Unreserved Business

minutes

Board Meeting on 8 January 2013

Present: Professor Cardwell (Chairman), Dr Cook, Dr Dixon, Professor Ford, Professor Forsyth, Dr Hiley, Dr Lasenby, Dr McLarty, Dr Padman, with Dr Maxwell as Secretary and with Mr Bennett, Ms Wilkinson and Ms Watts in attendance.

Apologies: There were none.

3988 Minutes

Having noted that the meeting was held on 13 November 2012, the minutes were approved.

3989 Declarations of Interest

There were none.

3990 Fee for graduate applications
(Paper 4845)

The Board received a paper proposing a nominal application fee and an acceptance fee. It noted that work was underway to investigate the feasibility of charging a fee per applicant in certain Schools.

The Board agreed that the current fee should be retained but that it should be subject to annual scrutiny and in particular following its review of the graduate admissions process, deadlines and timetable. The Board also agreed that funding derived from the fee should be targeted to support the work of graduate admissions.

Concern was expressed that a number of applicants do not apply through the Graduate Admissions Office until they have been offered a place by the Department. This arises from differences in the local requirements for the consideration of applications but has the effect of
skewing the University’s admissions statistics. It was agreed that all applications should be made through the Graduate Admissions Office and that in order for this to succeed an attempt should be made to capture the needs of the departments in question with a view to making the necessary modifications to the application process.

The Board also agreed that it was important not to encourage weaker students to apply and that the current fee level was probably appropriate to defer the majority of spurious applications.

3991 Process review report of graduate admissions
(Papers 4846 and 4847)

The Board received a process review report of graduate admissions submitted by MISD.

The Board agreed that although the review made some interesting points, it was inappropriate that MISD had not involved the Board during its consultation as the body with statutory authority for graduate admissions. The Board agreed that it was unfortunate that the review was carried out part-way through the admissions cycle in the first year of the development. It also agreed that it was inappropriate for MISD to influence the University’s educational or admissions policies. It noted that the Appendix had been completed in June 2012 and that a number of non-technical recommendations had been implemented between then and the release of the review in December 2012 which were not acknowledged in the review. The Board was disappointed by the lack of balance in the review and in particular, noted the omission of the considerable benefits that the implementation of the EDMs had made to graduate admissions across the piece in the face of increasing levels of applications and the relatively low level of central resource dedicated to the process. The Board also noted that 41/51 recommendations made in Appendix 1, arising from consultation with the departments, colleges and the Graduate Admissions Office related to IT and system changes.

The Board agreed that that the system must be properly completed and that this should be properly resourced and undertaken in a timely fashion to coincide with the start of the next admissions cycle in September 2013. It also agreed that technical changes would need to be made in conjunction with an overview of the timetables and deadlines for graduate applications and mindful of the pressures imposed by funding bodies and College decision-making.

It agreed that changes to the system would be identified, notified to the Education Committee and submitted for consideration at the March meeting of the SISC.

Professor Cardwell and Dr Padman, Dr Maxwell and Ms Wilkinson volunteered to join a working group to consider Graduate Admission
and to be chaired by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Education and include representation from the Schools, departments, colleges and CamSIS. It was agreed that the working group should report to the Board.

3992 Graduate Admissions: disclosure of a relevant criminal conviction (Paper 4848)

The Board agreed that a full proposal should be prepared and submitted to the Board.

3993 Application for renewal of University Partner Institute status: MRC Cognition and Brain Sciences Unit (Paper 4849)

The Board agreed to renew the UPI status of the MRC Cognition and Brain Sciences Unit for a further five years.

3994 Minutes of the Postgraduate Admissions Committee (Paper 4850)

The Board received the minutes of the meeting held on 8 November 2012.

It was noted that departments may specify any date for last arrival, provided that it is no later than the Division of Term.

3995 Supervisor Payments (Paper 4851)

Abolition of the supervisor fee was discussed but the Board declined to amend the fee paid to supervisors and agreed to remind Schools that they may, at their discretion, use the top-up Fee to enhance supervisor payments.