

# Examination Conventions 2020–21

## Final Honour School of Mathematics and Philosophy Part B

### 1 Introduction

This document sets out the Examination Conventions for marking and classification in examinations in the **Final Honour School of Mathematics & Philosophy Part B**. Examination conventions are the formal record of the specific assessment standards for the course or courses to which they apply. This document explains how your work will be marked and how these marks will be used to derive your final classification for Parts A and B.

The formal procedures for the conduct of University examinations are established by the University’s Education Committee. The Proctors have responsibility for the conduct of examinations in accordance with those procedures. The Proctors may be consulted by chairs of examiners, or by senior tutors on behalf of examination candidates in their college, on matters arising in the conduct of exams.

The examination conventions applying to examinations in Mathematics and Philosophy in any given academic year are reviewed in Michaelmas Term of that year by the Joint Committee for Mathematics and Philosophy, and must then be approved by the Mathematical, Physical and Life Sciences Division, and by the Humanities Division, following consideration by the Mathematics Teaching Committee and by the Philosophy Undergraduate Studies Committee.

The Board of Examiners may only make deviations from these conventions in exceptional circumstances, subject to the direction of Mathematics Teaching Committee, Philosophy Undergraduate Studies Committee, and the Proctors. This document is in all ways subsidiary to the current:

- *Examination Regulations*, in particular “Regulations for the Honour School of Mathematics and Philosophy” and “Regulations for Philosophy in all Honour Schools including Philosophy”
- *Examinations and Assessment Framework*

Further information set out for examiners can be found in the appendices of the Final Honour School of Mathematics Part B examination conventions:

[https://www.maths.ox.ac.uk/system/files/attachments/PartB\\_7.pdf](https://www.maths.ox.ac.uk/system/files/attachments/PartB_7.pdf)

### 2 Progression through University Examinations

To qualify for your BA or MMathPhil in Mathematics and Philosophy you must pass a First and Second Public Examination. The First Public Examination in Mathematics and Philosophy is currently called the Preliminary Examination and is taken at the end of the first year. You must pass the Preliminary Examination before you can be admitted to the Second Public Examination.

The Final Honour School comprises three parts. Mathematics & Philosophy candidates for both the BA and the MMathPhil take Part A at the end of the second year and Part B at the end of

the third year. There is no requirement of a minimum standard to be achieved in Part A before a candidate can proceed to Part B. Candidates are classified on the basis of Parts A and B together.

Any candidate who wishes to leave at the end of their third year and who satisfies the Examiners may supplicate for a classified BA in Mathematics & Philosophy at the end of Part B with the classification they have received in Parts A and B together. In order to proceed to Part C, a candidate must be awarded an Upper Second Class or higher in the combined classification of Parts A and B.

Candidates for Part C receive a separate classification based on their USMs in the Part C examination. A candidate achieving Honours, that is, an average USM  $\geq 40$ , is permitted to supplicate for the degree of MMathPhil. A candidate who in Part C fails to achieve Honours (that is, any candidate whose average USM in Part C is less than 40) may supplicate for a BA with the classification obtained at the end of Part B.

Successful candidates may supplicate for one degree only – either a BA or an MMathPhil. Whilst the MMathPhil is doubly classified a candidate will not be awarded both a BA degree and an MMathPhil degree, with two associated classifications.

## 3 Part B Assessment Units

### 3.1 Mathematics Exams

#### 3.1.1 Standard units (schedule 1)

Each mathematics paper will examine one unit. Most mathematics units will be assessed by open book exam. These will consist of three questions, each worth 25 marks. You may submit answers to as many questions as you wish, but only the best two answers will count towards the final mark for the paper. The examinations will be administered online and will be of two hours and 15 minutes duration. Of this time you should spend one hour and 45 minutes on the examination and the remaining 30 minutes on downloading the exam paper and then scanning your handwritten solutions and uploading them at the end.

In all papers the questions set should, as a whole, be fairly spread across the syllabus.

Questions will be similar in style to previous Part B questions, with an easy start examining material explicitly covered in the course, followed by a part which tests understanding. Each question will be set so that a sound student can produce a complete answer in 35-40 minutes.

Each question should be divided into two to four parts and an indication of the raw marks available for each part of each question should be given on the question paper.

#### 3.1.2 Additional units (schedule 2)

**Computer Science Department Units: OCS1–OCS4** Please see the Mathematics and Computer Science Part B examination conventions at <http://www.cs.ox.ac.uk/teaching/examconventions/mcs.html>.

#### **BEE extended essays**

Extended essays have a weighting of two units. The word limit for BEE essays is 7500 words.

