

Applications for Illegal Combinations of papers

Notes for Guidance for Staff and Students 2023-24

These guidance notes are intended to complement the relevant University Ordinances and they relate to applications submitted to the Committee in 2023-24.

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 relating to Tripos can be found online in Chapter IV (Preliminary Examinations and Tripos Examinations) of Statutes and Ordinances.

(<http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/univ/so/>)

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1 Introduction

1.1 The Examination Access and Mitigation Committee

The Examination Access and Mitigation Committee (EAMC) is a committee of the General Board 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 EAMC 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 EAMC considers applications from colleges on behalf of undergraduates studying Tripos who wish to take an illegal combination of papers.

1.3 Purpose of the EAMC

The purpose of the EAMC is to consider the cases of students relating to applications for;

- (a) Examination access arrangements (including adjusted modes of assessment);
- (b) Coursework extensions of more than seven days;
- (c) Disregarding terms;
- (d) Examination allowances
- (e) Consideration of non-standard combinations of papers;

2 Illegal Combinations of papers and cases of incuria

2.1 Policy

The EAMC do not allow candidates to offer combinations of papers which are not permitted in the regulations. There are two exceptions;

1. Incuria

This is where a genuine error has been made by a Director of Studies or Tutor, when advising a student. It should not be assumed that a plea of *incuria* would necessarily be approved.

2. Disadvantage

Where denying the request would seriously disadvantage the student's preparation for assessment (for example, if changes to Tripos regulations occurred whilst the student was on intermission).

In each case, the EAMC would expect the Faculty Board concerned to strongly support the application.

In cases where an application is made on other grounds, for example where a student is an Affiliated student, or because of a student's preferences or prior experience, the EAMC are unlikely to approve the request.

The EAMC adhere to the general principles that;

- An opportunity which is available to one student should be available to all;
- Both the student and his / her advisers should have known which combinations of papers were permissible under the regulations;
- The integrity of the structure of the Tripos is undermined by allowing too many individual exceptions to the prescribed routes through it.

Faculty Boards and comparable authorities which wish to maximise student choice should frame their regulations accordingly.

2.2 Cases of incuria

Colleges are expected to ensure that their Tutors and Directors of Studies are aware of the regulations for examination, but where students have been entered for illegal examination combinations in error, a plea of incuria can be submitted to the EAMC.

3 How to make an application

A completed application should be made **as soon as possible** which includes;

- A copy of the completed application form
- An explanation of why the error occurred
- Any indication of the additional support that the College will provide to ensure that the student will be prepared appropriately for the examination (or a statement that no additional support is necessary)
- Confirmation that the student is aware of the consequences that may arise from any non-standard teaching provision and that they are aware of any additional support promised by the College
- *Any correspondence from the Faculty / Department that the
 - Proposed examination entries represent a valid educational programme;
 - An indication of any potential difficulties that the student may encounter in their preparation;
 - Confirmation of the Faculty Boards strong support for the case to be allowed

*If this information is not included in the application, the Secretary will contact the Faculty / Department for these assurances which may delay presentation of the case to the Committee, and subsequent delay of an outcome.

If the case does not have the relevant support, then the application is likely to be declined and the student will be required to intermit.

The Committee only considers applications made through the college on the student's behalf, except in the most exceptional circumstances. Any student seeking a review of a decision of the Committee should apply via the mechanism available [online](#).

4 How the EAMC considers applications

4.1 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. If a college has previously submitted a warning about a student during the examination this fact is now disclosed to Committee members. In considering the college's application the Committee takes into account the application and evidence submitted.

4.2 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 reasonably 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.

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. Requests for Review are encouraged to be submitted as soon as possible and not left until the day of the deadline. It is particularly important for this purpose that the College keep records of when it communicates the Committee's decisions to the student. In instances where the Committee has declined an application, 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	Jenny.green@admin.cam.ac.uk
General / preliminary queries	eamc@admin.cam.ac.uk
Making an application to the Committee	eamc@admin.cam.ac.uk