

October 2016 Bulletin

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1. CamSIS Improvement Programme briefing

Improvement

The Academic Division has initiated a programme to improve the Collegiate University's processes relating to student administration and enhance the functionality of the system that supports these processes, CamSIS.

The programme, spearheaded by Emma Rampton, Academic Secretary, will run through to summer 2018. Before any improvements can be made to functionality within the CamSIS system, a series of system upgrades will take place that will support enhanced system features. Work is already underway; a platform software upgrade took place on 31 August and a system application upgrade will take place in February 2017.

In parallel, work to identify and prioritise improvements to some of the Collegiate University's end-to-end student administration processes will be led by Dr Kate Maxwell. The enhanced functionality will support these process improvements. The Steering Committee and programme team are working on a programme plan. This plan will be approved by the end of October, by Emma Rampton and the Programme Board.

A website with information about the programme plan and progress to date, the governance team overseeing the programme and key contacts will be available by the end of November.

Dr Kate Maxwell and Dr Steve Smith, Head of Enterprise and Mid-range systems at University Information Systems, chair the Steering Committee. The committee comprises:

Jenny Green, Head of Records & Exams, Student Registry;
Wendy Solomou, Student Statistics Officer;
Helen Reed, Head of Admissions & Data Services;
Sian Gardner, Tutorial Manager, Trinity College;
Vicky Argent, Tutorial Office Manager, Newnham College;
Silvana Dean, Teaching Administrative Officer, Faculty of Economics;
Lise Gough, Graduate Education Manager, Computer Laboratory;
Alison Webster, Registry Data Manager, ICE; and
Roberta Huldish, Education Officer, CUSU.

Contact: Kate Maxwell, Head of Student Operations
Queries: email kate.maxwell@admin.cam.ac.uk

2. Office for Student Conduct, Complaints and Appeals (OSCCA) New office

The University has established a new Office of Student Conduct, Complaints, and Appeals to consolidate the work of student complaints, examination appeals, conduct including harassment, and discipline. Sarah d'Ambrumenil, who joined us on 19th September from Cardiff University where she was Head of Student Cases, heads the office and can be contacted for procedural advice.

Contact: Sarah d'Ambrumenil, Head of OSCCA
Queries: Call (7)65440 or email sed52@admin.cam.ac.uk

3. Digital Strategy for Education New & 2 Pilot Projects

The University has published its Digital Strategy for Education, which outlines how technology can best support its educational goals over the next five years. The Strategy outlines five strategic goals, each of which is supported by a range of detailed actions to achieve success:

- a) to build and maintain a shared understanding of the needs and priorities of the collegiate University;
- b) to support students throughout the learning cycle;
- c) to ensure quality and equity of the student experience;
- d) to provide maximum effectiveness and efficiency of resource for students, staff, and collegiate University administration;
- e) to enable and propagate innovation.

The Strategy also outlines two key pilot projects, which will take place during the 2016-17 academic year: one on the use of Lecture Capture, and one on Computer-based Examinations practice. These projects aim to evaluate the benefits and challenges of these two technologies, in order to inform future steps.

More information: www.educationalpolicy.admin.cam.ac.uk/committees/digital-teaching-and-learning-sub-committee
Contact: Melissa Rielly
Queries: email melissa.rielly@admin.cam.ac.uk

4. Code of practice: reasonable adjustments for disabled students

Policy update

The Education Committee of the General Board approved an updated revised version of the Code of Practice on reasonable adjustments for disabled students. The main changes relate to strengthening the procedure for consideration of requests for alternative modes of assessment (appendix 1) and to extending arrangements to Graduate Students.

More information: www.educationalpolicy.admin.cam.ac.uk/supporting-students-learning-and-teaching

Contacts for alternative modes of assessment:

Board of Examinations, Catherine Fage, catherine.fage@admin.cam.ac.uk

Board of Graduate Studies, Kerri Gardiner, kerri.gardiner@admin.cam.ac.uk

General enquiries about reasonable adjustments:

John Harding, Head of the Disability Resource Centre john.harding@admin.cam.ac.uk

5. Course review processes & suspension of annual Quality Update

Change

In response to the new HEFCE revised operating model for quality assessment, Educational and Student Policy will be reviewing its course review processes, which includes the Learning and Teaching Reviews and the Annual Quality Updates. For 2016-17, there will be no change to the Learning and Teaching Review process or schedule; however, the decision has been taken to suspend the Annual Quality Update for 16-17.

