



The Regent House

A University governance guide



UNIVERSITY OF
CAMBRIDGE

UNIVERSITY GOVERNANCE AND THE REGENT HOUSE

The Regent House is the University's 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 below).

MEMBERSHIP MAKEUP

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
- College Fellows who meet 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)
- Retired members of the Regent House who are still active participants in the University's affairs
- Other University and College staff who qualify under Special Ordinance A (i) (f), including holders of certain lectureships, research posts and College offices and qualifying staff at Cambridge Assessment and in the Investment Office.

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). In February 2020, the Privy Council approved amendments to Statute which included removing the age limit (of 70 years) previously in place for certain categories of membership.

THE 'ROLL OF 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 correct and if necessary apply for an 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. 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.

Ballot information is uploaded to a dedicated section of the University's governance site, where general information on Regent House ballots can also be found: <https://www.governance.cam.ac.uk/ballots/rh/>. Throughout the year, when ballots are opening, members on the Roll are sent links to the ballot information and voting portal via their registered University email address (or by post where requested).

New and retired members of the Regent House

The list of members of the Regent House is initially generated with the help of HR records. Other than checking the preliminary roll (as above), most new and existing members are not required to take action to 'join' the Regent House.

Retired members or those nearing retirement 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 new Special Ordinance A (i) (e)).

The *Reporter* is an important source of information for the Regent House (see p. 5); those new to the Roll are automatically subscribed to the *Reporter* mailing list each year.

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.

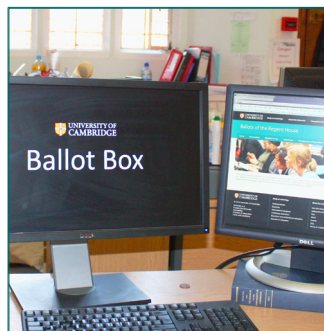


REGENT HOUSE MEMBERS' RIGHTS AND POWERS

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



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

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 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.

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 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 at least thirteen days 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 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 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 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, 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.

THE BALLOT PROCESS

Ballot called
and timetable
published

Fly-sheets
received and
ballot info
distributed

Voting
takes place

Ballot result
and fly-sheets
published

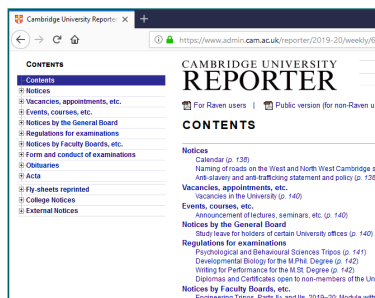
Ballot result
implemented

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, 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.

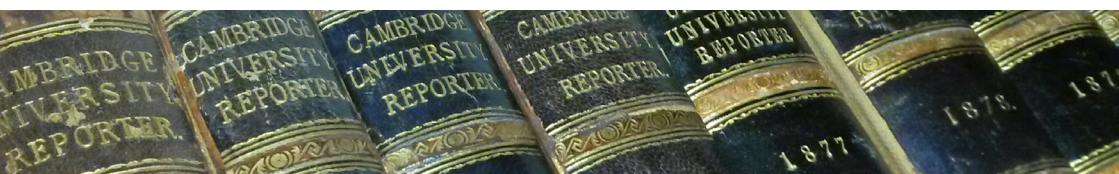
Discussion information – including Discussion reports (unofficial section), timetable (Notices), and responses (Notices).

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.

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

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 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 [new for the 2020 Roll]

Special Ordinance A (ii)

Submission of Graces / conduct of business by the Regent House [previously Special Ordinance A (i)]

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 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

New: Regent House Petitions site

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

Designed to host and facilitate the circulation of petitions for signature by members of the Regent House, this evolving resource 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.

Promulgated Roll:
Fifth weekday in November

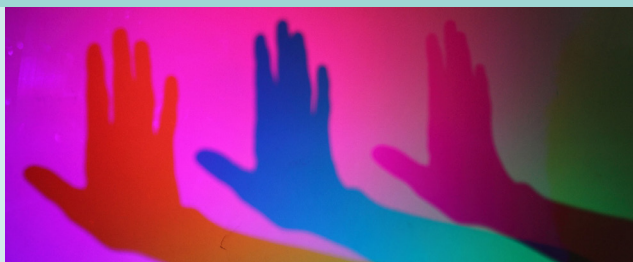
(Preliminary Roll:
First weekday in October)

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
Julia Copson

roll.enquiries@admin.cam.ac.uk
c/o Governance & Compliance Division, The Old Schools



www.governance.cam.ac.uk



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Queries on the content of this brochure should be addressed to governance@admin.cam.ac.uk;
for queries or advice on the University's governance processes email university.draftsman@admin.cam.ac.uk

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