

## Applications for the Conditional Allowance of a Term

### Notes for Guidance for Staff and Students 2017-18

These guidance notes are intended to complement the relevant University Ordinances.

They relate to decisions taken by the Committee in 2017-18. They do not themselves constitute a set of regulations. Nor should they be taken to imply that, given a particular set of circumstances, the Committee will automatically reach a particular decision.

The relevant Ordinances can be found online

(<http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/univ/so/2016/chapter02-section11.html>)

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## 1 Introduction

### 1.1 The Applications Committee

The Standing Committee on Applications is a committee of the Council which meets monthly throughout the year to consider applications for examination allowances and related matters. There is also a large volume of student casework undertaken under delegated authority much of which involves the expert opinion of its Medical Advisers.

The Applications Committee has the following overarching aims:

- To endeavour to ensure parity of treatment between applicants to the Committee who share similar circumstances, whilst recognising that each case is individual.
- To be mindful of the interests of students **taking the same examination but** who are not applicants to the Committee.
- To ensure that, particularly in relation to disregarding terms and repeating a period of study, an applicant is **neither** advantaged **nor disadvantaged** in comparison with other students.

### 1.2 Eligibility

The Applications Committee considers applications for the conditional allowance of a term from colleges on behalf of undergraduates and also on behalf of students on the following postgraduate courses: EMBA; LL.M; M.A.St; MBA; MCL; M.Eng; M.Fin; M.Math; M.Mus; M.Sci; PGCE.

It **does not consider** applications for those graduate students for which the [Board of Graduate Studies](#) is responsible, or for students being examined for courses leading to the M.B, B.Chir or the Vet.M.B.

### 1.3 Purpose of the conditional allowance of a term

One of the purposes of the Application Committee is to consider the cases of students who, due to unpredictable circumstances outside of their control, were not actually present in Cambridge for the required number of days in a term. Allowing a term means that a student is allowed to count as a term in residence, a term when in fact, for good reason, they were not actually present in Cambridge for the required number of days. An allowance of a maximum of two terms may be granted to a student who has six or more terms to complete. An allowance of a maximum of one term may be granted to a student who has six or fewer terms to complete.

## 2 How to make an application

### 2.1 General information

The Committee only considers applications made through the college on the student's behalf, except in the most exceptional circumstances. Students can apply directly to the Committee where they are seeking a review of a decision by the Committee.

In all cases, the application will need to demonstrate that the applicant has kept by actual residence as much as practicable of Full Term in the term applied for. If the student commenced residence later than the commencement of Full Term in the term applied for, the reason must be stated in the application. Any application for the allowance of a second term should give the reason, even if this is the same as that originally given.

The application form must be complete, i.e. it must include all the required documentation, a tutorial signature and explicit confirmation as to whether or not it has the College's support, and if it does not, to confirm it has told the student so. The application should also include any additional information or evidence which the college wishes to submit. Medical evidence should be accompanied by a completed declaration form from the student giving permission for medical evidence to be disclosed to medical members of the Committee.

The student may, if they wish, seek to have their own statement or other supporting evidence included. It is in all parties' interests that any such statement is clear and concise. The Committee regards it as good practice that the student should be fully aware of all the documentation being submitted by the College.

Completed applications should be sent to the Secretary of the Applications Committee at [applications.committee@admin.cam.ac.uk](mailto:applications.committee@admin.cam.ac.uk). Please note that in fairness to all students and to allow members sufficient time to read the papers, the submission deadline for each meeting of the Committee is strictly observed. Details of meetings and submission deadlines can be found at <http://www.student-registry.admin.cam.ac.uk/about-us/applications-committee>.

