

Examination Conventions FHS 2026

**Examination Conventions for History,
Ancient and Modern History,
History and Economics,
History and English,
History and Politics
in the Final Honour School of 2026**
(papers examined in year 3)

**History and Modern Languages
in the Final Honour School of 2026**
(papers examined in year 4)

1. Introduction

These conventions have been approved by the Board of the Faculty of History and the Boards of the Faculties of the other parent schools in the case of joint schools with History, with respect to timed exam papers and submitted written work in History. Examination conventions are the formal record of the specific assessment standards for the course or courses to which they apply. They set out how examined work will be marked and how the resulting marks will be used to arrive at a final result and classification of an award.

2. Rubrics for Individual Papers

A. History and all Joint Schools with History

The following papers will be examined by an in-person, invigilated 3-hour timed examination at Examination Schools:

EUROPEAN AND WORLD HISTORY PAPERS

This rubric applies to all European and World History papers; any exceptions are noted below		Candidates must answer THREE questions, and COMPLETE all their answers.
A16410H1	European and World History 3: The Central Middle Ages, 900-1300	Candidates must answer THREE questions, and COMPLETE all their answers. You may answer with reference to any medieval society or part of the period.
A16414H1	European and World History 7: Eurasian Empires, 1450-1800	Candidates must answer THREE questions and COMPLETE all their answers, of which AT LEAST ONE question should be chosen from Section B

A16416H1	European and World History 9: From Independence to Empire: America 1763-1898	Candidates must answer THREE questions and COMPLETE all their answers, of which AT LEAST ONE must be chosen from Section C.
A16418H1	European and World History 11: Imperial and Global History, 1750-1930	Candidates must answer THREE questions, and COMPLETE all their answers, of which AT LEAST ONE must be chosen from Section A and AT LEAST ONE from Section B.
A16419H1	European and World History 12: The Making of Modern America since 1863	Candidates must answer THREE questions, and COMPLETE all their answers. An asterisk (*) draws attention to questions which may be answered with reference to any part of the period.
A17635H1	European and World History 13: Europe Divided, 1914-1989: Crises, Conflicts, Identities	Candidates should COMPLETE ONE answer from EACH SECTION .
A16421H1	European and World History 14: The Global Twentieth Century, 1930-2003	Candidates should answer THREE questions from AT LEAST TWO sections, ONE OF WHICH must be from section C , and complete all their answers. Chronological divisions in Sections A and B are indicative, not restrictive; candidates may answer in either section with regard to the whole period covered by the paper where appropriate, if they wish.
A16424H1	European and World History Theme Paper C: Waging War in Eurasia, 1200-1945	Candidates must answer THREE questions including at least ONE from Section A and ONE from Section B
A18871H1	Further Subject: History of the World Economy [History and Economics only]	There are EIGHT questions in this paper. Answer THREE questions.

FURTHER SUBJECT PAPERS

This rubric applies to all Further Subject Papers; any exceptions are noted below	Candidates must answer THREE questions and COMPLETE all their answers. They should illustrate their answers, as far as possible, by reference to the prescribed authorities, and must complete AT LEAST ONE answer from BOTH Section A and Section B.
Further Subject: History of the World Economy [History and Economics only]	There are EIGHT questions in this paper. Answer THREE questions.

SPECIAL SUBJECT GOBBETS PAPERS

This rubric applies to all Special Subject Gobbets Papers; any exceptions are noted below	Candidates should attempt ALL the questions.
A10754H1 Special Subject: English Architecture, 1660-1720	Candidates should attempt ALL the questions. Answers may be accompanied by sketches where appropriate.

DISCIPLINES OF HISTORY

A10770H1	Disciplines of History	Candidates should answer TWO questions, ONE from EACH section. Candidates are advised to use the additional time per question to think about the questions carefully and to plan arguments, rather than to write longer answers.
A10770X1	Disciplines of History (old regs)	Candidates should answer TWO questions, ONE from EACH section.

HISTORY OF THE BRITISH ISLES

This rubric applies to all History of the British Isles papers	Candidates must answer THREE questions, and COMPLETE all their answers.
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The following papers will be submitted as coursework via Inspira:

History of the British Isles:

Coursework to be submitted in year 2 (Old Regulations) - Candidates will be examined by means of three essays of no more than 2,000 words each, under titles from a question paper published by the examiners on the Wednesday of eighth week of the Trinity Term in the year preceding the final examination. The essays are to be submitted via Inspira by noon on Friday of ninth week, Friday 26 June, 2026.

