

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY AND PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE
UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE

NST Part III History and Philosophy of Science

Senior Examiner's Report 2017–18

Overall results

The Part III course was taken by 10 students this year. Five achieved First Class marks (70+) overall, two a High II.i (67-69), and three a lower II.i (60-66). There were no lower seconds, thirds or fails.

The gender distribution of performances is as follows:

| Class | Female | Male | Total |
|--------------------|--------|------|-------|
| First (70+) | 4 | 1 | 5 |
| High II.i (67-69) | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| Lower II.i (60-66) | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| II.ii | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 6 | 4 | 10 |

The numbers are too low to identify statistical trends, but it should be noted that the numbers of female students achieving firsts was high, with the top mark of the year achieved by the only male student to achieve a first.

Prizes

The 9th Lipton prize for the best overall performance on the Part III and the Bronowski prize for the best overall performance in the first half of the Part III were awarded to Jonathan Cooper.

External examiner

Dr Staffan Müller-Wille (Exeter) continued for a second year as the external examiner for this MPhil and Part III. Once again, he found the quality of the student work 'very high'. He praised the 'exceptional detail and rigour' of our examiners' reports. He noted that the department took action to mitigate the effects of the strike on student performances. Overall, he described our examination process as 'sound and fairly conducted', expressed gratitude for our clear, meticulous and timely documentation, and concluded that our programme excels the standards of others in the UK.

Recommendations

Following a series of changes to the examination procedure in previous years (the use of core examiners and additional assessors, the process of nominating assessors, anonymous marking, the circulation of examiners reports to NUTO supervisors, the release of provisional marks to students, decreased reliance on the external to resolve disputed marks and to rank prize-winning essays and dissertations), the examination process is working smoothly and no changes are recommended.

One rare occurrence is worth noting:

1. The metric that was used to mitigate the potential impact of industrial action in Lent Term on Part III performances were fair and effective. In the event of future industrial action, the Department should be careful about assuming that this metric will work in the same way if the students know about it in advance rather than after the fact.

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