Contact: Holly Tilbrook

Queries: email holly.tilbrook@admin.cam.ac.uk

6. Student Feedback: the Student Barometer

New

The General Board's Education Committee has agreed to pilot a new student feedback instrument, the Student Barometer, for first and second year undergraduates and master's students. The Student Barometer offers advantages over PTES, and might in due course replace it.

The Student Barometer (run by thirteen Russell Group institutions, including Oxford, as well as many of the University's international competitors) will provide valuable benchmarked data. The survey is wider ranging than NSS, PTES, and PRES: as well as questions about educational experiences, it includes questions related to decision-making and applications; arrival experience; living experience; and support services.

Targeted students will be invited to complete the survey in the middle of November. This will, unfortunately, coincide with the launch of the Master's Self Evaluation (MSE) and, although the two exercises serve distinctly different purposes, MSE response rates might this year be adversely affected. We will monitor the situation, and will ensure that communications with students about both the Barometer and MSE are clear. However, given the importance of the MSE, your help in encouraging your MPhil students to complete the MSE would be much appreciated.

As with last year, MPhil students will be invited to provide further feedback in the Lent term via PTES. We appreciate that taught MPhil students would be surveyed twice this year but hope that the different timing of the surveys and the potential insight into student experience the Student Barometer will provide, will counter the expected reduced response rates for PTES this year. Results from both PTES and the Student Barometer will be made available in due course.

Contact: Marianna Kaimaki

Queries: email marianna.kaimaki@admin.cam.ac.uk

7. University Examinations

7.1 Enrolments

Important dates

Tripes and Prelim enrolments

The examination enrolment and approval period is open. Students should be encouraged to make their enrolment options as soon as practicable, and Directors of Studies should be urged to approve them soon after. The enrolment and approval periods are as follows:

	Examination enrolment opens	Examination enrolment closes
Students	1 October	3 November
Directors of Studies	1 October	10 November

MPhil enrolments

Course administrators will be able to enter enrolment information for MPhil examinations from 30 October 2016, which must be completed by the following deadlines:

- 11 November 2016, for Lent term 2017 examinations
- 16 December 2016, for Easter term 2017 examinations

In Lent term, certain MPhil courses add further enrolment data into CamSIS after liaison with the Registry.

Contact: Craig Belcher

Queries: email craig.belcher@admin.cam.ac.uk

7.2 Examination timetables

Important dates

The examination timetable for the Michaelmas term is now available online and the examination timetables for the rest of the academic year will be published:

- Week commencing 7 November, for examinations in the Lent term
- February, for examinations in the 'Early' period (April and May)
- Week commencing 4 April, for examinations in the 'Main' period (May and June)

More information: www.cambridgestudents.cam.ac.uk/your-course/examinations/all-students-timetable

Contact: Craig Belcher

Queries: email craig.belcher@admin.cam.ac.uk

7.3 Faith provision for examinations

Important dates

University examinations occur throughout the year, and take place Monday to Saturday. The University recognises that the examination timetable might clash with religious observance that restrict work. Consequently, the University seeks to minimise these clashes, where possible, but cannot guarantee that such clashes will not occur. If such clashes occur, it might be possible to make alternative arrangements.

The University policy is that it will consider applications for a religious observance that usually occurs over a restricted period (e.g. Eid ul Fitr, Shavuot, Shivaratri, Vaisakhi). It will not consider applications where observance extends over a significant period of time (e.g. Ramadan), where it is normally expected that daily activities (including examinations) will continue as normal; nor will it consider applications for amendment to the examination timetable to enable a student to make a holy visit.

