Oxford University Final Honour Schools
Trinity Term 2009

Mathematics and Philosophy Part A:
First Notice to Candidates

This Notice gives details of Mathematics and Philosophy second year examinations in Mathematics.

- Full particulars of the syllabus and the examination are contained in the *Examination Decrees and Regulations* together with the *Supplement* (Part A synopses) to the *Handbook for the Undergraduate Mathematics and Philosophy Courses 2008-2009*.
- You will receive a second notice later with information about the examination timetable and practical arrangements in the Schools, including information about examination numbers, handing in of scripts, and so on. I am expecting the examination to be held in week 9 in Trinity Term, June 22nd to 26th 2009. These dates should be regarded as provisional at this stage.
- A note about examination conventions relating to marking of papers in Part A is attached. Your marks will be reported to you in the University's standard format which consists of a mark in the range 0-100 for each paper.
- The examiners are planning to hold their final meeting on Friday 10th July 2009, and hope to distribute results to Colleges soon afterwards.

Dr Audrey Curnock
Chair of Part A Examiners
Mathematics and Philosophy
Mathematical Institute

cc Senior Maths Tutors
Senior Tutors

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Part A 2009 Mathematics and Philosophy: Marking of papers

Standardized Marks

The University wishes all examiners to adopt a uniform system of reporting marks. This means that each candidate will receive a numerical mark on each paper in the range 0-100, such that

- a First Class performance (on that paper) is indicated by a mark of 70 to 100;
- an Upper Second Class performance (on that paper) is indicated by a mark of 60 to 69;
- a Lower Second Class performance (on that paper) is indicated by a mark of 50 to 59;
- a Third Class performance (on that paper) is indicated by a mark of 40 to 49;
- a Pass performance (on that paper) is indicated by a mark of 30 to 39;
- a fail performance (on that paper) is indicated by a mark of 0 to 29.

In order to arrive at such University standardized marks (or USMs) for each paper, the examiners will mark and assess papers in the way described below.

Papers in Part A

Revised format of Papers in Trinity Term 2009

Candidates should read this carefully as examination papers have a revised format in Trinity Term 2009.

AC1(P) is a 2 hour exam. This exam will contain 6 short questions, 3 on Algebra and 3 on Analysis. Candidates are expected to answer all questions. Each question is worth 10 marks.

AC2(P) Is a 2 hour exam. This exam will contain 3 questions on Algebra and 3 on Analysis, and each question is worth 25 marks. Candidates may submit as many questions as they wish. **The best 3 questions will count for the total mark of this paper with at least 1 question from each section** i.e. the best answer in Algebra, the best answer in Analysis together with the next best answer.

The options papers, AO1(P) and AO2(P) will contain question on each of the options listed in the supplement (part A synopses) together with any option for which special approval has been obtained. Papers AO1(P) and AO2(P) will each contain 1 question on each 8 hour lecture course and 2 questions on each 16 hour lecture course.

AO1(P) This is a new, 1.5 hour exam. Candidates may submit answers to as many questions as they wish. **The best 4 answers will count for the total mark of this paper.** Each question is worth 10 marks.

AO2(P) This replaces AO3(P). This is a 1.5 hour exam. Candidates may submit answers to as many questions as they wish. **The best 2 answers will count for the total mark of this paper.** Each question is worth 25 marks.

There are revised rubrics for papers AC2(P) and AO2(P) in 2008/9. The limit on the number of questions which can be submitted has been removed. AO1(P) is a new paper for joint students this year.

The revised rubrics will appear on the front of each exam paper. Details of submissions of Examination booklets will appear in the next notice.

Marking of Papers

Mark schemes for questions out of 10 will aim to ensure that the following qualitative criteria hold:

9-10 marks: a completely or almost completely correct answer, showing good understanding of the concepts and skill in carrying through arguments and calculations; minor slips or omissions only.

5-8 marks: a good though not complete answer, showing understanding of the concepts and competence in handling the arguments and calculations.

Mark schemes for questions out of 25 will aim to ensure that the following qualitative criteria hold:

20-25 marks: a completely or almost completely correct answer, showing very good 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. In this range, an answer might consist of a very good 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.

USMs

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 Examiners will recalibrate the raw marks to arrive at USMs reported to candidates. In arriving at this recalibration, the examiners will principally take into account the sum of the marks for each question, subject to the rules above on numbers of questions answered, and the performance of all candidates in Part A Mathematics on the corresponding papers. The examiners aim to ensure that all papers and all subjects within a paper are fairly and equally rewarded, but if in any case a paper, or a subject within a paper, appears to have been problematical, then the examiners may take account of this in calculating USMs.

The USMs will be carried forward for consideration when classification is made.

(Extract from Handbook)

The object of the USM is to allow direct comparison between the results of the examination in different subjects. This means that the USM will not correspond to the raw mark. In the case of mathematics the conversion tends to exaggerate small differences at the top and at the bottom of the scale. It is usually true that the USM conversion makes the performance of a weak candidate appear better than the raw marks would suggest. It is often, but not always true that the effect is reversed for strong candidates.