

## **Faculty of Philosophy**

### **Undergraduate Examinations Guidelines for Examiners and Assessors for Tripos Examinations 2020**

#### **I. PROCEDURE**

##### ***Chair of Examiners:***

There is one Chair of Examiners for all parts of the Tripos. The appointment is made by the General Board, on the nomination of the Faculty Board. Once appointed, the Chair normally acts for two years. It is the duty of the Chair of Examiners to provide agendas and minutes of the following meetings:

- a) Setting Tripos Papers meeting;
- b) Final meeting.

Copies of all these must be passed on to the Faculty Office. (Reports of induction meetings should also be made and passed to the Faculty Office as noted below.)

##### ***Internal Examiners and Assessors:***

Examiners and Assessors are appointed annually. Appointments are made by the General Board, on the nomination of the Faculty Board. Ideally, no one should be an Examiner for any part of the Tripos for more than three years running. Those who do not have experience of undergraduate examining are normally appointed as Assessors in the first instance. The University's eligibility criteria for examiners and assessor are at <https://www.student-registry.admin.cam.ac.uk/examinations-further-guidance-staff/appointment-examiners-and-assessors/information-appointment>

The size of Boards of Examiners and Assessors varies with the number of students taking each part of the Tripos in a given year, and is left to the discretion of the Faculty Board, in consultation with the Chair of Examiners. The Chair of Examiners also decides how to allocate papers among the appointed Examiners and Assessors. For all Parts of the Tripos, two individuals are responsible for each paper. In Part IA, one of the two individuals acts as marker, the other as moderator; in Parts IB and II, both individuals act as markers.

(For further details, see *Marking Exam Scripts* below.)

##### ***External Examiners:***

There are three external examiners, one for each part of the Tripos. Each is appointed for three years. The University's eligibility criteria for external examiners are at: <http://www.student-registry.admin.cam.ac.uk/examinations-further-guidance-staff/appointment-examiners-and-assessors/information-appointment>. Appointments are made by the General Board, on the nomination of the Faculty Board.

##### ***Duties of External Examiners***

- a) External examiners are invited, but not required, to attend the Setting Meeting in the Lent Term. Whether or not the external examiner is able to attend the meeting, she/he will be sent all typed up draft papers after the setting meeting and asked to comment on them. It is the responsibility of the Chair of Examiners in consultation with other appropriate examiners to finalize papers in the light of the external examiners' comments
- b) External examiners will normally come to Cambridge for the final Examiners' Meeting, arriving shortly after the conclusion of the Reconciliation meeting. The duties of the external examiner during this period are described later in this document.
- c) External examiners will attend and contribute to the final meeting of Examiners and sign the Class Lists.

##### ***Induction Meetings:***

Once all examiners and assessors have been appointed, the Chair of Examiners holds meetings with all new examiners and assessors in order to go over the guidelines, marking scheme and classing criteria. The first briefing meeting is normally held in January with a further meeting to discuss marking standards in May (before the beginning of the examinations). Brief reports of these meetings are completed by the Chair, giving details of who has attended and any specific problems encountered. The Reports should be passed to the Faculty Office.

New examiners and assessors are required to attend these meetings.

##### ***Setting Tripos Papers:***

- a) Early in the Lent Term (once the first list of candidates has been received from the Student Registry), the Chair of Examiners allocates two examiners for each paper. The two examiners bear

equal responsibility for marking the paper assigned to them.

b) In early January, the Chair writes to **all** lecturers whose courses are listed in the Lecture List and invites them to suggest Tripos questions. This should include lecturers for papers borrowed from other faculties, who should make appropriate suggestions for the General Paper.

c) Once the suggested questions have been received, the Chair of Examiners passes them on to those responsible for setting the paper(s). The two setters for a paper should meet to produce a draft examination paper in advance of the Setting meeting. They should take account of the questions suggested by lecturers, the syllabus in the Guide to Courses, and past exam papers. They are asked to consult the previous three years of exam papers (which are available on the philosophy web page). The Chair also asks them to suggest questions for the General Papers. These questions may be drawn from all areas of the syllabus, including (e.g.) papers set by the Classics Faculty and Divinity, but not Experimental Psychology if in Part IB.

