

University of Oxford External Examiner Report - 2024/25

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EXTERNAL EXAMINER REPORT for the academic year 2024/25

1. Please check your title is correct, and select another option if needed

Professor

2. If you entered other, please specify

No response

3. Please check your first name(s) is correct, and amend if needed

Ali

4. Please check your last name is correct, and amend if needed

Taheri

5. Please enter the name of your home institution

University of Sussex

6. Please check the course level of the course(s) you acted as external examiner for is correct, and select another option if needed

Undergraduate

7. Please check the Division(s) responsible for that the course(s) that you acted as external examiner for comes under are correct, and amend if needed

Mathematical, Physical and Life Sciences Division

8. Please check the Faculty/Department(s) responsible for that the course(s) that you acted as external examiner for comes under are correct, and amend if needed

Mathematical Institute

9. Please check the course(s) that you acted as external examiner for are correct, and amend if needed

XMCN: Honour School of Mathematics and Computer Science Part A (2nd Year); XMAT: Honour School of Mathematics (Part A)

10. Please select whether you have just completed your first year of your term of office as external examiner, whether you have now completed your entire term of office, or whether you are in another year of your term of office

First year of term of office

11. Please check the date the final Examination Board took place is correct, and amend if needed. If you acted at external examiner for multiple courses which had separate Examination Board meetings, please check the correct date for the latest Examination Board meeting is showing, and amend if needed.

15 July 2025

Part A

12. Are the academic standards and the achievements of students comparable with those in other UK higher education institutions of which you have experience?
(Please refer to paragraph 15 of the Guidelines for External Examiner Reports)

12.1 A1. i) Academic standards of students

Yes

12.2 A1. ii) Academic achievements of students

Yes

13. Do the threshold standards for the programme appropriately reflect:
(Please refer to paragraph 16 of the Guidelines for External Examiner Reports)

13.1 A2. i) The frameworks for higher education qualifications?

Yes

13.2 A2. ii) Any applicable subject benchmark statement?

Yes

14. In relation to the academic process:

14.1 A3. Does it measure student achievement rigorously and fairly against the intended outcomes of the programme(s)?

Yes

14.2 A4. Is it conducted in line with the University's policies and regulations?

Yes

15. In relation to the information and evidence provided to you:

15.1 A5. Did you receive it in a timely manner to be able to carry out the role of External Examiner effectively?

Yes

16. Regarding your previous report, please indicate whether you:

No response

Part B

17. B1. 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 academic standards achieved by the students were consistent with the expectations of a leading institution and generally of very high standards.

18. B1. 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).

Student performance were also in general consistent with the expectations of a leading institution and of very high standards. All in all there was no particular issue for concern.

19. B2. 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 exam papers, the rigour and conduct of the assessment process, were appropriately challenging, and the marking was rigorous, fair, and clearly aimed at maintaining high academic standards. As far as I could verify and say, it also ensured equity of treatment for students and conducted fairly within university's regulations and guidance. I found no issues of concern, and the outcomes reflect the strong mathematical training the students receive.

20. B3. Are there any issues which you feel should be brought to the attention of supervising committees in the faculty/department, division or wider University? If you acted as external examiner for multiple courses, please indicate whether the issues related to all or selected courses.

No particular issue of concern. A couple of useful suggestions were made at the exam board meeting under "external examiner's comments" that have appeared in the minutes.

21. B4. 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.

Everything was carried out effectively, efficiently and to a very high standard.

22. B5. a) 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.

It would make the process of preparing exams more efficient if a new format is introduced to record the comments and responses made during the exam paper setting process. Specifically, appropriate forms are introduced where the comments/suggestions made by external examiners on individual questions and the exam as a whole and the responses/changes made as a result by the setter are recorded. I also note that there was the potential for exam paper difficulty variation when a new lecturer takes on a course although nothing of huge concern about this took place in the current year.

23. B5. b) Now that your term of office is concluded, please provide an overview here.

No response

Thank you for completing your 2024/25 external examiner report for the University of Oxford