

# Examination Access and Mitigation Committee

## Annual Report, 2019-20

This is the second annual report of the Examination Access and Mitigation Committee for presentation to the Examination and Assessment Committee and other interested bodies.

The format of this report is the same as was previously reported to the University Council by the Standing Committee on Applications and includes data on Examination Access Arrangements, which previously formed part of the Secretary's report to the Board of Examinations.

The report has been drafted by the Secretary using data held within the University's student information system (CamSIS), and data held locally in the Student Registry.

Unless displayed, percentages have been rounded.

Examination Access and Mitigation Committee

October 2020

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## A: Introduction

### REMIT OF THE COMMITTEE

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The Exam Access and Mitigation Committee (EAMC) reports to the Examination and Assessment Committee, who in turn reports to the General Board's Education Committee.

The Committee (or its Officers under delegated authority) deal with applications for:

- Examination Access arrangements (prior to examinations)
- Examination allowances (post examinations)
- Dissertation and Coursework extensions
- Disregarding terms, intermission and resuming study
- Consideration of non-standard combinations of papers
- Remission of University Composition Fees;
- Non-member leave to attend lectures;

The bulk of business concerns the implementation of the Ordinances governing Allowances to Candidates for Examinations (*Statutes and Ordinances, 2019 edition, p. 247*). Whilst much of its work is concerned with candidates for Honours Examinations, the Committee also has responsibility for considering allowances to candidates for other qualifications (e.g. the LLM and the MBA) which fall outside the remit of the Board of Graduate Studies.

### AIMS OF THE COMMITTEE

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The EAMC has the following overarching aims:

- To endeavour to ensure parity of treatment between applicants to the Committee who share similar circumstances, whilst recognising that each case is individual.
- To be mindful of the interests of students taking the same examination but who are not applicants to the Committee.
- To ensure that, particularly in relation to disregarding terms and repeating a period of study, an applicant is neither advantaged nor disadvantaged in comparison with other students.

Guidance notes to support students and staff submitting applications are reviewed and published annually.

### BUSINESS 2019-20

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The EAMC was required to respond quickly to the COVID global pandemic, implementing safeguards such as ensuring that student cases could still be considered if the medical advisors were not available and adjusting its guidance notes to adapt to the changes in assessment in the Easter term 2020. Due to the changes to assessment, from in person exams to a mix of formative / summative and online provision, the data for 2019-20 is non-standard and will impacts trends for several years to come. Further details of the impact on the data are within each section of this report.

## B: Summary of Activity 2019-2020

### EXAMINATION NUMBERS

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- The University scheduled 1,244 examinations in 2019-20, compared to 2,310 in 2018-19, a reduction of 46% due to the change to formative assessment for many first and second year subjects.
- There were 29,936 candidatures for summative assessment, compared to 66,451 in 2018-19, a reduction of 55%.

### EXAMINATION ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS (EAA)

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- 1,433 candidates were approved for examination access arrangements, although many would not have needed them due to the changes in modes of assessment.
- 45 applications were received for an Alternative Mode of Assessment

### EXAMINATION ALLOWANCES (DATA ACCURATE UP TO 29 SEPTEMBER 2020)

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- 779 cases considered by the Committee. A decrease of 30% from 2018-19 (1,093) but with the reduction in summative assessment, an overall **increase** of 3% (pro-rata)
- 52 applications declined by the Committee.
- 291 applications considered for students to disregard terms.
- 203 applications to resume study following a period of intermission.
- 112 requests for an extension to a dissertation or coursework.
- 38 requests for reconsideration of an original result following receipt of examination results.
- 70% of applications were for medical reasons.
- 51% of total number of cases / 71% of cases considered for medical reasons were for reasons of Mental Health.

## C: Examination Access Arrangements

### EXAMINATION ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS (EAA)

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Examination Access Arrangements are considered under the Code of Practice: Reasonable adjustments for disabled students.

Colleges submit applications for standard examination arrangements on behalf of students using the student information system, CamSIS. There are published guidelines and well-established processes for managing and approving these applications.

Examples of applications for EAA may include allowing a student:

- Extra time (written)
- Rest breaks
- Use of a PC
- Use of a scribe / amanuensis

Decisions on applications are made by delegated authority using the agreed framework. Cases for exceptional EAA are referred to the Secretary, and in specific cases, to the Committee. Table 1 below shows the number of applications for EAA over a 5-year period.

	<b>2019-20</b>	<b>2018-19</b>	<b>2017-18</b>	<b>2016-17</b>	<b>2015-16</b>
Number of students receiving standard EAA	1467	1660	1615	1498	1367

The decline in the number of students receiving standard EAA in 2019-20 compared to previous years comes as a result of COVID-19 and the transition from traditional exams to online assessments. For many students, the move to online assessments in Easter Term 2020 negated the need for specific examination arrangements as reasonable adjustments were built into the online assessment window. For example, where a student had previously been awarded extra time and/or rest breaks, there were many cases that now did not require any further extensions.