d) Examiners must take care to make it clear in non-text papers if they expect students to refer to the work of particular people, for example by using a formula such as 'Discuss with reference to X's view'. To avoid confusion, examiners should not attribute quotations they set for discussion on non-text papers unless they intend the question to be about the author's views as opposed to the views of which the quotation happens to be a succinct expression.

e) During the Lent Term, the Chair arranges a Setting meeting of examiners and assessors, to agree drafts of all Tripos papers. The main business is to check the papers in order to ensure that questions are clear, that questions do not overlap within or between papers, that the syllabus is covered, and that papers take account of the lectures given during the year. After the Setting meeting typed up draft papers are sent for comment to the relevant external examiner. It is the responsibility of the Chair of Examiners, in consultation with other appropriate examiners, to finalize papers in the light of the external examiners comments.

*(Agenda and minutes required.)*

#### ***Starting Exams:***

At the start of each Tripos examination, an examiner (normally one of the two who have set the paper concerned) attends for the first twenty minutes in order to answer questions put by candidates where this is appropriate. A gown must be worn.

#### ***Marking Exam Scripts:***

In all parts of the Tripos, students are allocated candidate numbers to preserve their anonymity.

##### *At Part IA*

Immediately after each examination, scripts are forwarded to the examiner who marks them and passes them on to the moderator.

Each examiner and moderator records an overall mark for each paper (see Section III of this document). Mark sheets are supplied by the Faculty Office for this purpose. Examiners may draw attention to any script they have found particularly difficult to assess.

The role of the moderator is to help in the assessment of difficult scripts and to ensure that the overall standard applied for the paper is correct. The moderator reads between one fifth and one quarter of the scripts for the paper, which are singled out by the examiner for that paper, scripts with a failing mark must be included. The moderator records an overall mark for each script read.

It is the responsibility of the Chair to select scripts to be read by each of the external examiners. These will include all failures, and a range of disputed and borderline cases.

##### *At Parts IB and II*

Immediately after each examination, scripts are forwarded to the first marker, who marks them and passes them on to the second marker. All markers record an overall mark for each paper (see section III of this document). Mark sheets are supplied by the Faculty Office for this purpose. Markers may draw attention to any script they have found particularly difficult to assess.

Each script is independently marked by two markers, who do not consult one another before the Reconciliation meeting, except with the agreement of the Chair of Examiners. Examiners submit their marks to the Chair before the Reconciliation meeting. The Faculty Secretary then transfers the marks to the final mark book.

### **SpLD Candidates**

Candidates with specific learning disabilities are marked with 'D' on the marking grids. The Faculty's policy on such candidates is not to penalize minor errors of spelling and wording. This applies to written examinations only (i.e. not to extended essays and dissertations).

**Examiners and assessors must return all papers to the Faculty Office in the correct packages and clearly labelled.**

### ***Marking Submitted Essays and Dissertations: (Part IB and Part II)***

Submitted Essays (Parts IB and II) and Dissertations (Part II) are marked anonymously. Candidates use their candidate number.

**Extended essays and dissertations that are irrelevant to the approved title will incur the same penalty as irrelevance in sat Tripos exams.**

Extended Essays are handed in at the end of the Lent Term and Dissertations by the second Friday of the Easter Term. Extended Essays and Dissertations are available for marking shortly after Dissertations have been handed in. Examiners are expected to mark them before Tripos examinations start.

### ***Reconciliation/Moderation Meetings:***

All markers should attend this meeting, unless given leave by the Chair to conduct the necessary business by telephone.

The Chair identifies those cases where (i) two examiners have given a paper sharply divergent marks, (ii) where smaller disagreements may affect the overall class of a candidate, or (iii) where despite a lack of disagreements a candidate sits on an important borderline. At the Interim Meeting examiners and moderators (IA) or pairs of examiners (Parts IB and II) are invited to discuss these cases and to produce an agreed mark if possible. Examiners will therefore find it helpful to make notes on every question of every script as they are marking. Examiners who discuss mark disagreements should produce a brief statement of the reasons for any significant continued disagreement to assist the External Examiner if consideration of the case is required.

