

# CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY REPORTER

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*End of the Official Part of the 'Reporter'*



UNIVERSITY OF  
CAMBRIDGE

## NOTICES

## Calendar

13 February, *Thursday*. Lent Term divides.

23 February, *Sunday*. Preacher before the University at 11.30 a.m., The Revd Canon Professor James Walters, of Selwyn College, Professor in Practice and Director of the LSE Faith Centre and of the LSE Religion and Global Society Research Unit (*Hulsean Preacher*).

25 February, *Tuesday*. Discussion by videoconference at 2 p.m.

## Discussions (Tuesdays at 2 p.m.)

25 February

18 March

## Congregations (at 10 a.m. unless otherwise stated)

1 March

29 March

5 April

11 April, 2 p.m. (degrees in absence only)

## Title of Senior Pro-Vice-Chancellor

Following the approval of Grace 1 of 11 December 2024,<sup>1</sup> the Vice-Chancellor has conferred upon Professor Kamal Munir, *HO*, the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for University Community and Engagement, and Professor Bhaskar Vira, *F*, the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Education and Environmental Sustainability, the title of Senior Pro-Vice-Chancellor from 1 January 2025. Professors Munir and Vira will share the additional responsibility until the expiry of their appointments as Pro-Vice-Chancellor.

<sup>1</sup> *Reporter*, 6763, 2024–25, p. 190.

## Twenty-ninth Report of the Board of Scrutiny: Notice in response

27 January 2025

The Council has received the Board of Scrutiny's Twenty-ninth Report and the remarks made at the Discussion on 5 November 2024 (*Reporter*, 2024–25: 6756, p. 65; 6759, p. 121). It has provided its response below to the Board's recommendations and the remarks made at the Discussion.

The Council notes the Board's recognition of the progress made in several key areas, referring specifically to finance and operations, the people strategy, the teaching review and environmental sustainability. The Board also highlights areas in which it considers that 'more needs to be done'. The Council agrees with Mr Hopwood and Dr Doubleday, the Board's current and previous Chairs, that there remain challenges facing the University. It acknowledges that some, like Mr Allen, will be frustrated with the pace of change in improving the information available on the University's finances. However, the Council also observes that projects of the scale of the Finance Transformation Programme, at least in the short term, add to the administrative load and need co-ordination if staff are not to feel overwhelmed, as both Mr Allen and the Board point out. The Council recognises that the approaches adopted to tackle the University's challenges need to remain under review, with adjustments where appropriate. However, if the University is to be able to adapt its ways of working effectively, as much as possible within existing resources, there has to be a limit on the number of initiatives it can undertake if it is not to run the risk of biting off more than it can chew (to use a phrase the Board employs elsewhere in its Report). Sometimes the better course is to do fewer things, so that you can do those things well.

## RECOMMENDATIONS IN THE BOARD'S REPORT

**1. The Board recommends that the Review of Teaching ensures that the new education strategy outlines concrete actions and structural reforms where necessary rather than simply warm words. Furthermore, the Review of Teaching should consider methods of increasing the supply of supervisions rather than, as at present, seeing this in terms of limiting the demand for supervisors by increasing the average number of students in each supervision. The latter should be avoided as much as possible given that the University's reputation for education is based on the strength of its small-group supervision system, which should be protected and defended as much as possible.**

The Council shares the Board's appreciation of the Task and Finish Group's progress towards an education strategy. The Group is working to ensure that its final recommendations are grounded in action, not only in the short term but also as they develop over a longer period. The strategy will aim to align with, and expand on, the University's core educational values and identify how these will be realised across the collegiate University. It will be accompanied by an action plan that will provide the concrete actions and structural reforms that the Board wishes to see.

Regarding the comment about increasing the supply of supervisions, the Group is not considering any reduction in small-group supervision contact time for students, nor is it considering increasing the amount of supervision contact time for students, given the well-established concerns about workload. It will continue to review methods to support supervisors so that the supply of supervisions is more efficient and effective, while still retaining the high quality associated with this teaching model. The Board's concerns about protecting the strength of the supervision system are noted. The Group wholeheartedly agrees that this is important, but argues that increasing group size does not automatically result in a drop in quality. Collaboration should be a key part of supervision experiences alongside individual development. Working together offers students opportunities for peer-to-peer learning and exposure to a variety of perspectives that deepen their individual understanding. Modern scholarship requires strong collaborative and leadership skills, which should be developed in part through supervisions. At present, the majority of supervisions on a third of all Triposes are held with a single student, causing those students to miss out on these collaborative opportunities. Both individual and small-group models offer benefits to student learning which should be considered and maximised, while retaining the exceptionally high standard of the University's personalised educational model.

**2. The Board recommends better assessments of policy changes from educational services on (a) staff time across the University and (b) equality, diversity and inclusion impact assessments. This is needed given the level of transformation in education services in the University, as there is a risk that these reforms occur in a piecemeal or siloed way without full assessment or mitigation of the consequences on other stakeholders in the University.**

Efforts are being made to align and, where possible, consolidate the change projects which are underway under the lead of Education Services. For example, there are some common themes emerging from both the Teaching Review and the Review of Disability Support, and recommendations will be considered together where appropriate to ensure a joined-up implementation plan. Development of emerging recommendations from the Teaching Review include an assessment of cost (staff time and other resources) against impact.

Education Services has initiated a project on Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs). The aim is to ensure all decisions, processes, and policies managed within Education Services are equitable and consider the diverse needs of the University's students, staff and other stakeholder populations, including those from minority, under-represented, or vulnerable groups (focused on, but not limited to, protected characteristics).

The project objectives are:

- Embed EIAs into business-as-usual practice across Education Services.
- Create EIA proforma appropriate for use within Education Services.
- Create repository of EIA data for analysis and creation of best practices and ongoing business improvement (including themes risks, and opportunities).
- Ensure compliance with University-level requirements.<sup>1</sup>

**3. The Board recommends that the University and the Colleges work to improve co-ordination of admissions processes and widening-participation schemes. The Board is particularly concerned about the lack of co-ordination between Colleges on admissions policies. The Board recommends that the University should do everything in its power to encourage agreement on admissions governance reform and then to swiftly implement it. In the medium term, the Board recommends that the University should promote the use of Bridging Courses and Preparation Weeks and encourage greater co-ordination between Colleges and Faculties/Departments over their delivery to maximise economies of scale.**

All Colleges follow the University admissions policy, as published on the University's website. Strategic and operational oversight of the admissions process and the associated recruitment and outreach activity are both under active review in 2024–25, with the intention that a new set of governance arrangements for undergraduate admissions that has both College and University involvement is operating from the 2025–26 academic year. The focus of the review of outreach will be to identify the best means to support the efficient and effective use of the collegiate University's resources to ensure that the aims of the Access and Participation Plan are met, in particular the renewed focus on regional under-representation at Cambridge and the need to address low participation from specific ethnicities.

