



UNIVERSITY OF
OXFORD



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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 impressive. They do well at the exams some of which are very challenging, though some others are less so. I was pleased with the variety of research projects. The diversity of available courses is very impressive indeed. 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).*

This was a particularly strong year, which was reflected in a slightly higher number of awarded first class degrees compared to previous years. The balance between mathematics and philosophy in the 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 exam committee to pay more attention to ensuring that the exam papers are of similar level of difficulty. I had a feeling that my comments on the exam papers (like "this exam is too easy and should be made harder" or "this exam is too hard and should be made easier"), have not always resulted in appropriate changes to the relevant exam papers.
- (2) The implementation of point (1) would make the decision making process at the examiners meeting more straightforward, in particular in the case of very easy or very hard exams taken by very few students.
- (3) Comparing dissertations in pure mathematics with those in history of mathematics is not easy. I have no specific suggestions here, but it would be good to ensure that dissertations with serious mathematical content should not attract less marks than those on the history of maths.

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) I would like to repeat my previous suggestion to enhance the learning opportunities of students by making research projects compulsory for Part C students. If a full length project (equivalent in value to two exams) is hard to arrange in terms of necessary staff and supervision hours, a half length project (equivalent to one exam) can be more realistic. I do not insist on this, though I would invite the teaching committee to give some thought to this recommendation.

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 efficient organisation of the examiners' meetings. 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:	07/07/16
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.	
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.	