Rubric: Candidates must submit essays in answer to **THREE** questions and are encouraged to follow their own interests in the history of this period whether thematically or chronologically. They may also note that the Regulations define the history of the British Isles as 'the history of England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland, and of other territories in so far as they are specifically connected with the History of Britain'. Questions marked with an asterisk (*) may be answered with reference to any part of the period and any part of such territories. Candidates are also encouraged to display some breadth of knowledge overall, whether thematically, geographically or chronologically. No essay must exceed 2,000 words, excluding references and the bibliography; over-length work will be penalised according to the published tariff. References must be in the form published in the Handbook for the Final Honour School of History.

History and all Joint Schools with History except History and Economics:

Special Subject Extended Essays (All):

[Course work to be submitted in the final year] Candidates should answer **ONE** question in an essay of no more than 6,000 words (including references but excluding bibliography). The completed essay must be submitted via Inspira by noon on Thursday of week 0 of Hilary Term). The essay should be illustrated by reference to the prescribed authorities.

History and all joint schools with History except History and English:

Compulsory Undergraduate Thesis:

[Course work to be submitted in the final year.] A thesis on a topic of the candidate's choosing of not more than 12,000 words (including footnotes, but excluding bibliography and appendices). The thesis should normally include an investigation of relevant printed or unprinted primary historical sources, and must include proper footnotes and a bibliography. The thesis should conform to the standards of academic presentation prescribed in the course handbook. The completed thesis must be submitted via Inspira by noon on Friday of week 8 of Hilary Term.

Optional Additional Thesis:

[Course work to be submitted in the final year.] A thesis on a topic of the candidate's choosing of not more than 12,000 words (including footnotes, but excluding bibliography and appendices). The thesis should normally include an investigation of relevant printed or unprinted primary historical sources, and must include proper footnotes and a bibliography. The thesis should conform to the standards of academic presentation prescribed in the course handbook. The completed thesis must be submitted via Inspira by noon on Monday of week 1 of Trinity Term.

B. History and Ancient and Modern History ONLY

Disciplines of History:

The paper consists of two sections: Section A, Making Historical Comparisons, and Section B, Making Historical Arguments. Candidates must answer two questions, one from each Section. Section A rubric: Candidates must demonstrate sustained and effective comparisons of at least **TWO** case studies drawn from at least **TWO** societies or historical periods. Section B rubric: In answering questions from this section candidates should discuss specific examples of historical writing. They should consider the ways in which historians select and use sources, the methodologies they have employed, and the historiographical context within which they write.

C. History and English ONLY

History and English Bridge Papers:

'A Flame of Fire': Reading, reform and salvation in late medieval England

Representing the City 1558-1640

Women's Life Writing: Gender and social change, 1870-1930

[Course work to be submitted in year 2] Candidates taking this paper were examined by means of an essay of between 5,000 and 6,000 words (including footnotes but excluding bibliography), on an interdisciplinary topic of the candidates' choosing, relevant to the Bridge Paper concerned. The completed essays must be submitted via Inspira by noon on Friday of week 1 Trinity Term.

Compulsory Interdisciplinary Dissertation:

[Course work to be submitted in year 3.] A dissertation on an interdisciplinary topic of the candidate's choosing of not more than 12,000 words (including footnotes, but excluding bibliography and appendices). The dissertation should normally include an investigation of relevant printed or unprinted primary historical and literary sources, and must include proper footnotes and a bibliography. The dissertation should conform to the standards of academic presentation prescribed in the course handbook. The completed dissertation must be submitted via Inspira by noon on Friday of week 8 Hilary Term.

D. History and Modern Languages ONLY

History and Modern Languages Bridge Essay:

A bridge essay of between 8,000 and 10,000 words on an interdisciplinary topic, designed to draw together interests and develop skills from both sides of the course. The limit of 10,000 words includes footnotes, but excludes bibliography, and, in cases for which specific permission has been obtained from the convenor of the joint school, appendices. Candidates must follow the guidelines on word count, presentation, and referencing as outlined in the course handbook.

The candidate will submit a title and short statement of up to fifty words on the manner in which he/she proposes to treat the topic, together with a note from his/her tutor approving the topic, addressed to the convenor of the Joint School of History and Modern Languages, c/o the History Faculty, no later than Monday of sixth week of Trinity Term of his/her second year. Titles will be approved by the convenor and one other member of the Standing Committee of the Joint School of History and Modern Languages. Notification of whether or not approval is forthcoming will be given by eighth week of Trinity Term.