Recent discussions at the Admissions Forum have identified a range of factors in the undergraduate admissions process that can complicate the process for applicants and their advisers, including the approach to interviews, the grades and subjects required for meeting an offer condition, and approaches to testing applicants at interview. Aspects of the process may discourage some applicants, particularly those who have limited access to support and guidance, from seeing Cambridge as a UCAS choice, particularly when compared to the perceived consistency of approach in these areas that Oxford provides. The complexity also adds cost to the running of the admissions process.

The expansion of College and Department bridging courses and Departmental induction programmes in recent years is to be welcomed, but there is a need to ensure effective co-ordination to make best use of the resources available. The Senior Tutors' Education Committee will be considering the development of College-led programmes, and the Access and Participation Plan Scrutiny Group will be looking to promulgate best practice through the APP 'What Works?' document.

<sup>1</sup> There is a plan to review and reshape the EIA framework that is provided by the staff EDI Team. The Education Services project will proceed ahead of this work being completed but will be mindful to ensure that any process created locally is able to align with the revised University-wide EIA framework.

**4. The Board recommends the University should collect more and better EDI data relating to recruitment, including socio-economic background, to guide further development of strategy and policy in this area.**

The new HR system (myHR) will significantly enhance the way in which the University collects, manages and reports information across various areas, including EDI data. The myHR implementation team plans to consider questions based on the UK Social Mobility Index as part of phase 2 of the implementation of myHR.

In the meantime, the EDI team has been using various culture surveys to gain insights into the University community's socio-economic composition. For example, one indicator involves understanding whether an individual's parents or guardians completed a university degree. Findings from a survey earlier this year revealed that 49% of staff (3,000 respondents in total) reported their parents or guardians had not attended university.

**5. The Board recommends that the University accepts the recommendations made to the RPC [Research Policy Committee] for a bold climate and environmental research strategy, and that appropriate resources are committed to support the strategy and associated fundraising effort.**

The Council joins the Board in welcoming the work of the Climate and Environmental Sustainability Research Working Group and its vision for a bold climate and environmental research strategy.

A consultation on the Working Group's report took place during June 2024 and the RPC considered the results at its meeting on 17 October 2024. The RPC formally endorsed the report at that meeting and will now consult with School Research Committees to establish their views on how a strategy should be developed and to identify key research priorities. The University's Research Strategy Office will support this process, which will feed into the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Education and Environmental Sustainability's wider efforts to develop an academic vision for sustainability that incorporates research and education.

The RPC recognises that, given current financial challenges, there is no scope for significant direct investment in the delivery of a bold research strategy in this area. As such, following the planned consultation with Schools, the RPC will aim to identify what can be delivered with existing resource or through reprioritisation, alongside a longer-term strategy for philanthropic fundraising to support the strategy.

**6. The Board recommends that long-term leadership is needed on operational environmental sustainability. The Board calls on the Council to clarify to relevant committees the Council's expectations on each for delivering against its commitments on environmental sustainability, including its carbon reduction target, so that progress is not slowed whilst the assessment of operational environmental sustainability and development of a new strategy is undertaken.**

**7. The Board recommends that the Council publishes a comprehensive update to the Regent House by July 2025 on progress towards the University's environmental sustainability commitments, covering both academic and operational activities. The Board also recommends that key committees such as the Estates Committee, Environmental Sustainability Strategy Committee, and Research Policy Committee are required to report to the Council on the progress they are making in supporting delivery towards the University's commitments.**

The Council considers recommendations 6 and 7 to be closely linked and therefore it has provided one response to both.

The Council agrees with the Board that long-term leadership on operational environmental sustainability is required. The Council's previous proposal to appoint a sixth Pro-Vice-Chancellor with responsibility for sustainability, for a maximum of six years, was not approved by members of the Regent House. The Council has subsequently agreed on an alternative route for strengthening the University's approach to operational environmental sustainability, including leadership and governance in this area.

Currently, a review of the University's approach to operational environmental sustainability is underway. The review includes a gap analysis of the University's approach, comparing it to institutions that are seen to be leading on environmental sustainability. The findings and recommendations will inform the development of a new operational environmental sustainability strategy in 2025, which will be led by an individual who has expertise in delivering stretching environmental sustainability objectives in complex organisations. This individual (yet to be appointed) will report to the Vice-Chancellor.

The Council has expressed an ambition for the new strategy to be sector-leading. It will be accompanied by a plan for delivery with appropriate key performance indicators against which progress can be measured; a clarified and strengthened governance structure to oversee progress; and a clear articulation of who, operationally, is responsible for delivering which aspects of the plan.

The Council intends to publish an update on this work by July 2025, by which time the review will be complete and the individual leading on development of the strategy should have been appointed.

Meanwhile, efforts to improve the University's operational environmental sustainability performance will continue. The Environmental Sustainability Strategy Committee will continue to provide strategic oversight. The Estates Committee is responsible for all matters relating to the environmental sustainability performance of the operational estate, and the Research Policy Committee (RPC) has a role to play in guiding the University in meeting the requirements of the Concordat for the Environmental Sustainability of Research and Innovation Practice.<sup>2</sup> The Council agrees with the Board that the University could do more to make use of its research strengths to support operational progress on its environmental sustainability commitments. The work the RPC is already undertaking to develop a research strategy (see above) is likely to highlight where there are opportunities for the University to apply learning and good practice, or be the subject of or participant in new research.

In light of the findings and recommendations of the ongoing review, the Council will consider how the roles and remits of these and other committees may need to evolve, as well as appropriate channels for committees to report to the Council on the progress they are making in supporting delivery towards the University's environmental commitments.

<sup>2</sup> The University signed the Concordat on 7 November 2024 (see: <https://wellcome.org/who-we-are/positions-and-statements/environmental-sustainability-concordat#signatories-e7be>).

