

## Report of the Fees Sub-Committee

Meetings were held on 17 July 2020 and 9 October 2020.

### Notes of guidance previously circulated to Bursars (also on the Bursars' website)

Guidance note	Minute reference	Date of email
Collection of... fees documents	9/18, min 7	1 Oct 2020

### Other matters to which attention is drawn

1. Changes to the collection of Bachelor of Theology (BTh) fees  
17 July 2020, minute 2a (and paper)

After an extensive period of discussion, Colleges will no longer need to collect the fees for BTh students (these will instead be transferred directly between the Cambridge Theological Federation (CTF) and the University). In exceptionally rare cases, Colleges will still collect fees if they are being paid by the Student Loans Company. Colleges will otherwise only collect the College matriculation fee for CTF students, and a form of words to accompany invoices has been agreed with the CTF to cover off the services being provided for the fee.

2. Reform of the Cambridge Bursary Scheme (CBS2)  
17 July 2020, minute 2b  
9 October, minute 5

In July 2020, it was confirmed that the launch of CBS2 would be deferred until 2021-22 at the earliest, given that not all Colleges had approved the proposal and the financial impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the immediate affordability of the scheme. It had been confirmed that the Strategic Working Group on Admissions and Participation (SWAP) would take the lead on pushing forward plans for its implementation in due course. As a consequence, it was confirmed that PTUBS would operate for a further year in 2020-21, with the generous support of Trinity College.

As an interim measure, SWAP had agreed to the disbursement of some of the monies raised for the Harding Intercollegiate Fund on "Digital Gateway Grants" to students on very low incomes (identified by those in receipt of free school meals and equivalent indicators). It had been reported that 230 Digital Gateway Grants awards had been awarded, comprising a total spend of £219,000: 208 students (eligible under the free school meals criteria) had received £1,000 each, with the remaining receiving £500 each from the residual funding. The Sub-Committee was gratified to learn that these figures were close to the predicted number (250) used in the CBS2 modelling exercises.

**It has been proposed that the funding previously collected from Colleges, but not yet spent (~£20,000) now be used to assess the impact of the Digital Gateway Grants (to provide further evidence for the Education Premium element of CBS2). Should additional funds be required, money will be sought directly from the Harding Intercollegiate Fund. Bursars are asked to make any concerns known to Richard Anthony as soon as possible about that proposal.**

The Chair and Secretary have agreed to organise a PTUBS / CBS2 refresher session for Bursars and Senior Tutors, to take place later in the Michaelmas Term 2020.

3. Changes to fee status Regulations, and the implications for 2021-22 entrants  
17 July 2020, minute 5a,c

In spite of a Ministerial announcement about the change of status of EU nationals from 2021-22, no statutory instruments to enact that announcement have yet been made. Colleges will be advised on the changes as soon as practicable after the Regulations have been published.

4. Changes to fee status Regulations, and the implications for 2021-22 entrants  
*17 July 2020, minute 5a,c*

In spite of a Ministerial announcement about the change of status of EU nationals from 2021-22, no statutory instruments to enact that announcement have yet been made. Colleges will be advised on the changes as soon as practicable after the Regulations have been published.

Discussions are ongoing in the University about the introduction of (a) a formal appeals procedure against a College's fee status decision and (b) a process to consider exceptional claims for overseas students to be charged home fees. These plans, not yet finalised, will include a panel to consider such cases, with College representation on any case from either the Chair of the Fees Sub-Committee or the Secretary of the Bursars' Committee.

5. Calculation of the cost of an undergraduate education  
*17 July 2020, minute 6*

Annually, the Sub-Committee is asked to receive and endorse the aggregated cost of an undergraduate education, from information compiled on behalf of all the Colleges. The Committee noted that this information is submitted formally to the University as part of its statutory returns to the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA). This year, in the subsequent annual review by the University, it was noted that in its calculation the University included a measure of "margin for sustainability and investment", and a request to include an equivalent figure for Colleges in future years. This matter has been referred to the Technical Sub-Committee of the Intercollegiate Committee on College Accounts.