### ***Reconciliation Meeting (Parts IB and II)***

In the event that the raw marks from the markers are not the same, we use three methods to arrive at a final mark.

1) If the disagreement is small and could not affect the candidate's class, the raw marks are averaged. *Example A:* if the two raw marks are 64 and 66, the final mark is given as 65.

*Example B:* if the two raw marks are 65 and 66, the final mark is given as 65.5.

*Example C:* if the two raw marks are 68.5 and 67, the final mark is given as 67.75.

Note that raw marks can only contain half marks in the case of extended essays (see Section III, point 2, of this document). This is the only circumstance when a quarter or three-quarter mark could raise in the final mark.

2) If not, then at the Reconciliation Meeting the two markers discuss their disagreement and attempt to reach an agreed mark. (If the disagreement is very large, skip this and go straight to method 3.)

3) If the markers cannot reach an agreement, or if the disagreement is very large, they make notes explaining the nature of the disagreement. These notes are passed to a third marker. This is usually the External Examiner, but internal examiners (including the Chair of Examiners) may also be used at the discretion of the Chair of Examiners. The third marker re-reads the script and recommends a final mark, which may be at any point in the range between the two raw marks (including the endpoints). This final mark is proposed, with reasons, at the Final Meeting.

The Chair of Examiners decides what is to count as a "large" or "very large" disagreement in the light of the overall incidence of disagreements.

### ***Moderation Meeting (Part IA)***

In Part IA each paper is allocated a marker and a moderator.

The marker, after marking the whole batch, chooses the 10% that seem most problematic and labels them "P" on the mark sheet. Any failing script *must* be regarded as problematic. Other reasons to regard a script as problematic include: illegibility; irrelevance; shortness; mixtures of very poor and very good features (e.g. good ideas badly expressed).

Then (except in the case of the General paper) from among the non-problematic scripts the marker selects the highest, the lowest, and those closest to 70, 60 and 50, labelling these five scripts "N" on the mark sheet. If two scripts tie for one of these positions, he or she chooses whichever of the two seems *less* problematic. (One or more of the five slots may be empty, e.g. if the lowest mark is greater than 50, in which case the marker may put more than one script in another slot.)

The moderator then marks all the P and N scripts blind (i.e. without being told which is in which category).

In the case of the P scripts, the second mark is treated in the same way as in Parts IB and II. (i.e. it is entered on the marksheet and, if the two markers differ, reconciled in accordance with the procedure described under "Reconciliation" above.) In the case of N scripts, the purpose of the second marking is only to assess whether the first marker has applied appropriate standards generally. So it is not entered in the marksheet and any differences between the markers are used only as a basis for a discussion at the reconciliation meeting about whether the first marker's marks need to be scaled across the board. In the case of the Logic paper, the marker should also forward to the moderator the marking scheme used for the formal questions, which will also be part of this discussion.

#### ***Final Meeting:***

The Chair of Examiners is responsible for arranging the final examiners' meeting. All examiners must attend this meeting, unless special dispensation has been given by the Vice-Chancellor. Assessors do not normally attend the final meeting.

In addition to any third marking as part of the reconciliation process, the External Examiner has a further role in relation to classing standards. In executing this further role, the External Examiner may third-read any script of any candidate, but is encouraged to pay particular attention to candidates close to borderlines. In relation to any script that he or she has third-read in this way, the External Examiner may at the Final Meeting propose an adjusted mark (even if this adjusted mark is outside the range of the raw marks). Any such proposal is discussed and voted on.

The principal purpose of the Final Meeting is to draw up the class list. The classes of candidates are usually decided in order of their average mark. Cases which are not in doubt may be decided in blocks, but borderline candidates are always discussed individually. Candidate numbers are decoded only after the class list has been agreed.

At the end of the meeting examiners will have an opportunity to consider any recommendations they may wish to make to the Faculty Board concerning the conduct of future examinations. After the meeting, the Chair submits the class lists, as agreed and signed by all examiners, to the Board of Examinations for publication outside the Senate House. The final class list is the responsibility of all the examiners.