Changes to the title must be submitted to the convenor of the joint school at the latest by the Friday of fourth week of the Hilary Term of the candidate's final year. Notification of whether or not approval is forthcoming will be given no later than sixth week of the Hilary Term of the candidate's final year. Bridge essays on approved titles should be submitted digitally via Inspira, by noon on the Tuesday of ninth week in the Hilary Term preceding the examination. A declaration of authorship will be automatically downloaded with each submission. The certificate declares that (a) the bridge essay is the candidate's own work, (b) that it does not exceed 10,000 words in length (including footnotes but not including bibliography and translations from quotations), (c) that no more than the specified maximum amount of advice and assistance (no more than five hours of preparatory or advisory meetings and/or email consultations) from college or external advisers has been received. In the rare cases when a candidate is dispensed from the requirement to spend a year abroad after their second year, that candidate shall not be required to submit their Bridge Essay until noon on Friday of ninth week of the Trinity Term preceding the examination. Any changes in title for such candidates should be submitted to the convenor of the joint school by the fourth week of Hilary

Term of the final year. Notification of whether approval is forthcoming will be given no later than sixth week of Hilary Term of the final year.

A first draft of the bridge essay may be read and commented on, but not corrected in matters of detail and presentation, by the bridge essay adviser.

3. Marking conventions

3.1 University scale for standardised expression of agreed final marks

Agreed final marks for individual papers will be expressed using the following scale:

70-100	First Class
60-69	Upper second
50-59	Lower second
40-49	Third
30-39	Pass
0-29	Fail

3.2 Qualitative criteria for different types of assessment

The following criteria will be used in the marking of the **History of the British Isles take-home essays and examination**:

Engagement	Close attention to the question A sophistication of argument, appropriate to the length of the essay Awareness of relevant historiography Range of issues addressed
Argument	Logical coherence of argument Clarity of structure Critical examination of evidence
Information	Accuracy of factual content Selection of the best and most telling examples to support the argument Use of primary sources. This may include quantitative or visual material where relevant. (If primary sources are utilised via a secondary work this is acceptable if clearly referenced.)
Organisation & Presentation	Clarity, fluency and elegance of prose Accuracy of grammar, spelling, and punctuation Correct use of referencing

The following criteria will be used in marking the exam question papers in **European and World History**:

Engagement	Directness of engagement with the question Range of issues addressed Depth, complexity, and sophistication of Comprehension of issues and implications of the question Effective and appropriate use of historical imagination and intellectual curiosity
Argument	Coherence, control, and independence of argument Conceptual and analytical precision Flexibility: discussion of a variety of views
Evidence	Depth, precision, detail, range and relevance of evidence cited Accuracy of facts Understanding of historical debate Critical engagement with primary and/or secondary sources
Organisation & Presentation	Clarity and coherence of structure Clarity and fluency of prose Correctness of grammar, spelling, and punctuation

The following criteria will be used in marking the exam question papers in **Disciplines of History**:

Engagement	Incisiveness of engagement with the question Range of issues addressed Depth and sophistication of comprehension of issues and Implications of the question Historiographical awareness Directness of answer to the question Choice of appropriate societies or periods for comparison Choice of appropriate historical works, schools, or methods for analysis
Argument	Coherence, control, independence and relevance of argument Conceptual and analytical precision Clarity and sophistication of development of argument Flexibility: discussion of a variety of views Sustained and effective comparison of societies or periods to support wider conclusions Sustained analysis of historical works, schools, or methods that demonstrates an informed understanding of their context, rationale, and significance.
Information	Relevance of deployment of information Depth, precision and detail of evidence cited Range of material deployed Accuracy of facts.
Organisation & Presentation	Clarity and coherence of structure Clarity and fluency of prose Correctness of grammar, spelling, and punctuation

The following criteria will be used in marking the exam question papers in **Further Subjects**:

Engagement	Directness of engagement with the question Range of issues addressed Depth, complexity, and sophistication of comprehension of issues and implications of the question Effective and appropriate use of historical imagination and intellectual curiosity
Argument	Coherence, control, and independence of argument Conceptual and analytical precision Flexibility: discussion of a variety of views
Evidence	Depth, precision, detail, range and relevance of evidence cited Accuracy of understanding of historical debate Critical engagement with primary and/or secondary sources
Organisation & Presentation	Clarity and coherence of structure Clarity and fluency of prose Correctness of grammar, spelling, and punctuation
Use of Set Texts	Depth and breadth of engagement with the set texts Appropriate deployment and understanding of the set texts

