UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE

# REPORT COVERSHEET FOR EXTERNAL EXAMINERS

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|---|---|
| Name and Title: Dr Rachel Cooper | |
| Email: | r.v.cooper@lancaster.ac.uk |
| Home institution: Lancaster University | |
| Award or subject area examined: | Part II History and Philosophy of Science |
| Associated University of Cambridge Faculty/Department: | History and Philosophy of Science |

**Please tick the statement which most closely reflects your views of the examinations.** TICK HERE

| | |
|---|---|
| The standards set for the award(s) or subject area(s) above were appropriate. The processes for assessment, examination and the determination of awards were sound and fairly conducted.<br>**Any recommendations made are for the purposes of enhancement to the course and its assessment.** | ☒ |
| The standards set for the award(s) or subject area(s) above were appropriate. The processes for assessment, examination and the determination of awards were sound and fairly conducted.<br>**HOWEVER, there are some risks to the future assurance of the course and its assessment, as outlined in my recommendations.** | ☐ |
| There are immediate concerns or risks relating to the standards set for the awards or subject areas above and/or the processes for assessment, examination and the determination of awards.<br>**These require immediate action on behalf of the University to prevent reoccurrence in the next set of examinations.** | ☐ |

| **Please tick as appropriate:** | Yes | No | N/A |
|---|---|---|---|
| Are you satisfied that you received sufficient programme materials (programme handbooks, regulations, and marking criteria)? | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Are you satisfied that you were consulted adequately on draft examination papers, and that the level of questions was appropriate? | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Were you given sufficient opportunity to scrutinise the general standard and consistency of marking of examination scripts and coursework? | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Have issues raised in previous report(s) been addressed to your satisfaction? | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ |

**Please return this form, with your full report, to: vcexternalexaminers@admin.cam.ac.uk by July 31st for undergraduate examinations, 1st October for Masters Degrees, and 12th October for resits.**

**Or:** The Vice-Chancellor, University of Cambridge, The Old Schools, Cambridge, CB2 1TN.

Please also forward copies to your Chair of Examiners.

This form can be downloaded from: http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/offices/education/examiners/eecoversheet.pdf

**External Examiner's Report on HPS Part II**

**Rachel Cooper, 6 July 2018**

I have been asked to comment on the following:

**The extent to which standards are appropriate for the examination and the qualification**

Standards are appropriate for the examination and qualification. Students were assessed on the basis of exams, primary source essays, and, in some cases, dissertations.

The exam questions were generally well chosen and probing. Students had clearly been well-taught and the quality of work was generally excellent.

I was especially impressed by the Primary Source Essays. Students were asked to closely engage with one of a range of set primary sources and wrote 3000 word essays. This work was supported by seminar series on the set texts. The essays written by students were generally of an excellent standard. This type of assessment worked very well and prompted students to think critically and deeply about the set texts.

Excellent work was also produced in the dissertations.

In general, students showed a sophisticated understanding of a range of topics in the history and philosophy of science. They were able to write well and clearly. Students could engage closely with difficult texts, critically assess the arguments of other scholars, and were able to develop their own original lines of argument.

**The extent to which standards are comparable with similar programmes in other UK institutions with which you are familiar**

Standards are comparable with similar programmes in other UK institutions with which I am familiar.

The standards expected for work to receive marks of a particular class were comparable to those of other institutions with which I am familiar in the UK. A higher proportion of students achieved first class degrees than at other institutions, but this was fully justifiable in view of the excellence of the work produced by candidates.

**The extent to which processes for assessment, and the determination of awards were sound and fairly conducted;**

Processes for assessment, and the determination of awards were sound and fairly conducted.

All essays, dissertations and exam scripts were double-blind marked. Examiners maintained notes on the rationale for awarding marks. These notes could be reviewed in cases where examiners disagreed and were also made available to me (as external examiner) on request. Where there were disagreements between markers these were resolved through discussion. In the one case where agreement could not be reached a third internal examiner considered the work and helped the original examiners reach agreement.

As external examiner, I reviewed a sample of exam scripts for each paper, and also read a sample of dissertations and essays. I am fully satisfied that the marks awarded were fair.

As external examiner, I also carefully reviewed work by candidates who were at a borderline between degree classes. I am satisfied that the work of borderline candidates was thoroughly considered.

**Any good practice which you feel could be usefully identified for further dissemination.**

Examples of good practice that can be identified for further dissemination are:

(1) All student work was double-blind marked.

**Additional comments**

In my 2017 report I had wondered whether students were achieving equivalent marks in history of science and philosophy of science. It had seemed possible to me that generally higher marks were awarded for work in history of science. I would like to report that this year I had no such concerns and saw multiple examples of excellent work in philosophy of science.