USM marks will be assigned to extended essays with the same meaning as regards class boundaries as in the mathematics papers. In arriving at these marks, the relative weights attached to content, mathematics and presentation will be 25%, 50% and 25%, respectively.

#### **BO1.1: History of Mathematics - Written Examination**

This is a two-unit course. The written examination will be of two hours and 30 minutes duration.

Of this time you should spend two hours on the examination and the remaining 30 minutes on downloading the exam paper, and then scanning any handwritten elements and uploading the full exam script at the end. Candidates can either type or handwrite their exam. It will have two sections: A (Extracts) with six questions and B (Essays) with three questions. Candidates will be expected to attempt two questions from Section A and one from Section B. The reading course mini-project will consist of an essay of 3000 words; essay topics set by the examiners will be released to the candidates in Week 7 of Hilary Term.

The assessment will use the following weighting principles:

1. A USM will be reported for the written paper and for the mini-project. The written paper and mini-project will each be given a weight of one unit when calculating a candidate's weighted overall average for Part B.
2. For the project, marks will be awarded for mathematical content, historical content, and presentation.
3. The extracts questions in Section A of the written paper will attract marks for treatment of context, content and significance.
4. The Section B essay will be marked using the same categories as the project.

## 3.2 Philosophy Exams

In Philosophy the subjects shall be subjects 101–116, 120, 122, 124, 125, 127–129, 137–139, 198 and 199 from the list given in Special Regulations for All Honour Schools Including Philosophy <http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/examregs/>. Each subject in Philosophy other than a Thesis shall be examined in one 3-hour paper.

## 4 Examination Conduct

Part B candidates will receive information from the examiners about the conduct of the examination they will be sitting in Trinity Term of this academic year. Examiners' Notices to Candidates from last year, which show the sort of information that will be provided, can be found on the Mathematical Institute website at <https://www.maths.ox.ac.uk/members/students/undergraduate-courses/examinations-assessments/examination-conventions>, past notices will be superseded by this year's notices.

## 5 Penalties for Non-attendance

Rules governing non-attendance at examinations and any consequent penalties are set out in full in the Examination Regulations (Regulations for the Conduct of University Examinations, Part 14).

If you miss an exam, you will be expected to provide a statement to your college explaining the reason you were not able to attempt the open-book exam within 48 hours of the start of that open-book exam. You are not expected to provide medical evidence. Colleges should apply with this information using the standard process.

**In cases where the Proctors do not believe there are satisfactory reasons for non-attendance or an application to the Proctors has not been submitted, this will result in failure of the whole of Part B. In such a case, the examiners will award a fail for each of the Part B assessments.**

## 5.1 Penalties for Late Submission of Open Book Examination Solutions

Candidates should upload their submission within the time allowed for their open-book examination. Candidates who access the paper later than the published start time (and who do not have an agreed alternative start time) will still need to finish and submit their work within the originally published timeframe or be considered to have submitted late. Candidates who access the paper on time but who submit their work after the published timeframe will also be considered to have submitted late. Where candidates submit their examination after the end of the specified timeframe and believe they have a good reason for doing so, they may submit a mitigating circumstances notice to examiners to explain their reasons for the late submission. The Exam Board will consider whether to waive the penalties for late submission.

Penalties will be applied if you do not submit your solutions to the open book examinations by the stipulated deadline. These penalties are set out in Table 1 below.

Lateness	Penalty
First 5 minutes	No penalty
6–20 minutes	Fail mark

Table 1: Late Submission Tariff for Open Book Exams.

**Failure to submit a required element of assessment will result in the failure of the whole of Part B. In such a case, the examiners will award a fail for each of the Part B assessments.**

## 6 Penalties for Late Submission of coursework

The Examination Regulations stipulate specific dates for submission of coursework to the examiners. This includes the Part B extended essays, BSP projects, BO1.1 extended essays and any coursework you need to complete if you take a course taught by another department. Rules governing late submission and any consequent penalties are set out in full in the Examination Regulations (Regulations for the Conduct of University Examinations, Part 14). For 2020-21, all written assessments are to be submitted online.

If you will be prevented by illness or other urgent cause from submitting your coursework on time you should contact your college office or college tutor as soon as possible. Your college is able to submit an application for an extension of time to the Proctors on your behalf.

The scale of penalties agreed by the board of examiners in relation to late submissions of assessed items, without an accepted reason, is set out below.

Lateness	Penalty, % point reduction
Up to 4 hours	1 %
4–24 hours	10%
24–48 hours	20%
48–72 hours	30%
72 hours – 14 days	35%
More than 14 days late	Fail

Table 2: Late Submission Table for Coursework

Note: The penalty will be a percentage reduction of the maximum total mark available for the work. For example, if a 10% penalty is applied to an assessment given a USM out of 100 then 10 marks would be deducted. The final mark awarded after application of the penalty cannot be below 0.