**8. The Board recommends, as a matter of urgency, that the University should better understand where there has been increased expenditure in the last decade, and why and having done so, closely consider a more strategic approach to implementing the interim 5% cut than ‘salami slicing’.**

The Finance Division has reviewed the published Financial Management Information to provide summary information on changes in University expenditure, as illustrated in the charts below (see p. 248 and p. 249).<sup>3</sup> The 2023–24 FMI is a draft and has not yet been published.

In summary:

- School expenditure has grown for both Staff and Other Operating Expenditure, with compound annual growth rates of 4.7% (Staff) and 5.3% (OOE) over the last 10 years.
  - The School of Clinical Medicine has made a major contribution to the School group, with compound annual growth rates of 5.7% (Staff) and 6.2% (OOE). The Clinical School accounted for 35% of total (Staff and OOE) School expenditure in 2023–24, an increase of 3% since 2013–14. This reflects, *inter alia*, the transfer into the University of several Medical Research Council Units and a step change in the size of the clinical student cohort during this period.
- Expenditure outside the Schools has grown at 7.7% (Staff) and 11.5% (OOE).
  - Estates has made a substantial contribution to the Non-School group, with annual growth rates of 8.7% (Staff) and 15% (OOE).
  - UIS has also made a significant contribution to the Non-School group, with annual growth rates of 8.0% (Staff) and 20% (OOE).
  - If these two cost centres are stripped out of the Non-School group, the adjusted annual growth rates are 7.5% (Staff) and 5.4% (OOE).

As a measure of the growth in University activity during the (eight-year) period from 2014–15 to 2022–23, revenues and costs as indicated in the published FMI were:

- Revenue growth: compound annual growth rate of 4.8%, after adjusting for: donation and endowment income; special transfers from Cambridge University Press and Assessment; and Research and Development Expenditure Credit (RDEC).<sup>4</sup>
- Staff costs,<sup>5</sup> Other Operating Expenditure<sup>6</sup> and depreciation: compound annual growth rate of 5.7%, or 2.2% after adjusting for inflation as measured by the Consumer Price Index.

The Board of Scrutiny recognises that the required reductions in expenditure in 2024–25 and 2025–26 are an interim measure. A more strategic approach to achieving material reductions in expenditure, focused on specific areas of University activity with the greatest potential for improvement, is necessarily a longer-term endeavour.

The Council remains satisfied that it is appropriate – as an interim measure – for all parts of the University to contribute as proposed in the next two financial years. Heads of School and Non-School institutions were consulted prior to publication of the 2024–25 Budget and Allocations Report and agreed that reductions in overall operating expenditure of 5% over two years could be achieved without reducing the academic potential of the University.

<sup>3</sup> In the second chart, ‘Estates’ includes the Estates Division within the UAS, estates-related centrally administered funds, and North West Cambridge. ‘Finance’ includes the Finance Division, the Chief Financial Officer’s office, and buildings-related finance expenditure (CUFS department AP). ‘UAS’ is the remainder of the UAS excluding Estates and Finance Divisions. ‘Central admin’ relates principally to centrally administered funds (CUFS department AX) and other costs incurred centrally (CUFS department AA).

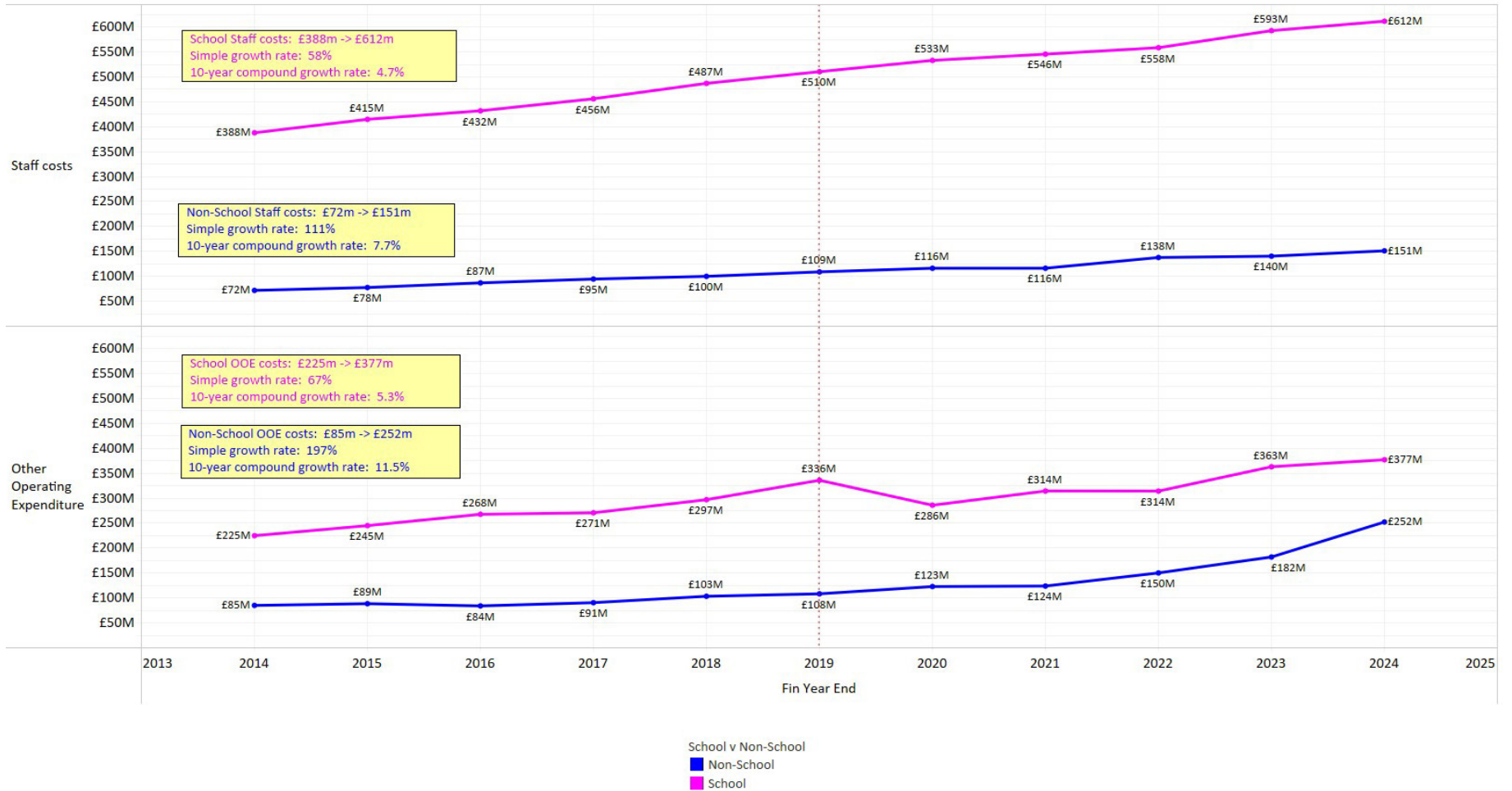
<sup>4</sup> Received until a change in legislation following 2014–15.

