



# The Regent House

*A University governance guide*



UNIVERSITY OF  
CAMBRIDGE

## UNIVERSITY GOVERNANCE AND THE REGENT HOUSE

The Regent House is the University's principal governing body, comprising some 6,000 plus members of the academic, research and senior administrative staff of the University and Colleges.

The Regent House is charged with approving the acts or decisions of the University, including, for example, making changes to University legislation, approving major building projects, establishing senior academic posts, and approving the University's financial and budget reports. The Regent House plays a crucial role in the University's decision-making process, with its membership empowered to accept, reject or request amendment to the recommendations proposed. The Regent House also elects members to the University Council and the Board of Scrutiny.

### *Effective governance*

The Regent House is the embodiment of the University as a democratic 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).



## MEMBERSHIP MAKEUP

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Membership of the Regent House is largely comprised of academic, research and senior administrative staff of the University and Colleges. Membership includes:

- The Chancellor, the High Steward, the Deputy High Steward, the Commissary, and the external members of the University Council (class (e))
- Heads of Colleges
- Fellows of the Colleges who conform to certain residence conditions
- University officers (including Professors, Readers, University Lecturers and certain academic-related administrative officers) and qualifying staff at Cambridge University Press (under Statute J 7)
- Other University and College staff who qualify under Statute A III 11(e), including holders of certain lectureships, research posts and College offices and qualifying staff at Cambridge Assessment and in the Investment Office.

Currently, with the exception of certain senior positions, members cease to be eligible for the Roll at the next promulgation after they reach the age of 70. However, one of the changes to Statute A currently awaiting Privy Council approval is the removal of the age limit on membership of the Regent House. A decision is expected during the 2019–20 academic year, meaning the age limit could no longer be in place for the promulgation of the Roll in November 2020.

## THE ROLL OF THE REGENT HOUSE

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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 correct and if necessary apply to the Registry for amendment.

The **definitive** Roll of the Regent House is published as a *Reporter* Special 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.

### *New members of the Regent House*

The list of members of the Regent House is initially generated with the help of HR records. New and existing members should check the preliminary Roll (as above) but are otherwise not required to take action to ‘join’ the Regent House. Items, such as voting papers and fly-sheets (statements for and against the proposals), are sent to members on the Roll via their registered University email or postal address.

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 and are therefore unable until that time to, for example, vote in ballots, sign fly-sheets or support amendments to Graces.

*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 members may request a topic of concern** be brought forward for Discussion
- **Fifty members may initiate a Grace** for submission to the Regent House
- **Twenty-five members** may request the **amendment of a Grace** already submitted but not yet approved
- **Twenty-five members** may request that a **vote be taken on a Grace by ballot**
- **Ten 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



### *Individual rights*

- **Vote in Regent House ballots**, including the election of members of the Council and the Board of Scrutiny (certain classes only)
- **Vote in elections of the Senate**
- **Attend and participate in Discussions**
- **Attend Congregations**
- **Use the University Combination Room**  
(see <http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/univ/combinationroom/>)

## HOW IT WORKS

Various bodies of the University report to the Regent House (Reports or Notices) or submit recommendations and proposals (in the form of 'Graces') for approval. The **University Council** (as the principal executive and policy-making body of the University), and the **General Board of the Faculties** (responsible for the academic and educational policy of the University) produce the majority of these but certain other bodies, for example some of the **Boards and Syndicates**, also have the right to report directly to the Regent House.

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, withdrawal 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. The shortest timescale, assuming support at every stage, is one month during term. Below are some examples of how the process works, from proposal submission to Regent House approval.

**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 4pm 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 General Board is published in the *Reporter* and included on the list for Discussion roughly two weeks later.

At the Discussion (which is usually 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 General Board then reviews the remarks and chooses whether to formally respond 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 (usually a Wednesday, so nine days later), unless at least twenty-five members of the Regent House request an amendment or a ballot.

### Example 2: Straightforward items

#### *Grace or Notice and Grace*

Requests for the approval of straightforward items of business, such as new regulations for funds or trusts, 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 Friday of the week following publication).

### 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 Notice often precede 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, 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.

