

# EXTERNAL EXAMINER REPORT FORM FOR TAUGHT COURSES

Name	Sabina Leonelli		
Home Institution	University of Exeter		
Email Address			
Name(s) of course(s) examined <i>e.g. Tripos Part/ MPhil/ MRes</i>	NST2HP Natural Sciences Tripos Part 2 History and Philosophy of Science		
Academic year of examination	2021-2022		
Level ( <i>Delete as appropriate</i> )	Undergraduate		
Year of Appointment	1 <sup>st</sup>		

	Yes	No	N/A
1. Are the academic standards set for the award appropriate for the qualification, and comparable with similar programmes in other UK institutions?	X		
2. Are you satisfied that you received sufficient programme materials (handbooks, regulations, marking and classing criteria) in a timely manner?	X		
3. Are you satisfied that you were consulted adequately on draft examination papers, and that your comments and suggestions were taken into consideration?	X		
4. Are you satisfied that the assessment was pitched at the appropriate level?	X		
5. Was the general standard and consistency of marking appropriate?	X		
6. Do the assessment processes measure student achievement rigorously and fairly against the intended outcomes of the programme?	X		
7. Are you satisfied that issues raised on your previous report form have been properly considered and, where applicable, acted upon?	X		
8. Did you receive a written response from the Department to your previous report form?	n/a		

If you replied No to any of the questions above, please expand here: n/a

Do you have any concerns about the course, including standards and quality?

No.

Are you satisfied that the procedures associated with the assessment are efficient (e.g. timeframes, draft papers, questions, design and conduct of exam, meetings, vivas)?

Yes.

The procedures for marking and assessment were appropriate and consistently applied. As external examiner, I reviewed a sample of dissertations and notes containing a spread of top, bottom and

borderline marks, which I am satisfied to be representative of the overall assessment. I also reviewed a sample of exam scripts for each paper, and had access to the overall results for each paper and piece of coursework.

Exams, essays and dissertations were double-blind marked, which is excellent practice to ensure fair and well-considered assessment. Examiners recorded their comments and subsequent discussions in ways that were well-substantiated and I could easily follow.

Do you have any comments on marking and classing (e.g. range of marks, action around borderline marks, penalties, moderation, double marking, reconciliation of marks)?

The coursework is assessed fairly, with robust and substantive discussions happening among markers and senior examiner, resulting in reliable marks. Having reviewed cases of spread between the marks provided by first and second marker, and subsequent constructive exchanges, I am fully satisfied that those differences have been resolved fairly and adequately. In specific cases of borderline scores for coursework, I provided written feedback which was in general agreement with the departmental markers.

In cases of disagreement over the extent to which exam scripts match the questions that were posed by examiners, I agree with the overarching emphasis on ensuring that students actually answer the questions they are given (as in the marking criteria provided by the department). While it is good to see students who are able to handle complex material and ideas, it is crucial to their training that they are able to handle that material pertinently and with clear relevance to the overarching topic of discussion; and it makes perfect sense to assess exams with a close eye to cultivating that skill.

Do you have any comments on the student experience of the course and/or their experience of the assessment process?

It is a pity that the feedback is not always made available to students, as it would undoubtedly benefit them to access the qualitative comments associated to their coursework (rather than just the final mark).

Do you have any comments on University policies (e.g. the role of the external examiner, policies around plagiarism, script annotation)?

No

Please describe here any recommendations for improvement.

I would recommend that students are given access to qualitative feedback, rather than only marks.

Please highlight any good practice you encountered.

It was a joy to read through this body of work, including the consistently solid writing by students and the careful crafting of course materials and coursework by lecturers. The essays are indicative of excellent teaching and effective mentoring, with students generally able to carry out independent research and to use both primary and secondary sources to support a consistent argument and engage in topical debates. This is particularly notable given the ongoing difficulties presented by the pandemic, which the department seems to have confronted effectively, thereby preventing serious damage to student learning.

The focus on primary sources for the essays is commendable and clearly very useful in cultivating discipline, rigor and an understanding of what it means to develop original research. The exam answers were generally well-crafted and replete with pointed examples and appropriate references.

The scholarly territory covered by the coursework I have seen is extensive and cutting-edge in its emphasis on the relation between research environments, technologies, social institutions and conceptual developments, and the colonial legacies and structures of Eurocentric modes of scientific

research. It certainly warrants the department's well-deserved fame as the best history and philosophy of science department in the UK.

Have you seen any evidence of grade inflation?

No. If anything, I thought that the marking for some of the coursework was somewhat conservative.

If this is your final year as external examiner? If so, have you seen improvements over your tenure? Has the Department acted on your advice?

n/a

Do you have any other comments?

no