The Faculty's approach to the CPGS was commended. It was agreed that the CPGS should be recommended to all Faculties as either a 'waymark' or an 'escape route' for other qualifications; the Secretary agreed to consider how the Regulations for the CPGS might need to be adjusted to allow for this. The Faculty should be reminded that an oral is requirement for the CPGS.

1088.2 Part-time MPhil in Historical Studies

The Board noted that the Faculty would in due course seek a part-time route to this degree.

1088.3 Amendments to the Special Regulations – oral examinations

The Board welcomed the alignment of the regulations for the Faculty's MPhil degrees but agreed to ask the Degree Committee to consider adding the possibility of papers other than the thesis being included, where appropriate, in the oral.

1088.4 Penalties for exceeding the word limit & submission of electronic copy

The Board had no objection to the Faculty's decision to impose penalties for exceeding the word limit, providing these were clearly specified in course literature. The submission of a further copy of the work in electronic format for this purpose would be justified.

1088.5 English language requirements

The Board understood that tests may not be appropriate in the cases of some EU students, but that it would be difficult for BGS staff to recognise special cases. While some Faculties would probably make reasonable cases based on an interview and submission of written work, others might not. Last year, the Board had been asked by the Working Group on International Students, and had agreed, to keep a firm line on English language requirements for admission.

It was therefore agreed that individual cases for exemption should be referred at the request of the Faculty to the Language Centre staff, as indeed already happens where a Faculty makes a special case.

1088.6 Admissions processes

This item was referred to the Head of Admissions.

1089 Role of the External Examiner as moderator or third marker for MPhil Degrees (Paper 2463 refers)

The Faculties of History and English both raised questions about the role of the External Examiner as a moderator compared to the role of a 'third examiner' of the thesis, as provided for by Regulation 10b for the MPhil Degree.

The Board agreed that a useful distinction could be made between these two examination functions, in that one demanded consideration of existing opinions and the other required that these be ignored, but that the same person might be called upon to fulfil both functions with respect to different cases. The Secretary asked the Board to consider a range of examples to establish which fell into which category; the Board in turn asked the Secretary to consider how the regulations and instructions to examiners might be redrafted to clear up any confusion.