

Christ's College

Brief Guide to the Procedures for Dealing with Examination Failure

This brief guide is a summary of the full College regulations for examination failure, which can be read in the College's Statutes and Ordinances online. Your Tutor can help you to understand and interpret them: the relevant section is Statute F.IV.6 and its associated Ordinance. This guide also explains the support that is available.

Students should note that the University has its own regulations governing examination failure and the eligibility requirements for degrees of the University, and that these University regulations apply regardless of the outcome of any College regulations.

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Members of the College are required to apply themselves diligently to their studies. Every undergraduate student, and every graduate student registered for an examined course, must take each year the examination proper to his or her studies.
- 1.2 A student will not be allowed to return into residence after examination failure, which for the purposes of this document includes not only outright failure, but also failure to be classed (failure to obtain Honours) in a classed examination. Refusal or inability to take an examination is also, for the purposes of this document, a failure.
- 1.3 If a student has failed an examination but the matter is resolved through other processes – for example, if the student receives an allowance from the University as described in section 2, or voluntarily withdraws from the College – then no further action will be taken.
- 1.4 Section 2 of this document sets out the ways in which the College will support a student who has failed an examination.
- 1.5 Section 3 of this document sets out special rules for failure in Preliminary Examinations or College examinations.
- 1.6 Nothing in this document applies to Second MB or Final MB examinations taken by medical students. Failure in a Second MB examination shall not prevent a student from continuing with Tripos examinations, although under University regulations it may prevent a student from proceeding to clinical medical studies.
- 1.7 Nothing in this document is intended to limit a student's legal rights.

2 The Tutor's advisory role

- 2.1 On receiving notice of an examination failure, the student's Tutor shall hold a meeting with the student concerned. The purposes of the meeting are:
 - to explain to the student his or her position following the examination failure;
 - to show the student this document;
 - to establish whether there are any circumstances which might mitigate the failure;

- most importantly, to consider whether an application for special consideration can properly be made to the University Applications Committee*, or whether to make use of alternative appeal procedures that the University may have set up, if any.
- 2.2 This meeting shall take place as soon as is practicable, and normally within two working days of the College being notified of the failure. If the student has left Cambridge the Tutor may at his or her discretion substitute a telephone conversation or some other suitable means of communication. The Tutor shall keep a written record of the meeting or conversation.
- 2.3 If the Tutor considers that sufficient grounds exist for an application to the University's Applications Committee*, he or she will submit such an application on behalf of the student. (The Applications Committee normally meets in late June and early July.) If the Tutor considers that no grounds exist for an application to the Applications Committee, the Tutor will continue to give the student all possible advice and assistance, including investigating the possibility of transfer to another University. Even if the Tutor declines to submit an application, it is permissible for the student to submit an application to the Applications Committee on his or her own behalf, and the Tutor is able to give instruction on the mechanism for doing so.
- 2.4 If the Applications Committee* issues one of the allowances in the list below, the student shall be considered not to have failed after all for the purposes of this document.
- Declared to have deserved Honours
 - Allowed the examination
 - Put in standing to continue
- 2.5 If at any time the student requests that the Tutor's duties should be performed by someone other than his or her own Tutor, the Senior Tutor shall either appoint another Tutor to act in the original Tutor's place, or shall take on those duties personally. The same applies if the student's Tutor is unable or unwilling to act, or to continue to act.
- 2.6 If there are insufficient grounds for an application to the University's Applications Committee*, or if the application is unsuccessful, then the student who has failed will cease to be registered as a student at the College and the University, and must therefore leave the College immediately. He or she will, however, retain life membership of the College.

3 Preliminary Examinations and College examinations

- 3.1 The University has different rules governing Preliminary Examinations, and therefore an application to the University's Applications Committee may not be appropriate or necessary. Instead, the procedures below shall be followed.
- 3.2 The procedures below shall also be followed in the case of failure in a College examination.

* For certain graduate students, the relevant University body is either the Board of Graduate Studies or the Office of Student Conduct, Complaints and Appeals, rather than the Applications Committee.

- 3.3 After the Tutor's meeting described in section 2, the Senior Tutor shall conduct an initial consideration of the case. The Senior Tutor shall take account of all relevant factors and circumstances, including any ill health or emotional distress, any medical evidence, any previous University examination record, any warnings that had been given about lack of progress or likely failure, and any other options that are available to the student. After consulting the student's Tutor and Director(s) of Studies, the Senior Tutor shall decide whether there is a clear reason to grant the student immediate permission to continue his or her studies. If the Senior Tutor so decides, no further action will be taken.
- 3.4 If the Senior Tutor does not grant such immediate permission, the case will be transferred to the "Student Behaviour Panel", which is described in the separately-published *Brief Guide to the College's Disciplinary Procedures*. The Panel shall take account of all relevant factors and circumstances, including the student's supervision reports and apparent ability and diligence, as well as those factors listed above. The Panel will invite the student to speak or make written representations, and may also take statements from the student's Tutor and Director(s) of Studies.
- 3.5 The Panel shall decide:
- to grant the student permission to return into residence and continue his or her studies; *or*
 - to set further conditions, such as passing a progress examination, before the student may return into residence; *or*
 - not to grant such permission to return into residence, in which case the student who has failed will cease to be registered as a student at the College and the University, and must therefore leave the College immediately. He or she will, however, retain life membership of the College.
- 3.6 The student may apply to the "Student Behaviour Appeal Panel" for reconsideration of the decision of the Student Behaviour Panel. The Appeal Panel will follow the procedures described in section 3.4 above and has the same decision-making powers as listed in section 3.5.