<sup>5</sup> Excluding USS non-cash provision.

<sup>6</sup> Including tuition fee share to the Colleges.

## Expenditure by type: Staff costs and Other Operating Expenditure (OOE) (draft 2023–24 figures)

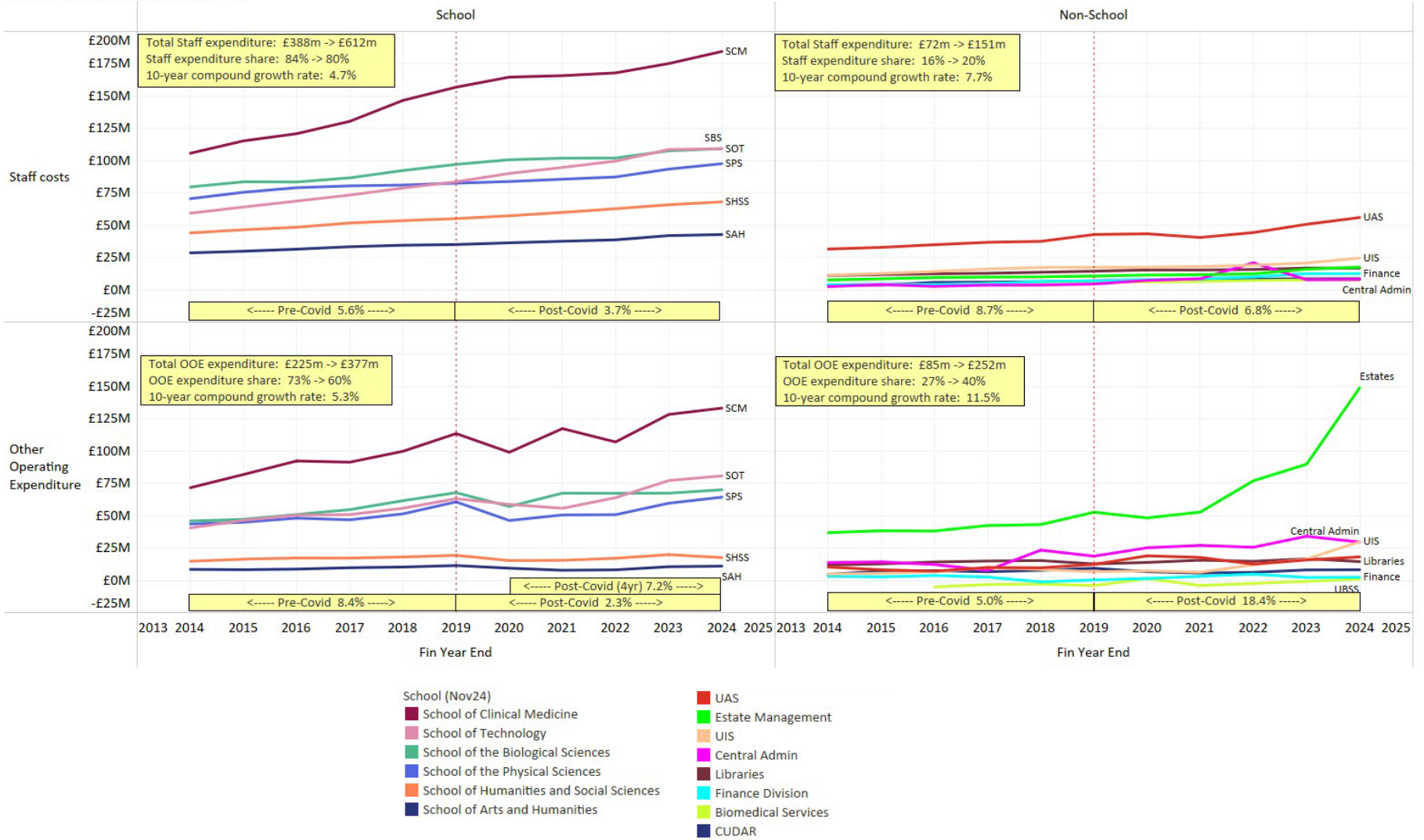
Pre-Covid 2014–19 : Post-Covid 2019–24





Expenditure by type: Staff costs and Other Operating Expenditure (OOE) by School/Non-School (draft 2023–24 figures)

Note: £12m spike in Staff costs in Central Admin (pink line) in 2021/22: Covid-related staff payment  
Pre-Covid 2014–19 : Post-Covid 2019–24



**9. The Board recommends that structures and reporting lines in financial and administrative leadership be reviewed, with consideration particularly given to the costs and benefits of establishing a post of Chief Operating Officer.**

The Council agrees with the Board that the University's operations are too siloed, there is often duplication and a lack of trust, and there needs to be greater co-ordination across the disparate parts of the University.

The Council has already taken steps to address these concerns, including:

- changing the portfolio of one of the Pro-Vice-Chancellors so that it covers the University's resources and operations. This is the first time a Pro-Vice-Chancellor's portfolio has had oversight of the entirety of the University's operations, encompassing all professional services, including those in UAS and UIS as well as administrative functions based in the Schools and in Non-School institutions;
- recruiting the University's first Chief Information Officer (who will also be the Director of Information Services and therefore the Head of UIS), part of whose brief will be to 'defragment' IT infrastructure and create a 'one IT' culture across the University;
- plans to place the Finance Division under the direction of the Chief Financial Officer (CFO), as part of the consolidation of the offices of CFO and Director of Finance, following the approval of Grace 1 of 15 January 2025;<sup>7</sup>
- recognising the need for greater co-ordination, the Planning and Resources Committee will be considering a proposal from the Change and Programme Management Board to put in place a fixed-term position of Director of the Transformation Programmes. The Director will be expected to provide leadership across all the transformation programmes, in particular to ensure that the Programmes are deliverable and delivered within reasonable timeframes and budgets, and to draw together currently largely disparate operational functions;
- through the work of the transformation programme Reimagining Professional Services, which as the Board acknowledges aims to create one professional services community across the University, directly addressing the issues of siloing and duplication across professional services as a whole, enhanced by the more function-specific activity of the other transformation programmes (covering Finance, HR, Research Services and Estates).