**Failure to submit a required element of assessment, without an accepted reason, will result in the failure of the whole of Part B. In such a case, the examiners will award a fail for each of the Part B assessments.**

## 7 Marking Conventions

Examination scripts, theses, dissertations, and essays are marked by examiners and assessors. Their marks result ultimately in a University Standardised Mark (USM), in the range from 0 to 100, for each script and submitted piece of work, which are then used in the process of classifying candidates. USMs in the classification process are always whole numbers.

### Plagiarism

You are reminded of the importance of avoiding any plagiarism, please see <http://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/guidance/skills/plagiarism> for further guidance. Depending on their severity, cases of suspected plagiarism may be referred to the Proctors for investigation or may be dealt with by the board of examiners. If dealt with by the board of examiners as a case of poor academic practice, the examiners may deduct marks (for lack of adequate referencing, poor use of citation conventions, etc.) of up to 10% of the marks available for the assessment. Where the consequence of the marks deduction would result in both the failure of the assessment and of the programme; the case must be referred to the Proctors.

When you take an exam, you will be required to sign up to an 'honour code'. This will confirm that you have understood and abided by the University's rules and plagiarism and collusion (see <https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/exams/open-book/honour-code>).

We will reserve the right to conduct follow-up viva voce exams to check candidates' understanding of the examined material, even where these are not currently specified in the Examination Regulations.

### The scale of USMs

In classified examinations the USM on each individual script and submitted piece of work is correlated with classification bands as follows:

- 70-100: First Class
- 60-69: Upper Second Class
- 50-59: Lower Second Class
- 40-49: Third Class
- 30-39: Pass
- 0-29: Fail

The processes by which USMs on scripts and submitted pieces of work are arrived at are as follows:

#### 7.1 How USMs are determined in Mathematics

##### Analysis of marks

There are two parts to the BA examinations: Part A and Part B

## Part A

At the end of the Part A Examination, a candidate will be awarded a University Standardised Mark (USM) for each of the four papers. The USMs awarded will be carried forward into a classification as described below.

## Part B

The Board of Examiners for Part B will assign USMs for each paper taken in Part B and may scale the raw marks to arrive at the USMs reported to candidates.

The scaling algorithm used by the mathematics examiners is explained in detail in the 2020 examiners' report which can be found at <http://www.maths.ox.ac.uk/members/students/undergraduate-courses/examinations-assessments/examiners-reports>.

The examiners may choose to scale marks where in their academic judgement:

- a paper was more difficult or easier than in previous years, and/or
- an optional paper was more or less difficult than other optional papers taken by students in a particular year, and/or
- a paper has generated a spread of marks which are not a fair reflection of student performance on the University's standard scale for the expression of agreed final marks, i.e. the marks do not reflect the qualitative marks descriptors.

Such scaling is used to ensure that all papers are fairly and equally rewarded. Scaling may be also used to mitigate against the difficulties with setting an alternative format of assessment required in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and any related difficulties faced by candidates.

When scaling the raw marks on a paper the examiners will consider the following:

- the relative difficulty of the paper compared to the other Part B papers;
- information on candidates' performances on the earlier parts of the Examinations;
- the report submitted by the assessor who set and marked the paper.

Examiners will use their academic judgement to ensure that appropriate USMs are awarded and may use further statistics to check that the marks assigned fairly reflect the students' performances on a paper. Examiners may also review a sample of papers either side of the classification borderlines to ensure that the outcome of scaling is consistent with the qualitative marks descriptors.

The USMs awarded to a candidate for papers in Part B will be aggregated with the USMs from Part A to arrive at a classification.

## Marking of Mathematics Examinations

The majority of mathematics examinations are marked by a single assessor or examiner according to a pre-agreed mark scheme which is strictly adhered to. The examination scripts are then checked by an independent checker to ensure that all work has been marked, and that the marks have been correctly totalled and recorded.

The Part B extended essays are independently double-marked, normally by the project supervisor and one other assessor. The two marks are then reconciled to give the overall mark awarded. The reconciliation of marks is overseen by the examiners and follows the department's reconciliation procedure (see <https://www.maths.ox.ac.uk/members/students/undergraduate-courses/teaching-and-learning/projects>).

The BO1.1 examination and essays are independently double-marked, normally by the course lecturer and one other assessor. The two marks are then reconciled to give the overall mark awarded. The reconciliation of marks is overseen by the examiners and follows the department's reconciliation procedure (see <https://www.maths.ox.ac.uk/members/students/undergraduate-courses/teaching-and-learning/projects>).

