

Faculty of Philosophy

Undergraduate Examinations Guidelines for Examiners and Assessors for Tripos Examinations 2015

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 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 examiner, the other as moderator; in Parts IB and II, both individuals act as examiners.

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

External Examiners:

There are three external examiners, one for Part IA, one for Part IB and one for Part II. Each is appointed for three years. External Examiners may not hold an office in the University, or a Fellowship or other office or post in a College, and should not habitually reside within 10 miles of the centre of Cambridge. Former members of staff are not eligible for appointment until at least three years have passed since their departure. 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 come to Cambridge for the final Examiners' Meeting, normally arriving shortly after the conclusion of the Reconciliation meeting. The Chair of Examiners, in consultation with the external examiner, will select scripts, extended essays and dissertations for the external examiners to read in advance of the final meeting. The scripts selected will include all failures, and a selection of disputed and borderline cases. It is possible that further re-reading might be required at the final meeting and external examiners will be required to take part in this.
- 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.
- c) Once the suggested questions have been received, the Chair of Examiners passes them on to the examiners (and moderators, in the case of Part IA) responsible for setting the paper(s). The examiners (and moderators, in the case of Part IA) 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. Examiners are asked to consult the previous three years exam papers which are available on the philosophy web page. The Chair also asks examiners 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. The Chair should also remind examiners to familiarise themselves with the syllabus and what is expected in the different papers.
- 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.
- 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:

Part IA

To preserve their anonymity, students are allocated candidate numbers. Immediately after each examination, scripts are forwarded to the examiner who marks them and passes them on to the moderator. A paper which is initially assigned a failing grade must be given for moderation, the mark then needs to be confirmed by the External Examiner.

Each examiner and moderator records an overall mark for each paper (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.

Parts IB and II

To preserve their anonymity, students are allocated candidate numbers. Immediately after each examination, scripts are forwarded to the first examiner, who marks them and passes them on to the second examiner (Parts IB and II). All examiners record an overall mark for each paper. (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.)

Each script is independently marked by two examiners, 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 Chair then transfers the marks to the final mark book.

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.

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.

The Faculty uses Turnitin to scan all submitted work. All students are required to give permission in October for work that they submit during that academic year.

Reconciliation Meeting:

All examiners, moderators and assessors 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.

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.

Between the Reconciliation and Final Meetings the External Examiner reads and gives his/her own mark to those scripts on which unresolved discrepancies between the marks might affect a

candidate's class. He/she is also asked to read any potential failures and a selection of other scripts.

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 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>
Final Mark Book Overall numerical marks for each individual paper, as agreed by the Board of Examiners at their final meeting. (More detailed breakdowns of marks are not available.)	Indefinitely	College Director of Studies or Senior Tutor's Office or Faculty Contact
Examiners' Reports	Indefinitely	Philosophy Library issue desk online Faculty Contact

Data available on request in writing only:

<i>Data</i>	<i>Retention period</i>	<i>Accessible in writing through:</i>
Minutes of final examiners' meetings	Indefinitely	Faculty Contact
Examiners' raw marks	One month	Faculty Contact
Examiners' comments concerning scripts	One month	Faculty Contact

Chair of Examiners

2014-2015

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Release of data under this policy does not constitute a subject access request under the Data Protection Act 1998: requests for access to all other personal data should be directed to:

University Data Protection Officer
10 Peas Hill
Cambridge CB2 3PN
Tel. 01223 332309
e-mail: data.protection@admin.cam.ac.uk

The Faculty strictly adheres to the University's policy covering aspects of examinations and examinations data. There is no requirement under the Data Protection Act 1998 to release examinations scripts to candidates, and therefore no requirement for Faculties to return scripts to candidates.

II. DESCRIPTIVE CRITERIA FOR CLASSING EXAMINATION ANSWERS, SUBMITTED ESSAYS AND DISSERTATIONS

First, higher range [80 or above]

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.

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, 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.

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.

Upper second, lower range [60 to 64]

Work in this category shows sound knowledge of the topic. It displays good understanding of the question set. It is clearly organised and cogently argued.

