APPENDIX I

THE CONSULTATION

The following tables summarize the substantive responses to the consultation undertaken during the Long Vacation 1998.

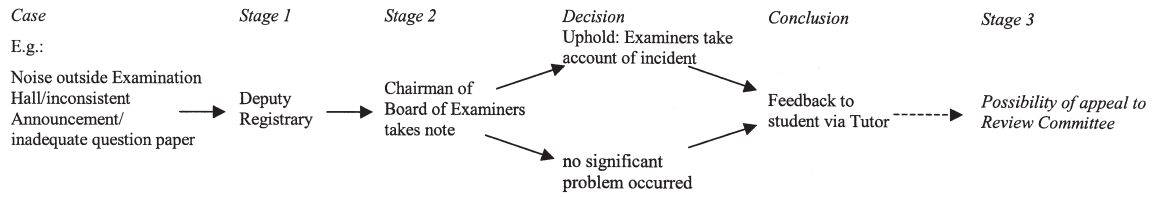|	
Adequate information for students on marking and classing criteria?	Out of the 16 Departments/Faculties which answered this question, 15 reported that they issued full details of marking and classing criteria as standard. In most cases the guidelines were circulated to students by themselves or within student handbooks rather than merely being available as notices in the Department/Faculty. Responses from Chairmen of Examiners generally confirmed the Departmental/Faculty response (11 out of 17 answered the question, and 9 said information was provided), but there are some discrepancies, for example, the responses from Classics, and Biology/MVST. Of the other responses, there is some indication from Colleges and the Counselling Service that there is unevenness across subjects.
How can arrangements for sick/disabled candidates be made fairer (if at all)? What other factors should be taken into account? How could they be verified	The responses to this question were quite varied. 15 Departments commented specifically. Of these, two-thirds said (in some form) that the present arrangements were satisfactory. Interestingly, half of these went on to qualify their statements. Chairmen of Examiners seemed to agree, in similar proportions. Colleges again, taking a non subject-specific view, were dissatisfied with current arrangements.
Continuity **Safeguards to prevent abrupt changes?**	All Departmental/Faculty responses indicated that continuity was not a problem, and was adequately protected. Chairmen of Examiners were less convinced of this.

TUTORIAL SURVEY

	Less than 1	*1–5*	*6–10*	*More than 10*
1(*a*). On average, how many students approach you each year with concerns about their examination results?	32%	64%	2%	2%
1(*b*). On average, how many students approach you each year with concerns about the nature and content of particular examination papers?	47%	47%	2%	4%

	Constant	*Increased*	*Decreased*
1(*c*). Have the numbers in (*a*) and (*b*) above remained constant, increased or decreased over the last few years?	87%	13%	–

	Less than 1	*1–5*	*6–10*	*More than 10*
2. How many of these enquiries actually result in submissions to the Applications Committee?	77%	22%	1%	–
3. How many 'Examination Warning Letters' do you write on average each year?	30%	63%	5%	1%

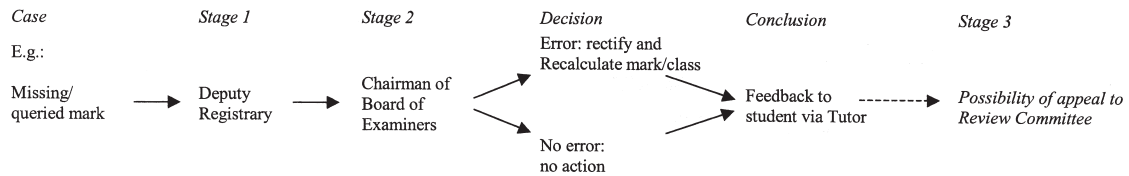|	*Yes*	*No*
4. Are the special arrangements made for sick and disabled candidates, and for those with non-health related problems, to sit examinations, fair and equitable?	93.5%	6.5%
5. Is the declaration 'To have deserved honours' a sufficient means of recognizing the achievement of those who have missed one or more examinations, through illness or other misfortune?	78%	22%
6. In your opinion, do the present arrangements for the review of results provide a fair means for students' grievances to be dealt with?	84%	16%