Students must submit a completed self-declaration form to the Student Registry, by deadlines given below, countersigned by their College. This form identifies potential days/dates, which might clash with University exams. The University will make every effort to address any clashes when the examination timetable is

drafted. However, constraints placed on the timetable might make this impossible and it may therefore be necessary to make alternative arrangements, which will be discussed with the College. The **deadlines for 2016-17** are as follows

University Examination Period	Deadline for receipt of form
Lent term 2017	Monday 17 October 2016
Easter term 2017	Monday 7 November 2016
Medic and Vet MB Examinations (September 2017)	Monday 12 June 2017

More information: www.cambridgestudents.cam.ac.uk/your-course/examinations/faith-provision-university-exams

Contact: Craig Belcher

Queries: email exam.arrangements@admin.cam.ac.uk

7.4 Board of Examinations

Useful information

The Secretary presented her annual report to the Board of Examinations on 28 September 2016. Below is a summary of the examination activity in 2015-16; the full report is available online (via Raven access).

- The University scheduled 2,334 examinations in 2015-16, compared to 2,256 (2014-15)
- 66,553 candidatures sat examinations over the year, compared to 66,244 in 2014-15
- Examinations occurred every month from September to July
- 1,866 (80%) examinations took place in May and June
- 52,011 candidatures (78%) sat examinations in May and June
- The early examination period ran from 18 April – 6 May
- The main examination period ran from 16 May – 10 June
- 5,183 candidatures sat papers on Tuesday 31 May, the busiest day
- 32% examinations were scheduled for less than or more than three hours
- 78 corrections/clarifications were required for Papers sat in Easter term
- 39 scripts were transcribed for 31 candidates
- The Secretary invoked Regulation 5 for a procedural irregularity
- 1,277 candidates (10.5%) took examinations in other locations in the Easter term
- 15% increase in examination adjustments for reasons of mental health/depression
- 36% increase in examination adjustments for reasons of anxiety
- Thirteen alternative modes of assessment approved
- Examinations were held in 35 different venues, 4 external to the University
- Seven examination venues cost £184,470.50, of which 47% (£86,305.30) were external
- Staff supporting operational delivery of examinations cost £316,936.40
- To date, operational costs equal £501,406.90, an increase of 83% on same period 2014-15

Full Secretary's Report: www.student-registry.admin.cam.ac.uk/about-us/board-examinations

Contact: Catherine Fage, Secretary of the Board of Examinations

Queries: email catherine.fage@admin.cam.ac.uk

8. Graduate Matters

8.1 Graduate admissions and funding

Updates

Graduate Admissions and Graduate Funding will see some significant changes in 2016-17, including:

- a) **Release of new online graduate application form** (5 September 2016), including a section on funding. Further phases of the Graduate Application project will be released throughout 2016-17.

More information: www.gap.admin.cam.ac.uk/

Contact: Liam Boote, Systems Analyst (Business Specialist)

Queries: email Liam.Boote@admin.cam.ac.uk

- b) **Launch of a new Cambridge Funding search** (24 August 2016) database that holds and promotes information that you have for funding new or existing Graduate students. If you are not using this tool, please contact Suzy.

More information: www.student-funding.cam.ac.uk/

Contact: Suzy Stoodley, Student Funding Administrator

Queries: email GraduateFunding@admin.cam.ac.uk

- c) **The first PostGraduate Open Day** on 2 November 2016

More information: www.graduate.study.cam.ac.uk/open-days-and-events

Contact: Holly Kavanagh, Graduate Marketing

Queries: Holly.Kavanagh@admin.cam.ac.uk

- d) **Graduate Funding Competition** Developing the “Graduate Funding Competition” as a brand, this useful for potential donors and the graduate fundraising campaign. Co-ordinates of lots of different sources of funding, but provides one simple route in for applicants.

More information: www.graduate.study.cam.ac.uk/finance/funding/graduate-funding-competition

Contact: Jessica Barrick, Deputy Head of Fees and Funding

Queries: email GraduateFunding@admin.cam.ac.uk

8.2 Web Project: School of Humanities & Social Sciences & GAO

Sharing good practice

The School of Humanities and Social Sciences worked closely with GAO to improve the graduate webpages across the School, and to promote the graduate applicant experience. The project appointed Freya Villis (Graduate Administrator, Faculty of Education) as the project officer, supported by a web designer (Ella Woolner).

