

# Equality Impact Assessment on Undergraduate Student Attainment

## Response by the General Board

The Board is pleased that the report commends University practice in many areas, including the very low dropout rates, the quality of documentation on the examination process for students and examiners and the support available to students, particularly in the Colleges. It notes with concern, however, that the report's findings are based on just two years' worth of data, and that only a limited attempt appears to have been made to assess the statistical significance of the data. The University has now established its own Equality and Diversity Section who will keep these matters under review.

In connection with the report's recommendations (Section 5.0), the Board's preliminary comment is as follows:

### Recommendation A

*"The University to collaborate with College in supporting and developing initiatives such as the Springboard Programme, targeted at assisting female students to achieve their full potentials. Additional analyses focussing on specific subject areas is recommended, which may help to identify where the gaps are and prioritise action."*

Funding, in cooperation with the Colleges, is being sought to continue the Springboard programme. In accordance with the report's recommendation, a number of University institutions (History, English, Modern and Medieval Languages and Computer Science) will, supported by the Equality and Diversity Section of the Human Resources Division, undertake their own analyses of examination performance by gender, the findings of which will be reported to the Board's Education Committee and the Board of Examinations.

### Recommendation B

*"Further investigation is recommended into Black students' experiences at Cambridge, and what factors (such as isolation) are significant to attainment. Local investigation may be attempted through a targeted confidential survey and/or focus groups."*



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The report acknowledges that all Cambridge undergraduate students, whatever their ethnic backgrounds, perform well above national averages. The number of black students whose examination performance was analysed in the report does not, in the Board's view, represent a statistically significant sample. The Board has previously, through its Joint Committee on Academic Performance, commissioned detailed research into the examination performance of certain ethnic groups (see Reporter 15 March 2006). The matter will continue to be kept under review.

### Recommendation C

*"... [support] the DRC plan to work with Colleges to promote positive practice that encourages students who are offered a place to disclose earlier so that the adjustments and adaptations are made in time, thereby making their arrival and the stay at Cambridge much more comfortable and successful."*

The Disability Resource Centre continues to work with the Colleges to encourage early disclosure from students with disabilities. The report notes that there is no evidence of under-performance by disabled students.

### Recommendation D

*"... that a training programme for Tutors on the Dignity at Study procedures is offered by CPPD. The primary purpose of the training sessions would be to reinforce and develop skills to support students who are harassed or bullied."*

Training opportunities for Tutors will continue to be offered.

### Recommendation E

*"... seek student perception through surveys to identify what is working well and what improvements can be achieved to create inclusive cultures that promote the best learning environment for all."*

The University continues to encourage students to participate in the National Student Survey. The Equality and Diversity Section will analyse the NSS data. The Board does not believe that the cost of additional University-wide surveys on these issues would be justified.