The Council is fully behind the need to modernise the University's operations. The Council considers that the above steps will, if successfully delivered, address the issues raised by the Board.

**10. The Board recommends that all proposals put to the Regent House (or other bodies) should be fully costed, with clarity as to where resources will come from, together with the value of benefits (and the implications of not accepting the proposal), the long-term aim being to embed a culture of financial control across the University.**

The Council believes that, where the Regent House – or indeed, any University body – is being asked to approve a proposal, there should be sufficient information available to understand the impact of approving that proposal, including financial and resourcing implications, and the consequences of not doing so. It agrees with the Board's implicit point that the Council should always consider whether it has provided enough information about the benefits, risks and costs when presenting a proposal for approval. However, the Council does not share the Board's view that all proposals should be fully costed. It considers that such evaluations should be proportionate, as a more prudent way of making use of the University's finite resources. Taking one of the examples cited by the Board, the Working Group had already (as the Board notes) provided its analysis of the costs of abolition of the Employer Justified Retirement Age alongside those of its recommendations.<sup>8</sup> The Council received assurances that the University would be able to manage the financial implications of the abolition of the EJRA and therefore was willing to authorise submission of the amendment in the ballot.

**RESPONSES TO OTHER POINTS RAISED IN THE BOARD'S REPORT AND AT THE DISCUSSION**

The Council refers Mr Haynes and Professor Evans to the Council's Notice responding to the Discussion remarks on the Topic of concern, the future of the EJRA (*Reporter*, 6759, 2024–25, p. 113), and Professor Evans to paragraph 35 of the Council's Standing Orders,<sup>9</sup> which sets out what the Council agreed in July 2024 concerning the confidentiality of business. The Council notes that since the Discussion, Dr Astle has received the Vice-Chancellor's response to his representation made under Statute A IX 1(a) concerning unestablished academic posts.

<sup>7</sup> See *Reporter*, 2024–25: 6759, p. 117; 6766, p. 227.

<sup>8</sup> See paragraph 79 of the Board's Report. In the Notice about the options on the EJRA ballot paper, the Council referred to consultation with the General Board and the Finance Committee because they are the committees from which the Council is expected to seek advice under Special Ordinance A (ii) 7(b).

<sup>9</sup> See: <https://www.governance.cam.ac.uk/committees/council/council-handbook/Pages/council-standing-orders.aspx>.



**CLASS-LISTS, ETC.****Approved for degrees**

The relevant Degree Committees have approved the following persons for the award of degrees. In the case of degrees where theses are required to be deposited in the University Library, the title of the thesis is shown after the name of the person by whom it was submitted. These lists do not include candidates who opted to withhold their names from publication.

**Doctor of Philosophy**

(under the regulations for the degrees of Ph.D., M.Sc., M.Litt. and M.Phil. (by thesis))

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## OBITUARIES

### Obituary Notices

Professor JOHN GUSTAV DAUGMAN, OBE, FREng, FBCS, FIMA, Emeritus Professor of Computer Vision and Pattern Recognition, British Computer Society Medallist and Information Technology Awardwinner, died on 11 June 2024, aged 70 years.

The Reverend DONALD CUPITT, M.A., Life Fellow and former Dean of Emmanuel College, member of Trinity Hall, formerly University Lecturer in the Faculty of Divinity, sometime Proctor (Senior), died on 18 January 2025, aged 90 years.

The Right Honourable Sir MURRAY STUART-SMITH, KCMG, M.A., LL.M., Honorary Fellow of Corpus Christi College, sometime a Lord Justice of Appeal, formerly President of the Court of Appeal of Gibraltar and a Justice of the Court of Appeal of Bermuda, died on 21 January 2025, aged 97 years.

Professor ANDREW NOEL SCHOFIELD, M.A., Ph.D., FRS, FREng, Emeritus Fellow of Churchill College, member of Christ's College, Emeritus Professor of Engineering (1966), Sir Frank Whittle Medallist, died on 27 January 2025, aged 94 years.

## ACTA

### Approval of Grace submitted to the Regent House on 22 January 2025

The Grace submitted to the Regent House on 22 January 2025 (*Reporter*, 6767, 2024–25, p. 232) was approved at 4 p.m. on Friday, 31 January 2025.

**Result of ballot on Grace 1 of 6 November 2024 (post-MAB exam review) and an amendment**

3 February 2025

The Registry gives notice that, as a result of the ballot held between 21 and 31 January 2025, Grace 1 of 6 November 2024<sup>1</sup> was **approved**. The approval of the Grace adds three new measures for mitigating the impact of disruption during the examination period and also makes changes to clarify the operation of other mitigations. The Council had agreed to include an amendment proposing the removal of one of the mitigating measures on the ballot paper (*Reporter*, 6761, 2024–25, p. 140). The results of the voting, conducted under the Single Transferable Vote regulations (*Statutes and Ordinances*, 2024, p. 121), are shown below.

Number of valid votes: 1,388 (no invalid votes) (quota: 694)

		First count	Result
(A)	In favour of the Grace (all three new mitigating measures, including the new provision allowing Examiners to include students declared to have deserved honours on the class-list, to be classed later)	715	Approved
(B)	In favour of the Grace as amended (two of the three mitigating measures, but not the DDH mitigation)	567	
(C)	Against the Grace whether in its original or amended form (the General Board continues to use its existing powers under Statute A V 1 but without the clarifications proposed)	106	
Total		1,388	

Four fly-sheets signed by members of the Regent House, and one fly-sheet signed jointly by members of the Regent House and sabbatical officers of the University of Cambridge Students’ Union, JCR and MCR Presidents and registered students were received in relation to this ballot. In accordance with the Council’s Notice on Discussions and Fly-sheets (*Statutes and Ordinances*, 2024, p. 116), the fly-sheets are reprinted below (from p. 257).

<sup>1</sup> *Reporter*, 6758, 2024–25, p. 106.

**Congregation of the Regent House on Friday, 31 January 2025**

A Congregation was held at 2 p.m. in the Senate-House. The Grace submitted to the Regent House (*Reporter*, 6768, 2024–25, p. 237) and the Supplicat for degrees were approved.

