

Supervision Norms – Information for Students

The Process

This document is intended to show students how the supervision system is managed and governed at a College and an inter-Collegiate level.

**How systematic under- or over-supervision is prevented**

Supervision norms are agreed annually by the Senior Tutors’ Committee (STC), in consultation with the relevant Faculty/Department. There is student representation on the Faculty Boards, Departmental Committees, and the STC. Students should therefore be engaged in setting and agreeing supervision norms at every level of the decision-making process.

Colleges are expected to abide by these norms (and have agreed to do so), unless there is a stated reason for not doing so. Examples might include, but are not limited to:

* student intermission part-way through the year
* accommodation of a student’s access requirements
* accommodation of a student’s learning difficulty

The supervision norms document for the academic year 2016-17 can be found online.

**The process by which supervision data is collected, monitored and analysed**

Supervisions are recorded through CamCORS, the ‘Cambridge Colleges’ Online Reporting System’. CamCORS is collectively owned by the Colleges and each College is responsible for its students’ records on the database. In addition, CamCORS provides a means by which supervisors can report on their students’ progress, and it provides a means of payment for supervisors and of recording the number of supervisions at the College or Tripos level.

Each year the STC and the Senior Tutors’ Standing Committee on Education (STEC) consider the number of supervisions given across Colleges per Tripos in relation to the supervision norms per Tripos. This is done by considering the CamCORS data at the Tripos level on a College-by-College basis.

Colleges which appear to be over/under teaching in a particular subject(s) will be contacted by the Chair of STEC, and/or the Secretary of the STC. These Colleges will be asked to account for the variances from the norms which have occurred in a particular subject(s). These responses will then be considered by the STEC and the STC. Both of these committees have student representation. Once approved by the STEC and the STC, the report detailing the outcomes of this process will be published on the public-facing pages of the Senior Tutors’ website (<http://www.seniortutors.admin.cam.ac.uk/>).

From the academic year 2016-2017, CamCORS will carry a new function which provides not only a distinction between “supervision” and “non-supervision activity” options, but further distinctions within the “non-supervision activity” option. This provides the additional benefit of allowing for an intercollegiate evaluation of the different types of academic provision open to students alongside the traditional supervision. This introduces an opportunity for the sharing of alternative study practices, allows for consideration to be paid to whether there are any inequalities in non-supervision College academic provision.

In addition, from the academic year 2016-17, Colleges will take part in a triannual Academic and Welfare Review. This is an intercollegiate review activity which will ensure that Colleges are maintaining a baseline level of provision across admissions, education and student welfare. The College Academic and Welfare Review will provide another means by which the extent Colleges operate within the inter-Collegiate norms can be measured.

**The process by which students can voice concerns regarding perceived supervision inequalities**

There has not historically been a formal process through which this could be achieved. Students are expected to open a dialogue about supervision norms with their College, and if students feel that they are unable to resolve this through speaking with their Director of Studies, Tutor, or Senior Tutor, they should report their concerns to their student representatives on the STC and the STEC. Additionally, from the academic year 2016-17, CUSU will hold student representation on the CamCORS Committee of Management. This is the body which manages the CamCORS application, and the platform on which all collected supervision data is stored. Alongside these meetings, CUSU officers and CamCORS representatives will meet annually to discuss supervision data in detail. Therefore, if any student has concerns about their level of supervision provision and they are more comfortable raising concerns with their student representatives, students are welcome to contact the CUSU President and/or Education Officer who will be able to raise these concerns in the relevant fora at the appropriate points in the year.