The majority of EAAs were approved prior to the changes in modes of assessment and so they are still reported, although they may not have been needed during the assessment period. For instance, students that were approved to take their examinations in College appear in the statistics, yet they completed their assessments from home or in another format.

Colleges use CamSIS to make applications for students to receive EAA, which since 2018-19, allows Colleges to record more than one reason for applications.

The data has shown us that:	<b>2019-20</b>	<b>2018-19</b>
Maximum number of disabilities listed for one student	4	4
Number of candidates who have more than one disability listed	241	295
Number of candidates who have more than two disabilities listed	51	55

**Table 2 – Exam Access Arrangements awarded by reason, year and term**

Reason	2019-20			2018-19			2017-18			2016-17			2015-16		
	MT	LT	ET	MT	LT	ET	MT	LT	ET	MT	LT	ET	MT	LT	ET
Accident		2	2	1	3	37	1	4	30		1	21			26
Anxiety	7	19	252		9	271	3	7	159	2	4	176	1	1	145
Asperger's Syndrome / Autism	1	4	101	2	7	90	1	2	50		2	55			61
Attention Deficit Disorder	9	6	105	1	9	93	3	6	47	1		27	1	4	26
Back / joint pain					5	96									
Blind/Visual Impairment	2	4	27		1	22	1	1	22	1	3	21	2	1	21
Cough/Cold						5		1							2
Deaf/Hearing Impairment		2	23		1	18		1	11		1	3		1	3
Epileptic						5			5			7			2
Headache/Migraine	1		19			12			20			18	1	1	13
IBS/Colitis	5	5	45		3	46		1	26	1	1	26	1	3	24
Long-Term Illness				4		6	2	4	71	2	2	54		1	41
ME/Chronic Fatigue			17			20			18			22	1	1	21
MH issues / Depression / Eating disorder	9	12	247	5	13	265	2	5	123	1	2	98	3		67
OCD	3	2	27		3	25	1	3	22			10			9
Other & Short term illness	2	4	15	5	11	64	4	2	220	5	14	228	1	14	187
Physical Mobility	4	8	68	2	7	101	3	4	59	1	3	47	2	2	38
Pregnancy				1	1	1	1					1		1	
SpLD (Dyslexia, Dysgraphia or Dyspraxia)	31	39	540	26	38	547	21	34	507	16	36	488	12	31	502
Stomach Bug						19			12			9			11
Tendonitis/RSI	2	1	63	1	2	75	1	2	67			64		1	57
Unseen Disability (e.g. diabetes)	10	14	194	2	3	151	1	2	22	2	1	21	1	2	21
Admin issues (Late changes, timetable clash)						14									
<b>Total per term</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>123</b>	<b>1,745</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>1983</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>1491</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>1396</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>1277</b>
<b>Total adjustments per year</b>	<b>1954<sup>1</sup></b>			<b>2147<sup>1</sup></b>			<b>1615</b>			<b>1498</b>			<b>1367</b>		
<b>Year on year change</b>	<b>-193 (-11%)<sup>2</sup></b>			<b>+45 (3%)<sup>2</sup></b>			<b>+117 (8%)</b>			<b>+131 (10%)</b>			<b>+ 85 (6%)</b>		

The data shows that despite a reduction in EAA's for the Easter term 2020, cases in the Michaelmas and Lent terms continue to rise.

<sup>1</sup> Students will have been counted more than once

<sup>2</sup> Based on actual number of students receiving EAA (see table 1)

**Table 3** below shows number of candidates with exam access arrangements in an Easter term and their spread across locations.

<b>Table 3</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>% change</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>% change</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2014</b>
College	590	-32%	879	+4%	847	826	780	695	687
Dept.	118	+100%	59	-23%	77	53	64	37	26
University Centre	316	+0.6%	314	+29%	243	196	239	260	234
PC in central location	369	+7%	346	+15%	300	247	182	150	176
Early venue	17	-37%	27	+13%	24	26	12	60	46
Central venue	23								
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,433</b>		<b>1625</b>		<b>1,491</b>	<b>1,396</b>	<b>1277</b>	<b>1202</b>	<b>1169</b>
% increase	-11%		+9%		+6.8%	+8.5%	+6.2%	+2.8%	+16%

Applications for students sitting examinations in other locations have grown in previous academic years and this was anticipated and planned for again in 2019/20 by making best use of centrally offered space and reducing the numbers sitting exams 'in College'. As in previous years, this included expanding the number of spaces available for the central use of a PC provision by putting an additional venue in place.

However, COVID had an impact on all of these processes, including:

- The changes to formative or online assessment negated the need for various location provision, however Colleges were advised to continue to submit applications for EAA in case of allowance or appeal. When submitting any application, a location is required, so the data presented has been affected.
- A number of applications are usually made after the deadline, at the start of the Easter term and are known as 'late fallers'. The non-residential nature of the Easter term 2020, as well as change in mode of assessment, meant that such applications were not received.

