

Regulations on Financial Matters**With effect from 1 September 2012***Explanatory Note*

Following the delivery of the Browne Review in October 2010 and the outcome of the Comprehensive Spending Review later that month, the government announced its plans for the reform for higher education and student finance on 3 November 2010. In essence, from 2012/13, it is understood that the basic level of HEFCE support for teaching will be removed, with residual HEFCE funding focused on certain high cost or vulnerable subjects; and the government will instead provide student loans to cover the up-front cost of increased tuition fees. In December 2010, Parliament voted in favour of raising the cap on tuition fees to £9,000 for home/EU undergraduate entrants in 2012. Any university wishing to charge £6,000 or more (up to the £9,000 maximum) must have in place an Access Agreement approved by the Office of Fair Access (OFFA). To assist with the drafting of Access Agreements, guidance was published by OFFA on 8 March 2011¹. Universities must submit their proposed Access Agreements to OFFA by 19 April 2011; the final versions are due to be published on the OFFA website by 11 July 2011.

As a consequence of these decisions, the funding environment for higher education has shifted significantly, particularly for home/EU undergraduates from 2012/13, and the collegiate University has been deliberating its response over the last three months. This process has involved wide consultation across Oxford, including a Congregation Discussion, and careful consideration by a number of bodies, including Divisional Boards, Governing Bodies, the Conference of Colleges and the jointly constituted Joint Teaching and Student Funding Review Group. The results of these debates have fed into the University's formal decision-making structure, led by the Planning and Resource Allocation Committee (PRAC) and the Education Committee.

Council considered the recommendations of PRAC and the Education Committee at its meeting on 14 March 2011. Before turning to the specific issues before it, Council reasserted Oxford's fundamental belief in the public benefit of higher education and the need for public funding at a level which would allow the UK's universities to thrive in a globally competitive context. Notwithstanding the significant challenges arising from the changes in the funding of higher education, Council affirmed its adherence to the principles articulated in its Strategic Plan and restated in its submission to the Browne Review, namely to continue to recruit the very best students nationally and internationally through an equitable process based on achievement and potential; and to provide an exceptional education for both undergraduates and graduates, characterised by the close contact of students with distinguished scholars in supportive collegiate and departmental communities. Oxford will not compromise on its admissions standards: the guiding principle is, and will remain, that admissions decisions will be made by the academics who will teach the candidates they admit, and that their decisions will be based on academic factors with the aim of admitting the best candidates in each subject, not meeting pre-determined quotas. It is fundamental to Oxford's approach that all candidates who successfully apply to Oxford should know that they have been admitted on the basis of their academic merit and their potential to benefit from the highly intensive undergraduate courses which Oxford offers. Nor will Oxford compromise on the quality of its teaching: the collegiate University will continue to strive to optimise the benefits to students of studying within a dynamic research environment, the active participation of senior research-active academics being an integral feature of the Oxford undergraduate experience. To remain true to these principles, despite the cuts in funding, is to act in the interests of the individual, of the collegiate University and of the economy and society at large.

¹ See <http://www.offa.org.uk/publications/>

The primary challenge facing Oxford as a result of the recent funding decisions is to sustain the quality of its teaching following the removal of the HEFCE funding, whilst at the same time continuing to encourage able students from disadvantaged backgrounds to apply to Oxford, and providing those admitted with the financial support to enable them to apply themselves to academic work without having to take employment during term time. To seek to meet this challenge, Council:

- (i) approved a fee of £9,000 for home/EU undergraduates commencing study in 2012/13, as recommended by PRAC, together with the associated amendment to the regulations (see further below);
- (ii) approved in principle the draft Access Agreement for 2012/13, delegating authority to a small group of Council members to finalise its terms before submission to OFFA by 19 April 2011. Approval of the draft Access Agreement included, in addition to the fee level, the following elements:
 - (a) on PRAC's recommendation, a bursary model which preserves the highest level of maintenance support from the University currently available to students in the lowest category of residual household income (RHI)² (£3,300 for students with an RHI of less than £16,000 p.a.); after this point, bursary support would be stepped down in £500 bands to an RHI of £42,600. It is proposed to enhance slightly the University's current overall spend through the extension of the scheme to medical students in their NHS-funded years and to other EEA students. In addition, all students from households with a RHI below £42,600 would receive a start-up bursary of £1,000 or £500;
 - (b) on PRAC's recommendation, a programme of partial fee waivers as follows:
 - students from households with an RHI below £16,000 would receive a fee waiver of £5,500 in the first year of study, falling to £3,000 in subsequent years. Together with the bursary, this means that the first year of study will be no more expensive for these students than it is now;
 - students from households with an RHI between £16,001 and £20,000 would receive a waiver of £2,000 p.a.; and
 - students from households with RHI between £20,001 and £25,000 would receive a waiver of £1,000 p.a..It is proposed that the programme of waivers for first-year students would be supported by the University's National Scholarship Programme allocation, directed towards those from households with an RHI below £16,000;
 - (c) on PRAC's recommendation (subject to approval through the University's budgeting process for 2012/13), additional spend of up to £1.5m, to support access and outreach work aimed at meeting the targets set in the draft Access Agreement, and to support student retention and support measures. Details of this spending have yet to be finalised, and, as stated, would have to go through the usual budgetary approvals process, but are likely to include up to £750,000 on access and outreach work, and up to £750,000 on additional student services, including induction, financial advice and guidance, counselling, provision for students with disability and careers advice; and
 - (d) on the Education Committee's recommendation, the four targets set out in the draft Access Agreement. These relate to increasing the number of UK undergraduate students at Oxford from schools and colleges which historically have had limited progression to Oxford; increasing the number of UK undergraduate students at Oxford from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds; increasing the number of UK undergraduate students at Oxford

