

Open Business

minutes

Board Meeting on 13 March 2007 held at 4 Mill Lane



**UNIVERSITY OF
CAMBRIDGE**

Board of Graduate Studies

Present: Professor WA Brown (Chair), Prof GAJ Amaratunga (from item 1199), Dr GMW Cook, Dr LRR Gelsthorpe, Dr PC Hewett, Dr CR Hiley, Dr DA Jefferson, and Professor SK Rankin with Dr LE Friday as Secretary and Dr C Maxwell in attendance.

Apologies: Professor LF Gladden, Professor GP Hawthorn, Professor ML Jacobus, Professor RG Osborne, Professor BJ Sahakian, Mr K Mohaddes, Ms B Bowers, Dr N Tooke, Ms CL Burton and Mrs L Whitebread.

Dr J Runde was on sabbatical leave.

The Chairman welcomed Dr Jefferson to his first meeting of the Board.

1191 Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting on 13 February 2007 were signed as a correct record.

Matters for report

1192 Part-time research courses

The Department of Earth Sciences was approved to offer part-time research degrees.

1193 Research Council budgets 2007-08 (Paper 2723 refers)

The Board noted the possibility of a cut in Research Council funding and that this might affect the 2007 doctoral training grants.

1194 Examiners' fees for the MPhil Degree
(Paper 2724 refers)

The final decisions regarding examiners' fees for the MPhil Degree were noted, especially the decision to drop the separate fee for conducting an oral examination; the new fees will be paid with immediate effect.

Matters requiring discussion

1195 Reports of the Board's Studentships Committees 2006

The Board welcomed the following reports.

1195.1 Overseas Research Studentship competition 2006
(Paper 2716 refers)

This report offered the most detailed analysis of the ORS competition to date and demonstrated strong patterns of awards across world geographical regions and subject areas.

The Board were particularly concerned at the loss of almost a quarter of the top-ranked candidates who withdrew having been offered an ORS award. They noted that complete funding offers need to be made, by underwriting if necessary, by mid-April, and preferably as a package with the ORS award, in order to retain these candidates. The Board's Admissions and Studentships offices had delivered all but a very small number of the candidates' papers to the Trusts offices by the Trusts' requested deadline, and the Board noted that further close co-operation with the Trusts would be needed to achieve the goal of early complete funding packages.

1195.2 Domestic Research Studentship competition 2006
(Paper 2717 refers)

The Board endorsed the report of the Committee and welcomed the decision to provide bursary support for research-training masters degrees. The continued support of the Isaac Newton Trust and the Chest was noted and welcomed.

1196 Non-University Institutions
(Papers 2718 & 2719 refer)

Documentation for the renewal of NUI status was approved for the 2007 round of recognition.

1197 Fees for students who are members of staff: refunds

It was noted that some candidates are only now seeking refunds of fees paid while employed by the University in the period January 2004- present. It was agreed that, in general, fees should be refunded only to students who are currently still paying

fees, but discretion was left to the Secretary given that some refunds have already been made to former students. Requests for refunds are likely to cease within the next year.

1198 MPhil Degree in Quaternary Science
(Paper 2732 refers)

It was noted that the Faculty had decided that this course cannot be offered in 2007 and should be reviewed for the future. Two offers had been made and the Secretary would write to the two candidates to advise them of alternatives.

1199 Writing up status and fees
(Paper 2745 refers)

The Bursars' letter in response to the proposal to introduce 'writing-up' status and a continuation fee was considered. The Board agreed that the Bursars' alternative model, of a 'fee for the course', has merit and should be discussed further before coming to a firm decision about a continuation fee. The prerequisite for establishment of a 'fee for the course' would, however, be further consideration of the fee charged for terms spent away from Cambridge under 'Leave to Work Away'. The Board agreed to revisit its earlier discussion of this matter as soon as possible.

1200 Examination for the MPhil in Biological Anthropology
(Paper 2746 refers)

The Board agreed for its part the changes to the ordinances for the course, noting that the modification is a temporary simplification of arrangements due to the departure of a key member of staff, pending restructuring of the courses offered by the Department.