## D: Alternative Modes of Assessment (AMA)

### BACKGROUND

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The Alternative Mode of Assessment (AMA) process is applied under the Code of Practice: Reasonable Adjustments for Disabled students where examination access arrangements to the standard mode of assessment do not adequately address the specific, substantial disadvantage experienced by a disabled student. This will, in most cases, entail setting aside the regulations for examination and determining an adjustment where to do so is an effective and reasonable means of avoiding or offsetting the disadvantage.

Any AMA should meet the competence standards being measured through the current assessment method. There is no requirement to adjust the competence standards of the course.

In 2018-19, the Committee made decisions on these applications for the first time, having previously been considered by the Board of Examinations. In 2019-20, the Committee delegated authority to the Secretary to the Committee to make decisions on straightforward applications, such as extensions to periods of study, with the complex applications continuing to be considered by the Committee. This change has enabled decisions to be reached quicker, ensuring delays to implementing adjustments are minimised.

The number of approved AMA applications over the past 5 years is demonstrated in Table 4.

Table 4

	<b>2019-20</b>	<b>2018-19</b>	<b>2017-18</b>	<b>2016-17</b>	<b>2015-16</b>
Alternative Modes of Assessment (approved)	37	40	20	17	13

Although fewer AMAs were approved in 2019-20, the number of applications received was not dissimilar to those received in the previous academic year. In 2018-19, 46 applications for an AMA were made. In 2019-20, 45 applications were made, of which 37 were approved. Of those remaining 8:

- Three were withdrawn as a result of the changes to assessments following COVID-19
- Two were managed through the provision of exam access arrangements
- One student intermitted due to ill-health so their application was withdrawn
- One student had their application declined by the EAMC due to lack of medical evidence
- One student had their application declined by the EAMC as a result of the changes to assessments following COVID-19

Although only a slight difference in the number of applications received, the consideration of adjustment to the mode of assessment is for exceptional cases only, and each application is considered on a case-by-case basis. Despite the change to online assessments, AMAs were still delivered as appropriate where assessments had not been cancelled.

## FIRST TIME APPLICATIONS

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The number of first time AMA applications over the past 5 years is shown below:

	<b>2019/20</b>	<b>2018/19</b>	<b>2017/18</b>	<b>2016/17</b>	<b>2015/16</b>
1 <sup>st</sup> year student	5 <sup>3</sup>	5		2	3
2 <sup>nd</sup> year student	6	9 <sup>4</sup>	3	4	4
3 <sup>rd</sup> year student	9	15	5	3	3
4 <sup>th</sup> year student	1	3			

Over the past 3 years, final year students have required an AMA for the first time during their academic career at Cambridge more than any other year group. Whilst there are various reasons for why a student would need an AMA in their final year and not in their first or second year, requests will continue to be monitored closely to ensure AMAs are processed when appropriate.

## DEADLINES

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Applications must be submitted by the end of full Michaelmas term in any year and Colleges are reminded of this deadline from the start of each Michaelmas Term and encouraged to submit applications as soon as possible as the process can take several weeks or months to resolve (where the Tripos or application is complex). The deadline is to ensure that any teaching and support can be put in place and that alternative modes can be discussed with the Faculty / Department concerned.

Requests or evidence submitted later than the end of full Michaelmas term will not be accepted unless there is a valid reason for delay. Where cases submitted after the deadline have been accepted, the process that follows remains the same; it is passed to the Medical Advisers of the EAMC for consideration. The Advisers will consider the application and the medical evidence provided, and if content, approve the application to move to case conference.

Until the point of an approved recommendation, the student should continue their study without any changes. Applications submitted after the deadline, particularly those received in Lent Term relating to examinations in Easter Term cause extra pressure for those involved in the process to reach an alternative. Late applications also limit the student's time to effectively prepare for examinations without knowing their mode of assessment until a recommendation has been approved.

- In 2019/20, 4 applications were received and processed after the deadline
- In 2018/29, 8 applications were received and processed after the deadline
- In 2017/18, 5 applications were received and processed after the deadline

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<sup>3</sup> Includes a Final Vet Part I student in year 4/6, no application in years 1-3

<sup>4</sup> Includes two Final M.B. Part II students in year 5/6, no application in years 1-3

## ADMINISTRATION AND PROCESS

In July 2019, an administrator was appointed to focus on and better support the AMA process. This decision was taken given the increase in numbers, complexity of applications, and resource needed to operationally deliver the AMA process. This has allowed designated support to the process which can be complex and take several weeks or months to resolve, as demonstrated in Table 5, 6 and 7.