Please see the qualitative descriptors of the bands of marks awarded to examination answers and extended essays/projects.

Further information on the setting and marking of mathematics papers is given in the appendices to the Examination Conventions in Mathematics available online <https://www.maths.ox.ac.uk/members/students/undergraduate-courses/examinations-assessments/examination-conventions>

## Marking Schemes and Model Solutions

Assessors setting questions should be asked to provide complete model solutions indicating everything that a candidate would be expected to write to answer the question fully. The model solutions and marking scheme need to be sufficiently clear and comprehensive to be meaningful to an external examiner.

The model solution for each question should be accompanied by a marking scheme out of 25. The marking scheme should aim to ensure that the following qualitative criteria hold (see also the class descriptors given below):

**20–25 marks** A completely, or almost completely, correct answer, showing excellent understanding of the concepts and skill in carrying through the arguments and/or calculations; minor slips or omissions only.

**13–19 marks** A good though not complete answer, showing understanding of the concepts and competence in handling the arguments and/or calculations, and some evidence of problem-solving ability. Such an answer might consist of an excellent answer to a substantial part of the question, or a good answer to the whole question which nevertheless shows some flaws in calculation or in understanding or in both.

**7–12 marks** Standard material has been substantially and correctly answered with some possible minor progress on to other parts of the question.

**0–6 marks** Some progress has been made with elementary, accessible material.

Assessors should classify the parts of each question under the headings:

**B:** bookwork/routine material: either explicitly seen before, or easily synthesized from such. Because of open book conditions, we must be cautious about bookwork: there is no value in asking students to copy material out of lecture notes, etc., we have to be testing the students in a useful way;

**S:** similar to material seen before;

**N:** new, demanding good command of concepts and/or methods.

## Coursework

The examiners should pay careful attention to what candidates have been told about the assessment of coursework in the *Examination Regulations* and the *Course Handbook*. All coursework is independently marked by at least two assessors. The examiners will oversee the reconciliation of marks, following the established reconciliation procedure (<http://www.maths.ox.ac.uk/members/teaching->

staff/information-supervisors-undergraduate-projects). If reconciliation is not possible, an additional marker should be appointed.

Projects and extended essays will be assessed with reference to the following qualitative descriptors.

#### **For BE extended essays**

- 90–100 Work of potentially publishable standard, as evidenced by originality or insight. The work should show depth and accuracy, and should have a clear focus. It is likely to go beyond the normal level for part B. The standard one sees in winners of one of the examination prizes.
- 80–89 Work in this range will be at the level of a strong candidate for a DPhil applicant. The project will be an easy choice as a winner of a college essay prize. It will have depth, accuracy and a clear focus. It will show a strong command of material at least at the level of part B. It is likely to contain original material, which may take the form of new mathematical propositions, new examples, or new calculations, for example.
- 70–79 The work submitted is of a generally high order, with depth, clarity and accuracy, but may have minor errors in content and/or deficiencies in presentation. It may contain original material, at least in the sense of new examples or calculations.
- 60–69 The candidate shows a good grasp of their subject, but without the command and clarity required for first class marks. Presentation, referencing and bibliography should be good, and the mathematics should have no more than minor errors.
- 50–59 The work shows an adequate grasp of the subject, but is likely to be marred by having material at too low a level, by serious or frequent errors, a high proportion of indiscriminate information, or poor presentation and references.
- 40–49 The candidate shows reasonable understanding of parts of the basic material, but reveals an inadequate competence with others. The material may be at too low a level. There are likely to be high levels of error or irrelevance, muddled or superficial ideas, or very poor writing style.
- 30–39 The candidate shows some limited grasp of at least part of the material.
- 0–29 Little evidence of understanding of the topic. The work is likely to show major misunderstanding and confusion.

#### **For OE and BO1.1 extended essays**

- 70–100 The candidate shows clear focus on the question, with precise and accurate details (mathematical and other), imaginative selection of examples and appropriate selection and quality (rather than quantity) of sources, and cogent argument, supported by evidence.

Within this band the following finer gradations may be helpful:

- 90–100 Work of publishable quality.
- 80–89 Demonstrates originality of content or insight. Work at the upper end of this range could be publishable after minor improvements. Would be an appropriate entry for a national or university prize.
- 70–79 Work of high or very high quality, but perhaps lacking the originality that would be expected of publishable work. Might be a good candidate, for example, for a college prize.

