

FINAL HONOUR SCHOOL OF HISTORY AND ECONOMICS EXAMINERS' REPORT 2020

Part I

A. Statistics

All candidates

Class	No					%				
	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016
I	11	2	4	5	1	64.7	16.7	28.6	33.3	12.5
II.1	6	10	10	10	6	35.3	83.3	71.4	66.7	75
II.2	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	12.5
III	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

All candidates, divided by male and female

Class	Number										Percentage (%) of gender									
	2020		2019		2018		2017		2016		2020		2019		2018		2017		2016	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
I	10	1	2	0	2	2	5	0	1	0	66.7	50	28.6	0	28.6	28.6	41.7	0	14.3	0
II.1	5	1	5	5	5	5	7	3	5	1	33.3	50	71.4	100	71.4	71.4	58.3	100	71.4	100
II.2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	14.3	-
III	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

EXAMINING METHODS AND PROCEDURES

Because of the pandemic, new classification rules were agreed. HECO finalists were assessed on all eight papers but classified on their highest six papers, with the lowest two marks being disregarded. In all ECONOMICS papers, there was a word limit for essays of **1600** words, with technical material (sensibly-sized diagrams &/or equations, etc.) contributing to the total at the rate of 400 words per A4 page. The finalists were informed of these new rules and other matters directly by email on 20 April 2020.

Part II

A. GENERAL COMMENTS ON THE EXAMINATION

There were 60% Firsts, which is a huge step up from last year, and was due to the candidates being classified on their best 6 papers under the new regulations. External examiners noted that there is more to be done in creating easy access to paperwork, if online, especially with regard to sampling. They also commented that a wider range of marks could be used. Both externals made the point that as new externals they were not able to make a comparison with 'normal' years. The external examiners noted that the First Class boundary is far more generous than other universities, due to our relatively low average mark for a First. They also observed that there is not enough use of lower marks (lower 60s and below). It was

also noted that, on History papers, there is often significant divergence between markers and too much of a tendency to settle on a midpoint with not enough clarity about how this reconciliation occurs.

B. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES AND BREAKDOWN OF THE RESULTS BY GENDER

The Chair noted that the University is in fact interested in breakdown of results by sex, not gender (male and female being sexes).

The proportion of female and male students getting Firsts is not statistically significant, so it is very hard to draw conclusions here. The external examiners noted that it would be useful to know what proportion of female applicants HECO receives, and what proportion of those get places. They noted that Oxford has a proud history of employing senior women as economic historians and that it would be good to see the University leading the way in attracting women to study History and Economics at degree level.

C. COMMENTS ON PAPERS AND INDIVIDUAL QUESTIONS

In discussing the increase in the number of Firsts, examiners agreed that the candidates' theses were in general of an extremely high standard.

D. FURTHER COMMENTS ON THE EXAMINATION PROCESS

All examiners felt that, given the extraordinary circumstances, the examination process had worked very well and that the decisions taken about (for example) Mitigating Circumstances were transparent and comprehensible. Nine of the 17 candidates submitted MCEs.

Prof Selina Todd (Chair)

Prof Alan Beggs

Dr Leif Dixon

Prof Godfrey Keller

Dr Simon Skinner

Prof Jo Fox (External Examiner for History)

Professor Edmund Cannon (External Examiner for Economics)