APPENDIX II

A FORMAL REVIEW PROCEDURE

Case 1. Difficulties in the Examination environment (*pre* class-list)

Case	Stage 1	Stage 2	Decision	Conclusion	Stage 3
E.g.:			Uphold: Examiners take account of incident		
Noise outside Examination Hall/inconsistent Announcement/ inadequate question paper	→ Deputy Registry	→ Chairman of Board of Examiners takes note	→ / no significant problem occurred	→ Feedback to student via Tutor	- - - → Possibility of appeal to Review Committee

Procedure:
1. Student informs Tutor (within 72 hours) about for example, constant loud noise outside the Examination Hall during paper, or notices being read in one examination room, but not another. In the former example, immediate action should be taken, if possible, by the invigilator.
2. Deputy Registrary informed via Tutor;
3. Deputy Registrary refers the query to the Chairman of the Board of Examiners;
4. Chairman of Board of Examiners takes note of the incident;
5. Student's mark is considered in the light of the incident (*NB all other candidates likely to have been similarly affected should also be similarly reconsidered*);
6. Written feedback to student via Tutor/Senior Tutor;
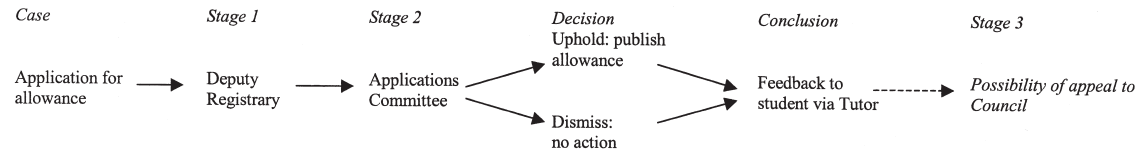7. Case recorded for inclusion in report.

Case 2. Administrative/clerical error (*post* class-list)

Case	Stage 1	Stage 2	Decision	Conclusion	Stage 3
E.g.:			Error: rectify and Recalculate mark/class		
Missing/ queried mark	→ Deputy Registrary	→ Chairman of Board of Examiners	→ / No error: no action	→ Feedback to student via Tutor	- - - → Possibility of appeal to Review Committee

Procedure:
1. Student queries his/her marks/class;
2. Deputy Registrary informed via Tutor;
3. Deputy Registrary refers question to the Chairman of the Board of Examiners;
4. Chairman of Board of Examiners investigates; if error confirmed, it is rectified and student's mark and class recalculated. If necessary, a new class-list issued;
5. Written feedback to student via Tutor;
6. Case recorded for inclusion in report.

Case 3. Application for allowance

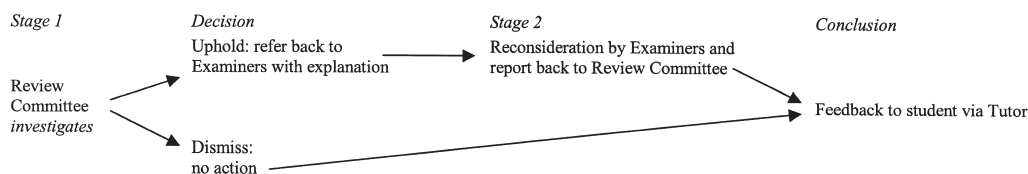| Case	Stage 1	Stage 2	Decision	Conclusion	Stage 3
			Uphold: publish allowance		
Application for allowance	→ Deputy Registrary	→ Applications Committee	→ / Dismiss: no action	→ Feedback to student via Tutor	- - - → Possibility of appeal to Council

Procedure:
1. Student falls ill during examination, or suffers some other grave misfortune;
2. Application for allowance made to Deputy Registrary via Tutor;
3. Deputy Registrary refers application to the Applications Committee;
4. Applications Committee considers evidence. If allowance is granted, it is published;
5. Written feedback to student via Tutor. *If student dissatisfied, may appeal to the Council*;
6. Written feedback to student via Tutor;
7. Case recorded for inclusion in report.