- 60–69 Work that addresses the given topic, with solid command of factual content, reasonable range of examples and sources, coherent argument and analysis, and correct referencing and bibliography.  
(Essays at the lower end of this range may lack some of these qualities or show them only intermittently.)
- 50–59 Work with some use of facts, sources, and arguments, but marred by one or more of a failure to address the topic, serious or frequent errors of fact, a high proportion of indiscriminate information, speculation or unsupported argument, and incomplete or inaccurate referencing.
- 40–49 The candidate shows some knowledge of the topic but the work is marred by several of the following:- high levels of error or irrelevance, muddled or superficial ideas, incoherent or non-existent argument, incompetent use of sources, or very poor writing style.
- 30–39 The work demonstrates a little knowledge of the topic but no coherent argument.
- 0–29 The work demonstrates almost no knowledge of the topic.

## Qualitative description of examination performance in Mathematics

The average USM ranges used in the classifications reflect the following general **Qualitative Class Descriptors** agreed by the Teaching Committee:

**First Class:** the candidate shows excellent skills in reasoning, deductive logic and problem-solving. They demonstrate an excellent knowledge of the material, and can use that in unfamiliar contexts.

**Upper Second Class:** the candidate shows good or very good skills in reasoning, deductive logic and problem-solving. They demonstrate a good or very good knowledge of much of the material.

**Lower Second Class:** the candidate shows adequate basic skills in reasoning, deductive logic and problem-solving. They demonstrate a sound knowledge of much of the material.

**Third Class:** the candidate shows reasonable understanding of at least part of the basic material and some skills in reasoning, deductive logic and problem-solving.

**Pass:** the candidate shows some limited grasp of at least part of the basic material.

[Note that the aggregation rules in some circumstances allow a stronger performance on some papers to compensate for a weaker performance on others.]

**Fail:** little evidence of competence in the topics examined; the work is likely to show major misunderstanding and confusion, coupled with inaccurate calculations; the answers to questions attempted are likely to be fragmentary only.

## 7.2 How USMs are determined in Philosophy

### Marking of FHS Examinations in Philosophy

All Philosophy scripts and submitted work in Finals are marked independently by two markers. The two markers discuss any difference between their marks, and endeavour to agree a mark. Since USMs are always whole numbers, the agreed mark cannot in general be reached by ‘splitting the difference’ between the two initial marks, e.g. two Philosophy markers whose marks for a given script are 67 and 68, cannot submit a mark of 67.5, but rather must determine an agreed mark that is either 67 or 68. A third marker marks the script or submitted work if the two original markers cannot agree a mark.

## Qualitative description of examination performance in Philosophy

The standard of work for the various classes is specified in the following terms.

- **Class I** 70–100

In order to encourage use of a wider range of First Class marks, markers are asked to give First Class marks divisible by 3 as initial marks. Agreed marks can be any marks within the First Class range, e.g. initial marks of 72 and 75 might result in an agreed mark of 74.

- Upper: 84+

Exceptional answer displaying originality, outstanding analytical and argumentative skills, superior command of the facts and arguments relevant to the question, excellent organisation, and lucid and precise expression.

- Middle: 78, 81

Excellent answer offering high-level analysis, independent and rigorous argument, skilled handling of the facts and arguments relevant to the question, transparent organisation, and lucid and precise expression.

- Lower: 72, 75

Strong answer displaying a high standard of analysis and argument, a thorough command of the facts and/or arguments relevant to the question, transparent organisation and clear language.

- **Class II.1** 60–69

- Upper: 65-69

Strengths: Effective analysis and argumentation, thorough command of evidence, clarity of expression, transparent organisation of material.

Weaknesses: Occasional imprecision in argumentation or expression; or lack of depth; or minor omissions; or lapses in focus.

- Lower: 60-64

Strengths: Well-structured answer offering a generally accurate analysis of central arguments and themes, and a well-reasoned conclusion.

Weaknesses: Occasional lapses in argumentation; writing may be somewhat pedestrian or unclear or imprecise; some omissions or infelicity in organisation of material.

- **Class II.2** 50–59

- Upper: 55-59

Strengths: Adequate, if somewhat basic, analysis and understanding of key concepts and arguments.

Weaknesses: Significantly lacking in scope, depth or precision; pat or pedestrian representation of thoughts and arguments; important inaccuracies or omissions; some lapses in argumentation.

- Lower: 50-54

Strengths: Answer showing a basic grasp of relevant material and arguments, and a fair attempt to arrive at a reasoned conclusion.

Weaknesses: Serious inaccuracies or omissions; significant lapses in argumentation (e.g. nonsequiturs, misuse of concepts or evidence); failure to digest material; minor irrelevance.

- **Class III** 40–49

- Upper: 45-49  
Strengths: Limited answer to the question; constructs a rudimentary argument; some evidence of relevant study.  
Weaknesses: Superficial or incomplete treatment; some gaps or mistakes in understanding of key concepts and arguments; poor focus and organisation; some irrelevance.
- Lower: 40-44  
Strengths Significant elements of a basic and relevant answer.  
Weaknesses: Muddled argumentation, very superficial discussion with poor focus, significant misunderstanding of key concepts and arguments; considerable irrelevance; seriously incomplete answer.