<b>TABLE 5</b> Time taken from application received to completion	<b>2019-20</b>	<b>2018-19</b>	<b>2017-18</b>
<b>Quickest:</b>	3 days	15 days	4 days
<b>Longest:</b>	122 days	116 days	122 days
<b>Average:</b>	48 days	48 days	48 days

<b>TABLE 6</b> Time taken from date of application submitted to date of case conference	<b>2019-20</b>	<b>2018-19</b>	<b>2017-18</b>
<b>Quickest:</b>	14 days	10 days	17 days
<b>Longest:</b>	62 days	97 days	117 days
<b>Average:</b>	35 days	37 days	37 days

<b>TABLE 7</b> Time taken from date of case conference to recommendation	<b>2019-20</b>	<b>2018-19</b>	<b>2017-18</b>
<b>Quickest:</b>	3 days	1 day	1 day
<b>Longest:</b>	113 days	53 days	42 days
<b>Average:</b>	31 days	12 days	15 days

Appointment of a dedicated AMA administrator has allowed for effective support of the AMA process throughout 2019-20 and to make improvements such as liaising with the Chair of Examiners prior to a case conference taking place to ensure they are well informed and prepared.

There may be some circumstances where it may not be necessary to hold a case conference. This may include where a student has had an AMA previously and there is no change to their condition or their request, and that request maps onto the next year's modules. It may also not be necessary to hold a case conference if a student is looking to extend their period of study, with no further adjustments. When a case conference is held, it can take weeks to simply find a suitable date for all stakeholders to attend due to difficulties with availability. Following a case conference, further time is required for the Chair to consult with colleagues, such as their Exam or Faculty Board on the request made, and what, if any, AMA would be recommended.

Whilst some applications can be processed and completed within days, other applications can take longer for a variety of reasons, such as those listed above or due to the difficulties with setting aside the regulations for the examination or determining an adjustment which is considered an effective and reasonable mean of avoiding or offsetting the disadvantage. This varies between trips and the competence standards being measured.

Cases previously considered will not set any precedent for a particular disability or alternative mode of assessments and applications are considered on a case by case basis, to offset the disadvantage caused by the disability (reason for the AMA).

## APPLICATIONS BY TRIPOS

Approved applications for AMAs: 2015-16 to 2019-20, by Tripos.

	2019/20	2018/19	2017/18	2016/17	2015/16
ASNac					1
AMES		1			
Classics	1	2			
Computer Science			1		
Economics	1			2	
Education	1	1	2	2	3
Engineering	3	3	1	1	1
English	7	4	2	2	
Final M.B. Exam Part II		2			
Final M.B. Exam Part III	1				
Final Vet M.B. Part I	1				
Geography	4	4			
HSPS	2	5	4	1	2
Law	2	2	1	1	1
MCL					1
MRes	1				
MSt	1				
Medical Sciences	2				
MML	1	3		1	
MPhil		1	2		
Music		1		1	1
Natural Sciences	2	1	1	1	1
PhD			1		
Philosophy	1	2			
PBS	4	6	3	4	2
TRPT	2	2	2	1	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>13</b>

## AMA / INTERMISSION

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The AMA process is for those disabled students where the examination access arrangements to the standard mode of assessment do not adequately address the specific, substantial disadvantage experienced by a disabled student. An AMA cannot prevent intermission, and should not be used as an alternative to intermission where a student is not well enough to study.

The number of students that intermitted after an AMA was put in place and the reason for this is demonstrated below:

	2019/20	2018/19	2017/18	2016/17	2015/16
<b>Mental Health</b>		1	1		
<b>Physical condition</b>		4	1		
<b>Mental Health &amp; Physical condition</b>	1 (student in 2nd year of 1 year over 2)			1	3 (student in 2nd year of 1 year over 2)

## TYPES OF AMA

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Different types of AMA have been delivered over the past 5 years which have included:

- Extended period of study (split one year over two, long extension to Dissertation / coursework)
- To replace a written examination with an essay or a portfolio of essays
- Bespoke paper to be written and broken up into smaller chunks
- To reduce the number of questions to be answered and submit an essay

In 2019/20, the majority of requests have been to complete an extended period of study, followed by replacing a written examination with an essay or a portfolio of essays. This aligns with requests also made in 2018/19.

The type of AMA is based on the student's disability and cases previously considered will not set any precedent for a particular disability or alternative mode.

In some instances, where the AMA requested cannot meet the competence standards and alleviate the disadvantage, other alternatives have been provided which has further challenged Departments and Faculties and in their delivery of teaching.

Extended period of study requests may also include creating bespoke papers or delivering teaching differently to one student in comparison to the rest of their cohort. Some departments have also faced challenges when replacing examinations with an alternative format, such as coursework or a portfolio of essays.

## FEE REMISSIONS FOR EXTENDED PERIODS OF STUDY

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Students who are approved to extend their period of study (usually undertaking one year over two but other patterns also occur) generally apply for fee remission for the second year. As a result of extended period of study arrangements:

- In 2019-20, 21 AMA students were approved to have their fees remitted in their second year of study
- In 2018/19, 17 AMA students were approved to have their fee remitted in their second year of study

Assuming that all 21 cases are 'Home/EU' and liable for the fee rate of £9,250, the cost to the University in 2019-20 of these reasonable adjustments is £194,250.

