



# The Regent House

A University governance guide



UNIVERSITY OF  
CAMBRIDGE

## UNIVERSITY GOVERNANCE AND THE REGENT HOUSE

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The Regent House is the University's governing body, comprising over 7,200 members of the academic, senior research and senior administrative staff of the University and the Colleges. The Regent House is charged with approving certain acts or decisions of the University, for example, making changes to University legislation and approving major building projects. The Regent House plays a crucial role in the University's decision-making process: its membership is empowered to accept, reject, or request the amendment of recommendations proposed to it by the Council and the General Board and also by its own members (see [collective actions](#)). Members of the Regent House are also able to stand for and vote in elections to the Council and the Board of Scrutiny.

### Effective governance

The Regent House is the embodiment of the University as a self-governing institution, and its effectiveness is contingent upon its members maintaining awareness of and engagement with the issues at hand. Members of the Regent House are encouraged to take an active interest in the proposals put to the Regent House and may, when appropriate, choose to exercise the powers granted to them under the University's *Statutes and Ordinances* (see p. 3 below).

## MEMBERSHIP COMPOSITION

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Most members of the Regent House are academic, senior research or senior administrative staff of the University and the Colleges. The Regent House includes:

- The Chancellor, the Vice-Chancellor, the High Steward and Deputy High Steward, the Commissary, the Proctors and Pro-Proctors, the Orator, the Registry, the Librarian, the Director of the Fitzwilliam Museum, the Esquire Bedells, the University Advocate and Deputy Advocates, the University Organist and the external members of the University Council;
- University employees at Grade 9 and above (including Professors, Clinical Professors, Professors (Grade 11), Associate Professors, Assistant Professors, and certain other senior clinical, academic-related and research staff) and qualifying staff at Cambridge University Press & Assessment;
- Heads of the Colleges, and College Fellows who meet certain residence conditions;
- retired University staff who were members of the Regent House and who are still active participants in the University's affairs (membership by application, see p. 2);
- other specific University and College staff, including holders of affiliated titles and certain College offices, Associate Lecturers, senior staff of University of Cambridge Investment Management Ltd, University employees outside the grade structure who are equivalent to Grade 9 and above, and, as part of the conditions for moving to a Grade-based model in 2022, University employees who were on the 5 November 2021 Roll who would not otherwise qualifying for inclusion.

The categories of membership of the Regent House are provided in Special Ordinance A (i) and Chapter I of the Ordinances (see p. 6 below).

## THE 'ROLL OF THE REGENT HOUSE'

### Inclusion on the Roll

The list of members of the Regent House is generated afresh each year with the help of data held in CHRIS (the University's HR database). Other than checking the preliminary Roll (see below), *most* new and existing members are not required to take action to 'join' the Regent House.

A *preliminary* list of the names to be placed on the Roll of the Regent House is published as a special issue of the *Reporter* on the *first weekday of October* each year to enable those who are eligible, or who think they should be eligible, to check their entries are present and correct and if necessary apply for an amendment.

The *definitive* Roll of the Regent House is published as a *Reporter* special issue on the *fifth weekday in November* each year (the promulgated Roll). Once promulgated, the Roll is fixed and membership of the Regent House does not change until promulgation the following November. Regardless of seniority, new members of staff or individuals appointed to qualifying posts after the Roll has been promulgated have to wait until the following November for inclusion on the Roll and are therefore unable until that time to, for example, vote in ballots, sign fly-sheets or support amendments to Graces.

Once the Roll has been promulgated, those listed become eligible to participate in Regent House business (see p. 3). Throughout the year when ballots are opening, links to the ballot information and voting portal are sent to Regent House members via their registered University email address (or by post where requested). Members of the Regent House are encouraged to subscribe to the mailing list for the *Reporter*, which is an essential source of information for Regent House members (see p. 5 below).

### Retired or retiring University staff

*Retired* members or those *nearing retirement* whose membership of the Regent House was contingent on holding an office or appointment in the *University* need to apply to the Registry by **15 August** each year to be included on the Roll. To be accepted, applications must include confirmation from Heads of institution of *active participation in University affairs* (see Special Ordinance A (i) (e)). NB: this mechanism is for University-based qualifying roles and is not applicable to College Fellowships and other College roles.

*The Roll is maintained by the Clerk of the Roll of the Regent House and queries should be addressed by email to [roll.enquiries@admin.cam.ac.uk](mailto:roll.enquiries@admin.cam.ac.uk).*

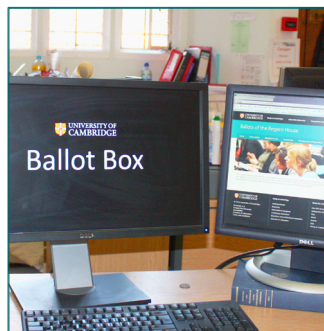


## REGENT HOUSE MEMBERS' RIGHTS AND POWERS

Members of the Regent House can have an input into University matters in a variety of ways and are empowered to do the following:

### *Collective actions*

- **Ten or more members may raise a topic of concern** for formal Discussion or request that a **Discussion be held in person**
- **Fifty or more members may initiate a Grace** for submission to the Regent House
- **Twenty-five or more members** may request the **amendment of a Grace** already submitted but not yet approved
- **Twenty-five or more members** may request that a **vote be taken on a Grace**
- **Ten or more members** can make known their views on questions which are to be the subject of a ballot by issuing a statement as a **fly-sheet** for circulation



A SharePoint site is available to members of the Regent House where petitions for collective actions may be posted for circulation and signature by other members, see p. 6 and [www.governance.cam.ac.uk/governance/key-bodies/RH-Senate/Pages/RH-Petitions.aspx](http://www.governance.cam.ac.uk/governance/key-bodies/RH-Senate/Pages/RH-Petitions.aspx)

### *Individual rights*

- **Vote in Regent House ballots**, including the election of members of the University Council and the Board of Scrutiny (certain classes only)
- **Qualify for, or be appointed or elected to certain roles in the University** e.g. certain committee appointments or standing for election to the University Council or Board of Scrutiny (subject to other applicable qualifying criteria)
- **Attend and participate in Discussions**
- **Attend Congregations**
- **Use the University Combination Room**
- **Be a member of the Senate** and vote to elect the Chancellor and High Steward

## HOW IT WORKS

The *University Council* (as the principal executive and policy-making body of the University), and the *General Board* (responsible for the academic and educational policy of the University) report to the Regent House (via **Reports** or **Notices**) or submit recommendations and proposals (in the form of '**Graces**') for approval, usually by publishing them in the *Reporter*.

The Regent House then considers the proposals and any comments made in Discussion and members choose whether to accept the proposals as drafted or otherwise use their collective powers to seek a ballot or amendment.

The timescale for getting business through the approval processes varies depending on the complexity and/or controversy of the proposed changes and the stages involved. Below are some examples of how the process works, from proposal submission to Regent House approval.



UNIVERSITY  
DECISION-MAKING:

Process overview

**Report published**  
(including  
recommendations)**Discussion held**  
(forum for RH  
members and others  
to state their views)**Discussion  
remarks published****Response to remarks  
by issuing body**  
(incl. option to  
revise or withdraw  
the proposals or for  
Council to call a ballot)**Grace submitted to  
the Regent House**  
(seeking approval of  
the [revised] proposals)**Grace approved**  
(at 4 pm on the second  
Friday after publication,  
*unless before then*:  
(i) the Vice-Chancellor  
withdraws it, or  
(ii) the Council calls a  
ballot on it, or  
(iii) at least 25 members  
of the Regent House  
request a ballot or  
propose an amendment)*Example 1: A standard Report**Report > Discussion > Response > Grace > Approval*

A Report of the Council is published in the *Reporter* and included on the list for Discussion at least thirteen days later.

At the Discussion (which is chaired by a Deputy Vice-Chancellor and attended by the Proctors) Regent House members and others may comment on the Report and its proposals; any remarks made are then published in the *Reporter* the following week. The Council then reviews the remarks and, having consulted with other contributing bodies as needed, formally responds by way of a Notice published in the *Reporter*.

A Grace seeking approval of the Report's recommendations is submitted to the Regent House. The Grace is automatically approved at 4 pm on the second Friday after publication (which is usually a Wednesday, so nine days later), unless at least twenty-five members of the Regent House request an amendment or a ballot (or the VC decides to withdraw it).

*Example 2: Straightforward items**Grace or Notice and Grace > Approval*

Requests for the approval of straightforward items of business, such as new regulations for trust funds, may be made simply by the submission of a Grace, or if some explanation or context is required, by Notice and Grace. Both are published in the relevant sections of the *Reporter*, with the Grace subject to the usual approval process (i.e. 4 pm on the second Friday after publication, unless withdrawn or ballot request/amendment received).

*Example 3: Business requiring a ballot**Report > Discussion > Response > Ballot information and Grace > Fly-sheets and voting > Ballot result > Outcome implemented**Topic of concern raised > Notice > Discussion > Response > Ballot / Grace etc if required*

For items of particular significance, complexity, controversy, or importance, Regent House approval may be sought by ballot. The usual process of Report, Discussion and Response often precedes the ballot process as a way of communicating and debating the issues at hand. Ballots are conducted in accordance with the relevant Ordinances, including the Single Transferable Vote regulations. When a ballot is called on a Grace, a Notice is published in the *Reporter* providing information on the ballot process and timetable, including the criteria and deadline for the submission of fly-sheets. **The outcome of a ballot of the Regent House is definitive** and the Grace implemented, amended or rejected accordingly.

## THE BALLOT PROCESS

Ballot called  
and timetable  
publishedFly-sheets  
received and  
ballot info  
distributedVoting  
takes placeBallot result  
and fly-sheets  
publishedBallot result  
implemented

## CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATION

**The Cambridge University Reporter**

<https://www.reporter.admin.cam.ac.uk/>

The *Reporter* is the University's journal of official business and the primary means through which official information and governance-related matters are conveyed by the University to the Regent House and beyond. Ordinary issues of the *Reporter* are usually published weekly in term time and carry items of importance to the Regent House, such as:

**Notices** – issued by the Vice-Chancellor, University Council, Registry, or other authorised bodies. Used for a variety of purposes, from the announcement of a ballot or University-wide consultation, to the arrangements for the Honorary Degree congregation or the closure of the University Combination Room.