- **Pass 30–39**

Strengths: Limited attempt to address question showing a rudimentary grasp of some relevant information.

Weaknesses: Very incomplete, brief, or poorly organised answer; fundamental misunderstanding of key arguments or ideas; large portions of discussion irrelevant or tangential.

- **Fail 0–29**

- Upper: 15-29  
Strengths: Some slight evidence of a proper attempt to answer question; glimpse of relevant material.  
Weaknesses: Extremely limited and inadequate answer, for instance in note form; discussion mostly irrelevant.
- Lower 0-14:  
Weaknesses: Completely or almost completely irrelevant or ignorant answer. Nothing or almost nothing written.

## Qualitative description of extended essay or thesis performance in Philosophy

- **Class I 70–100**

In order to encourage use of a wider range of First Class marks, markers are asked to give First Class marks divisible by 3 as initial marks. Agreed marks can be any marks within the First Class range, e.g. initial marks of 72 and 75 might result in an agreed mark of 74.

- Upper: 84+  
Exceptional work displaying originality, outstanding analytical and argumentative skills, superior command of a wide range of facts and arguments relevant to the question, excellent organisation and presentation, lucid and precise expression.
- Middle: 78, 81  
Excellent work offering high-level analysis, independent and rigorous argument, critical understanding of a wide range of relevant material, transparent organisation and presentation, lucid and precise expression.
- Lower: 72, 75  
Strong work displaying a high standard of analysis and argument, critical insight, and a thorough command of the relevant material; transparent organisation and presentation; clear and precise expression.

- **Class II.1 60–69**

- Upper: 65-69  
Strengths: Effective analysis and argumentation, demonstrating thorough command of relevant material; transparent organisation and presentation of material; clarity of expression.  
Weaknesses: Occasional imprecision in argumentation or expression; or lack of depth; or minor omissions; or lapses in focus.
- Lower: 60-64  
Strengths: Clearly structured and generally coherent discussion, offering a mostly accurate analysis of central arguments and themes, and a justified conclusion.  
Weaknesses: Occasional lapses in argumentation; writing may be somewhat pedestrian or showing unclarity or imprecision of expression; some omissions or infelicity in organisation of material and/or presentation (e.g. missing or incomplete references, misquotations or misattributions).

- **Class II.2** 50–59

- Upper: 55-59  
Strengths: Adequate, if somewhat basic, analysis and understanding of key concepts and arguments; generally cogent and well-structured treatment of topic.  
Weaknesses: Lacking in scope, depth or precision; pat or pedestrian representation of thoughts and arguments; important inaccuracies or omissions; some lapses in argumentation and/or presentation.
- Lower: 50-54  
Strengths: Discussion showing a reasonable grasp of basic material and arguments, and a fair attempt to arrive at a reasoned conclusion.  
Weaknesses: Significant inaccuracies or omissions; major lapses in argumentation (e.g. nonsequiturs, misuse of concepts or evidence affecting overall conclusions); failure to digest material; minor irrelevance; sloppy presentation.

- **Class III** 40–49

- Upper: 45-49  
Strengths: Limited treatment of topic showing some familiarity with relevant material and arguments; recognisable structure.  
Weaknesses: Superficial or incomplete treatment; gaps or mistakes in understanding of key concepts and arguments; poor focus and organisation; some irrelevance; poor presentation.
- Lower: 40-44  
Strengths: Significant elements of a basic and relevant answer showing some structure.  
Weaknesses: Muddled argumentation, very superficial discussion with poor focus, significant misunderstanding of key concepts and arguments; considerable irrelevance; incomplete answer; substandard presentation.

- **Pass** 30–39

- Strengths: Limited attempt to address question showing a basic grasp of some relevant material.  
Weaknesses: Seriously incomplete answer; fundamental misunderstanding of key arguments or ideas; significant portions of discussion irrelevant or tangential; basic failures of organisation and presentation.

- **Fail** 0–29

- Upper: 15-29  
Strengths: Very limited attempt to answer question; some use of relevant material.  
Weaknesses: Wholly inadequate answer, discussion largely irrelevant; unacceptably poor organisation and/or presentation.
- Lower: 0-14  
Weaknesses: Completely or almost completely irrelevant or ignorant answer. A very short piece of work, providing no or negligible evidence of study.