The following criteria will be used in marking the exam gobbet question papers in **Special Subjects**:

Immediate context of the extract	Relation of the extract to the wider text from which it is drawn Representativeness/distinctiveness of the extract within the wider text Precise meaning or significance of terminology or points of detail Identification of key individuals, institutions or events
Clarification of the extract	Authorship, authority, and purpose Audience Contemporaneity or employment of hindsight Conditions of creation, transmission, reception, and preservation Genre Language or visual style
Wider context of the extract:	Relationship between the extract and other set texts Relevance of the extract to wide historical developments Relevance of the extract to historiographical debates
Organisation & Presentation	Clarity and coherence of structure Clarity and fluency of prose Correctness of grammar, spelling, and punctuation

The following criteria will be used in marking all **theses and extended essays**:

Engagement	Identification and definition of a problem Location in the relevant historiographical context Range of issues addressed Depth, complexity and sophistication of comprehension of issues and implications
Argument	Coherence, control, independence and relevance of argument to problem Conceptual and analytical precision Sophistication of development of argument Flexibility: discussion of a variety of views
Evidence	Use of primary material Sophistication of methods of research Range of material deployed Relevance of information deployed Understanding of historical debate Depth, precision, detail and accuracy of evidence cited
Organisation & Presentation	Clarity and coherence of structure Clarity and fluency of prose Correctness of grammar, spelling, and punctuation

3.3 Verification and reconciliation of marks

- a) Each script or submission is marked independently by two markers. Markers use a comment sheet to note their assessment of the script/submission against the marking criteria.
- b) An individual mark is given for each question and an overall raw mark is given for each paper
- c) The two markers confer to reach an agreed mark for each paper. This agreed mark must be within the range set by the higher and lower marks awarded independently by the markers. If the 'raw' marks are the same then agreement is reached automatically.
- d) If the assessors are unable to agree on a mark, the script/item of work is then referred to a third assessor, usually an internal examiner on the FHS Board of Examiners with appropriate period expertise. Their mark must be within the range identified by the initial markers. Where the initial raw marks are at a variance of 11 or more marks, they are automatically referred for third marking.

Scripts/submissions may be scrutinized by the Board of Examiners for any of the following reasons:

- a) One or more responses on the exam script are short-weight
- b) One or both of the original assessor has requested further scrutiny
- c) The candidate has failed to comply with the rubric
- d) The candidate has a SpLD
- e) The candidate made a Mitigating Circumstances application

- f) The mark is out of line with the candidate's other papers
- g) The mark is below 50
- h) The candidate is on a borderline (see 5 below)

3.4 Scaling

Runs of marks by pairs of examiners are compared to ensure parity across different marking teams. If necessary, scaling may be used under the advice of external examiners, and an explanation will be given in the Chair's report.

The Examiners may choose to scale marks where in their academic judgement:

- a) A paper was more difficult or easy than in previous years, and/or
- b) An optional paper was more or less difficult than other optional papers taken by students in a particular year, and/or
- c) A paper has generated a spread of marks which are not a fair reflection of student performance on the University's standard scale for the expression of agreed final marks, i.e., the marks do not reflect the qualitative marks descriptors.

Such scaling is used to ensure that candidates' marks are not advantaged or disadvantaged by any of these situations. In each case, examiners will establish if they have sufficient evidence for scaling. Scaling will only be considered and undertaken after moderation of a paper has been completed, and a complete run of marks for all papers is available.

If it is decided that it is appropriate to use scaling, the examiners will review a sample of papers either side of the classification borderlines to ensure that the outcome of scaling is consistent with academic views of what constitutes an appropriate performance within each class.

Detailed information about why scaling was necessary and how it was applied will be included in the Examiners' report and the algorithms used will be published for the information of all examiners and students.

3.5 Short-weight convention and departure from rubric

A mark of zero shall be awarded for any part or parts of questions that have not been answered by a candidate, but which should have been answered.

Omission of an entire question – the completed questions will be marked, and then the overall mark awarded as the average of those marks multiplied by the fraction of the paper completed (i.e. $\frac{2}{3}$ in the case of one essay missing from a three-essay paper, or some fraction of 12 in the case of a twelve-gobbet Special Subject paper).

