



## Unreserved business minutes of College Council on 28 May 2025

### Present:

<b>Ex officio members</b>	Master, Acting Vice-Master, Senior Tutor, Bursar
<b>Elected members</b>	Dr Bordin, Dr Eaton, Professor Fruk, Dr Groom, Dr Harasimov, Mr Ireland, Dr Öner, Dr Ranasinghe, Dr Sumnall, Dr Wilson-Lee
<b>Student members</b>	Mr Bowyer (JCR Vice-President), Ms Harrison (Student Representative), Mr Johnson (JCR President), Mr Łastowiecki (MCR President)
<b>In attendance</b>	College Registrar (Council Secretary)

### Introductory business

#### 901 Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Ms Baskerville.

#### 902 Approval of agenda

Approved.

#### 903 Declaration of interests

None.

#### 904 Unreserved business minutes of 7 May 2025 (CC.2425/904)

The JCR requested that minute 807, Arrangements for 2025-26 and 2026-27 Undergraduate Admissions Rounds, be amended to read “Students **reported that the JCR Executive did not have a preferred interview format, and** asked that the costs to applicants, and environmental impact of travel, of attending in-person interviews be considered; it was confirmed that the College already covered expenses for qualifying applicants.” Subject to the above amendment, the minutes were **confirmed**.

#### 905 Matters arising not elsewhere on the agenda (CC.2425/905)

Council **noted** the update and that online Fellows’ expenses forms were being developed.

#### 905a 2025-26 Undergraduate Admissions Round: Review of Decision-Making Procedure (Interim Admissions Director / Deputy Senior Tutor) (CC.2425/905a)

Council, noting the strength of feeling amongst some Directors of Studies, and the importance of taking further time to consider representations made directly by Directors of Studies, **agreed** that it wished to revisit the decision taken on 7 May to interview all home applicants in person.

Council discussed the options for admissions interview formats, and the pros and cons of each, recognising that there was no solution which satisfied everyone. Regret was expressed that there was not an inter-collegiate-led approach for consistency across subjects.

***Model 1 – interview all home applicants online***

- The increasing risk of generative AI affecting the interview process was discussed at length: there were opportunities to mitigate some risk through interviewers' expertise in their subjects and pre-emptive use of AI to identify signs of cheating, but it was likely that the growth in AI use would lead to in-person interviews again becoming the norm in the near future; for this reason, the Interim Admissions Director recommended model 2 by a narrow margin.
- Whilst convenience and personal preference were understandable motivators, and for which sympathy was expressed, no academic arguments had been proposed in favour of online interviews.

***Model 2 – interview all home applicants in person***

- This was applicants' preferred model, thereby offering an opportunity to increase direct applicant numbers, one of the priorities in the draft Vision & Strategy: for this reason, the Deputy Senior Tutor recommended Model 2.
- Reasonable adjustments would be implemented to mitigate health risks and to meet accessibility needs for both applicants and Directors of Studies: such arrangements were also implemented for Open Days.
- Visiting Cambridge offered better understanding of college residential and social experience.

***Model 3 – interview home applicants for certain subjects in-person and others online***

- The University published admissions arrangements by College rather than by subject: applicants could be discouraged by the complexity of the approach, leading to a decline in direct application numbers: the Interim Admissions Director's recommendation was not to proceed with Model 3.
- The additional survey conducted since the last Council meeting showed that preferences by subject were very mixed, with seven subjects opting for each of in-person and online interviews if Model 3 were to be implemented (the remainder leaving the decision to Council). There was no data on the impact of such an approach on application numbers as only one other College had varied interview format by subject, and that only involved a different format in a single subject.
- The Admissions Team could implement Model 3, but it was the most operationally complex.

Students reported that the issue had been discussed extensively at the JCR Executive, but the student body offered varied opinions, including the potential impact of travel arrangements

and nerves on in-person performance; the opportunity to treat home and international students equally by interviewing everyone online; and the message the College sent of its values by how it chose to interview, noting that other institutions did not interview at all.