Case 4. Cases which reach the Examinations Review Committee

Procedure:

Stage 1

Decision
Uphold: refer back to
Examiners with explanation

Stage 2
Reconsideration by Examiners and
report back to Review Committee

Conclusion

Review
Committee
investigates

Dismiss:
no action

Feedback to student via Tutor

1. Student complains that there has been a substantive injustice (e.g. bias on the part of an Examiner, or breakdown in procedure on the part of the Board of Examiners) and requests a review of examination result;
2. Deputy Registrary refers complaint to the Chairman of the Board of Examiners and the Examinations Review Committee;
3. Examinations Review Committee receives all evidence and paperwork to date, plus any other material it sees fit to request. If complaint is upheld: matter referred back to the Board of Examiners or an Executive Committee thereof;
4. Board of Examiners reconsiders and reports back to Examinations Review Committee: if appropriate, new class-list published;
5. Written feedback to student via Tutor;
6. Case recorded for inclusion in report.

APPENDIX III

FORMALIZING GOOD PRACTICE

In the view of the Working Group, the introduction of formal procedures for dealing with queries and complaints about examinations and requests for review of examination results will be beneficial to the University as a whole. Openness and transparency of procedure will allow students greater awareness of the rigour of the assessment process, and will lead to the enhancement of that process, through increased scrutiny. For this reason, the Working Group recommend that Boards of Examiners take positive steps towards adopting more rigorous procedures relating to all stages of the examinations process, as described below.

Examination expectations and criteria

The University encourages Chairmen of Examiners and Senior Examiners to make their procedures as transparent as possible, while safeguarding their right to exercise proper discretion and judgement. Practically all University Departments and Faculties are expected to provide comprehensive information to students in a variety of formats, about what to expect from their examinations – the structure and content of papers, how marks will be used, and, often, criteria for marking and classing. Past and specimen papers are widely available. Such openness and transparency of procedure is commendable; the Working Group recommend that provision of this information becomes standard in all Faculties and Departments.

Examination setting

In a University which provides for well over a thousand examination papers every year, some mistakes are inevitable. It is impossible to guarantee consistency and continuity of coverage, but it is the Working Group's view that these factors can be monitored, and related causes for queries and complaints kept to a minimum by Examination Boards requiring that the guidance issued by the General Board for External Examiners (which states that they should 'participate fully, with the Internal Examiners in the approval of question papers'), is strictly adhered to as standard. In this way, Boards of Examiners may be satisfied that all that can be done to prevent queries and complaints and ensure fairness has been done.

Examiners' Meetings

Transparency of procedure should also apply to the conduct of Examiners' Meetings. In the event of a query or complaint after the final class-list has been published, Chairmen of Examiners must be able to show that proper procedures have been carried out; by and large, this is a matter of recording what already happens in a well-conducted examination board. A written record of decisions other than in straightforward cases, a record of double-marking of all borderline and aberrant candidates and an indication of marks confirmed or resolved by the External Examiner would provide the necessary evidence in case of subsequent query. Evidence of the latter two should be made accessible through the mark books sent to Colleges, and will show that examination procedures build in a review of marks, which has been applied wherever required. Actual minutes and records of Examiners' discussions would remain confidential, but in the event of a dispute, would be made available to the proper authority investigating the complaint.

Mark books

Mark books are the only means by which candidates can determine how their final class has been arrived at. The Working Group consider that second or even third marks, resolutions, and externally validated marks should be clearly indicated in the mark book as such – it demonstrates to the candidate that adequate checks have been applied to their work to ensure that the final result is a fair one. Such transparency may well reduce the likelihood of requests by borderline candidates for remarking.

Transcripts

The University is able to produce computer-generated transcripts to students on request, giving details of the courses followed together with the class obtained at the end of each year. It is important for transcripts (which may be used for a variety of purposes), and the information contained on them, to be comprehensible to those outside Cambridge. For this reason, the Working Group recommend that those candidates who are declared to have deserved honours, should have this term explained on their transcript. Responses to the consultation indicated that the term is not widely understood outside Cambridge. Suggested wordings are given below:

(*a*) *This candidate, while absent from part of the examination, performed with credit in a substantial part of it. Because of the absence the Examiners, being unable to place the candidate in the list of successful candidates, or having otherwise to award the candidate a class that would in their opinion seriously misrepresent his or her abilities, have agreed to [declare the candidate to have deserved honours].*

(*b*) *This candidate, while absent from part of the examination, performed with credit in a substantial part of it. Because of the incomplete performance, the Examiners were unable to classify the candidate, or would otherwise have*

had to award the candidate a class that would not adequately represent his or her abilities. They have therefore agreed to [declare the candidate to have deserved honours].