Failure to complete an essay or question in full – the assessor will mark the question on its merits (factoring in its brevity) and calculate an average mark as usual from all the questions attempted.

All short-weight cases will be reviewed by the Board and the comment sheets will be scrutinised to ensure that all cases are being treated consistently.

Departure from rubric: where a candidate has failed to answer a compulsory question, or failed to answer the required number of questions in different sections, the complete script will be marked and the issue flagged. The board of examiners will consider all such cases so that consistent penalties are applied.

3.6 Penalties for late or non-submission of theses and extended essays

Late submission will incur accumulating automatic penalties which can result in the mark for the submission being lowered by a class or more. The Proctors have ruled that computer difficulties are no excuse for late submission.

Penalties for late submission are as follows: *As agreed by the FHS Exam Board 2025*

Lateness	Cumulative mark penalty
Within an hour of the deadline	-1 mark
Within 2 hours of the deadline	-2 marks
After 2 hours of the deadline but submitted on the same day	-5 marks (- 5 percentage points)
Each additional calendar day	-1 mark (- 1 percentage point)
Max. deducted marks up to 14 days late	-18 marks (- 18 percentage points)
More than 14 calendar days after the notice of non-submission	Fail

Failure to submit a required element of assessment will result in the failure of the whole Second Public Examination.

Penalties will only be applied after the work has been marked and the Exam Board has checked whether there are any valid reasons for late submission.

3.7 Penalties for over-length work and departure from approved titles or subject-matter in theses or extended essays or portfolio essays

The Board has agreed the following tariff of marks to be deducted for over-length work:

Percentage by which the maximum word limit is exceeded	Penalty (up to a maximum of -10)
Up to 5%	-1 mark
Over 5% and up to 10%	-2 marks
Over 10% and up to 15%	-3 marks
Each further 5%	-1 further mark

Assessors should mark work as normal and note any areas where it diverges from what was required; the Exam Board, not the marker, will review these points and determine whether any penalties should be applied.

3.8 Penalties for poor academic practice

The Examination Board will handle cases of poor academic practice where the material under review is limited and does not exceed 10% of the submission. Assessors should mark work on its academic merit with the Board responsible for deducting marks for derivative content or poor referencing.

Determined by the extent of the poor academic practice, the Board shall deduct between 1% and 10% of the marks available for cases of poor referencing where material is widely available; factual information or a technical description that could not be paraphrased easily; where passages draw on a variety of sources, either verbatim or derivative, in patchwork fashion (and examiners consider that this represents poor academic practice rather than an attempt to deceive); where some attempt has been made to provide references, however incomplete (e.g. footnotes but no quotation marks, Harvard-style references at the end of a paragraph, inclusion in bibliography); or where passages are unreferenced 'grey literature' such as unattributed web sources.

Candidates are reminded that it **is not permissible** to submit work which has previously been submitted, either partially or in full, either for their current Honour School or qualification, or for another Honour School or qualification of this University (except where the Special Regulations for the subject permit this), or for a qualification at any other institution. Students are advised that **copying text** straight from notes into their submissions is **highly inadvisable**. Use of material such as notes, essays or Collections answers written by someone else or jointly composed with someone else **is not permissible** and will put students at risk of inadvertently committing academic misconduct such as collusion or plagiarism and render them liable to the maximum penalty for poor academic practice. Unacknowledged direct quotations from books or articles copied from notes will equally face penalties for plagiarism.

Any case involving repeated poor academic practice, suspected plagiarism, or circumstances where the Board's deductions would result in failure of the assessment or of the programme must be referred to the Proctors. More serious cases than those outlined above, or cases where more than 10% of the submission is affected, must likewise be referred. In such instances, the Chair will provide the Proctors with a summary of the extent and seriousness of the issue, including relevant source material.

Turnitin is fully integrated into Inspira and full similarity reports will be available on each submission. These reports will be available to assessors marking submissions, and are also available for consideration by the Exam Boards. The Exam Boards will refer to them in cases where assessors have flagged submissions as suspicious.

3.9 Penalties for non-attendance

Failure to attend an examination will result in the failure of the whole Second Public Examination.

4. Progression rules and classification conventions

4.1 Qualitative descriptors of classes

[See descriptors and mark bands under item 3.2 above].

