Planning and Resource Allocation Committee of Council

Changes in regulations

The Planning and Resource Allocation Committee of Council (PRAC) has made the following changes in regulations, to come into effect from 1 September 2012.

Regulations for Oxford bursaries and tuition fee reductions

Explanatory note

In Michaelmas term 2011, PRAC and Education Committee considered and approved a number of detailed policy decisions on the recommendation of the Fees Policy Group, relating to financial support for Home/EU undergraduates commencing their studies in the academic year 2012/13. These policies were approved on the understanding that they would form the basis of formal written regulations governing tuition charge waivers and the bursary scheme, to govern the operation of fee reductions and bursaries, to ensure that all students are treated consistently, and to provide a framework in the case of complaints and appeals. Such regulations have now been drawn up and approved by PRAC, in consultation with Education Committee.

Text of regulations

With effect from 1 September 2012

In Examination Regulations, 2011, p. 1107, after l 3, insert new §6 as follows, and renumber existing § 6 to § 7, existing § 7 to § 8, and existing § 8 to § 9.

‘§ 6 REGULATIONS FOR OXFORD BURSARIES AND TUITION FEE REDUCTIONS

1) The arrangements described in this section apply to members of the University, entitled, in accordance with the Special Appendix to §5, to be charged fees at the appropriate ‘home’ (and EU) rate, who are working in Oxford
i. For the Degree of BA or the Degree of MBiochem or the Degree of MChem or the Degree of MMathCompSci or the Degree of MEarth Sc or the Degree of MEng or the Degree of MMath or the Degree of MCompSci [From 1 October 2012: or the Degree of MCompPhil] or the Degree of MPhys or the Degree of MPhysPhil or the Degree of MMathPhil, or the degree of BTh (full time mode only);
ii. For the degree of BFA;
iii. For the First Examination for the Degree of BM;
iv. For the Preliminary Examination in Medicine;
v. For the Second Examination for the degree of BM;
vi. For the full time Certificate or Diploma in Theological and Pastoral Studies;
vii. For the Postgraduate Certificate in Education.

2) All students described in cl 1 above, who are entitled to receive support from a funding agency as described in cl 6 below, will be eligible to be assessed for an Oxford bursary, subject to cl 4. Bursary levels will be at the rates determined from time to time by Council’s Education Committee and Planning and Resource Allocation Committee. Bursary amounts are set out on the University website. Members of the University described in cl 1. (i), (ii) and (iii) who are in their first year
of study will be eligible to be assessed for an additional start-up bursary. Special regulations for members of the University described in cl 1. (iv), (v), (vi) and (vii) are set out in cll 12 to 15.

3) All students described in cl 1, who are entitled to receive support from a funding agency as described in cl 6 below, who commenced their programme of study on or after 1 September 2012, and who would otherwise be liable for the full University composition fee as described in § 5, will be eligible to be assessed for a reduction in their fee, subject to cl 4. The level of the fee reduction will be at the rates determined from time to time by Council’s Education Committee and Planning and Resource Allocation Committee. The levels of fee reductions are set out on the University website. Special regulations for members of the University described in cl 1 (iv), (v), (vi) and (vii) are set out in cll 12 to 15. Students will not be entitled to a cash equivalent of a fee reduction.

4) If a student who is eligible to be charged the university composition fee at the home rate is not entitled to means-tested maintenance support from his or her funding agency, he or she will not be eligible to be assessed for a bursary or tuition fee reduction in that academic year. Students who are entitled to be assessed by the Student Finance European Team, and who are entitled, in accordance with the Special Appendix to § 5, to be charged fees at the appropriate ‘home’ (and EU) rate, are eligible to be assessed for a bursary or tuition fee reduction, subject to the conditions referred to in paragraph 10.

5) Students who are repeating a year of their studies at Oxford will be eligible to be assessed for a bursary and/or tuition fee reduction subject to cl 4. Students repeating their first year or transferring to year one of a new course described in cl 1 will not be eligible for any start-up bursary, and will receive a fee reduction at the level received by eligible students after their first year.