Lower second, higher range [55 to 59]

Work in this category shows sound basic knowledge of the topic. Yet it shows some weaknesses either 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 sound basic knowledge of the topic. Yet it shows extensive weaknesses 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.

Third, lower range [40 to 44]

Work in this range shows some basic knowledge if 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.

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.

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, 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.

III. MARKING SCHEMES

1. In all parts of the Tripos, each Philosophy paper carries equal weight.
In Part IB, Paper 8, Experimental Psychology is worth 40% of the total marks, and each of the remaining three papers 20%

Extended essays/Dissertations

In the case of subject essays and dissertations, each piece of work is given a single mark which is reported to the Chair of Examiners.

Students submitting extended essays and dissertations have to e-mail an electronic version to the Faculty Office. This is as well as handing in two hard copies. Examiners who suspect plagiarism may ask for such work to be submitted for scanning by Turnitin.

General paper

Again, each piece of work is given a single mark which is reported to the Chair of Examiners. A special issue arises with respect to the General paper, where candidates are given a number of very short (usually one-word or two-word) titles rather than specific questions. The intention here 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.

Subject Papers

In subject papers where students answer more than one question, each **question** should be marked separately, but only the overall mark for the paper is reported to the Chair of Examiners.

When marking, examiners should use the following scale:

0	–	39	=	Fail
40	–	49	=	III
50	–	59	=	II.ii
60	–	69	=	II.i
70	–	100	=	I

2. 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 item 1 above, should be regularly used.

Examiners 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.

3. In marking individual questions to arrive at an averaged overall mark for a script, it is important that examiners should be prepared to use the full range of marks at the top and bottom of the range.
4. Examiners 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.
5. In Part IB and Part II, all scripts are double marked, with no consultation between examiners before the reconciliation meeting. In Part IA marks are moderated by a second examiner.
6. (a) **Procedure for agreeing marks at the final meeting**
The final meeting receives a table showing, for each candidate, both marks for every paper

taken, together with their overall average mark.

At the beginning of this meeting, there will be a pause to enable each Examiner to check that their marks have indeed been correctly entered into the table.

Mark changes agreed at the Reconciliation Meeting are reported, and brief reasons for them given.

Every set of marks is briefly scrutinised, to see if there is any reason why a candidate should not simply get the class which their average suggests.

Doubtful and borderline cases are reserved for a second round. Such cases are generally resolved by discussion based on examiners' notes; third readers may be used, but sparingly. Marks for a script may be altered, or an agreed mark substituted, as a result of such discussions; but discrepancies (even big ones) may be left unaltered when they do not affect the eventual class.

b) The mark recorded for each student taking the Part IB Experimental Psychology paper shall be the numerical mark received from NST. This mark shall then be weighted as 40% in working out the candidate's overall mark for Part IB Philosophy.

(c) In deciding the **overall** class in borderline cases, decisions should follow the following rule, as applied to the overall average of the candidate's marks:

Ordinary = 30+; 3rd = 40+; 2.ii = 50+; 2.i = 60+; 1 = 68+; 1* = 76+.

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 consistently exhibit the marks of first class answers to an exceptional degree.
- ii) A candidate shall only receive a first class mark overall if their **overall average** is at least 68, **and** at least two papers are first class papers (i.e. for each of these papers the average mark from the two markers is at least 70).
- iii) A candidate who fails one paper will be awarded the class one below that indicated by the average mark, unless the fail paper is compensated for by at least one paper which receives a mark in the class above that indicated by the average mark.
- iv) A candidate who gets a third on two papers will be awarded (at best) a third overall unless the third class papers are each compensated for by papers awarded an upper second class mark (or better).
- v) A candidate who gets a third on one paper and a fail on another will be awarded (at best) a third overall unless each of the candidate's other papers is awarded an upper second class mark (or better).
- vi) A candidate who fails two papers will fail overall, unless the examiners deem that there has been sufficient very good work elsewhere in which case the candidate will be awarded a third class overall.

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

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

Experimental Psychology, which has the weight of two papers in calculating the average mark of a student who opts for it in Part IB counts only as one paper for the purpose of the classing rules stated above.

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 Tim Crane
December 2012

(updated September 2014)