

EXTERNAL EXAMINER REPORT FORM FOR TAUGHT COURSES

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| Name | Charlotte Sleigh | | | |
| Home Institution | UCL | | | |
| Email Address | | | | |
| Name(s) of course(s) examined e.g. Tripos Part/ MPhil/ MRes | Part III and MPhil | | | |
| Academic year of examination | 2023-24 | | | |
| Level (<i>Delete as appropriate</i>) | | | Postgraduate | |
| Year of Appointment | 1 st | 2 nd X | 3 rd | 4 th |

| | 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? | | X | |

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

(1) The marking is a little more stringent than I have seen for comparable programmes at other UK universities. I would say that marks are 2-5% more conservative than I've seen elsewhere.

(1) Although I understand the constraints of organisation, it is strange that the MPhil pass is 60 and the Part III is 50. The work is of comparable quality even though the assessment tasks are slightly different. I wonder whether the desire to preserve passes for MPhil students means that grades artificially bottom out at 60 for them, except in the rare cases of clear fails.

(5) On the basis of a two year sample it now appears that philosophical work is more stringently marked than historical work. We discussed this at length in the examiner's meeting; the problem seems to be that a lot of the philosophical marking is done by academics in the Philosophy faculty, not HPS, and that they have higher expectations.

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| (8) brief item in the Department's Board minutes from 13 November 2023 but no response as such |
| <p>Do you have any concerns about the course, including standards and quality?</p> <p>The question of students' use of generative AI in written assessment needs to be kept under review. We discussed this in the examiners' meeting.</p> |
| <p>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)?</p> <p>Yes, this all works well.</p> |
| <p>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)?</p> <p>All markers need to explain reconciliation of marks where there is divergence across a boundary or by a significant number of marks. This need only be a simple matter of stating 'it was agreed that the quality of x slightly outweighed the deficiency y', or vice versa. Even in the case of a straight numerical mean it should be noted that the qualities and deficiencies balanced. More markers explained their reconciliations this year but by no means all. I would further add that there's no particular reason why these comments should be withheld from the student. I would add a box for reconciliation on the form and preserve another for confidential comments if required.</p> <p>It may be useful to produce descriptors to differentiate bands at the top end of marks.</p> <p>Penalties were fairly and consistently applied.</p> |
| <p>Do you have any comments on the student experience of the course and/or their experience of the assessment process?</p> <p>No</p> |
| <p>Do you have any comments on University policies (e.g. the role of the external examiner, policies around plagiarism, script annotation)?</p> <p>No, except that payment/costs reimbursement was exceptionally slow and required a lot of chasing.</p> |
| Please describe here any recommendations for improvement. |
| <p>Please highlight any good practice you encountered.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There was a good diversity of written work produced by students. This was of high quality overall, some of it superb. • Marking was thoughtful and rigorous. • The issues mentioned above produced a very engaged and thoughtful discussion at the examiners' meeting – there is a great concern about fairness for students. |

Have you seen any evidence of grade inflation?

Quite the reverse – see above.

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?

n/a