

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 2015-16**

**Overall results**

The MPhil course was taken by 28 students. Nineteen students achieved overall First Class marks (70 or above) with five achieving distinctions (75–79). Seven candidates achieved overall High Performance marks (65–69) and two Pass marks (60–64). No students failed the course (0–59).

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)	3	2	5
First (70-74)	4	10	14
High performance (65-69)	1	6	7
Pass (60-64)	1	1	2
Total	9	19	28

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 is awarded for the best overall performance in the MPhil essays. Three students were awarded this prize: Alissa Aron, Claudia Dumitru, and Henry Schmidt. This is the first year in which three students have won this prize. The 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Rausing Prize for the best MPhil dissertation was awarded to Henry Schmidt.

**External examiner**

Dr Emma Tobin (University College London) served as external examiner for the MPhil programme. This was her third and final year serving as external examiner. Throughout the year, she described the work of both MPhil and Part III students as outstanding. She also praised the greater spread of essays across the areas offered by the programme. She described the feedback provided by examiners as exemplary—beyond that seen in other institutions—and was pleased to see that examiners were using the full range of available marks.

Dr Staffan Müller-Wille has agreed to take over as External Examiner next academic year.

### **Recommendations**

1. The MPhil/Part III Senior and Ordinary Examiners together with the Director of Graduate Studies will continue to nominate two examiners per student before Degree Committee meetings.
2. The anonymization of marking for MPhil and Part III students continues to be effective. The Senior Examiner has found no evidence of inequality in gender attainment.
3. In order to encourage consistency in the kind and quantity of feedback provided to students on examined work, the word limit of 200-500 words on examiner comments has been implemented.
4. Following the recommendation of the External Examiner, the department is encouraged to screen student work for plagiarism using software such as Turnitin. One case of plagiarism was detected this year by an examiner.
5. Following a suggestion by the External Examiner, the department is encouraged to implement a greater penalty for late work in order to discourage students from submitting essays after the deadline. This will ensure that examiners have sufficient time to examine submitted work.
6. The Senior and Ordinary Examiners recommend that MPhil and Part III examination follow the Part II model with a fixed set of core examiners plus assessors who mark work but do not attend the examiners' meetings. This is in accordance with new regulations released by Education and Student Policy in which all examiners are expected to be present at the final examiners meeting.
7. A gift from Dr Anita McConnell who passed away on 28 April 2016 will form a fund called the Anita McConnell Prize. This fund will be used to encourage students to study objects from the Whipple Museum of the History of Science.