

EXTERNAL EXAMINER REPORT FORM 2018



External examiner name:	Simon Robert Blackburn	
External examiner home institution:	Royal Holloway University of London	
Course examined:	Mathematics Part B, Mathematics and Philosophy Part B	
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?	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 6 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?	Yes		
A7.	Are you satisfied that comments in your previous report have been properly considered, and where applicable, acted upon?	Yes		

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

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?*
- 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).*

Standards are consistently high, indeed higher than many other institutions where I have acted as external. It is clear to me that the programme encourages students to excel.

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.

Exams distinguished the range of student ability well, especially at the top and bottom of the range. Exam questions were carefully chosen and precisely phrased. The process was well conducted and rigorous.

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?

There was a significant issue with the process this year: corrections to marks that arose from the checking process were not uploaded into the exams' database. This was spotted and fixed at the Part B Examiners' Meeting, so all is well this year. For future years, I suggest that an extra check is put in place (possibly at the pre-scaling meeting) to catch this problem earlier in the process. I also suggest that the reasons for this issue arising this year are investigated, to make sure this part of the procedure is as robust as possible.

Though the vast majority of assessor reports were excellent, a few reports were not received by the Examiners' Meeting. This seems to be a recurring problem, and is not something I have seen at other institutions. I suggest that some thought is put into how this issue can be resolved.

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 have nothing specific to note here, other than my confidence in the process.

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 commend the practice of asking the assessors' opinion on which marks should scale to the borderlines at 60% and 70%. But I also suggest asking assessors for a mark that might scale to 50%. I believe this would be extremely useful at the Part B Examiners' Meeting. In addition, I suggest that all assessors are encouraged to provide more 'soft' information such as: confidence in their suggested scaling, and comments on the difficulty of the exam compared to previous years. Many assessors already provide such contextual information, and it seems to be very useful (particularly for exams with a smaller cohort).

I would like to give my sincere thanks to everyone involved in the examination process for all their care and hard work this year, as in my previous years as external examiner. In particular, I would like to thank Helen Lowe, Waldemar Schlackow and Gemma Proctor, Helen Byrne and Dominic Joyce for overseeing and administering the many processes involved, and for their good advice throughout.

Signed:	
Date:	10/7/18

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.

