

EXTERNAL EXAMINER REPORT FORM 2021

External examiner name:	John Billingham		
External examiner home institution:	University of Nottingham		
Course(s) examined:	Mathematics, Mathematics and Statistics, Mathematics and Philosophy, Mathematics and Computer Science		
Level: (please delete as appropriate)	Undergraduate		

Please complete both Parts A and B.

Part A					
		<i>Please (✓) as applicable*</i>	Yes	No	N/A / Other
A1.	Are the academic standards and the achievements of students comparable with those in other UK higher education institutions of which you have experience? <i>[Please refer to paragraph 6 of the Guidelines for External Examiner Reports].</i>		Yes		
A2.	Do the threshold standards for the programme appropriately reflect the frameworks for higher education qualifications and any applicable subject benchmark statement? <i>[Please refer to paragraph 7 of the Guidelines for External Examiner Reports].</i>		Yes		
A3.	Does the assessment process measure student achievement rigorously and fairly against the intended outcomes of the programme(s)?		Yes		
A4.	Is the assessment process conducted in line with the University's policies and regulations?		Yes		
A5.	Did you receive sufficient information and evidence in a timely manner to be able to carry out the role of External Examiner effectively?		Yes		
A6.	Did you receive a written response to your previous report?				N/A
A7.	Are you satisfied that comments in your previous report have been properly considered, and where applicable, acted upon?				N/A
* If you answer "No" to any question, you should provide further comments when you complete Part B.					

Part B

In your responses to these questions, please could you include comments on the effectiveness of any changes made to the course or processes in response to the COVID-19 pandemic where appropriate.

B1. Academic standards

- a. *How do academic standards achieved by the students compare with those achieved by students at other higher education institutions of which you have experience?*

The level of the exam papers was definitely higher than that of papers at Russell Group Universities with which I am familiar, including my own. The approach taken to setting examinations under online, open book conditions was very sensible, and I would say successful.

- b. *Please comment on student performance and achievement across the relevant programmes or parts of programmes and with reference to academic standards and student performance of other higher education institutions of which you have experience (those examining in joint schools are particularly asked to comment on their subject in relation to the whole award).*

The strongest students showed an excellent grasp of the material, and the tail of students not performing well was quite small. I have no reason to believe that the students' performance was out of line with that in cohorts unaffected by the pandemic.

B2. Rigour and conduct of the assessment process

Please comment on the rigour and conduct of the assessment process, including whether it ensures equity of treatment for students, and whether it has been conducted fairly and within the University's regulations and guidance.

The whole assessment process was handled in an exemplary manner, and I have no doubt that all students were treated fairly, with Covid-related issues being dealt with in a sensible and sympathetic way.

B3. Issues

Are there any issues which you feel should be brought to the attention of supervising committees in the faculty/department, division or wider University?

I don't think that there are any significant issues that I need to flag up.

B4. Good practice and enhancement opportunities

*Please comment/provide recommendations on any **good practice and innovation relating to learning, teaching and assessment**, and any **opportunities to enhance the quality of the learning opportunities** provided to students that should be noted and disseminated more widely as appropriate.*

I can't think of anything significant. I was certainly impressed by the thorough consideration of the comments I made on a couple of papers.

B5. Any other comments

Please provide any other comments you may have about any aspect of the examination process. Please also use this space to address any issues specifically required by any applicable professional body. If your term of office is now concluded, please provide an overview here.

This is my first year as external examiner, and it has been an exceptional year for obvious reasons. I can't therefore compare your processes this year with what I'd see in a normal year. For now all I can say is that I am impressed by the thorough and thoughtful way that all aspects of the assessment process have been handled under difficult circumstances.

Signed:	
Date:	12 th July 2021

Please ensure you have completed parts A & B, and email your completed form to: external-examiners@admin.ox.ac.uk and copy it to the applicable divisional contact set out in the guidelines.