



March 28, 2011

Dear Colleague

The Regent House has voted in favour of a proposal that Cambridge should seek to charge new UK and EU undergraduates a £9,000 per annum tuition fee from October 2012. This proposal will now be submitted to the Office for Fair Access (OFFA) for approval.

There has been wide debate on this proposal. I know from conversations with my colleagues in the Schools, Departments, Faculties and Colleges that there are misgivings about the impact of higher fees on future students. However, there is no other practical way to maintain Cambridge's excellence in teaching. In consequence, we must put in place generous financial support mechanisms for students that will offset any risks that higher fees may bring.

This is an important decision for Cambridge so I want to ensure that you understand the background to it.

During 2008-9, the University saw its teaching funding from Government decline by more than £6 million. In addition, Government is now proposing that the existing teaching grant be cut by 80% and that, from 2012, public funding would instead be concentrated on support for the student loan scheme that will underpin the move to higher student fees. Currently, the collegiate University receives total teaching income of £8,300 per student. The proposed increase in fees from the current level to £9,000, for the cohort of students entering in 2012, will barely cover the cut to the teaching grant, particularly when the increased costs of financial support and outreach work are taken into account.

In 2010-11, the average annual cost per undergraduate of providing supervision-based teaching across the Departments and Colleges is more than £17,000. This means that the University and the Colleges already have to use other sources of income to make the books balance. A fee lower than £9,000, in these circumstances, would significantly damage our ability to sustain the highest quality of undergraduate education.

Although students will not have to pay these fees up front, there are concerns that fees at this level might deter some students from applying. That is the reason why our proposal for higher fees is accompanied by a commitment from the University and Colleges to a financial support system designed to ensure that no UK student is deterred from applying to Cambridge because of financial considerations, and that no student should have to leave because of financial difficulties.

Vice-Chancellor's Office
The Old Schools
Trinity Lane
Cambridge CB2 1TN

Tel: +44 (0)1223 332290
Fax: +44 (0)1223 339669
v-c@admin.cam.ac.uk

The benefits available to eligible students under that support system are:

- The Cambridge Bursary, a non-repayable grant, available, on a tapering basis, to all students from households with an annual income below £42,600 and to all mature students aged 21 and above.
- The maximum annual Cambridge Bursary of £3,500, available to those with annual household income of less than £25,000 (these students will also be eligible for the maximum government maintenance grant of £3,250 and a further maintenance loan, if they need it, of £3,875).
- A mature student who is eligible for a Government means-tested Higher Education Maintenance Grant will be eligible for a Cambridge Bursary of up to £5,650.
- Students will be given a choice of using the Cambridge Bursary either towards maintenance costs or to reduce fees.

£1.5 million will be available for enhanced support for particularly disadvantaged students. In these cases, we will also provide an additional fee waiver of £6,000 per annum.

In total, we expect that these new arrangements (which will be funded by the University, the Colleges and the Isaac Newton Trust and supported by benefactors) to cost £9 million a year. We will also be continuing to invest in our outreach work with disadvantaged pupils to ensure that the best students from any background both continue to aspire to study at Cambridge and have the support mechanisms that will help them to meet our exacting standards for entry.

Under these proposals, every undergraduate should be well placed to take advantage not just of the intense intellectual development offered by Cambridge but also the rich extra-curricular activity that characterises collegiate life.

We cannot stand aloof from the world around us. In responding to the new environment, Cambridge must remain true to its core values: an outstanding undergraduate education within a collegiate environment; an education available to those who can meet our exacting standards, whatever their family and financial background.

Thank you for your support in meeting these goals.

Yours sincerely,



L K Borysiewicz