(*c*) *This candidate, while absent from part of the examination, performed with credit in a substantial part of it. The Examiners were unable to class the candidate on the basis of the incomplete performance, or would otherwise have had to award a class of degree that would in their opinion seriously misrepresent his or her abilities. They have therefore agreed to [declare the candidate to have deserved honours].*

Report of the General Board on the establishment of a Centre for Applied Research in Educational Technologies

The GENERAL BOARD beg leave to report to the University as follows:

1. The Council and the General Board have, in recent years, given consideration to the implications for the University of trends such as globalization and the use of new information and communication technologies in the provision of higher education. As stated in the Annual Report of the Council for 1997–98 (*Reporter*, 1998–99, Special No. 8), the Council and the General Board agreed to explore the possibilities for Cambridge of the concept of a 'virtual university' using the World Wide Web, and through their Planning and Resources Committee they have also been considering how these technologies could be used to enhance and extend existing teaching and learning resources within the University. As a result of these considerations, they agreed to provide funding of £433,000 a year, for an initial period of three years, from the Strategic Planning Reserve Fund, for a centre (*Reporter*, 1999–2000, p. 491) which would assist Departments and Faculties in understanding how existing educational technologies could be deployed, and, more importantly, new systems and applications developed.

2. The General Board now propose the establishment of a Centre for Applied Research in Educational Technologies (CARET) which will accomplish this goal. CARET will be a research and development group, in which the focus will be on applied research to develop, implement, and evaluate new technologies in education. It will focus on deliverable projects which will be appropriately evaluated so as to reveal the generic principles on which they are based, with the intention that these could influence the design of other systems. The principles would relate to both technological and pedagogical issues.

3. CARET would provide the core facilities for experts in information technology, education, design, and media communications to work with academic staff from existing Faculties and Departments within the University, and from Colleges, many of whom have already been successful in this area on their own account. (The recent success of the Department of Materials Science and Metallurgy in gaining funds from the HEFCE's Fund for the Development of Learning and Teaching is an example of this.) The Centre will form part of the underpinning local infrastructure for any Cambridge response to the HEFCE e-University project, and it already has a role within the Board's

Learning and Teaching Strategy (*Reporter*, p. 552). It will also play a vital role in delivering parts of the programmes of the Cambridge–MIT Institute (*Reporter*, p. 491), and will provide a focus for any future collaborations the University may have with other bodies and agencies who are exploiting these technologies in a similar fashion. It is envisaged that, on start-up, the following staff would be required:

(i) two programmers to develop generic software;
(ii) a training officer to run courses and produce course material on educational technologies;
(iii) an administrator for the Centre;
(iv) a computer officer to offer technical support.

The funding for these positions would be part of the funding referred to in paragraph 1. In addition, it is proposed that a University office of Director as the academic and administrative head of the Centre be established, and that an Advisory Committee be established to advise the Director on lines of applied research in educational technologies and their financial implications.

4. For academic staff from individual Faculties, Departments, and Colleges who wish to develop novel technology-based teaching resources, CARET will provide assistance to help define the scope of any project and the resources that will be needed both from CARET and the individual or group for the project to succeed. The Advisory Committee will guide the selection of projects to be housed in the Centre. Support will be provided for applications for research funds to support projects, and, where appropriate, projects will be provided with space and core resources to support the research and development.

5. CARET will act as a central unit for Research and Development for academic staff involved in such a project during its development phase, but the individual project will remain the 'property' of the originating institution, and will return to it when completed. The Centre will provide the necessary creative environment with a range of in-house core resources to support the development, testing, and evaluation of the specific projects. Where publications or software arise directly from a project, these will be declarable on the Research Assessment Exercise returns of the originating institution, and will be seen as supporting its teaching in the context of assessments by the Quality Assessment Agency (QAA). The General Board will ensure that appropriate mechanisms are put in place for handling