## 2.2 Medical Evidence

If the reason for the application is for medical reasons, evidence must be included with the application. The following should be noted;

- Evidence must be submitted by the deadline of the Committee meeting at which the college would like the application to be considered. **Where a student's referral to a specialist medical advisor has been delayed for reasons outside the student's control, this should be made clear**
- The Committee expects to receive evidence from a medically qualified practitioner, for example a doctor's report, preferably from a doctor based in Cambridge. Where appropriate, it will additionally consider evidence from an accredited counsellor. If there is a disability element to the application, the Committee would normally expect to see reference to consultation with the DRC. In the case of short term debilitation, the Committee will consider evidence from a college nurse. **Statements by college nurses will generally suffice in instances of 'routine' illness and acute medical problems with measurable and visible symptoms**
- Evidence is required, as opposed to merely a declaration that the student was debilitated. Supporting letters from relatives or friends, irrespective of whether they are medically qualified, or anecdotal sources of information do not constitute medical evidence and are not acceptable to the Committee.
- The medical evidence should be a clear diagnosis which includes the nature and severity of the illness; it should state how the condition is likely to have affected the student's keeping of terms. The evidence should be precise and self-explanatory.
- The amount of evidence required will vary from case to case. For example, hospital admission will need a shorter explanation than will a less obvious or less serious condition where background information and details of the candidate's medical history may be required.

Strict confidentiality is observed regarding medical evidence. Medical evidence is disclosed only to the medical members of the Committee (although it is accepted that it will also be seen by the Secretary and Assistant Secretary to the Committee and by College staff collating the application). Other members of the Committee do not see this part of the application unless the student explicitly asks that they should do so. The student is required to submit a form giving permission for their medical evidence to be disclosed to the medical members of the Committee.

## **2.3 Evidence of other grave causes**

Mitigating circumstances which are not medical may be considered. A grave cause may have a variety of characteristics but will include being (i) unanticipated and (ii) entirely beyond the student's control. In cases relating to grave cause, the Committee would expect to receive evidence from an appropriate professional; the evidence should be independent and should corroborate the college's application. The Committee is not able to consider evidence from a relative, friend or anyone with a close personal connection to the student or family.

## **3 How the Applications Committee considers applications**

### **3.1 General overview**

Members of the Committee normally receive applications seven days before the scheduled meeting. Where necessary a second circulation of applications will be issued: but only in the most exceptional circumstances will the Committee feel able to consider tabled applications. Medical evidence is only sent to medical members of the Committee.

In considering the college's application the Committee takes into account the evidence submitted, points raised in the college's application form, any statement from the student. Where the medical evidence is considered by the medical members to be weak or unconvincing, the Committee may defer a decision until further appropriate evidence is obtained, or it may decline the application.

Applications for the conditional allowance of a second term are normally declined, unless a good part of the two terms has been kept or there are exceptional circumstances.

### **3.2 Matters dealt with by delegated authority**

Some matters may be dealt with by authority delegated to the Chair and / or Secretary. In very exceptional circumstances i.e. where a decision cannot reasonable wait until the next scheduled meeting of the Committee and where the case is not straightforward, the Committee may be prepared to consider an application by circulation. If, however, in such circumstances any member of the Committee wishes the application to be considered at a scheduled meeting, then the application will need to await that meeting.

#### 4. Approved applications

If the application is approved by the Committee, then the application form will be signed and returned to the Tutor. It should be retained until the student has taken a degree.

If the application is approved before the end of Full Term in the term in question, the approval is conditional only, and is not ratified unless the Tutor subsequently certifies below that their pupil resided continuously, from the last day of residence originally certified, to the end of Full Term.

#### 5. Review procedure

Details of the [Review Procedure](#) and form can be found online and requests for review should be submitted on the Review Request form within 14 days of the formal decision being issued. It is particularly important for this purpose that the College keep records of when it communicates the Committee's decisions to the students. In instances where the Committee has declined an application or offers an alternative to the allowance sought, it is essential that the decision is conveyed to the student as soon as possible.

The review will essentially be of a procedural nature i.e. the Reviewer will consider whether in reaching its decision(s) the Committee has observed the relevant Ordinances and these Notes of Guidance and whether or not it has come to a reasonable decision in that context. The Review Procedure is the final stage before the student may take their case to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator.

#### 6. Key contacts

Complex queries	<a href="mailto:Jenny.green@admin.cam.ac.uk">Jenny.green@admin.cam.ac.uk</a>
General / preliminary queries	<a href="mailto:applications.committee@admin.cam.ac.uk">applications.committee@admin.cam.ac.uk</a>
Making an application to the Committee	<a href="mailto:applications.committee@admin.cam.ac.uk">applications.committee@admin.cam.ac.uk</a>