*(Agenda and minutes required.)*

#### ***Examiners Reports on Individual Papers:***

The first examiner for each paper, consulting with the second examiner (or, in the case of Part IA, the examiner, consulting with the moderator), writes a report on the performance in that paper. Examiners are expected to make overall comments, **and comments on the answers to individual questions** or at least state how many candidates answered each individual question. After Faculty Board has considered individual reports, they will be made available to students. Examiners may also make confidential comments for the attention of the Faculty Board only.

The Faculty Office will send out a reminder about submitting reports, providing the link to the relevant webpage.

All reports are considered by the Faculty Board at its October meeting. All reports (excluding the confidential section on page two of the report form) are then placed in the Philosophy Library and on the Philosophy website where they can be consulted by students.

***Reports by Chair of Examiners:***

The Chair of Examiners writes a report on the overall conduct and standard of the examination. These are also considered by the Faculty Board at its October meeting, and made available thereafter for consultation by students.

***Reports by External Examiners:***

The main role of External Examiners is to ensure that examination and assessment procedures are fair and fairly operated, and that the standards applied are comparable with those of institutions of a similar academic level. The General Board issues guidelines covering the arrangements for External Examiners. Each external examiner is required to write a report for the Vice-Chancellor. The University's Education Committee then forwards these reports to the Faculty, asking it to respond to any points raised. The reports are considered by the Faculty Board in October, together with all the other reports, and changes are made where appropriate. The Guidelines for Examiners are revised annually to take account of any changes to examining procedures agreed by the Faculty Board.

The University recommends that external examiners reports are released in full to students except where they contain information of a 'confidential nature'. The Secretary of the Faculty Board writes to each external examiner asking for permission to make their reports, or an edited version, available to students.

## Data Retention Policy

All Examiners and Assessors should note the Faculty's Data Retention Policy and handle information connected to the examinations accordingly

The following policy applies to the examinations forming the Philosophy Tripos, Parts IA, IB and II

Routinely available data:

| <i>Data</i>  | <i>Retention period</i> | <i>Accessible through:</i>   |
|--|-------------------------|--|
| <b>Final Mark Book</b><br>Overall numerical marks for each individual paper, as agreed by the Board of Examiners at their final meeting. (More detailed breakdowns of marks are <b>not</b> available.) | Indefinitely            | <b>College Director of Studies or Senior Tutor's Office or Faculty Contact</b> |

Data available on request in writing only:

| <i>Data</i>                                 | <i>Retention period</i>                              | <i>Accessible in writing through:</i> |
|---|--|---------------------------------------|
| <b>Minutes of final examiners' meetings</b> | <b>Indefinitely</b>                                  | <b>Faculty Contact</b>                |
| <b>Examiners' raw marks</b>                 | <b>One month after publication of the Class List</b> | <b>Faculty Contact</b>                |

### **Chair of Examiners 2019-2020**

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Release of data under this policy does **not** constitute a formal subject access request under data protection legislation. Formal requests for access to all other personal data should be directed to the University's Information Compliance Office (<https://www.information-compliance.admin.cam.ac.uk/data-protection/subject-access-request>).

Information Compliance Officer  
Registry's Office  
The Old Schools  
Trinity Lane  
Cambridge CB2 1TN  
Tel. 01223 764142  
e-mail: data.protection @admin.cam.ac.uk

**The Faculty adheres to the University's policy covering aspects of examinations and examinations data. There is no requirement under the data protection legislation to release examinations scripts to candidates, and therefore no requirement for Faculties to return scripts to candidates.**

## II. GRADE DESCRIPTORS

### **Fail, lower range** [0 to 9]

Work in this category shows no attempt to answer the question set. It fails to show any basic knowledge of the topic.

### **Fail, middle range** [10 to 29]

Work in this category shows an attempt to answer the question set. Yet it fails to show any basic knowledge of the topic.

### **Fail, higher range** [30 to 39]

Work in this range shows an attempt to answer the question set. It may display some basic knowledge of the topic. Yet it is either irrelevant to the question set, incoherent, unsystematic, superficial, or unacceptably brief. Work at the lower end of this range will have more than one of these defects.

### **Third, lower range** [40 to 44]

Work in this range shows some basic knowledge of the topic. Yet it displays extensive serious deficiencies in terms of its accuracy, coherence, detail, organisation, breadth of reference, or focus on the wording of the question set.