6) Requirements for the assessment of student’s household income are as follows:

i. A member of the University as described in cl 1 can only be considered for a bursary or tuition fee reduction if he or she is first financially assessed by his or her funding agency and if consent has been given for the University to access this information. Financial assessments will only be accepted from Student Finance England, Student Finance Northern Ireland, Student Finance Wales, the Student Awards Agency for Scotland, the Student Finance Services European Team, the Student Loans Company (SLC) or the National Health Service (NHS). The University will only base a student’s bursary and/or tuition fee reduction upon income information provided to it via the SLC;

ii. Special regulations for financial assessments apply to members of the University who are working in Oxford for the Preliminary Examination in Medicine and Second Examination for the degree of BM. These are set out in cll 12 and 13;

iii. Home students are obliged to accept any maintenance grant they become eligible for as a result of financial assessment by their funding agency in order to be eligible to be assessed for a bursary and/or a tuition fee reduction. They are not required by the University to take out a maintenance loan or tuition fee loan from their funding agency to be eligible to be assessed for a bursary or for a tuition fee reduction respectively.
7) The annual deadlines for the assessment of bursaries and tuition fee reductions shall be as follows:

i. To be assessed for an Oxford bursary and/or tuition fee reduction students must comply with the application deadlines set by their funding agency. Students who fail to comply with requests to provide information to their agency will not be assessed by the University after the deadlines listed in cl 7 (ii) and (iii);

ii. To be assessed, or reassessed, for an Oxford bursary students must ensure that they have provided all information to their funding agency in time to ensure their assessment is complete and available to the University from the SLC by 30 May of the academic year in which they wish to be considered for a bursary;

iii. To be assessed, or reassessed, for a tuition fee reduction students must ensure that they have provided all information to their funding agency in time to ensure their assessment is complete and available to the University from the SLC by 20 December of the academic year in which they wish to be considered for a tuition fee reduction;

iv. Any student who wishes to be considered for a bursary and/or tuition fee reduction, or a change in their bursary and/or tuition fee reduction after the dates listed in cl 7 (ii) and (iii) must submit their case for a re-assessment to the Student Financial Support section (Examination Schools, Oxford OX1 4BG) by 30 May of that academic year. The request must detail when the student applied for funding, what difficulties he or she had in being assessed correctly, and what action he or she took to rectify this. It must also contain the final financial notification for that year, if available, and any evidence of the difficulties which he or she has experienced. If the final financial notification received by the student from the funding agency for that academic year is still not available to the University by 30 May of that academic year, the student will have until 20 December of the following academic year to submit the final financial notification for a re-assessment to be completed by the University.

8) The arrangements for adjustments to bursaries during an academic year are as follows:

i. Each of the regulations in this section will be subject to the dates and regulations listed in cl 7;

ii. Students who have received an overpayment of their bursary following a revised household income assessment will not be asked to repay any funds, unless the bursary was obtained due to incorrect information being knowingly submitted to the student’s funding agency by the student or his or her sponsor;

iii. If a student’s revised household income assessment results in an increased bursary entitlement, subsequent bursary payments will be adjusted upwards to reflect the student’s increased entitlement for the whole year. The increased bursary payments will be calculated as if the student had been eligible for that level from the start of the academic year;

iv. If a student fails to provide information requested by their funding agency, as a result of which the financial assessment is withdrawn, the University will suspend bursary payments until the student’s assessment has been completed by the funding agency, at which point their bursary entitlement will be re-assessed;
v. The amount paid per term will be one third of the total annual bursary to which they are eligible. Students will be expected to repay their bursary for any term where they have suspended or withdrawn before the Monday of week 2.

9) The arrangements for adjustments to fee liability and tuition fee reductions during an academic year are as follows:

i. Each of the regulations in this section will be subject to the dates and regulations listed in cl 7;

ii. Students whose revised household income assessment has increased will not be liable for an increased tuition fee, unless the initial tuition fee reduction was obtained due to incorrect information being knowingly submitted to the student’s funding agency by the student or his or her sponsor;

iii. If a student’s revised household income assessment has reduced, resulting in an entitlement to a larger tuition fee reduction, he or she will receive an additional tuition fee reduction. The level of the fee reduction will calculated as if the student had been eligible for that level from the start of the academic year.

10) Household income will be assessed in the first year of study only for students who are entitled to be financially assessed by the Student Finance European team, and who are entitled, in accordance with the Special Appendix to § 5, to be charged fees at the appropriate ‘home’ (and EU) rate. These students will not be automatically reassessed each year. Students who wish to have their household income reassessed must submit a request to the Student Financial Support section, Examination Schools, Oxford, OX1 4BG.