The following degrees were conferred in absence:

*This content and page 255 have been removed as they contain personal information.*

*This content has been removed as it contains personal information.*

E. M. C. RAMPTON, *Registrar*

**END OF THE OFFICIAL PART OF THE 'REPORTER'**

**FLY-SHEETS REPRINTED****Fly-sheets relating to the ballot on Grace 1 of 6 November 2024 (post-MAB exam review) and an amendment**

In accordance with the Council's Notice on Discussions and Fly-sheets (*Statutes and Ordinances*, 2024, p. 116), the five fly-sheets received for the ballot on Grace 1 of 6 November 2024 (post-MAB exam review) are reprinted below. Fly-sheets are reprinted in the order in which they appeared in the ballot booklet, which was random. For the result of the ballot see p. 254.

**Fly-sheet in favour of Grace 1 of 6 November 2024**

We believe that the request for amendment of Grace 1 of 6 November<sup>1</sup> to delete new Regulation 7 from the proposed Ordinance for the Approval of Class-Lists will be detrimental for the following reasons:

- Cambridge's current regulatory system placed students at a unique disadvantage during the 2023 Marking and Assessment Boycott. Students were left in limbo – unable to continue their studies, proceed with visa applications, and missing job opportunities. In contrast, other universities implemented mitigation measures that allowed their students to progress, putting Cambridge students at a distinct disadvantage to their peers. Cambridge risks significant reputational damage as other Russell Group universities, including Oxford, have now implemented mitigation measures to protect their students.
- The maintenance of academic standards remains paramount, and we acknowledge that this measure will not benefit all students equally. Some will lack sufficient marks to take advantage of the mitigation or require a classification to progress. The proposed awarding of 'declared to have deserved honours' (DDH) is not intended to eliminate inequalities between groups of students but rather to mitigate the overall impact of disruption during the exam period on the student body.
- Failure to adopt this measure could place the University in breach of its conditions of registration with the Office for Students (OfS). The principle that University processes should be solely determined by the Regent House and remain immune to external regulation is arguable; as a publicly funded institution, the University is accountable not only to itself but also to external regulators.
- Opposing the proposed Regulation 7 solely because a similar measure was rejected by the Regent House in the ballot on Grace 2 of 15 March 2023 overlooks the significant work of the Task and Finish Group on this matter. Unlike the previous provision, current proposals explicitly uphold academic standards while prioritising the protection of student interests, while no longer relying solely on the General Board's general responsibility under Statute A V 1 for setting and maintaining the University's academic and educational policy.

We therefore urge you to **vote in favour of the Grace in its original form.**

Signed by the following members of the Regent House:

G. A. BAGLEY	H. HEDGELAND	C. A. SHORT
J. C. BLAKESLEY	L. M. JOY	J. SPENCE
J. M. R. BUNBURY	J. H. KEELER	J. A. TASIOLAS
J. CLARE	S. H. MANDELBROTE	ANDREW C. THOMPSON
K. DEVEY	T. P. MONIE	P. J. VAN HOUTEN
J. T. DIX	R. MOSEY	B. VIRA
P. DOMINIAK	G. T. PARKS	A. WATHEY
M. C. ELLIOTT	N. PEAKE	C. WOODFORD
S. E. FLOOD	R. V. PENTY	J. M. WYBURD
M. R. W. GLOVER	R. A. W. REX	
H. J. HANCOCK	M. J. SEWELL	

Signed by the following sabbatical officers of the University of Cambridge Students' Union and JCR and MCR Presidents:

*[The names of these eight signatories were included in the ballot booklet but are not reproduced for general publication.]*

Signed by the following registered students:

*[The names of these eighteen signatories were included in the ballot booklet but are not reproduced for general publication.]*

<sup>1</sup> *Reporter*, 6761, 2024–25, p. 140.



## Fly-sheet supporting a vote to AMEND Grace 1 of 6 November 2024

### The need for Regent House oversight of examination procedures

The exercise of the University's power to award degrees is arguably our most important responsibility. Any possibility, or the appearance of any possibility, that degrees might be conferred before candidates have been properly assessed would represent a threat to the University's academic integrity. Consequently, the Regent House has established detailed procedures by which a matriculated student may eventually qualify for admission to a degree, which it regulates by Ordinance. These Ordinances include regulations that govern the sitting, marking and classification of examinations and regulations that govern the meetings of Examiners at which class-lists are finally approved. In general, the regulations are written tightly, so that any departure from a procedure that might risk undermining the rigour of academic assessment requires the approval of the Regent House by Grace.

At Cambridge, the General Board has delegated responsibility for the academic and educational policy of the University, but that delegation is expressly made 'subject to the powers of the Regent House.'<sup>1</sup> No members of the General Board are elected by the Regent House. Consequently, the Board is accountable to the Regent House only through the Council.

The Regent House is the University's governing body.<sup>2</sup> It has a responsibility to defend the University's procedural standards from internal or external pressures. It is the sole body in the University with the independence and academic authority to do so.<sup>3</sup> It should be cautious of delegating to a central administrative committee general powers to make exceptions to fundamental procedures designed to assure the integrity of the degree-awarding process.

The undersigned believe that the Regent House would be neglecting its duty of academic oversight if it were to grant the General Board a power to allow students to graduate before their examinations have been classified. We encourage members of the Regent House to **vote for the status quo by supporting the amendment to the Grace**.

Signed by the following members of the Regent House:

W. J. ASTLE	G. R. EVANS	M. G. MORENO FIGUEROA
A. J. ATTAHERI	T. V. FORMAN	C. G. A. MOUHOT
M. N. BEG	P. J. GIRLING	S. E. W. MUELLER-WILLE
J. R. BELLIS	P. GOPAL	L. J. MULLEN
G. A. BIRD	R. HAYNES	S. M. OOSTHUIZEN
D. F. BUSCHER	S. B. HOLDEN	M. A. RUEHL
R. D. CAMINA	I. R. B. M. HUSSAIN	J. S. TENNEY
F. CHARMAILLE	D. R. H. JONES	D. H. WEISS
J. CLARK	M. H. KRAMER	M. B. WINGATE
E. R. CREMA	P. MENDES LOUREIRO	
J. M. DIXON	T. G. MICKLEM	

<sup>1</sup> Statute A V 1(a), *Statutes and Ordinances*, 2023, p. 7.