² Residual Household Income is defined as household's gross income less pension schemes and superannuation payments eligible for tax relief; less an allowance of £1,130 for each financially dependent child; less £1,130 for parents who are also students.

from neighbourhoods with low participation in higher education; and meeting the HEFCE benchmark on disabled students at Oxford.

Effective communication will be critical to the successful implementation of these decisions: potential applicants will need to be informed promptly and, above all, clearly about the support that will be available to them should they be admitted. In addition, Oxford needs to consider in more depth exactly how to take these decisions forward, for example the mechanisms for co-ordinating the access and outreach work of the colleges and the University. Furthermore, as the Access Agreement applies only for one year, its terms will need to be revisited through a process of ongoing review. To assist in examining the next stages in the process—both in the short and medium term—a Congregation Discussion for Tuesday, 10 May 2011 (week 2, Trinity term) is planned. Further details will be issued in the *Gazette* of 24 March 2011.

More information about the implications of the new funding arrangements for Oxford, and for its future students, can be found at <http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/vc/news/studentfunding> and, for the University community, at www.admin.ox.ac.uk/council/Agenda140311.pdf.

As a consequence of these decisions, the following change to the University's regulations has been approved by Council. It indicates that the composition fee for 'home' (including EU) students will be £9,000 for the 2012/13 academic year. Further changes to the regulations will be made nearer the time to confirm full details of the fees with effect from 1 September 2012. This change in regulations will come into effect on 1 April 2011 and will be in force from 1 September 2012.

Text of Regulations

In *Examination Regulations*, 2010, p. 1102, l.6, as amended by *Gazette* Supplement 2 March 2011, p.471, 2., delete '£3,375' and substitute '£9,000'.

Notification of change in Examination Regulations to the Gazette July 2011

Council

Approved at the meeting of 27th June 2011

Regulations for the Conduct of University Examinations - Proctors' Disciplinary Regulations

Brief Note of Change

Amendments to Part 19, Proctors' Disciplinary Regulations for Candidates in Examination.

With effect from 1 October 2011

In Examination Regulations 2010, Part 19 of Regulations for the Conduct of University Examinations

- (1) Page 52, line 1, insert after 'essay': 'Transfer of Status materials, Confirmation of Status materials,' continuing with 'other coursework'.
- (2) Ibid., line 2, after 'but', insert 'is a requirement for,' continuing with 'counts towards'
- (3) Ibid., line 5, after 'Secretary of Faculties', insert 'or his or her deputy,' continuing with 'or approved by'
- (4) Ibid., line 19, insert new paragraph 6. as follows:

'Unless specifically permitted by the Special Subject Regulations for the examination concerned, no candidate shall submit to the Examiners any work which he or she has previously submitted partially or in full for examination at this University or elsewhere. Where earlier work by the candidate is citable, he or she shall reference it clearly.

- (5) Ibid., after new paragraph 6, renumber subsequent paragraphs from old paragraph 6 (7) up to old paragraph 17(18) on page 53
- (6) Ibid., line 24, after 'revision notes)', insert 'item or device (including a mobile telephone or any other device capable of receiving or communicating information),'

(7) Ibid., line 26, delete 'it' and replace with 'such material, item or device.'

(8) Page 53, line 9, replace 'must' with 'shall'

(9) Ibid., line 19, delete existing paragraph 18 'No candidate.....examination room.'

Note: remaining paragraphs 19 and 20 numbers and content of Part 19 are unchanged

Explanatory Notes

These changes update the regulations following consultation with Council's Education Committee.