6. Matters raised by the Cambridge Trust  
*17 July 2020, minute 7*

The Secretary of the Senior Tutors' Committee had been contacted by the Cambridge Trust, regarding their concerns about how requests for additional financial support needed to be managed where the Cambridge Trust provided only a partial scholarship. The issue relates to whether such requests should be met by the Trust, or whether students should be referred to Colleges and their hardship support funds.

The Committee agreed that to propose to the Cambridge Trust that returning students should be considered by Colleges for hardship awards on a case-by-case basis (taking into account that they may have saved rent costs during the Easter Term 2020) but that for new students, the Trust might respond to requests for additional financial assistance.

7. Authorisation of fee waivers for Michaelmas Term 2020 for Cambridge-CARES PhD students  
*17 July 2020, minute 10*

The Bursars' Committee is asked to note that, over the Long Vacation, the Chair had approved on behalf of the Committee a proposal for Cambridge-CARES PhD students to have their College fee portion waived. It was informed that the standard arrangement with the CARES exchange programme was that students spent one year in Singapore and their fees were waived for this period, with the Colleges not receiving a fee portion.

The request had come as a result of COVID-19 restrictions: these students would ordinarily have been undertaking research away from Cambridge (attracting no College fee portion) but had been required to remain in residence. The estimated cost to the Colleges collectively was £5,841.

(The Chair of the Bursars' Committee had approved the request on behalf of the Bursars' Committee.)

Dr M Russell  
14 October 2020

## Report of the Fees Sub-Committee

Meetings were held on 27 November 2020 and 29 January 2021.

### Notes of guidance previously circulated to Bursars (also on the Bursars' website)

Guidance note	Minute reference	Date of email

### Other matters to which attention is drawn

1. Publication of information to students on University expenditure  
29 January 2021, minute 2a

The University has now published this information at:

<https://www.information-hub.admin.cam.ac.uk/university-profile/how-we-use-tuition-fees>

2. Publication of information to students on the use of the College (portion of) tuition fees  
27 November 2020, minute 2b

Following agreement of a statement over the Long Vacation by both the Bursars' committee and the Senior Tutors' Committee, this paper is now published at:

[https://www.ois.cam.ac.uk/files/use\\_of\\_the\\_tuition\\_fee\\_2020\\_july\\_2020.pdf](https://www.ois.cam.ac.uk/files/use_of_the_tuition_fee_2020_july_2020.pdf)

References to it are made from relevant pages on the University's webpages for both applicants and current students.

3. Proposal for UKRI- funded international postgraduate students  
27 November 2020, minute 3  
29 January 2020, minute 2c

This item is a principal item of business for the Bursars' Committee meeting on 18 February 2020, and was discussed at both previous Fees Sub-Committee meetings.

The proposal relates to the UKRI (post-Brexit) relaxing its eligibility rules for funding to be awarded to international students, providing that the students are charged UK (Home) fees. The University first proposed to allocate 20 such studentships over two years, then revised its request to 100 students. Further information was sought after the meeting in November 2020, but the Sub-Committee was not satisfied with the response at its January 2020 meeting. Given the scale of student fees involved, it was agreed that the matter should be discussed at a full Bursars' Committee meeting. The concerns raised by the Sub-Committee resulted in requests for further information relating to:

- clarity on the ongoing timescale of the proposal (i.e. any potential plans beyond the 2022-23 intake);
- detailed information on financial implications and modelling, and whether this represented a reduction of potential international student fees (i.e. to what extent might these students reasonably receiving full international funding from other sources);
- how the proposal fitted with any international recruitment strategy and whether in particular the aim of the proposal was to ensure funding went to the best students (irrespective of national origin) or whether it was intended to boost (international) doctoral student numbers by spreading existing funding sources across more candidates;
- how the proposal also linked to the other reported proposal to extend such an initiative to cover other sources of doctoral funding and especially those linked to the University, such as the Cambridge Trust and the Gates Trust.

