

## History and Philosophy of Science Part III: Senior Examiner's Report 2023-24.

### Overall results

The Part III course was taken by 12 students this year. 8 achieved First Class marks (70+) overall, and 4 received a Second Class mark, Division 1 (60-69).

	First (70+)	Second, division I (60-69)	Total
Male	3	2	5
Female	5	2	7
Other			

The cohort is not sufficiently large to draw specific conclusions from this data.

### Prizes

The **Lipton prize** for the best overall performance on Part III was awarded to Eleanor Connell.

The **Bronowski Prize** for the best overall performance in the first half of the Part III was awarded to Matthew Holland.

### External examiner

Professor Charlotte Sleigh was the external examiner for the Part III (as well as MPhil) for the second consecutive year. Professor Sleigh remarked upon the high quality of the student work, noting to be 'high quality overall, some of it superb', and additionally complimented the 'thoughtful and rigorous' marking and 'engaged and thoughtful' discussions at examiners meetings. In addition, Professor Sleigh included several specific recommendations for both the Part III and MPhil programs (in her joint report), which we will endeavour to build upon in future years, which I'll list below, together with suggestions for recommendations from internal examiners. We are very grateful to Professor Sleigh for her excellent, honest and detailed report, for her work and commitment to this role throughout the year, and for continuing for a third year.

### Recommendations

There were no recommendations specifically aimed at just Part III, but two main new issues have come to affect both the Part III HPS and HPSM MPhil courses, which require continued attention at the level of the board and amongst Part III examiners. Firstly is the continuing issue of Chat GPT and similar language models, and to what extent it can be identified or else discouraged. Secondly concerns the introduction of self-certified extensions. On this point, it is important that students are aware that these are to be used only if necessary, and are not simply a de facto later deadline. We have considered how to deal with the possibility of a large proportion of essays being submitted at a later date than the advertised deadlines and adjusted examiner meeting dates to accommodate this, and it has been made clearer to students that essays that are not assessed prior to the final examiners meeting, due to extensions, may in some cases not be eligible to receive certain student prizes.

Assessors will once again be encouraged to use a full range of marks, and to use the 'confidential comments' boxes to give a clear explanation of how joint marks are agreed (or if there's a failure to agree a joint mark) in the case that individual assessor marks are far apart.

One issue that was raised by the external examiner concerned the different marking schemes for Part III and the HPSM MPhil. This is due to the difference in marking structures between undergraduate and postgraduate courses within the university, but we are aware of the need to clearly communicate to assessors the difference in how work is to be marked between the two programs.

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