Where a University fee remission is applied, the College is also required to waive the College fee. Using the same assumptions of 'Home/EU', and an average annual College fee of £9,000, this totals £189,000.

## AMA 2020/21

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- The Examination and Assessment Committee approved to change the name of Alternative Modes of Assessments to 'Adjusted Modes of Assessment'. Guidance notes and supporting documentation, including material online has been updated to reflect this name change from the start of the 2020/21 academic year.
- A further addition to the guidance notes addresses where there may be some difficulties in obtaining medical evidence due to some restrictions on NHS services. For this year only, the date of medical evidence requirements has been relaxed, however evidence is still required for applications.
- A further guide aimed specifically at Faculties and Departments has been published to offer more information for those involved in the process.
- AMA Guidance has been updated to remind students and Colleges that study should be the primary focus of attendance, even those with an AMA in place. Engagement with extra-curricular activities is not prohibited and the University encourages students to have a positive work / life balance. However, it is advised that participation in extra-curricular activities should not prevent a student from meaningful engagement with their studies and / or impact the student's ability to perform academically and in particular, any extra study time awarded under the AMA procedure is to address the substantial disadvantages experienced by disabled students and is not for engaging in extra-curricular activities to the detriment of their studies.

## E: Committee work

### MEETINGS

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The Committee met 14 times in 2019-20, twice in June and three times in July. Additional meetings were scheduled to take into account the extension to the examination period because of the move to online assessments and as a result of the second assessment period in September.

The numbers shown in this chapter do not consider any applications made as a consequence of the Second Assessment period which ran 7 – 25 September 2020. Approximately 1000 students were enrolled for assessments within this period, with results still to be published at 15 October. Those cases will be included in the 2020-21 Annual Report.

In total there were fewer applications than previous years due to the reduction in the number of students taking summative assessment in 2019-20 (Primarily final year students and some first and second year Tripos required for accreditation purposes).

The Committee did not award the allowance of 'Allowed to Proceed' in 2019-20 as assessments in the first and second year were moved to formative in response to COVID-19 and all students undertaking this formative assessment were automatically awarded 'Allowed to Proceed'.

### ALLOWANCES AND OTHER CASEWORK

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Table 8 overleaf details the types of allowances awarded with comparison data for the previous years. This table continues to build greater granularity, with cells in 2015-16 and 2014-15 greyed out where previously grouped.

Despite the drop in cases this year, the overall pattern is still increased. Pro-rata calculations show 2019-20 saw **11%** of those students taking summative assessment access the various allowance mechanisms, an increase from 8% in 2018-19.

The number of applications for allowances based on medical reasons continue to grow, increasing the burden on the Medical Advisers. For 2019-20, 51% of the cases required input from the medical advisors. Additionally, cases for reasons of Mental Health / Anxiety / Depression continue to rise steadily. This is in line with patterns identified with students requiring examination access arrangements and is in line with the HE sector as a whole.

The Secretary, in conjunction with the Medical Advisers and/or the Chair as appropriate, dealt with 72% of this casework under delegated authority. This is higher than last year, due to the overall reduction in the number of applications and additional measures put in place in response to the challenges faced by COVID-19. Whilst the data shows a decrease of 30% in caseload for 2019-20, and an overall increase of 39% over the past six years, this is not truly representative of the pattern of activity, given the significant changes in assessment in 2019-20..

<b>TABLE 8</b>	<b>2019-20</b>	<b>2018-19</b>	<b>2017-18</b>	<b>2016-17</b>	<b>2015-16</b>
<b>Allowances</b>					
Allowed the Examination (medical)	2	1	5	6	
Allowed the Examination (non-medical)	0	0	0	8	
Allowed to Proceed (medical)	N/A	72	19	11	
Allowed to Proceed (non-medical)	COVID	34	64	59	
Declared to have deserved honours (medical)	5	24	72	61	59
Declared to have deserved honours (non-medical)	4	4	9	3	4
Reconsideration of a result (medical)	18	98	97	56	
Reconsideration of a result (non-medical)	20	29	12	19	
Other allowances (medical)					276
Other allowances (non-medical)					95
Ordinary BA (medical)	0	1	2	4	5
Ordinary BA (non-medical)	0	0	1	3	2
Leave to have terms disregarded (medical)	235	297	260	259	247
Leave to have terms disregarded (non-medical)	69	40	47	31	30
Reconsideration of Original Result where the Safety Net could not be applied	3				
Resume study following disregard (medical)	184	242	236	216	
Resume study following disregard (non-medical)	25	27	24	16	
Consider for Put in Standing for Part III (medical & non-medical)	N/A COVID	9	5	6	Not Reported
<b>Other Business</b>					
Allowance of a term	11	25	8	6	Not reported
Dissertation and Coursework extensions	116	149	131	134	Not reported
Illegal combinations of papers	8	3	Not reported – previously GBEC		
Leave to attend courses (non-member leave)	18	3	16	21	22
Names to be withheld from Class Lists	0	0	0	89	40
Rescind allowance	0	0	1	2	0
University Composition fee remission	39	35	20	15	17
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>779</b>	<b>1093</b>	<b>1029</b>	<b>1025</b>	<b>797</b>