### **Third, higher range** [45 to 49]

Work in this category shows some basic knowledge of the topic. Yet it displays some serious deficiencies in terms of its accuracy, coherence, detail, organisation, breadth of reference, or focus on the wording of the question set.

### **Lower second, lower range** [50 to 54]

Work in this category shows extensive weaknesses in terms of its accuracy, coherence, detail, organisation, breadth of reference, or focus on the wording of the question set. But it shows sound basic knowledge of the topic. Achieving this mark on a question therefore signifies that the candidate has firm control of at least some of the essential points.

### **Lower second, higher range** [55 to 59]

Work in this category shows some weaknesses in terms of its accuracy, coherence, detail, organization, breadth of reference, or focus on the wording of the question set. But it shows sound basic knowledge of the topic. Achieving this mark on a question therefore signifies that the candidate has firm control of the essential points.

### **Upper second, lower range** [60 to 64]

Work in this category shows generally sound knowledge of the topic, displays good understanding of the question set, and is clearly organised and cogently argued. There may be weaknesses in these or other areas, but such weaknesses will be relatively minor.

### **Upper second, higher range** [65 to 69]

Work in this category shows sound knowledge of the topic. It displays very good understanding of the question set. It is clearly organised and cogently argued. Work in this category will normally contain a detailed and broad based engagement with the relevant material.

### **First, lower range** [70 to 74]

Work in this category shows all the merits of Upper Second class work. Yet it goes beyond such work either in terms of its range, detail, precision, clarity or sophistication of argument.

### **First, middle range** [75 to 79]

Work in this category shows excellent command of the topic. It displays an excellent level of understanding of the question set. It is well organized, clearly expressed and cogently argued.

### **First, higher range** [80 to 85]

Work in this category shows excellent command of the topic. It displays an excellent level of understanding of the question set. It is well organised, clearly expressed and cogently argued. Work in this category will either approach the question set from an unexpected angle, contain unusually elegant, illuminating or original passages, or be especially well illustrated in a relevant fashion.

*A special issue arises with respect to the General paper for Parts IB and II, where candidates are given a number of short titles rather than specific questions. The intention is that candidates should in effect set their own question within the area (or one of the areas) indicated by the title, and should set*

*it with a view to the fact that they have three hours to answer it. Work which does not fall within any reasonable interpretation of the title incurs the same penalties as does irrelevant work in other papers.*

### III. CLASSING CRITERIA

1. In all parts of the Tripos, each paper carries equal weight, subject to two exceptions
  - a) In Part IA, Paper 5 (Formal Methods) carries only half the weight of the other four papers. (This is reflected in clause 6a, below.)
  - b) In Part IB, Paper 8 (Experimental Psychology) is worth double the weight of the other papers. (This is reflected in clause 6b, below.)
2. Each candidate is given a single mark for each of their examined papers, extended essays, and dissertations. This single mark is based upon the raw marks supplied by the markers (see discussion of Reconciliation Meeting in Section I of this document), who will follow the guidelines in Section II of this document.

For dissertations and the General Paper, markers will directly award a raw mark to a candidate, and report this directly to the Faculty Office.

For subject papers, markers should mark each question separately. To calculate a raw mark, they should take the average (rounded to the *nearest integer*) of the individual marks a candidate receives for each question. This raw mark is then reported to the Faculty Office.  
*Example: if a marker awards 74, 65 and 72 for a candidate's three essays, the marker should report a single raw mark of 70 for that candidate.*

For extended essays, markers should mark both essays separately. They should then report *both* marks to the Faculty Office. The four marks (two marks per essay) are given equal weight in calculating the final mark. (Ordinarily, a marker's raw mark for a candidate's extended essays is the *unrounded* average of the two marks for the two essays. However, since supervisors are not permitted to mark their supervisees' work, there may be cases when a single candidate needs to have three or four markers for their essays.)