The priorities of the project were to:

- improve navigation between Department webpages and GAO webpages (phase 1)
- remove duplicate and conflicting information from the department pages (phase 1)
- improve the layout and visual appeal of the department pages (phase 1)
- promote the Postgraduate Open Day on the department pages with short films, improved photography etc. (phase 2)

Phase 1 of the project had target completion date of 1 September 2016.

It was agreed at the outset that Department pages and GAO pages should complement each other rather than repeat each other, or worse still, contradict each other. Consequently, it was agreed that:

- GAO would cover generic application information, e.g. how to apply, costs and funding and basic factual course information (required by the CMA); and
- Departments would provide more detailed information of what it was like to take the course, and to market the course (for example, with student testimonials, video interviews with students and academics, information about staff and their expertise, how to find a supervisor). This approach has helped departments to rationalise their pages and improve their coherence and appeal.

Freya will continue to work closely with GAO to feedback common problems faced by Departments in the admissions process and liaise over ways of resolving them. For example, to try to reduce time spent passing enquiries between the Departments and GAO and improve turnaround times GAO has already improved the FAQ pages and the enquiries link through to Departments.

Anyone interested in hearing more about the project can contact **Freya Villis** at fv221@cam.ac.uk

8.3 Paid maternity and paternity leave for graduate students

New policy

The University has recently agreed a policy to provide periods of paid maternity and paternity leave for eligible graduate students. Eligible students should continue to receive their maintenance stipend for up to 26 weeks (maternity) or 2 weeks (paternity). To be eligible students must be funded by funds held within Schools, Faculties, and Departments (this does not include students funded by Research Councils or by Gates Cambridge, which have separate policies for maternity and paternity pay, or by the Cambridge Trust). Other eligibility conditions apply:

- a) There is no qualifying period for eligibility although a student would only be entitled to a period of paid maternity/paternity absence if that period of absence occurs during the period of their funding award (e.g. a student with funding for 3 years of study would not receive stipend for a maternity/paternity absence taken in their 4th year).
- b) A student who does not return to study for a period of at least 3 months following their absence would be required to repay the amount paid to them during the maternity/paternity absence in full.
- c) A student who returns to study for more than 3 months but does not complete their studies may be required to repay a proportion of the amount paid to them during the maternity/paternity absence – this would be decided on a case-by-case basis by the funder(s) concerned.

Students may be entitled to take, or share up to 52 weeks shared parental leave; however the maximum period of paid absence is 26 weeks. This means that in cases where both parents are students eligible for paid absence under the terms of this policy, stipend will be paid for 26 weeks regardless of whether the mother or the father takes the absence. In cases where only one parent is eligible for paid absence under the terms of this policy, there is no eligibility for shared parental leave.

Schools, Faculties and Departments are expected to cover any additional costs from their existing studentship funding or from reserves. If this is not possible, Schools may make a case to the Planning and Resource Allocation Office for a non-recurrent grant to cover the additional cost.

Where students are funded by more than one funding body, which comes under the remit of this policy, the additional cost would be split between the funders with each funder continuing to fund at its usual rate. Where more than one funding body funds students but only one of these comes under the remit of this policy, the stipend would continue to fund at its usual rate.

Contact: Kerri Gardiner, Head of Graduate Student Administration

Queries: email kerri.gardiner@admin.cam.ac.uk

8.4 Graduate student absence tracking

Change in procedure

Following recent concerns involving students undertaking fieldwork overseas, the University is strengthening its policy and procedures and has already determined that it requires a robust and comprehensive list of students based in particular countries at a given time, which can then be used to contact them in the event of natural disasters, acts of terrorism, etc. in those countries.

Consequently, the Student Registry has developed a process of tracking students who are away from Cambridge that requires Degree Committees to confirm that students have left and returned to Cambridge on the dates specified in their formal applications for students taking periods of working away and intermission from Cambridge.

Contact: Kerri Gardiner, Head of Graduate Student Administration

Queries: email kerri.gardiner@admin.cam.ac.uk

8.5 Viva voce examinations by teleconference

Change in procedure

Previously, the Secretary of the Board of Graduate Studies, approved requests for viva voce examinations for graduate students. From October 2016, Degree Committees will be able to decide whether to approve a request for a viva voce examination by teleconference. This applies to PhD, MPhil, MSc, MLitt and MRes degrees.