Table 9 breaks down the medical reasons for the various forms of allowance granted:

<b>Table 9:</b>	<b>2019-20</b>	<b>2018-19</b>	<b>2017-18</b>	<b>2016-17</b>	<b>2015-16</b>
Mental Health / Anxiety / Depression	385	509	487	473	437
Physical Health affecting any part of body	62	205	141	112	113
Virus	20	17	41	26	3
Long term illness	58	0	14	17	3
Eating Disorder	8	10	8	31	28
COVID19	4				
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>537</b>	<b>741</b>	<b>691</b>	<b>659</b>	<b>584</b>

#### APPLICATIONS TO INVITE EXAMINERS TO RECONSIDER THEIR ORIGINAL RESULT

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Each year the Committee receives a number of applications requesting that the Examiners be invited to reconsider their original result by disregarding papers, under Regulation 3(d).

In 2019/20, a total of 38 applications were received for 'Reconsideration of Original Result'. This is significantly lower than the previous year where 127 applications were made, but this decrease is due to the reduction in summative assessment.

Of the 38 applications, 13 were approved and referred to the Chairs of Examiners for consideration. 21 were declined by the Committee, one was withdrawn, one was awarded 'Declared to have deserved honours', one was recommended to attempt the assessment in the second period and one is still under review.

A new allowance of 'Reconsideration of Original Result where the Safety Net could not be applied' was introduced in Easter Term 2020 due to the changes in assessment. Students who had received an allowance in their previous Tripos exams and who could not take advantage of the Safety Net could apply for their results to be reconsidered if they felt their Easter Term 2020 marks did not reflect their academic ability accurately. Of the three applications submitted for this allowance, two resulted in the student being awarded a higher class with one remaining at the same class.

The Committee may decline to forward a request to the Chair of Examiners either because there is insufficient academic evidence that the student would have been likely to have attained a higher class or because there is no clear evidence of under-performance being confined to just a small part of the examination.

Upon reviewing the application, the Examiners can decide not to amend their original decision.

Data showing the breakdown of these applications is shown in Appendix A.

## FEE REMISSIONS

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Calls for fee remission are primarily linked to requests for disregarding terms and fee liability on students' return to study or where students are taking a course over an extended period of study. The Committee received 38 new applications for fee remissions in 2019-20 for reasons of ill health or grave cause, an increase on the year previous (35). Of the 38 new applications for fee remission, 33 were approved (21 were AMA related), 1 was declined, 4 were withdrawn and 1 was approved in part.

Additional applications were received at the end of 2019-20 for the Academic Year 2020-2021 where students finances had been impacted by COVID-19. However, the majority of students with financial difficulties have applied to disregard terms for 2020-2021.

## EXTENSIONS TO COURSEWORK AND DISSERTATIONS

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Regulation 7 for Allowances to Candidates for Examinations allows the Committee to consider applications for extensions to coursework and dissertation submission. The regulation references a 'brief' extension and the guidance notes indicate that only in exceptional circumstances would a deadline of more than seven days be granted. Applications must also be submitted in advance of the deadline.

Due to the timing of applications and submission, extensions are rarely considered by the Committee and instead managed via delegated authority between the Secretary and the Chair or Senior Examiner.

For Easter term 2020 only, applications for extensions to dissertations, essays and coursework etc. were considered directly by departments. This was due to the changes to assessments. Therefore, the data as presented only shows those received for the Michaelmas and Lent terms.

	<b>Nbr applications</b>	<b>Nbr received after the original date of submission</b>	<b>Nbr received on the original date of submission</b>	<b>Nbr received less than 7 days before original date of submission</b>
2019/20	116	18	14	38
2018/19	149	23	28	47
2017/18	131	22	24	44
2016/17	135	Information not held		

Of those 116 applications received, the length of extension requested data is as follows;

<b>Nbr &lt; 7 days</b>	<b>Nbr 7 days</b>	<b>Nbr &lt; 14 days</b>	<b>Nbr 14 days</b>	<b>Nbr &gt; 14 days</b>
19	49	9	16	23

As the data below shows, the majority of requests for extensions are for reasons of Mental Health, which aligns with the increases seen in Examination Access Arrangements and Allowances.