These criteria inform the following mark bands (in what follows, 'theses' encompasses both essays and theses):

I	86-100	Theses will be so outstanding for their originality and sophistication that they could be immediately published.
	80-85	Theses will excel across the range of the criteria, and will be both distinctive and thought-provoking in their argument and/or use of evidence. They will be above and beyond the examiner's expectations of an Oxford finalist.
	75-79	Theses will be of the highest quality that an examiner might reasonably expect from a candidate within the constraints inherent in the exercise. They will be excellent in their combination of quality of problem-identification and research-design, range and sophistication of engagement with historiographical context, coherence, clarity and relevance of argument, and quality of primary evidence adduced.
	70-74	First Class marks should be awarded to theses that are consistently impressive across all criteria of conceptualisation, argument and evidence. Such work may combine truly outstanding performance on some criteria with high competence that would otherwise merit upper-II:1 marks on other criteria.
II.1	65-69	Theses in the upper-II:1 range will be highly competent across all criteria, and very clearly so where marks just below 70 are awarded.

		They must exhibit some essential features, identifying a clear problem in historiographical context, and offering a coherent argument based on accurate primary evidence found in research, the whole being clearly presented. Nevertheless, additional strengths (for instance the range of issues addressed, the sophistication of the arguments, or the range and depth of research and information) may compensate for other weaknesses.
	60-64	Theses which the examiners consider to be of average quality across most criteria should be placed in this band. They will be consistently competent and should manifest the essential features described above, in that they must offer an argument in response to a clearly-identified problem based on evidence acquired in research; but they will do so with less range, depth, precision and perhaps clarity. Again, qualities of a higher order may compensate for some weaknesses.
II.2	50-59	Theses toward the top of the II:2 band will be of reasonable quality, showing some solid competence in meeting the criteria, though also some deficiencies. Lower II:2 theses will meet fewer of the criteria, and/or do so less competently. Theses in this band may be marked by inadequate definition of the problem or lack of historiographical context, failure to offer a clear argument, narrowness in the range of issues addressed, lack of research and primary evidence or irrelevance in its deployment, or poor organization and presentation, including incorrect prose and inadequate apparatus.
III	40-49	Theses will cover only some of the criteria, and/or will do so only very partially, but will exhibit some vestiges of the qualities required, such as the ability to define a problem, to deploy evidence found in research, or to offer some coherent analysis towards an argument. Such qualities will not be displayed at a high level or consistently, and will be marred by irrelevance, incoherence, error and poor organization and presentation. Very short theses which nevertheless have promise may fall into this band.
Pass	30-39	Theses will display a modicum of knowledge or understanding of some points, but will display almost none of the higher qualities described in the criteria, and will not be based on any meaningful research. They will be marred by high levels of factual error and irrelevance, generalization and lack of information, and poor organization and presentation; and they may be very brief.
Fail	<30	Theses will fail to exhibit any of the required qualities.

4.2 i) Classification rules

In the FHS of History, Ancient and Modern History, History and Economics, History and English, and History and Politics, each item in the assessment is given equal weight, and counts as one paper (including the compulsory undergraduate thesis). In the FHS of History and Modern Languages, each item of assessment is given equal weight and counts as one paper with the exception of the Oral examination, which counts as 0.5 of a paper. For candidates in FHS History and joint schools who have taken the Optional Additional Thesis the mark will replace the lowest mark in a History paper, provided that

no mark is below 50.

Classification in FHS 2026 will normally be on the basis of the following assessment elements:

- In History: 7 papers of 7 assessed, viz. (a) pre-submitted: Special Subject Extended Essay, a Thesis from Original Research (b) examined by timed written exam papers: History of the British Isles, European and World History, Further Subject, Disciplines of History, Special Subject gobbets papers.
- In Ancient and Modern History: 7 papers of 7 assessed, viz. (a) pre-submitted: Special Subject Extended Essay (if taken), a Thesis from Original Research; (b) examined by timed written exams: History of the British Isles (if taken), European and World History, Ancient History period paper, Further Subject, Ancient History Special Subject essay paper (if taken), Disciplines of History, History Special Subject gobbets paper. If an Ancient Language paper is taken as an optional additional paper, the mark will substitute for the lowest mark in another paper provided that that mark is 50 or above; but if an Ancient Language paper is taken as one of the seven papers assessed there will be no substitution of marks.
- In History and English: 7 papers of 7 assessed.
- In History and Modern Languages: 9.5 or 10.5 assessed papers.
- In History and Politics: 7 papers of 7 assessed.
- In History and Economics: 8 papers of 8 assessed.

