

EXAMINATION FAILURE - Statement of Practice

1. The College Regulations state:
 2. A Student who has failed to be classed in an examination will not be allowed back into residence unless the College Council is prepared to make an exception for special reasons.
 3. The College admits undergraduates only to read for Honours and will not normally permit them to remain in residence unless qualified to read for an Honours degree, nor to read another subject after one examination failure has made it impossible to continue with the course for which they were originally admitted. A change of subject may be made only with the agreement of the Tutor and Directors of Studies concerned.

A copy of these regulations is sent to every undergraduate before admission to the College.

2. If a student fails an examination his or her Tutor will consult his or her Director of Studies and together they will collect as much information as they can about the nature of the failure and the reasons for it. They will try to get in touch with the student as soon as possible. Normally this will happen within a day or two of the failure becoming known, but it may take longer - or indeed be impossible - if the student is out of the country or cannot be reached.
3. If there is a medical explanation for the failure this will normally be known already and steps will be taken to obtain any medical certificates or reports that are needed to support an application for an allowance to the University. The student's Tutor will decide after consultation with the Director of Studies and the Senior Tutor whether or not to make an application on medical or other grounds.
4. If there is no medical explanation for the failure and the Tutor decides that there is no adequate case for an application, the Tutor will investigate the matter further, paying particular attention to the following questions:
 - Is it possible for the student to proceed regardless of the failure and, if so, should this be allowed?
 - Can the student continue with the same course but at 'Ordinary Degree' level and, if so, should this be allowed?
 - Can the student retake the examination?
 - Is there another Tripos course to which the student is qualified to transfer and which is suitable and, if so, should this be allowed?
 - Would it be best for the student to continue in the same discipline but at another university where the course might be more suited to his or her skills and temperament?
5. The Tutor will discuss these and any other relevant issues with the student and will gather together any relevant documentary evidence that is available (for instance supervision reports and warning letters). The student will be invited to add to the dossier of documentary evidence that is being compiled (for instance by making written representations or by submitting written representations made by others). The student may bring a friend or adviser to any meeting held with the Tutor at this stage. The Tutor will provide the student with a copy of the dossier as soon as it is complete.
6. The Tutor will report to a meeting of the other Tutors, who will be supplied with copies of the dossier. The Tutors will discuss the case at the meeting and will decide whether or not to recommend to the College Council that the student be allowed to return into residence.
7. The decision of the Tutors will be reported to the College Council by the Senior Tutor. The members of the College Council will be provided with copies of the dossier of documentary evidence and will receive an oral account of the Tutors' reasoning from the Senior Tutor. After the members of the College Council have asked the Senior Tutor any questions they may wish to ask, he or she and any other Tutor who happens to be a member of the College Council will withdraw. The College Council will decide whether it is (a) ready either to accept a positive recommendation from the Tutors or to reject a negative recommendation, or (b) more inclined either to reject a positive recommendation or to accept a negative recommendation. In the former case a College Order will be recorded allowing the student to return into residence and this will be intimated to the student by his or her Tutor.

8. If the College Council is more inclined to reject a positive recommendation or to accept a negative recommendation from the Tutors, the Registry will write to the student intimating as much, inviting the student to add further to the dossier of documentary evidence, and asking whether the student wishes to appear in person before the College Council at its next meeting. Copies of any additional documentation received will be sent by the Registry to all members of the College Council.
9. Any student who exercises the right to appear in person before the College Council may bring a friend or adviser. The student's Tutor and Director of Studies will be invited to attend. The Master (or other presiding Fellow) will invite the student to make a statement to the College Council, after which any friend or adviser and the Tutor and Director of Studies will be invited in turn to speak. The members of the College Council will then be given the opportunity to ask questions of the student, any friend or adviser, and the Tutor and Director of Studies. When the questioning is over, the student and any friend or adviser will be invited to make a [mal statement before leaving. The Tutor and Director of Studies will remain to advise the College Council, but they and the Senior Tutor and any other Tutor who happens to be a member of the College Council will withdraw before a decision is made. The College Council will then decide whether or not to accept the recommendation of the Tutors.
10. The Registry will send Written notice of the College Council's decision to the student as soon as is practicable after the meeting. The student may then write to the Registry declaring a wish to appeal against the decision. On receipt of any such declaration, the Registry will arrange for a former Master or President of the College (failing whom another senior Fellow who is not a member of the College Council) to preside over a board of appeal and will invite two persons who are not members of the College to join the board. The Registry will send each member of the board a copy of the dossier of documentary evidence and a written account of the College Council's proceedings and decision. The Fellow invited to preside will invite the student to make written or oral representations to the board and to bring a friend or adviser to a meeting of the board, will convene a meeting, and will provide the student with \-written notice of the board's decision as soon as it is practicable to do so. There will be no further appeal, save on procedural grounds to the Visitor of the College.
11. Because a student who is not permitted to return into residence will need time to make alternative arrangements, the aim will always be for the College Council to make its [mal' decision, by its Long Vacation meeting in July at the latest. There may be cases, however, where this proves impossible (for instance because the student could not be contacted or because an application for an allowance was made to the University and failed too late for the case to be processed before the Long Vacation meeting). In such a case, a decision will have to be made at the start of the next academic year, at the risk of the student not being permitted to return and having no alternative arrangements in place.

This compendium was approved by C.O of 19.vi.02 and replaces any previous document dealing with the same subject.