Reason	Number	% of total
Mental Health	41	37%
Physical Health	33	29%
SpLD	10	9%
Grave Cause	21	19%
COVID related (prior to authority being devolved to Departments and Faculties)	7	6%

## REVIEW PROCEDURE

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The Committee may be required to review a decision made where a case has been made to the Office of Student Conduct, Complaints and Appeals (OSCCA) and after consideration by an independent reviewer, the application is upheld, or new evidence is presented.

Of the 779 cases considered by the Committee in 2019-20, 52 (7%) were declined. Of those 52 declined cases, 15 were subsequently upheld by a reviewer following an application to OSCCA. Each of those 15 cases supplied additional evidence for the review which had not been included with the application to the EAMC. Additionally, two of the cases were also upheld on the ground that the original decision *'is unreasonable, in that no reasonable person or body could have reached the same decision on the available evidence'*

Of those 15 cases, 7 were subsequently approved due to new evidence being provided, 6 upheld the original decision and the last one will be reconsidered by the Committee in 2020-21, following a request for a new application and further information.

## OFFICE OF THE INDEPENDENT ADJUDICATOR

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Where students are dissatisfied with the outcome of a Review of a decision of a University Body, they can raise a complaint with the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA), the external Ombudsman. The OIA will consider whether the University has followed its own procedures and whether the actions taken are reasonable in all circumstances.

Students have one year from the end of the University process to raise a complaint with the OIA, so cases upheld by the OIA and referred back to the University for consideration, do not usually relate to the current year of activity.

In 2019 -20, there were no cases referred back to the EAMC from the OIA.

## UNRESERVED BUSINESS

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The Committee deals primarily with reserved business, however there is occasional unreserved business for the Committees consideration is sought. A table showing the unreserved business can be found in Appendix B.

## E: Membership and Guidance Notes

### MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMITTEE 2019-20

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All Members are appointed by the General Board.

The medical advisers continue to be essential to the operation of the Committee. The Committee is well aware of the load undertaken by the medical advisers, particularly in light of their other responsibilities and following the outbreak of COVID-19 and is grateful for the work and attention that they apply to the cases presented.

2019-20 saw several changes to membership, with more for 2020-21. It is hoped that the current vacancies will be filled by the end of the Michaelmas term 2020.

The Committee remains of the firm view that student representation on it would be inappropriate given the Reserved nature of the majority of its business, however the Secretary and where appropriate, the Chair, meet with the relevant CUSU Officers and colleagues in the Students' Unions' Advice Service to discuss matters of mutual interest.

### COLLEGES

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The Committee is dependent on the quality and sufficiency of the documentation forwarded by the Colleges. The Committee is grateful to the Colleges, particularly their Tutorial Offices, for the care with which the majority diligently provide this documentation. The Colleges continue to provide an appropriate filter mechanism (not least by dealing internally with cases which do not reach the Committee) and the Committee remains of the firm opinion that all applications must be made via the student's College, which has the opportunity to indicate if it does, or does not support the application.

### GUIDANCE NOTES

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In order to make their policies and processes clearer, to both staff and students, the Committee issues Notes of Guidance and application forms which are reviewed annually and are available online<sup>5</sup>. Whilst they do not have the formal status of Ordinances, they are listed in the [Notice](#) attached to the Allowances Regulations and are required in relation to requests for a Review of a decision by the Committee, and to cases that reach the Office of the Independent Adjudicator.

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.student-registry.admin.cam.ac.uk/about-us/EAMC>

## F: Looking to 2020-21

### GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS FOR GRADUATE AND POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS

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The transfer of matters relating to applications for **Examination Allowances** and **Alternative Modes of Assessments** for Graduate and Postgraduate taught programmes which includes Master of Philosophy (MPhil) by Advanced Study, Master of Education (MEd), Master of Research (MRes), Master of Studies (MSt), Certificate of Postgraduate Study (CPGS) and Advanced and Postgraduate Diplomas moved to the EAMC following the dissolution of the Board of Graduate Studies on 1 October 2020.

Other work under the Board of Graduate Studies will transfer to other Committees, including the Postgraduate Committee, sitting under the General Board's Education Committee (GBEC).

As a result of this change to governance, the EAMC expanded its membership to include a Graduate Tutor from October 2020.

#### **Benefits of this change to governance:**

- i. Provision of a holistic approach to matters relating to examination of all taught students;
- ii. Consistency in provision and student experience;
- iii. Intuitive structure for colleagues in Departments and Colleges;
- iv. More timely decisions on individual student applications

### RESIT EXAMINATIONS

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One of the two cases upheld by the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) in 2018-19 included in its recommendations that the University review its re-sit policy and the examination allowances available for students who have mitigating circumstances.

The Examinations and Assessment Committee commissioned a Working Group, Chaired by the Chair of the EAMC, to consider the OIA's recommendations in relation to the re-sit policy and examination allowances.

That group concluded that the current provision and allowance mechanisms were appropriate, with a several areas identified for further consideration. A formal response was submitted to the OIA by the deadline and subsequently endorsed by the General Board's Education Committee.