Guidance for viva voce examinations by teleconference: www.student-registry.admin.cam.ac.uk/examinations-further-guidance-staff/degree-committees-and-departments/viva-voce-examinations

Contact: Kerri Gardiner, Head of Graduate Student Administration

Queries: email recordsandexams@admin.cam.ac.uk

8.6 E-thesis project

Pilot

The University library and Student Registry are running a pilot of electronic thesis submission in 2016/17. Students from selected Departments (Applied Mathematics and Theoretical Physics, Architecture and History of Art, Biochemistry, Chemistry, CRUK Cambridge Institute, History, Material Science, Music, Pure Mathematics and Mathematical Statistics, Sociology, Veterinary Medicine) will be asked to submit an electronic thesis as well as their hardbound thesis.

The digital theses will be held in the University DSpace repository Apollo <https://www.repository.cam.ac.uk/>

Contact: Daniel Ford, Graduate Lead, Student Registry

Queries: email recordsandexams@admin.cam.ac.uk

8.7 New MPhil Regulation Framework

Reminder

The new MPhil Regulation Framework comes into effect on 1 October 2016. ESP has written to each Degree Committee to explain the impact that the changes will have for MPhil courses. The key change to note is that there will be an MPhil by dissertation and an MPhil by advanced study.

The Report announcing the new regulations was published in the Reporter and can be accessed here:

www.admin.cam.ac.uk/reporter/2014-15/weekly/6394/section6.shtml#heading2-39

Contact: Holly Tilbrook, Deputy Head of Educational and Student Policy

Queries: email Holly.Tilbrook@admin.cam.ac.uk

The Master's Self-Evaluation process will occur again in Michaelmas Term 2016 but will be targeted at MPhil students only. (Please note the separate item relating to the Student Barometer.)

All MPhil students who have been admitted in Michaelmas Term 2016 will be prompted to complete their Self-Evaluation report in CamSIS in the week commencing 14 November, with prompts being sent to assigned Supervisors and College Graduate Tutors as each student submits their self-evaluation.

In preparation for this process, we kindly request that Departments and Colleges ensure that all MPhil students admitted in MT 2016 be assigned a Principal Supervisor and College Graduate Tutor in CamSIS as soon as possible during Michaelmas Term and by the end of October at the latest.

Reminders, posters, and technical guidance will be forthcoming in the lead up to going 'live'.

Ongoing co-operation with the evaluation process is greatly appreciated and feedback will once again be welcome.

Contact: Katherine Springthorpe, Administrative Officer, Educational and Student Policy
Queries: email kas88@admin.cam.ac.uk.

9. Staff updates

New TEF and CCTL Administrator, Educational and Student Policy (ESP)

Dr Vikki Forsyth has joined the ESP team to assist with Enhancement initiatives. Vikki will be helping Dr Holly Tilbrook and Dr Meg Tait with the development of the Cambridge Centre for Teaching and Learning (CCTL): www.cctl.cam.ac.uk.

Vikki is also taking on the Departmental Liaison Officer role for the Faculties of Clinical Medicine, Education, and Veterinary Medicine. Vikki can be contacted at vikki.forsyth@admin.cam.ac.uk

Deputy Head, Scholarships, Student Registry

Jessica Barrick remains in the Student Registry but has moved from being Deputy Head of Examinations to Deputy Head, Fees and Funding. Jessica's email remains the same, Jessica.Barrick@admin.cam.ac.uk

Whilst we recruit to the vacant Deputy Head of Examinations post, please address any emails, previously sent to Jessica, on examinations to recordsandexams@admin.cam.ac.uk

Graduate Lead, Student Registry

Daniel Ford joined the Student Registry on 17th October 2016 as graduate lead. This appointment followed Sarah Pickard's move to Academic Registrar, Downing College.

Please address any emails previously sent to Sarah to recordsandexams@admin.cam.ac.uk

Interim Head of Fees and Funding: Jane Wilkinson jane.wilkinson@admin.cam.ac.uk covers Sally-Ann Gannon's maternity leave (until July 2017)

Interim Head of Graduate Admissions: Alex Drury Alex.Drury@admin.cam.ac.uk replaces Jane Wilkinson (until July 2017)