## Qualitative description of commentary work performance in Philosophy

- **Class I** 70–85 (*NB: marks above 85 are not awarded for translation work*)
  - Upper: 80-100:  
Strengths: a commentary displaying in-depth knowledge of the passage, excellent analysis and criticism of the argument(s), distinction(s), or concept(s) found in the passage, a lucid and concise account of the relation of the passage to the wider context, or/and the whole work, or/and the author's general thought, or/and some problem in modern philosophy.
  - Lower: 70-79  
Strengths: a commentary showing a good understanding of the immediate and wider context of the passage, lucid and concise analysis of the ideas and/or arguments involved, and clear and precise language.
- **Class II.1** 60–69
  - Upper: 65-69  
Strengths: a commentary displaying a good understanding of the context and a clear and concise analysis of arguments, distinctions and/or concepts in the passage.  
Weaknesses: limited command of some aspects of the passage, or context; minor lapses in the analysis of the argument, occasional unclarity in expression or use of concepts.
  - Lower: 60 to 64  
Strengths: a generally clear and satisfactory commentary, offering a mostly correct specification of the argumentative context and a reasonable analysis of the argument, distinction(s), or/and concepts of the passage.  
Weaknesses: some lapses in argumentation and/or invoking evidence from the passage; some inaccuracy in identification of context; somewhat pedestrian, unclear, or imprecise expression.
- **Class II.2** 50–59  
Strengths: a competent if basic commentary showing familiarity with the passage and its context; mostly clear and relevant analysis of passage; some attempt to offer a critical perspective.  
Weaknesses: gives an incomplete account of the context of the passage; significant inaccuracies or gaps in analysing or criticising the argument of the passage; marred by lapses in concision, relevance, and lucidity of expression.
- **Class III** 40–49  
Strengths: a commentary that contains evidence of some knowledge of relevant facts and analytical skill.  
Weaknesses: generally weak, with confused or little specification of the context, or discussion and criticism of the argument of the passage; some irrelevance; muddled and unclear language. This class does qualify for an Honours degree.

- **Pass 30–39**

Strengths: some attempt to specify the argumentative context or/and content of the passage; occasionally relevant material.

Weaknesses: extremely limited and inadequate commentary; comments largely (but not entirely) irrelevant.

- **Fail 0–29**

Completely, or almost completely, irrelevant or ignorant commentary; nothing, or almost nothing, written.

*NB: Candidates should note that one of the commonest reasons for commentaries receiving poor marks is irrelevance.*

## Short weight

If a candidate answers fewer than the required number of questions, the overall mark will be

$$\left(\frac{n}{N}\right)A$$

where A is the mean average of the marks assigned to attempted questions, n is the number of questions attempted, and N is the number of questions required.

## Rubric failure

If a candidate fails to obey a rubric expressing a condition stipulated in the Examination Regulations, the examiners may reduce the overall mark. In cases where the maximum number of questions that may be attempted in a given section, or on a given author, is N, and the candidate answers more than N questions in that section, or on that author, only the highest-scoring N answers attempted in that section, or on that author, will contribute to the overall mark.

## 8 How classifications in Parts A + B of Finals are determined

After marks for each examination script and submitted piece of work have been determined (in accordance with §7 above), classifications in Finals are determined from each candidate's weighted overall average mark, average mark in Mathematics and average mark in Philosophy, according to conventions (see below) for each examination.

### 8.1 Decimal points and rounding of averaged marks in the determination of classification in Parts A + B

Averages of marks are calculated to two decimal points, which the examiners need in order to recognize candidates very close to a class borderline, in which case their marks profile needs to be given particular attention, and also for ranking candidates when awarding prizes. However, at the stage of applying the classification rules to determine a candidate's classification from their average marks, the averages are then symmetrically rounded to a whole number, so that e.g. 69.50 is rounded to 70 (which, if this is as an overall average, gives that candidate a First), and 69.49 is rounded to 69 (in which case, unless Rule (2) for Part A + B classification applies, the candidate is classified II(i), but only in that case after the examiners have carefully gone over the candidate's marks, being so close to a borderline).

## 8.2 Classification in Parts A + B

The classification conventions for Parts A + B are in conformity with the stipulation that “The highest honours can be obtained by excellence either in Mathematics or in Philosophy provided that adequate knowledge is shown in the other subject of the examination,” (in “Regulations for the Honour School of Mathematics and Philosophy”, *Examination Regulations 2018*).

### Weightings in the calculation of averages in Parts A + B

In calculating these averages, USMs for individual papers in Mathematics are first weighted to take account of the proportion of the course examined in each subject, and then scaled so that Parts A and B are weighted in the ratio 2 : 3. This gives the following weights:

Paper A2	16
Each of Papers A0, A3, A4, A5, A8, ASO	8
Part B Mathematics unit	15

(Thus, in particular, the four Part A Mathematics papers jointly carry the same weight as half of Part A in the Honour School of Mathematics, and 2/3 of the weight, 60, of four Part B units in Mathematics.)

