



UNIVERSITY OF
OXFORD



UNIVERSITY OF
OXFORD

Title of Examination:		Mathematics Part C
External Examiner Details	Title:	Professor
	Name:	Alexei Skorobogatov
	Position:	Professor of Pure Mathematics
	Home Institution:	Imperial College London

Please complete both Parts A and B.

Part A					
		<i>Please (✓) as applicable*</i>	Yes	No	N/A
A 1.	Did you receive sufficient information and evidence in a timely manner to be able to carry out the role of External Examiner effectively?	✓			
A 2.	Are the academic standards and the achievements of students comparable with those in other UK higher education institutions of which you have experience?	✓			
A 3.	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 3(c) of the Guidelines for External Examiner Reports].</i>	✓			
A 4.	Does the assessment process measure student achievement rigorously and fairly against the intended outcomes of the programme(s)?	✓			
A 5.	Is the assessment process conducted in line with the University's policies and regulations?	✓			
A 6.	Have issues raised in your previous reports been responded to and/or addressed to your satisfaction?				✓

*** If you answer "No" to any question, please provide further comments in Part B. Further comments may also be given in Part B, if desired, if you answer "Yes" or "N/A".**

Part B

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?*

Students' achievements are very impressive. They do well at the exams which are sufficiently challenging and diverse. I was particularly pleased by the depth and quality of research projects. The diversity of available courses is also quite impressive. On the whole, the achieved academic standards compare favourably with those of Imperial College students.

- b. *Please comment on student performance and achievement across the relevant programmes or parts of programmes (those examining in joint schools are particularly asked to comment on their subject in relation to the whole award).*

Straight Mathematics students mostly do very well. They seem to be mathematically stronger than those doing Mathematics and Philosophy. Some of the Mathematics and Philosophy students find the relevant mathematics exams challenging, which is not so surprising taking into account that they spend less time studying maths. I think that the balance between maths and philosophy in this joint degree is fair.

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 assessment process has been conducted rigorously and fairly, in full compliance with University's regulations.

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?

- (1) I would encourage the Mathematics Department to advise checkers of the exam papers to look more carefully for typos and mistakes, and to compare the exam papers to those of previous years. A number of typos and infelicities of language remained in a small number of papers sent to me this year, which ideally should have been corrected at an earlier stage.
- (2) I would suggest that in the case when the exam setter does not have enough experience of setting exams, the checker should be someone with appropriate experience who would be able to help with whatever issues can arise.
- (3) I would prefer solutions to the exam questions to be typed or in any case clearly legible if hand-written.

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.*

- (1) It was very helpful to see all the data projected to a screen during the examiners' meeting. This is particularly useful when the figures change and the updated information becomes instantly available. This is an example of good practice that should be disseminated widely.



- (2) A possible suggestion to enhance the learning opportunities of students would be to make research projects compulsory for Part C students. This is an excellent form of in-depth learning of mathematics at research level, but regrettably not all students choose to do it because such a project can attract less marks than the corresponding number of course units.

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.

I would like to express my satisfaction with the perfect organisation of the examiners' meeting. The support staff (both IT and secretarial) should be commended for having done an excellent job. I am very pleased with fair, efficient and professional running of the examination process in the Mathematics Department of the University of Oxford.

Signature:	Alexei Skorobogatov
Date:	10/07/15
<p>Please email your completed form (preferably as a word document attachment) to: external-examiners@admin.ox.ac.uk and copied to the applicable divisional contact.</p> <p>Alternatively, please return a copy by post to: The Vice-Chancellor c/o Catherine Whalley, Head of Education Planning & Quality Review, Education Policy Support, University Offices, Wellington Square, Oxford OX1 2JD.</p>	