Classification in History and all joint schools

The Humanities Division has agreed the following rules for classification in undergraduate programmes:

First: Normal Route	Average mark of 68.5 or greater; marks of 70 or above on at least TWO papers; no mark below 50 on any paper.
First: Alternative route (ARF):	The average mark must be 67.5 or greater; marks of 70 or above on at least 50% of the papers; no mark below 50 on any paper.
Upper Second:	Average mark of 59 or greater. Marks of 60 or above on at least two papers. No mark below 40 on any paper.
Lower Second:	Average mark of 49.5 or greater. Marks of 50 or above on at least two papers. No mark below 30 on any paper.
Third:	Average mark of 40 or greater. Marks below 30 on no more than one paper.
Pass:	Average mark of 30 or greater. Marks below 30 on no more than two papers.

Before finally confirming its classifications, the Examining Board may take such steps as it considers appropriate to reconsider the cases of candidates whose marks are very close to a borderline, or in some way anomalous, and to satisfy themselves that the candidates concerned are correctly classified in accordance with the criteria specified in these Conventions.

In the joint school of History and Modern Languages:

For the purposes of establishing the average, the mark on the oral examination, if it is expressed out of 100, shall be halved. The total of marks on all papers shall then be divided by 9.5 (or 10.5).

To attain a First by the above method, a candidate must obtain at least one mark of 70 or above in a content paper (i.e., a History or a literature paper).

To attain a First by the Alternative Route to a First, at least 50% of the papers must have a mark of 70 or above (discounting the mark on the oral examination), and the average mark must be 67.5 or greater.

Before finally confirming its classifications, the Examining Board may take such steps as it considers appropriate to reconsider the cases of candidates whose marks are very close to a borderline, or in some way anomalous, and to satisfy themselves that the candidates concerned are correctly classified in accordance with the criteria specified in these conventions.

4. 2. ii) Declared to Have Deserved Honours

A Declared to have Deserved Honours Degree is an unclassified undergraduate degree. A Declared to have Deserved Foundation Certificate/Undergraduate Certificate/Diploma/Advanced Diploma are also available. These are collectively referred to as DDH. It will be awarded when a student has been unable to complete their summative assessments for legitimate reasons, and the examination board is satisfied that they would have been likely to have obtained an Honours degree (or a pass degree for the other awards) had they been able to complete their assessments.

While the formal awards will be unclassified, transcripts will be adapted to explain the unusual circumstances behind them and will be accompanied by an enhanced reference letter indicating the class of degree the student was expected to achieve, as far as this can be determined by the available evidence. For further information about the DDH see: [Declared awards | University of Oxford](#)

4.3 Progression rules

No candidate shall be admitted to the Final Honour School of History of the joint schools with History unless they have *either* passed or been exempted from the First Public Examination *or* have successfully completed the Foundation Course in History at the Department of Continuing Education *or* have Senior Student status.

5. Identification and Consideration of Borderline Candidates

Before finally confirming its classifications, the Examining Board may take such steps as it considers appropriate to reconsider the cases of candidates whose marks mean they are 'borderline' as defined below, and to satisfy themselves that the candidates concerned are correctly classified in accordance with the criteria specified in these Conventions. It follows from this that those candidates whose marks do not qualify as borderline as defined below should not be reassessed, unless there are very clear and unusual reasons for doing so which will need approval from the Chair of Examiners and confirmation at the pre-general meeting.

i) **General Principles**

To be reconsidered for a higher class, candidates must satisfy ONE of the criteria for the class (whether profile or average). Where a third reading has already taken place BEFORE preliminary classification, the resulting mark is treated as final and will not be re-opened, unless it was an adjudication.

ii) **Definition of borderline candidates on preliminary classification**

2.1/.1 borderline (requirement for First: average of 68.5 or above, at least 2 marks of 70 or above):

Average between 69 and 67.5; at least 2 marks of 70 or above

Average of 68.5 or more; at least one mark of 70 or above;

2.1/.1 borderline (alternative requirement for First: average of 67.5 or above, at least 50% marks of 70 or above):

Average between 68 and 66.5; at least 50% marks of 70 or above;

2.2/2.1 borderline (average of 59 or more; at least one mark of 60 or above):

Average between 59.5 and 58.0; at least two marks of 60 or above

Average of 59 or more; at least one mark of 70 or above;

3/2.2 borderline

Average between 50 and 49; at least two marks of 50 or above

Average of 49.5 or more; at least one mark of 50 or above

iii) **Scrutiny of borderline candidates**

Examiners should identify for re-reading:

- Scripts (if any) where a difference of more than 5% between markers has not been resolved before preliminary classification;
- In cases where the requirement for profile has not been met, a maximum of 2 scripts within 2 marks of the higher class;
- In cases where the requirement for average has not been met, a maximum of any 2 scripts;

- Any script with a mark below 50 for a candidate otherwise eligible for a First; and any script with a mark below 40 for a candidate otherwise eligible for a 2.1.

iv) Permissible range of marks

At this stage in the process, it *remains* the case that adjusted marks may not fall outside the range of the two original marks given for a script, except where there exist clear and defensible reasons explicitly approved by the Chair of the Board of Examiners.