No weighting is applied to USMs for Philosophy papers.

### Conventions for classification in Parts A + B

Let  $M$  denote the average USM for Mathematics papers in Parts A and B, calculated according to the weightings given above. Let  $P$  denote the average of the USMs in Philosophy in Part B. The overall average  $A$  is calculated to be

$$A = [(8 - k)M + kP]/8,$$

where  $k$  is the number of Philosophy papers taken (which may be either 3 or 4, depending on the papers chosen by the candidate).

In Mathematics & Philosophy a candidate may be given a class higher than the average of their marks, on the basis of particular strength in one of the two subjects.

The quantities  $M$ ,  $P$  and  $A$  are calculated according to the above formulae. After these quantities have been symmetrically rounded to the nearest integer, as stipulated in §8.1, classifications are determined by the following inequalities:

1. No candidate will be given a classification lower than that implied by the place of the value of  $A$  on the scale 70–100 First; 60–69 Upper Second; 50–59 Lower Second; 40–49 Third; 30–39 Pass; 0–29 Fail.
2. In the following circumstances a candidate will be given a higher classification than that implied by the value of  $A$ :
  - a. A candidate who achieves  $A \geq 67$  and either
$$M \geq 70 \text{ and } P \geq 60, \text{ or}$$
$$P \geq 70 \text{ and } M \geq 60$$
will be awarded a First.
  - b. A candidate who is not awarded a First but who achieves  $A \geq 57$  and either
$$M \geq 60 \text{ and } P \geq 50, \text{ or}$$

$P \geq 60$  and  $M \geq 50$

will be awarded an Upper Second.

The award of a Third, Pass or Fail will, in all cases, be by individual consideration.

## 9 Resits

A candidate who obtains only a pass or fails to satisfy the examiners in Parts A & B may retake Part B on at most one subsequent occasion. Candidates who retake Part B are not permitted to continue to Part C. The Part B assessments would be retaken the following Trinity term.

## 10 Alternative Examination Arrangements and Mitigating Circumstances Notices to Examiners

A candidate in any University Examination with specific learning difficulties or disability/illness may apply through the Senior Tutor of their college for alternative examination arrangements relating to their condition. Please see <http://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/exams/arrangements> for further information on the process.

Candidates who would like the examiners to be aware of any mitigating circumstances that may have affected their performance before or during an examination are advised to discuss their circumstances with their college and consult the Examination Regulations (Part 13). The candidate's college will submit the Mitigating Circumstances Notice to Examiners for forwarding to the relevant chair of examiners.

A candidate's final outcome will first be considered using the classification rules/final outcome rules as described above in section 4. The exam board will then consider any further information they have on individual circumstances.

Where a candidate or candidates have made a submission, under Part 13 of the Regulations for Conduct of University Examinations, that unforeseen circumstances may have had an impact on their performance in an examination, a subset of the board (the 'Mitigating Circumstances Panel') will meet to discuss the individual applications and band the seriousness of each application on a scale of 1-3 with 1 indicating minor impact, 2 indicating moderate impact, and 3 indicating very serious impact. The Panel will evaluate, on the basis of the information provided to it, the relevance of the circumstances to examinations and assessment, and the strength of the evidence provided in support. Examiners will also note whether all or a subset of papers were affected, being aware that it is possible for circumstances to have different levels of impact on different papers. The banding information will be used at the final board of examiners meeting to decide whether and how to adjust a candidate's results. Further information on the procedure is provided in the Policy and Guidance for examiners, Annex C and information for students is provided at [www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/exams/guidance](http://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/exams/guidance).

## 11 Declared to have Deserved Honours (DDH)

Candidates who have indicated they wish to be considered for DDH will first be considered for a classified degree, taking into account any individual Mitigating Circumstances Notices to Examiners. If that is not possible and they meet the DDH eligibility criteria, they will be awarded DDH. Further details can be found here: <http://www.ox.ac.uk/students/coronavirus-advice/declared-awards>.

## 12 Examiners for 2020–21

The internal examiners are:

Prof. Paul Dellar (Chair)

Prof. Kevin McGerty

Prof. Peter Millican

Prof. Simon Saunders.

The external examiners are:

Prof. Marco Schlichting, University of Warwick.

Prof Karim Thebault, University of Bristol (TBC)

It must be stressed that to preserve the independence of the Examiners, you should not make contact directly with them about matters relating to the content or marking of papers. Any communication must be via the Senior Tutor of your college, who will, if they deem the matter of importance, contact the Proctors. The Proctors in turn communicate with the Chair of Examiners.