

Open Business

minutes

**Board Meeting on 20 November 2007 held at
4 Mill Lane**



**UNIVERSITY OF
CAMBRIDGE**

Board of Graduate Studies

Present: Prof WA Brown (Chair), Dr GMW Cook, Dr LRR Gelsthorpe, Dr CR Hiley, Ms K Linder, Mr LS Liu, Prof RG Osborne, Dr J Runde, with Dr K Maxwell as Secretary and Dr LM Biggs, Ms S-A Gannon and Ms SJ Pickard in attendance

Apologies: Dr WD Allison, Prof J Heal, Prof BJ Sahakian and Mr MR Younger

Professor PC Hewett and Professor SK Rankin are on sabbatical leave

1332 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting on 23rd October 2007 were signed as a true record.

Matters for report

1333 Membership of the Board

The Board were sorry to hear that Professor Jacobus had decide to resign from the Board, but were pleased to learn that Professor Heal has agreed to join the Board as a replacement.

Matters requiring discussion

1334 Application for renewal of Non-University Institution status

The Board reviewed the applications and supporting documents from the relevant Degree Committees and cognate departments and agreed to renew NUI status for the Cambridge Crystallographic Data Centre, the MRC Cognition & Brain Sciences Unit and the MRC Dunn Human Nutrition Unit. Each institution will be invited to apply for renewal of NUI status in 2012.

1335 Copying and distribution of MPhil Papers and Dissertations

In response to a query from Legal Services, the Board were disturbed to learn that the University does not have regulations regarding the copying and distribution of MPhil Papers and dissertations. The Board asked the Secretary to liaise with Legal Services to formulate guidelines to be used to prevent unauthorized publication of MPhil material.

Action: Secretary

1336 Proposal for an increase in the baseline fee for MPhils etc in the School of the Humanities & Social Sciences

The Board considered a discussion paper received from the Chair of the School of Humanities & Social Sciences regarding the possibility of increasing the baseline Composition Fee for all MPhils and other courses within the School.

The Board wished to raise a number of question and comments:

- The Board were sympathetic to the idea that the MPhils are underpriced and that the University should levy a realistic charge in order to ensure economic viability in the future. However, the Board were concerned that the increased revenue should be used exclusively for the MPhil degrees and should not be used to support financial shortfalls in other areas, nor should this be used as justification for increasing the fee.
- The Board were concerned that underpricing may be a common concern and that all Schools should now be given the opportunity to re-evaluate the cost of their MPhil courses.
- How would the proposed increase in fee level be reconciled with the decrease in the number of Home students who apply to Cambridge and how would the difference between the maximum Research Council fee and the proposed fee be achieved? The Board would expect that the University would commit to recycling increased fee income in the form of student bursaries, but matching funds would also be required. The Board require confirmation that Home students would not be disadvantaged should the scheme be approved.
- The cost of the College Fee to the student must also be considered as this will not be an issue at most other HEIs.
- The Board were opposed to gradual introduction of the increased fee.
- Sufficient resource would be required for the enhancements which it would be necessary to make to CamSIS.
- The Board requested input from the Planning and Resource Committee and the Education Committee.

1337 QAA Institutional Audit: draft briefing document

Overall, the Board were content with the draft document, but felt that more emphasis could be placed on recent achievements in graduate education, such as the Code of Practice for Research Degrees.

1338 Proposals for the introduction of new or significantly amended courses and examinations for the MPhil Degree: revised application form

The Board approved the use of the revised form. The Board asked that the next version of the form should be revised to include an additional section to be used to opt-into the part-time MPhil pathway and to provide detail on part-time provision. It was also felt that further detail was required on how to request premium fees for taught MPhil courses.

Action: Secretary

1339 Examination for the PhD by the Special Regulations, no *prima facie* case: complaint by candidate

The Board approved the immediate introduction of a new form to be circulated to Degree Committees for the use of establishing a *prima facie* case in respect of candidates for the PhD by Special Regulations. The form includes a checklist for criteria of the Degree and a section to permit feedback to candidates.

Action: Secretary

1340 Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) studentship competitions

The Acting Assistant Registry, gave a verbal report on the 2008-09 competition and preparation for the Block Grant Awards which will commence in 2009-10. The Chairs of the Schools of Humanities & Social Sciences and the Arts & Humanities have agreed to oversee key management decisions whilst the Board of Graduate Studies will provide administrative support and assume financial responsibility for the Block Grants.

1341 Board of Graduate Studies Annual Report: 2005-6

The Board signed the document as an accurate record of its activities for the academical year 2005-6.

1342 Proposed change to constitution of Degree Committee: International Studies

The Board approved the changes proposed to the Degree Committee i.e. that the quorum should be reduced to five and that total membership be increased to 11.

1343 Revised Regulations for the MPhil Degree

The Board were pleased to approve the revised Regulations for the MPhil Degree.

The meeting closed at 17.40