4. Requests for other small scale international fee reductions

27 November 2020, minute 4

29 January 2021, minute 6

In addition to the larger-scale request noted in point 3 above, the Fees Sub-Committee (either at meetings or by delegated action to the Chair) has considered and approved a number of small-scale fee concessions, relating either to Brexit or to travel constraints as a result of Brexit. These include:

BAS-sponsored PhD	1 student	reduction of overseas to Home fee liability (Brexit)
CARES students	3 students	unable to travel to Singapore and would otherwise attract a fee liability for two Terms

5. Reform of the Cambridge Bursary Scheme (CBS2)

27 November 2020, minute 6

29 January 2021, minute 4

This item is a principal item of business for the Bursars' Committee meeting on 18 February 2020, and was discussed at both previous Fees Sub-Committee meetings.

Progress towards developing the final CBS2 proposal was reported at the meetings and included:

- a) approval from the Colleges' Standing Committee to push ahead a proposal to introduce CBS2 in 2021-22, following confirmation that, short- and medium-term financial concerns notwithstanding, there remained no "in principle" objections to the reformed scheme;
- b) updated financial modelling of CBS2 in the light of another year of CBS and PTUBS data, the Digital Gateway Grant initiative, and further bursaries research;
- c) clarity that enhanced bursaries would continue as at present;
- d) confirmation that the Harding Intercollegiate Fund would fund the first cohort in CBS2 for the duration of their course;
- e) confirmation that Trinity College would continue to support the rub-off of PTUBS in some form;
- f) the development of a mechanism to identify recipients of the Educational Premium (noting that this is still ongoing work);
- g) clarity over the University's preference for the calculation of the "CBS legacy element" and a clear recommendation from the Fees Sub-Committee that this should be pegged to the number of regulated fee students.

The Sub-Committee otherwise noted that, while the principal intercollegiate committees would discuss the final proposal at meetings later this Term, the proposal would be taken forward through the consideration and approval of the new scheme through the governing bodies of the participating Colleges, probably towards the end of this Term or early in the Easter Term, with decisions of Colleges being reported to Colleges' Committee. In addition, the Chair and Secretary planned to host two presentations in February to set out the proposals to Colleges.

2. Changes to fee status Regulations, and the implications for 2021-22 entrants

29 January 2021, minute 2b

In spite of a Ministerial announcement about the change of status of EU nationals, no statutory instruments to enact that announcement have yet been made. The Sub-Committee noted that a number of further non-statutory statements had now been made, including the move for Islands students to become Home fee status, but the PRC Fees Sub-Committee had felt that no confirmation could be made to applicants until legislation was published.

Consequently, a "wait-and-see" offer letter had been developed for students who it was felt would previously have been Home fee status but might now be Overseas fee status (and, indeed, *vice versa*). Changes to fee status Regulations, and the implications for 2021-22 entrants

3. Office for Students: regulatory compliance audit relating to consumer law and the COVID-19 pandemic  
*29 January 2021, minute 3*

The Sub-Committee noted that the University had been reminded by the Office for Students of its regulatory expectations relating to compliance with consumer law, and had requested the University to conduct a compliance audit.

The Secretary gave an account of a recent meeting with University representatives on 22 January 2021 regarding providing a response to the letter from the Office for Students. At that meeting, it had been agreed that a high-level audit of communications to students from the Vice-Chancellor and Senior Pro-Vice-Chancellor would be undertaken to identify any areas of risk arising from non-delivery of any perceived promises made in those communications.

The Secretary confirmed that, as part of that review, he had provided the following information on behalf of the Colleges:

- an analysis of the number of undergraduate supervisions delivered in Michaelmas Term 2020 in comparison with numbers delivered in the pre-COVID Michaelmas Term 2019);
- a copy of the Position Paper on Student Rents, dated 5 January 2021.

4. Foundation Year  
*29 January 2021, minute 9*

The Committee received for information financial projections for the Foundation Year, launched on 11 January 2021.

Dr M Russell  
2 February 2020