

## ***Open Business***

# *minutes*

**Board Meeting on 12 June 2007 held at  
4 Mill Lane**



**UNIVERSITY OF  
CAMBRIDGE**

Board of Graduate Studies

Present: Professor WA Brown (Chair), Prof GAJ Amaratunga (from item 1253)  
Dr GMW Cook, Dr LRR Gelsthorpe, Dr PC Hewett, Dr CR Hiley,  
Professor ML Jacobus, Mr K Mohaddes (to item 1253), and Professor  
BJ Sahakian, with Dr LE Friday as Secretary

Apologies: Ms B Bowers, Professor GP Hawthorn, Dr DA Jefferson, Professor RG  
Osborne, Professor SK Rankin, Dr J Runde, Dr N Tooke, and Mrs L  
Whitebread.

### **1249 Minutes**

The Minutes of the meeting on 22 May 2007 were signed as a correct record.

### **Matters requiring discussion**

1250 Graduate School of Biological, Medical and Veterinary Sciences: change of  
title  
(Paper 2839 refers)

The Board welcomed the proposal to change the title to 'Graduate School of Life Sciences'.

1251 Proposal for a Master of Finance Degree  
(Paper 2840 refers)

The Board agreed that they could see no objection, in principle but that they would wish to see a more detailed proposal that addressed the following points:

1. which body would be responsible for the general oversight and quality assurance of the degree? Would it follow the MBA and be embedded in the Business School only, or come under the purview of the Board of Graduate Studies (the Board noted that the answer to this question might, in the fullness of time, change according to reorganization of graduate studies generally but

- central oversight of matters such as allowances, complaints and reviews would be essential);
2. what exactly would the relationship be between the existing MPhil in Finance and the MBA? Which papers would be shared and who would teach them?
  3. has the Faculty of Economics been consulted (given that papers are currently shared between Finance and Economics)?
  4. would the fee arrangements be as for the MBA or as for an MPhil?

It was also agreed that a revision of Statute BIII, to facilitate the creation of new degrees without recourse to Privy Council would be most welcome.

1252 Proposal for premium fees for MPhils in the Judge Business School  
(Paper 2841 refers)

The Board had no objection in principle to premium fees being applied to MPhils in **Technology Policy, Management and Finance**. It was agreed that the argument to charge them would normally rest on two main arguments: that the teaching is particularly intensive and/or expensive, and that the market can bear it. The 'intensive teaching' argument must be quantifiable; and it would be helpful if a register of teaching activity on MPhils across the University could be drawn up against which to judge such claims.

The Board accepted that these three courses are 'underpriced' compared to competitors and supported the view of the Council of the School of Technology that support should be given to UK/EU students, who would bear the brunt of the increases. Bursary schemes would be needed to support UK applicants and those funded by Research Councils, the Cambridge Trusts and other comparable bodies. The Business School should be asked whether there any evidence from institutions offering comparable courses at premium fees that the composition of the student body has shifted towards overseas students.

The Board noted the tendency for the proliferation of small variations in fees and agreed that a small number of premium fee *bands* should be established into which any applications to charge premium fees could be fitted. The Board could see no justification for creating a continuum of fees; indeed this would be utterly unworkable in CamSIS and a constant source of error and confusion to applicants, staff and students.

In the light of this, the Board proposed that the fee for overseas students on the **MPhil in Economics** should be brought *down* to match the MPhil in Finance premium rate – ie the established overseas science fee, rather than the only slightly higher £12,400 currently charged.

1253 Council for Lifelong Learning  
(Papers 2842 and 2843 refer)

The Board agreed to nominate Professor Sahakian to replace Dr Friday as their representative on the Council.

1254 Learning & Teaching Review of the Institute of Continuing Education  
(Paper 2844 refers)

The Board welcomed the opportunity to respond to the review on the particular subject of MSt provision.

The Board noted that the regulations as they stand lead to considerable confusion of the relative powers and responsibilities of the ICE, the Board, and the Degree Committees; this meant that regulations were not always clearly expressed in course literature or understood and followed in practice. The reconfiguration of MSts as part-time MPhils, under the same regulations, and with the same procedures would be likely greatly to improve matters.

The Board noted that many applicants are returning to tertiary education after a long break or have no training at degree level at all. This is not in itself a bar to admission, but the Board felt that any remedial training in basic study skills should be given prior to the course, not during it.

The Board felt that they (and Degree Committee and College) were much less in touch with the progress of MSt students and generally became aware of a problem only when it has progressed so far that a remedy is difficult to achieve. MSt courses need to be brought into the mainstream reporting of progress through CamGRAD at the earliest opportunity.

Regarding degree approval, the system needs to be clearer and the relationship between the MSt 'Joint Academic Degree Sub-Committee' (where such exists) and the Degree Committee more clearly defined.

The Board concluded that the contribution of ICE to part-time masters study is valuable and particularly effective in the following areas: as a 'first contact' service for identifying suitable applicants and dealing with them and their employers (where relevant) on a one-to-one basis; in day-to-day management of a dispersed student body; and providing a pedagogical approach suited to those returning to study after a long break or studying part-time while employed.

1255 Proposal for an MPhil Degree in Architecture  
(Paper 2847 refers)

The Board supported the Faculty's proposal for an MPhil examined by thesis and oral only. They noted that the course would not be recognised by the ESRC.

1256 Postgraduate Research Experience Survey  
(Paper 2849 refers)

The results of the survey were warmly welcomed and thanks expressed to Miss Wilkinson for running the survey so effectively. It was agreed that the results should be published and that the data should be analysed further to allow Faculties and Colleges to evaluate their own students' responses.

1257 Fee liability of graduate students  
(Papers 2851, 2852, 2853 refer)

The Board agreed to recommend a 'fee for the course' model be adopted, that is, every student should pay a composition fee:

- appropriate to his or her residency and employment status;
- at the published annual rate for the course (unless varied by the BGS for exceptional circumstances, in which case the balance of the fee would come from hardship funds);
- for *each and every term up to the minimum number of terms required* for the qualification, *except* for the only terms for which (s)he intermits or comes off the register (these do not count towards the number of terms required for the course);
- regardless of the place in which the student resides during his or her studies;
- whether the student is working in the University, its approved non-University Institutions, or away from Cambridge;
- whether studying part-time or full-time;
- entitlement to supervision and use of central facilities for a further one year (or until the examination is concluded, whichever is the sooner) would be included in the fee for the course;
- entitlement to facilities in Faculties and Departments might vary according to the nature of the research, but it is expected that students would *not* continue to undertake original research 'beyond their terms' but be working on material gained during those terms (ie 'writing up');
- a full fee would be payable for any term for which the student is granted leave to work away from Cambridge.

The Board would further wish to recommend very strongly that the composition fee for each term for which the student has leave to work away should largely be used to set up funds to support the costs of fieldwork etc. The fees should, however, be top-sliced to provide for services that continue to be supplied by the University while the student is away (supervision, admin etc), and, where a student translocates to another institution at which a fee is payable, this should be provided from the remainder of the UCF.

The Board further recommended that:

- a) *automatic* exemption for *writing-up* (for PhD students, after 9 full-time terms or part-time equivalent, except for 4-year students) should be established forthwith;
- b) fees be introduced for terms of leave to work away as soon as possible, but at a time and in a manner to be agreed in consultation with the Faculties most affected, the Colleges and the Trusts.