

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY AND PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE

UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE

**MPhil in History, Philosophy and Sociology of Science, Technology and
Medicine****Senior Examiner's Report 2012-13****Overall results**

The MPhil course was taken by 19 students, of whom 12 achieved overall First Class marks (70 or above), 3 with distinction (75–79). All remaining candidates achieved overall High Performance marks (65–69).

In line with the departmental agreement to monitor gender-based trends in student performance, we should note the following breakdown of results. There are no particular concerns arising from this year's results, but we should continue monitoring.

Class	Female	Male	Total
First with distinction (75–79)	2	1	3
First (70–74)	4	5	9
High performance (65–69)	5	2	7
Total	11	8	19

There are no significant trends that the Senior Examiner has detected on the basis of other demographic or disability categories.

Prizes

The Jennifer Redhead Prize, for best overall essay performance, was awarded to David Dunning. The Rausing Prize, for best dissertation performance, was awarded to Caitlin Doherty and Zina Ward jointly.

External examiner

Dr Serafina Cuomo (Birkbeck College, University of London) completed her term as external examiner for the MPhil programme with her work this year. She expressed her appreciation of the high quality of the work produced by the candidates, and also her approval of the improvements seen over the years in the examiners' work and the procedures followed by them.

The examiners wish to thank Dr Cuomo for her valuable contributions over the last three years. Dr Emma Tobin (University College London) has agreed to serve as the next external examiner.

Recommendations

1. When students are building on previous work, this should be clearly indicated by citing the previous work in the same way as any other secondary source. (This would occur most commonly in the use of one of the three essays in the dissertation.) This year's examiners recommend in such a case the use of one of

the same examiners for both works, as an exception to the general rule that we should try to avoid using the same examiner repeatedly for a given student.

2. Supervisors of essays and dissertations should remind students to submit a change-of-topic form in case of a change significant enough to affect the choice of examiners.

3. It has worked very well this year to have a small group of people including the Senior Examiner (Hasok Chang) and the Ordinary Examiner (Helen Curry) propose examiners for essays and dissertations to the Degree Committee, rather than try to have the whole committee come up with suggestions on the spot at the meeting. In working out suggested examiners, supervisors should be consulted as necessary. This new procedure should be continued in coming years, unless there are new reasons arising against it. It would also help shorten the Degree Committee meetings.