<sup>2</sup> Statute A III 1, *Statutes and Ordinances*, 2023, p. 5.

<sup>3</sup> The close supervision of the University's academic procedures by the Regent House is important because, like Oxford, Cambridge has no academic senate. The academic senates of the red-brick and plate-glass universities oversee their academic procedures and are typically granted constitutional protection from administrative interference.

## Fly-sheet supporting a vote to AMEND Grace 1 of 6 November 2024

### The need to uphold the University's standards against external pressure from the Office for Students

We commend the effort of the Task and Finish Group to clarify the University's examination regulations. The Group's recommendations improve on the present regulations in several ways, in particular by setting out clearly and comprehensively the procedures to be followed when Examiners fail to attend a meeting constituted for the approval of class-lists. However, we believe that it would be a mistake to grant the General Board the power to allow candidates for admission to degrees to graduate before sufficient marks are available to classify their examinations in the usual way. The introduction of such a practice would diminish the academic credibility of the University and the academic credibility of its degrees.

The Council appears to have come under pressure from the Office for Students (the OfS, the regulator of higher education in England) to introduce the proposed power, following the Acting Vice-Chancellor's decision to offer the regulator a review of the University's examination regulations, after the Regent House voted to uphold the University's usual standards during the 2023 Marking and Assessment Boycott of the UCU.<sup>1</sup> Although the OfS is obliged to act in the interest of students, in this case we believe it is attempting to defend them as consumers at the expense of standards.

The Council claims it may be necessary for the University to allow its students to graduate before all their exams have been marked in order to avoid breaching its conditions of registration with the OfS. However, it has not explained why that is so, even in response to questions put in the Discussion of the Report on the review of the University's examination regulations.<sup>2</sup>

The OfS is a struggling regulator,<sup>3</sup> which has been subjected to heavy parliamentary criticism. It has been reproached by the House of Lords Industry and Regulators Select Committee for failing to anticipate the present financial crisis in higher education.<sup>4</sup> The Committee's report *Must do better: the Office for Students and the looming crisis facing higher education* noted that

The OfS' regulatory framework has become increasingly prescriptive over time. It is too willing to direct higher education providers' operations and activities, showing little regard to the need to protect institutional autonomy.

The report also criticised the OfS's approach to quality and standards, following the decision of the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) to withdraw from the assessment of universities in England.<sup>5</sup> The Committee considered that the OfS had 'little regard to the expertise and impartiality' of the QAA, that it 'apparently views its own convenience and control as more important than preserving independent oversight of quality and standards' and that 'the OfS does not have the confidence of the sector in providing an impartial assessment of quality and standards'.

The undersigned believe it is necessary to establish clearly the principle that the academic and procedural standards of the University of Cambridge, as determined by the Regent House, are not susceptible to dilution by an external regulator. The University should hold its nerve. The OfS would discredit itself were it to challenge the University of Cambridge for refusing to dilute its standards. We encourage members of the Regent House to **vote in support of the amended form of the Grace**.

Signed by the following members of the Regent House:

W. J. ASTLE	R. J. DOWLING	P. MENDES LOUREIRO
A. J. ATTAHERI	G. R. EVANS	T. G. MICKLEM
M. N. BEG	T. V. FORMAN	C. G. A. MOUHOT
J. R. BELLIS	P. J. GIRLING	S. E. W. MUELLER-WILLE
G. A. BIRD	P. GOPAL	L. J. MULLEN
D. F. BUSCHER	R. HAYNES	S. M. OOSTHUIZEN
R. D. CAMINA	S. B. HOLDEN	M. A. RUEHL
F. CHARMAILLE	J. R. HOWLETT	J. S. TENNEY
J. CLARK	I. R. B. M. HUSSAIN	D. H. WEISS
E. R. CREMA	D. R. H. JONES	M. B. WINGATE
J. M. DIXON	M. H. KRAMER	

<sup>1</sup> *Reporter*, 6700, 2022–23, p. 667.

<sup>2</sup> *Reporter*, 6755, 2023–24, p. 46.

<sup>3</sup> *Can OfS really be transformed from sector's scourge to saviour?*, Times Higher Education, 6 August, 2024, available at: <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/depth/can-ofs-really-be-transformed-sectors-scourge-saviour>.

<sup>4</sup> *Must do better: the Office for Students and the looming crisis facing higher education*, report of the House of Lords Industry and Regulators Committee, 13 September 2023, available at: <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld5803/ldselect/ldindreg/246/246.pdf>.

<sup>5</sup> *OfS takes England's quality role after QAA delisted*, Times Higher Education, 30 March 2023, available at: <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/news/ofs-takes-englands-quality-role-after-qaa-delisted>.

### Fly-sheet supporting a vote to AMEND Grace 1 of 6 November 2024

The effects of industrial action on students should be mitigated, but not at the expense of the integrity of the University's examination standards

The proposal that students should be allowed to graduate before all their examinations have been marked is equivalent to a temporary measure proposed by the Council in 2023 to mitigate the effects of the UCU Marking and Assessment Boycott. The Regent House rejected that proposal when it voted to amend Grace 2 of 15 March 2023.<sup>1</sup> We encourage members of the Regent House to read the fly-sheets from the 2023 ballot, which contain many arguments relevant to the present proposal and which were reprinted in *Reporter* No. 6700.<sup>2</sup>

The University has established a reputation over many decades for exceptional academic standards in education, learning, and research. It has done so partly because it maintains the highest institutional standards and protects them through academic self-government. We accept that the University has a responsibility to respond to industrial action to minimise the disadvantage to its students. However, it must do so in a way that maintains its academic integrity. Procedures that are considered generally necessary to assure standards should not be diluted. We must avoid endorsing the notion that a degree is a commodity to be purchased, rather than a qualification conferred by the University in recognition of academic achievement. That risks reputational damage, which will be difficult to reverse.

In addition to concerns about standards there are concerns about fairness. The adoption of the Council's proposal will mean that certain students are particularly and unfairly affected when there is disruption to marking. Allowing students with sufficient marks to demonstrate the minimum level of attainment required for a degree but without sufficient marks for their exams to be classified to graduate ahead of their cohort has the potential to humiliate those left behind. These are likely to be the students who struggled during the academic year, perhaps due to circumstances beyond their control. In any event, the inclusion of candidates with sufficient marks for a degree but without sufficient marks for a classification in a list of candidates who are 'Declared to have deserved honours' is unlikely to do much to reduce delays to their progression into employment or further study, which in most cases will depend on the results of properly classified examinations.