### LENGTH OF INTERMISSION

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The Committee agreed that a key focus for 2019-20 would be data analysis on the length of continuous and non-continuous periods of disregarding terms and identifying successful completion rates following extended periods of intermission. It was anticipated that this would be considered in the Lent term 2020 and may inform guidance on maximum periods of intermission that the Committee would normally agree. Unfortunately, due to COVID and the emergency action required, this work was not completed. It is hoped that this will be considered in 2020-21.

## APPENDIX A

Applications for Reconsideration of an original Result (including 'Reconsideration of Original Result where the Safety Net could not be applied'): 2015-16 to 2019-20, by Tripos.

	2019-20		2018-19		2017-18		2016-17		2015-16	
	Nbr received	Nbr declined								
ASNaC			1	1						
Architecture							1			
AMES							2	1	1	
Chemical Engineering			3		3	1	1			
Classics	4	3			2	1	1	1		
Computer Science	3	1	2	2						
Economics	2	2	4	1	8	1	5	2	2	1
Education	2				6	1	1			
Engineering			4	1	8	5	3	2	3	2
English			12	4	4	2	6	2	5	1
Geography			3							
History of Art	1	1	2	1	1		1		1	
HSPS			8	1	6	1	8	1	3	
History	1		5	1	3		8		1	
History & MML			1		1					
History & Politics			2							
Land Economy					2		1		2	
Linguistics	2				1					
LLM & MCL	1	1	3	2	1	1				
Law	4	1	12	6	1	3	4	1	5	1

<b>MASt: (Astrophysics, Physics and Maths)</b>			2	1	1				2	
<b>Mathematical</b>	3	2	3		4	3	1		1	
<b>Manufacturing Engineering</b>	1				1	1				
<b>MBA &amp; EMBA</b>					1		3			
<b>Management Studies</b>	4	1								
<b>MVST</b>			8		2		1			
<b>MML</b>			5	1	7	2	4	2	3	
<b>Music</b>	1	1	6	1	3		2			
<b>NST</b>	8	6	26	7	2	4	14	1	14	1
<b>PBS</b>	2	2	3				3		2	1
<b>Philosophy</b>	1		2		5	4	1			
<b>Theology &amp; Religious Studies</b>	1		2		6	1	4		1	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>119</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>8</b>

## APPENDIX B

Paper title	Brief desc
EAMC: Proposed Items for Committee Review 2019-20	Paper reviewed topics prioritised for consideration in 2018-2019 and their progress, and outlined topics of consideration for 2019-20
Consideration of Guidance Notes 2019-20	Review the guidance notes for use in academic year 2019-2020
Terms of Reference for the EAMC 2019-2020	Updated Terms of reference for 2019-2020
EAMC Annual Report 2018-2019	The Secretary presents the Annual Report for the Committee to review and comment.
Examinations Operational Report	The Committee is asked to note the Operational Report that was presented to the Examination and Assessment Committee on 17 October 2019.
OSCCA Annual Report	The Committee is asked to note the Annual Report produced by the Office of Student Conduct, Complaints and Appeals.
Fitness to Study Procedure - OIA Good Practice Framework	Ms d'Ambrumenil, the Head of OSCCA, attended the meeting to inform the Committee of the consultation on the proposed changes to the Fitness to Study process.
Governance Changes for Postgraduate Taught Students and their impact on the EAMC	Changes to the Board of Graduate Studies and Exam Allowances for Taught students now moving to the EAMC
Fitness to Study Procedure - OIA Good Practice Framework	First draft of fitness to study procedure
Re-sit Paper Feb 2020	Working Group to review the university's policy on re-sit examinations.
Contingency Planning	Contingency plans for the COVID-19 outbreak
Alternative Modes of Assessment	Re-naming Alternative Mode of Assessment to avoid confusion with Diversifying Assessment project
Existing guidance to Colleges	Extract from a bulletin sent to Colleges on 20 April 2020.
Supplementary guidance to students and colleges on allowances and disregarding terms	The Committee received paper EAMC192048 which proposed supplementary guidance to students and Colleges on allowances and disregarding terms.
EAMC Meeting dates for 2020-2021	List of meeting dates for the next academic year
Disregard Terms Guidance Notes	Following the outcome of the Review case considered at the meeting on 5 June 2020, the guidance notes for disregarding terms have been updated to include information on Fitness to Study Processes.
Assessments for students with Specific Learning difficulties (SpLDs)	The Secretary has been alerted to a change in diagnostic assessments under the current physical distancing requirements.
Terms of Reference 2020-21	Revised ToR following addition of business from BoGS
Email from DSO	Request for review of evidence required for AMA
BGS to EAMC transition paper 110920	Paper to clarify the transition of BGS to EAMC on October 1st 2020
Amendment to guidance notes for Adjusted modes of assessment	The guidance notes for adjusted modes of assessment were published in September. The paper informs the Committee of an amendment to the guidance.