**Reports** – usually published by the University Council and/or the General Board. Substantive items requiring the approval of the Regent House (by Statute/Ordinance or custom) are published as Reports, and therefore are subject to Discussion by the Regent House.

**Graces** – proposals put to the Regent House for approval.

**Acta** – confirmation of official approval; Grace approval confirmations, congregation lists and ballot results are published here.

**Discussion information** – including schedules and listings (Notices), responses (Notices), and Discussion reports that record the details and individual remarks made.

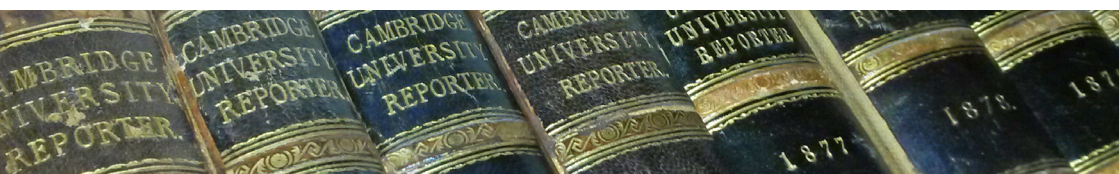
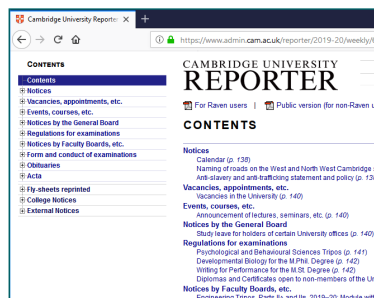
**Election notices, timetables and information** – for election to University bodies such as the University Council or Board of Scrutiny.

**Ballot and fly-sheet information** – ballot information and timetables are usually published as Notices; ballot results are published in Acta; and fly-sheets are reprinted in the unofficial section of the same issue of the *Reporter* as the ballot result.

*Extraordinary issues*, published outside of the advertised schedule but following the same numbering as the weekly issues, are published occasionally during the year. The University's Annual Reports and Financial Statements are usually published each year as an extraordinary issue.

*Special issues* of the *Reporter*, including the preliminary and promulgated Roll of the Regent House, the Fellows of the Colleges, and members of University bodies (committees, boards, syndicates, etc.), are also published during the academic year.

To subscribe to the *Reporter* mailing list and receive email notification for the publication of *Reporter* issues, use the sign-up form on the *Reporter* homepage.





## The Statutes and Ordinances

<https://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/univ/so>

The University's *Statutes and Ordinances* provide the constitutional framework that allows the University to govern its affairs. Regent House members don't need to be experts in the S&O but knowledge of the core provisions is useful in understanding the workings of the University and the sphere in which it operates. Useful provisions:

### *Statute A III*

Main provisions on the Regent House, including powers and role within University decision-making processes

### *Special Ordinance A (i)*

Membership of the Regent House

### *Special Ordinance A (ii)*

Submission of Graces / conduct of business by the Regent House

### *Ordinance Chapter I*

Most of this Chapter is relevant, especially:  
*Roll of the Regent House*, including the categories of membership under Special Ordinance A (i) (f);  
*Conduct of Business*, including:  
 – Discussions  
 – Graces and Congregations of the Regent House  
 – Graces of the Senate  
 – Discussions and fly-sheets (Council Notice); and  
*The Council and Election of Members of the Council*

## Regent House Petitions site

<https://universityofcambridgecloud.sharepoint.com/sites/RegentHousePetitions>

Accessible only to current members of the Regent House, the Petitions site is designed to host and facilitate the circulation of petitions for signature by members of the Regent House. The site also contains advice on process and the factors to consider when seeking collective actions (see p. 3).

## The University governance site

<https://www.governance.cam.ac.uk/>

The governance site provides information on the University's governance structure, decision-making processes, instruments of governance, and key personnel. It also hosts sub-sites for the Council and other University committees, as well as for Regent House ballots and voting information.

*Promulgated Roll:*  
Fifth weekday in November  
  
*(Preliminary Roll:*  
First weekday in October)

*Current Roll of the Regent House*  
Published on the *Reporter* website at:  
[www.admin.cam.ac.uk/reporter/  
regent\\_house\\_roll/](http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/reporter/regent_house_roll/)

*Clerk of the Roll of the Regent House*  
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c/o Governance & Compliance Division, The Old Schools



[www.governance.cam.ac.uk](http://www.governance.cam.ac.uk)



Created by the Governance and Compliance Division.

Queries and advice on University governance may be addressed to [university.draftsman@admin.cam.ac.uk](mailto:university.draftsman@admin.cam.ac.uk)

Queries on this brochure may be emailed to [governance@admin.cam.ac.uk](mailto:governance@admin.cam.ac.uk)

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