It is regrettable that industrial action taken by University staff primarily affects students. Attempts to mitigate the consequences may be justified, but they must not compromise the University's academic integrity. Crossing this line will erode the trust placed in the University by its students, by its alumni, and by society generally. Even from a commercial perspective – which we do not endorse – the amendment of the Grace should be supported; by lowering our standards we will ultimately devalue our degrees.

**We encourage the Regent House to reaffirm the position it took in the ballot on Grace 2 of 15 March 2023, by supporting the amended form of this Grace.**

Signed by the following members of the Regent House:

W. J. ASTLE  
A. J. ATTAHERI  
M. N. BEG  
J. R. BELLIS  
G. A. BIRD  
D. F. BUSCHER  
R. D. CAMINA  
J. CLARK  
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S. M. OOSTHUIZEN  
M. A. RUEHL  
J. S. TENNEY  
D. H. WEISS  
M. B. WINGATE

<sup>1</sup> *Reporter*, 6700, 2022–23, p. 667.

<sup>2</sup> *Reporter*, 6700, 2022–23, p. 668.

## Fly-sheet supporting a vote to AMEND Grace 1 of 6 November 2024

### The Office for Students is legally prohibited from interfering in academic assessment

A fly-sheet circulated in support of a vote for the Grace in its original form states that:

Failure to adopt this measure could place the University in breach of its conditions of registration with the Office for Students (OfS). The principle that University processes should be solely determined by the Regent House and remain immune to external regulation is arguable; as a publicly funded institution, the University is accountable not only to itself but also to external regulators.

While it is true that the University must comply with the Higher Education and Research Act 2017 (HERA), which subjects it to regulation by the Office for Students, the Act itself enshrines protections for the institutional autonomy of higher education providers. Section 2 of the HERA explicitly restricts the Office for Students (OfS) from interfering in assessment procedures:<sup>1</sup>

In performing its functions, the OfS must have regard to the need to protect the institutional autonomy of English higher education providers.

The Act defines ‘the institutional autonomy of English higher education providers’ to include the following:<sup>2</sup>

the freedom of English higher education providers to determine the content of particular courses and the manner in which they are taught, supervised and assessed.

The assertion that a vote for the status quo risks a breach of the University’s conditions of registration with the OfS overlooks these statutory safeguards. Accordingly, we encourage members of the Regent House to **vote in support of the Grace in its amended form**.

Signed by the following members of the Regent House:

W. J. ASTLE  
A. J. ATTAHERI  
M. N. BEG  
G. A. BIRD  
D. F. BUSCHER  
F. CHARMAILLE  
J. CLARK  
E. R. CREMA  
J. M. DIXON  
R. J. DOWLING  
G. R. EVANS

T. V. FORMAN  
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S. M. OOSTHUIZEN  
M. A. RUEHL  
J. S. TENNEY  
D. H. WEISS  
M. B. WINGATE

<sup>1</sup> Higher Education and Research Act 2017, s 2(1), available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2017/29/part/1>.

<sup>2</sup> Higher Education and Research Act 2017, s 2(8), available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2017/29/part/1>.

## COLLEGE NOTICES

### Elections

#### St John's College

Elected to Fellowships under Title A with effect from 1 October 2025:

Lucy Sixsmith, B.A., M.Phil., Ph.D., *T*, M.A., *Bath Spa*  
 Dongxun Lyu, B.Sc., *Imperial*, M.Phil., Ph.D., *PEM*  
 Pratyush Ghosh, B.Sc., *St Xavier's College, Kolkata*,  
 M.Sc., *IIT Kanpur*  
 Holli Sargeant, LL.B., *Bond University*,  
 GDLP, *College of Law Australia*

### Vacancies

*Corpus Christi College*: Non-Stipendiary Early-Career Research Fellowship 2025 (any subject); tenure: up to three years from 1 October 2025; closing date: 30 April 2025 at 12 noon; further details: <https://www.corpus.cam.ac.uk/about/opportunities/academic-vacancies>

*Murray Edwards College*: Postdoctoral Bye Fellowships (up to ten available: five in Sciences and five in Arts and Humanities); tenure: from 1 October 2025 for one year in the first instance (with the possibility of annual renewal for up to three years); closing date: 11 April 2025 at 12 noon; further details: <https://www.murrayedwards.cam.ac.uk/about-us/work-us>

*Newnham College*: Margaret Anstee Research Fellowship; open to women candidates working in subjects related to economic and social development and/or international relations in the Global South; tenure: from 1 October 2025 to 31 August 2029; stipend: £38,249; closing date: 28 March 2025; further details: <https://newn.cam.ac.uk/vacancy/margaret-anstee-research-fellowship>

*St John's College*: Tutor for Undergraduate Admissions; salary: £65,814; closing date: 19 February 2025 at 9 a.m.; further details: <https://www.joh.cam.ac.uk/tutor-undergraduate-admissions-0>

### Events

#### *Hughes Hall*

#### Anniversary reflections on Covid 19: Five years since lockdown

In this panel discussion and Q&A, experts in prominent roles during the pandemic reflect on the experience from different perspectives. Speakers include Professor Sir John Aston, Dr Rachel Clarke, Professor Tamsin Ford, Professor Ajith Parlikad, Professor Deborah Prentice (Vice-Chancellor) and Professor Sander van der Linden. This event, chaired by Sir Laurie Bristow, will take place on Thursday, 20 February 2025 from 6 p.m. to 7.30 p.m. in the Pavilion Room, Hughes Hall. All welcome. For further details and to reserve a place, see: <https://www.hughes.cam.ac.uk/about/events/reflections-on-covid-19-five-years-since-lockdown>

## EXTERNAL NOTICES

### Oxford Notices

*Faculty of History and All Souls College*: Chichele Professorship of Medieval History; tenure: from 1 October 2025 or as soon as possible thereafter; closing date: 3 March 2025 at 12 noon; further details: <https://www.recruit.ox.ac.uk>, vacancy ID: 177665

*St Hilda's College*: Career Development Fellowship in German; tenure: three years from 1 September 2025; salary: £38,674–£41,997 (depending on experience), plus allowances; closing date: 25 February 2025 at 12 noon; further details: <https://www.st-hildas.ox.ac.uk/vacancies/career-development-fellowship-in-german>

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