

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 2013-14****Overall results**

The MPhil course was taken by 11 students, of whom 7 achieved overall First Class marks (70 or above), 1 with distinction (75–79). 3 candidates achieved overall High Performance marks (65–69). One candidate has been granted an extension on his dissertation until October 1 for medical reasons.

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)	0	1	1
First (70–74)	3	3	6
High performance (65–69)	1	2	3
Total	4	6	10

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 Michael McGovern. The Rausing Prize, for best dissertation performance, was awarded to Catherine Alessandra Colaianni and Michael McGovern jointly.

External examiner

This was the first year in which Dr Emma Tobin (University College London) served as external examiner for the MPhil programme. At the final examiners' meeting she described the candidates' work as, in general, outstanding and of high caliber. She commended the examiners on the quantity and quality of feedback they offered to the candidates, noting that this exceeds what she has encountered at other institutions.

Dr Tobin will continue as external examiner next year.

Recommendations

1. The procedure of having the Senior and Ordinary Examiners, in consultation with the Director of Graduate Studies, take a first pass at assigning examiners for essays and dissertations continues to be an effective means of making the process of assigning examiners more efficient. It is recommended however that

the Senior and Ordinary Examiners be aided by someone whose expertise complements their own, which may not necessarily be the Director of Graduate Studies.

2. Following a suggestion by the external examiner, departmental staff agreed to try anonymization of marking for MPhil and Part III students in 2014-15.

3. The department should consider including: in its advice to students, more specific guidance as to what counts as a topic in the History and Philosophy of Science; and, in marking criteria, a note that first-class work is expected to be polished and typo-free.