*Example: if a marker gives marks of 74 and 67 for a candidates' two essays, the marker should report both marks, and the raw mark from that marker will be 70.5.*

3. Students submitting extended essays and dissertations must e-mail an electronic version to the Faculty Office (in addition to handing in two hard copies). Notwithstanding the use of Turnitin, any examiner or assessor who has reason to suspect plagiarism in submitted work should contact the Chair of Examiners immediately. Recent practice has been to impose very severe penalties on submitted work that re-uses material from external sources without proper acknowledgment, up to and including the award of a zero mark for the entire essay/dissertation. For the Faculty's policy on plagiarism see: <http://www.phil.cam.ac.uk/curr-students/IA/curr-students/ugrads-exam-folder/ugrads-exams>
4. Examiners are reminded that the (normal) practice of averaging marks for individual questions to arrive at a mark for a paper, and then averaging the various marks for all the papers to arrive at a final overall mark, will tend to compress those final marks into a relatively narrow band. If the spread of final marks is to reflect the spread in the examination performances, then the full range of marks for individual questions, as described in the grade descriptors, should be regularly used. Markers are reminded in particular of the great importance of not disadvantaging Cambridge undergraduates by being grudging with first-class marks for any part of the Tripos. While examiners may reasonably wish to resist grade-inflation, first-class work should be clearly marked as such.
5. Markers may annotate their mark if they wish, thus: 's.w.' for a script containing short work, '\*\*' for a script containing some work significantly better than the mark would otherwise suggest, and '?' to indicate a doubt, e.g. over relevance. Incomplete answers will be penalised.
6. **Procedure for agreeing marks at the final meeting**
  - a) At Part IA, the Formal Methods paper (Paper 5) carries half the weight of the other four papers. So, a student's overall mark at Part IA is given by this formula:

$$[2 \times (P1 + P2 + P3 + P4) + P5] \div 9, \text{ rounded to one decimal place}$$

where  $P_n$  is their agreed final mark for Paper  $n$ ,

*Example:* if a student respectively receives marks of 63, 67, 68, 71, 70 for Papers 1–5, their overall mark shall be 67.6.

- b) At Parts IB and II, a student's overall mark is the average of their marks in the individual papers, rounded to one decimal place, unless they have taken Part IB Experimental Psychology.  
If the student has taken Part IB Experimental Psychology, the mark recorded for that paper will be the numerical mark received from NST, and the student's overall mark is given by this formula:

$$[P_a + P_b + P_c + 2 \times \text{Exp}] \div 5, \text{ rounded to one decimal place}$$

where Exp is the mark received from NST for Experimental Psychology, and  $P_a$ ,  $P_b$  and  $P_c$  are the agreed final marks for the student's other three (Philosophy) papers,

*Example:* if a Part IB or Part II student (not taking Experimental Psychology) receives marks of 64.5, 66, 67.25, 70, and 70.5, their overall mark shall be 67.7.

*Example:* if a Part IB student receives a mark of 64 in Experimental Psychology, and marks of 64.5, 68 and 72 in their three Philosophy papers, their overall mark shall be 66.5.

- c) In deciding the **overall class**, decisions should follow the following rule, as applied to the *overall mark* (as calculated above):

$$3\text{rd} = 40+; 2.\text{ii} = 50+; 2.\text{i} = 60+; 1 = 68.5+.$$

This rule is subject to the following modifications:

- i) The examiners have discretion to award a mark of distinction ('starred first') to candidates whose scripts exhibit the qualities of first class answers to an exceptional degree.

ii) A candidate shall receive a first class mark overall only if their **overall mark** is at least 68.5, **and** at least two papers are first class papers (i.e. they received a final agreed mark of at least 70).

In applying this rule: both Part IB Experimental Psychology and Part IA Formal Methods counts as a *single* paper (despite their different weights in calculating a student's overall mark).

In cases where a candidate is moved from one class to another as a result of applying the above rules, their recorded overall mark shall remain unchanged.

A candidate's recorded overall performance in the examination shall be their assigned class *and* their recorded overall mark.

### **Student Administration and Records**

(Grade Roster/HEFCE Requirements for Student Records)

Student Records and Statistics are required to provide to all students a written transcript of their academic achievements. The marks reported for each candidate shall be their numerical mark for each paper, their numerical average mark overall, and their overall class mark.

Chair of the Faculty of Philosophy  
Professor Rae Langton

January 2020