Ballot called  
and timetable  
published

Fly-sheets and  
ballot info  
distributed

Voting  
takes place

Ballot result  
and fly-sheets  
published

Ballot result  
implemented

## CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATION

**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 published weekly in term time and carry items of importance to the Regent House, such as:



Cambridge University Reporter (2014-15, weekly/6360/)

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Download a printable pdf of this Reporter

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- Notice of a Discussion on Tuesday, 28 October 2014 (p. 50)
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**Vacancies, appointments, etc.**

- Vacancies in the University (p. 51)
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**Notices by Faculty Boards, etc.**

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**Obituaries**

- Obituary Notice (p. 54)

**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, but other bodies, such as Syndicates and Boards, may also publish. Substantive items requiring the approval of the Regent House (by Statute/Ordinance, custom, or substance) are published as Reports, and therefore are subject to Discussion by the Regent House.

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

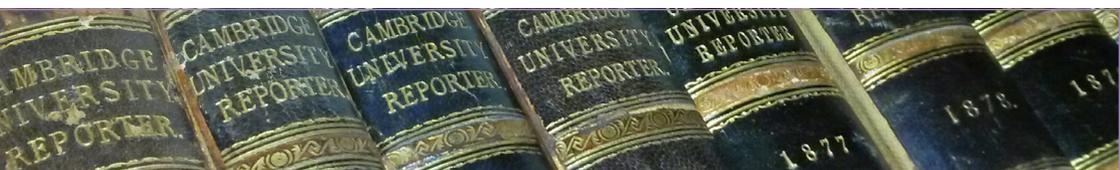
**Acta** – confirmation of official approval; Grace approval confirmations, congregation lists and ballot results are published here.

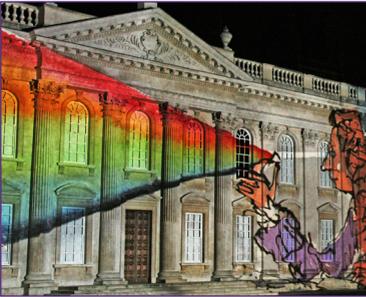
**Discussion information** – including discussion reports (unofficial section), timetable (Notices), and responses (Notices).

**Election notices, timetables and information** – for election to University bodies such as the University Council, General Board, 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 in the same issue as the ballot result.

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





**The Statutes and Ordinances**

<http://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 S&O provisions:*

- Statute A III* Main provisions on the Regent House, including powers, role, and membership
- Special Ordinance A (i)* Submission of Graces / conduct of business by the Regent House
- Statute J 7* Staff of the University Press who qualify for membership
- Ordinance Chapter I* Most of this Chapter is relevant, especially:  
*Roll of the Regent House*, including the categories of membership under Statute A III 11 (e);  
*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*

**The University governance hub**

- Homepage:* [www.governance.cam.ac.uk](http://www.governance.cam.ac.uk)
- Decision-making:* [www.governance.cam.ac.uk/governance/decision-making/](http://www.governance.cam.ac.uk/governance/decision-making/)
- Ballots:* <https://www.governance.cam.ac.uk/ballots/rh/>

A central resource focusing on governance information, the University’s governance website provides information on the University’s governance structure, decision-making processes, instruments of governance, and key personnel. It also facilitates access to the work of the University Council and other committees, providing a central access point for committee information, papers and resources. Information on the role of the Regent House, Graces, Discussions and ballots can be found there.

*Promulgated Roll:*  
Fifth weekday in November

*Current Roll of the Regent House*  
Published on the *Reporter* website at:

*Clerk of the Roll of the Regent House*  
Julia Copson

*(Preliminary Roll:*  
First weekday in October)

[www.admin.cam.ac.uk/reporter/regent\\_house\\_roll/](http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/reporter/regent_house_roll/)

[roll.enquiries@admin.cam.ac.uk](mailto:roll.enquiries@admin.cam.ac.uk)  
c/o Registry’s Office, The Old Schools, CB2 1TN



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



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*Queries concerning the governance of the University or on the content of this brochure should be addressed to [governance@admin.cam.ac.uk](mailto:governance@admin.cam.ac.uk) or The Reporter Office, The Old Schools, Cambridge, CB2 1TN*

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