6. Assessment of options taken from another programme

In taking an option from another faculty or department, students are to follow the assessment requirements of the faculty or department delivering that option.

7. Resits

A candidate's entitlement to resit is dependent on their stage of study and award level. In all cases, candidate is not permitted to resit an assessment unit that has been passed unless the whole University Examination has been failed, i.e., it is not possible to resit an assessment in order to improve the mark.

Resits should normally be taken at the next opportunity, but may be deferred once.

8. Mitigating Circumstances

Where a candidate or candidates have made a submission, under Part 13 of the Regulations for Conduct of University Examinations, that unforeseen circumstances may have had an impact on their performance in an examination, a subset of the board (the 'Mitigating Circumstances Panel') will meet to discuss the individual. The Panel will evaluate, on the basis of the information provided to it, the relevance of the circumstances to examinations and assessment, the strength of the evidence provided in support and the extent of the impact. The Panel will also note whether all or a subset of papers were affected, being aware that it is possible for circumstances to have different levels of impact on different papers. The board of examiners will separately consider whether and how to adjust a candidate's results as a result of the mitigating circumstances, taking into account both the Panel's considerations of the notice(s) and the scripts/submissions and marks.

Candidates who have indicated they wish to be considered for DDH/DDM will first be considered for a classified degree, taking into account any individual MCE. If that is not possible and they meet the DDH/DDM eligibility criteria, they will be awarded DDH/DDM].

9. Details of examiners and rules on communicating with examiners

FHS Board of Examiners in History 2026

Sian Pooley (Chair)
Zbigniew Wojnowski (Secretary)
Hannah Smith
Amanda Power
Adam Smith
David Parrott
Richard Reid
Adam Smith
Helen Gittos
John Hudson (External, University of St Andrews)
Naomi Tadmor (External, University of Lancaster)
Iain McDaniel (External, University of Cardiff)
John Slight (External, The Open University)

Candidates should not under any circumstances seek to contact individual internal or external examiners.

APPENDIX A

1. Gibbs Prizes

The following History prizes may be available for the examiners to award:

- GIBBS PRIZE
Best performance in the main School of History
- GIBBS PRIZE
Best performance in History papers in the Joint Schools with History
- GIBBS PRIZE (PROXIME ACCESSIT)
Next best performance in the main School of History
- GIBBS PRIZE (PROXIME ACCESSIT)
Next best performance in History papers in the Joint Schools with History
- GIBBS 2017 PRIZE
Best performance by a candidate admitted under the provisions of the Access/Widening Participation/Opportunity Oxford initiatives begun in 2017
- GIBBS PRIZE BOOK AWARD
Excellent performance in History and its Joints Schools

2. Thesis Prizes

i. Awarded by the FHS Board of Examiners:

- ARNOLD MODERN HISTORICAL PRIZE
Best thesis in modern history (i.e. post AD 285)

- GLADSTONE PRIZE
Best thesis on recent British history, especially in relation to politics or finance
- KIRK-GREENE PRIZE
Best thesis on modern African History
- OLWEN HUFTON PRIZE
Best thesis on Gender History
- WYLIE PRIZE
Best thesis on American History
- JOAN THIRSK PRIZE
Best thesis on Medieval History
- RICHARD COBB PRIZE
Best thesis on European History
- GEORGE RAMSAY PRIZE
Best thesis on Early Modern History
- BARBARA SAVAGE PRIZE
Best thesis on Black History
- HERMILA GALINDO PRIZE
Best thesis on Latin American History

ii. Awarded by External University Bodies:

- HERBERT PRIZE
Best thesis on Imperial/Commonwealth History
(Awarded by the Beit Fund Management Trust)
- JANE WILLIS KIRKALDY JUNIOR PRIZE
Best thesis on the History of Science, Technology or Medicine
(Awarded by the Jane Willis Kirkaldy Prize Fund Board)