After lengthy discussion and confirming that it had considered all the information, Council, voting decisively in favour, **agreed**:

- (a) that the preferred format for 2025-26 was to interview all home applicants in-person; and
- (b) to revisit the issue in a year's time.

**905b 2025-26 Undergraduate Admissions Round: representations from Directors of Studies in Engineering** (CC.2425/905b)

The representations were **received** as part of item 905a.

**Decision items**

**906 Risk Register 2025: final consideration (Registrar)** (CC.2425/906)

The Registrar drew attention to the risks and mitigations relating to:

- ambitions exceeding available resources, relevant to the Vision & Strategy and the fundraising campaign to support it;
- capacity of Principal Officers, other Fellows and key staff continuing to be stretched, particularly in relation to delivering Vision & Strategy objectives in addition to business as usual; and
- communications, as the Communications Manager vacancy had been filled.

The 2025 risk registers for Governance, University and Inter-collegiate Relations, and Communications, were **approved** for presentation to the Audit Committee.

**907 HR Committee Terms of Reference (Bursar)** (CC.2425/907)  
**Approved.**

**Discussion items**

**908 Q3 Management Accounts (Bursar)** (CC.2425/908)

**Noted.** Discussion would take place at the Governing Body meeting following Council.

**909 Draft College Budget 2025-26 (Bursar)** (CC.2425/909)

**Noted.** Discussion would take place at the Governing Body meeting following Council. The final version of the budget would be brought to the Annual Meeting for approval, having first been reviewed by Finance & Needs Committee.

- 910 Interment of Ashes Guidelines (Registrar) (CC.2425/910)**  
The Registrar presented the current guidelines on interment of ashes, and the Chaplain's comments on the practice of scattering. Council, having considered the theological and practical considerations, requested that updated guidelines, explaining that the College did not permit scattering, be proposed for adoption. **Action: Registrar**

**Policy items with substantive revisions**

- 911 Anti-Bullying and Harassment Policy (Bursar) (CC.2425/911)**  
The amendments reflected the new legal duties in relation to anti-bullying and harassment in the workplace. The policy was **adopted**, on the recommendation of the HR Committee.

- 912 Security Policy (Bursar) (CC.2425/912)**  
The policy had been substantially rewritten to encompass estate security as well as personal security. The policy was **referred** to the Health and Safety Committee with a request to re-word the policy relating to the securing of external doors, noting that it might not always be possible to ensure that a building was empty. **Action: Health & Safety Committee**

- 913 Special Leave Policy (Bursar) (CC.2425/913)**  
Amendments reflected the new legal duties in relation to leave for neonatal care. The policy was **adopted**, on the recommendation of the HR Committee.

- 914 Staff Code of Conduct (Bursar) (CC.2425/914)**  
The updated document included the College's new legal duties in relation to anti-bullying and harassment in the workplace. The Code of Conduct was **adopted**, on the recommendation of the HR Committee.

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**Policy items adopted following planned review by the HR Committee**

- 915 Capability Policy (CC.2425/915)**  
**916 Disciplinary Policy (CC.2425/916)**  
**917 Grievance Policy (CC.2425/917)**  
**918 Hybrid Working Policy (CC.2425/918)**  
**919 Performance Development Review (PDR) Policy (CC.2425/919)**  
**920 Sickness Absence Policy (CC.2425/920)**  
**921 Staff Pay Framework (CC.2425/921)**

**Reports received from committees**

- 922 Health & Safety Committee 7 May 2025 (unconfirmed) (CC.2425/922)**  
**923 HR Committee 13 May 2025 (unconfirmed) (CC.2425/923)**  
**924 Finance & Needs Committee 19 May 2025 (unconfirmed) (CC.2425/924)**

**Other business**

**925 Any other business**

None.

**926 Date of next meeting**

Wednesday 25 June 2025 at **10am** (Annual Meeting) in the William Mong Hall.