11) The arrangements for changes to bursary and tuition fee reduction entitlement between years are as follows:

i. Students entitled, in accordance with the Special Appendix to §5, to be charged fees at the appropriate ‘home’ rate, and who are entitled to be financially assessed by Student Finance England, Student Finance Northern Ireland, Student Finance Scotland, the Student Awards Agency for Scotland, the Student Loans Company or the National Health Service, are required by these funding agencies to apply for financial support each year if they wish to access means-tested support. The assessment of their household income by their funding agency may change from year to year, and consequently their entitlement to a bursary and/or tuition fee reduction is subject to change each year. Special regulations are set out in cll 12 and 13 for financial assessments for members of the University working for the Preliminary Examination in Medicine (Part II) and Bachelor of Medicine (Second Examination);

ii. Students will only be eligible to be assessed for a bursary and/or tuition fee reduction for the period in which they are entitled, in accordance with the Special Appendix to §5, to be charged fees at the appropriate ‘home’ (and EU) rate.

12) Special regulations apply for members of the University who are working in Oxford for the Preliminary Examination in Medicine (Part II) and Bachelor of Medicine (Second Examination) where these students were admitted on the accelerated four-year course. These are as follows:
i. The household income of students in years two to four of their course will be based on the financial assessment of their household income in year one of their course;

ii. Students will be eligible to be assessed for a tuition fee reduction in the first year of their course. The level of the fee reduction will correspond to the reduction available to students described in cl 1 (i), (ii) and (iii) after their first year of studies;

iii. Students will be eligible to be assessed for a bursary for all years of the course. They will not be eligible for any start-up bursary available to students in cl 1 (i), (ii) and (iii) in their first year of study.

13) Special regulations apply for members of the University who are working in Oxford for the Bachelor of Medicine (Second Examination) in years four to six of the six-year medicine course:

i. The household income of students in years five and six of the six-year medicine course will be based on the financial assessment of their household income in year four of their course;

ii. Students in year four of the course will be eligible to be assessed for a tuition fee reduction. The level of the fee reduction will correspond to the reduction available to those eligible students described in cl 1 (i), (ii) and (iii) after their first year of studies;

iii. Students will be eligible to be assessed for a bursary for all years of the course. They will not be eligible for any start-up bursary available to students in cl 1 (i), (ii) and (iii) in their first year of study.

14) Special regulations apply for members of the University who are working in Oxford for the Certificate or Diploma in Theological and Pastoral Studies.

i. Students will be eligible to be assessed for the tuition fee reductions advertised on the Faculty of Theology website, and determined from time to time by Council’s Education Committee and Planning and Resource Allocation Committee;

ii. Students will be eligible to be assessed for a bursary for all years of the course. They will not be eligible for any start-up bursary available to students in cl 1 (i), (ii) and (iii) in their first year of study.

15) Members of the University working in Oxford for the Postgraduate Certificate in Education will be eligible to be assessed for a tuition fee reduction determined from time to time by Council’s Education Committee and Planning and Resource Allocation Committee. The level of the fee reduction will correspond to the reduction available to those eligible students described in cl 1 (i), (ii) and (iii) after their first year of studies. They will only be eligible to be assessed for an Oxford bursary if they do not receive a Training and Development Agency (TDA) bursary. They will not be eligible for any start-up bursary available to students in cl 1 (i), (ii) and (iii) in their first year of study.

16) Students who have completed the part time Foundation Certificate in History or English Language and Literature at Oxford with the Department for Continuing Education and who progress directly to the second year of the BA in History or the
BA in English Language and Literature are eligible to be assessed for any start-up bursary and/or enhanced tuition fee reduction that is normally available to students described in cl 1 (i), (ii) and (iii) in their first year.

17) If a student believes that his or her bursary or fee reduction has not been processed according to these regulations and/or the bursary and fee reduction rates approved by Council’s Education Committee and Planning and Resource Allocation Committee, he or she should contact the Student Financial Support section, Examination Schools, Oxford, OX1 4BG. Any question of doubt or difficulty relating to the eligibility of individual students for tuition fee reductions and/or Oxford bursaries shall be determined by the Fees Panel, as described in § 5, cl 13 (d) and (e).