

# FINAL HONOUR SCHOOL OF HISTORY AND ENGLISH EXAMINERS' REPORT 2023 FINAL

## Part I

### A. Statistics

All candidates

Class	No						%					
	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018
I	6	8	7	6	6	2	40	80	50	46.2	50	33.3
II.1	9	2	7	7	6	4	60	20	50	53.8	50	66.7
II.2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
III	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

All candidates, divided by male and female

Class	Number										Percentage (%) of sex									
	2023		2022		2021		2020		2019		2023		2022		2021		2020		2019	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
I	3	3	2	6	2	5	2	4	1	5	75	27.3	100	75	50	50	66.7	40	100	45.5
II.1	1	8	0	2	2	5	1	6	0	6	25	72.7	0	25	50	50	33.3	60	0	54.5
II.2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
III	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

### NEW EXAMINING METHODS AND PROCEDURES

- A. The FHS Board followed the established HENG convention that candidates would be classified according to History rules, but making use of English protocols where appropriate. The particular circumstances of the MAB meant that each Faculty had adopted slightly different processes for dealing with missing marks (History had adopted moderation, and interim DDH awards, and English had adopted a system of provisional classification).

## Part II

### A. GENERAL COMMENTS ON THE EXAMINATION

Fifteen students sat the examination (11 W, 4 M). Six received Firsts (three women and three men). There were 9 Upper Seconds (eight women and one man), with no lower classifications.

The Chair was very grateful for the quality of the preparatory work undertaken by the History Faculty Office, under very challenging circumstances (technical computer difficulties alongside the challenges presented by the MAB). The Chair would particularly like to thank Andrea Hopkins for her sage advice in dealing with procedural issues and borderline cases. He would also like to thank his opposite number in English, Professor Peter McCullough, for his help in determining MCEs and talking through the complex cases. The External Examiners from both Faculties also offered invaluable counsel at various points in the process. Lastly I

would also like to thank all of the members of the Board for being willing to meet slightly later than scheduled because of the technical difficulties affecting the History data.

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

With such a small cohort, with a very small number of men, it would be unwise to extrapolate any information regarding discrepancies between the achievements of male and female candidates.

## **C. DETAILED NUMBERS ON CANDIDATES' PERFORMANCE IN EACH PART OF THE EXAMINATION**

Another high-achieving year, with only two marks below 60 and a total of 42 marks of 70 or above (out of 102, i.e. 41% first class marks throughout all papers).

All 15 candidates submitted a Bridge Essay: The average mark was 68.3, with a range from 61 to 77; eight candidates gained first class marks (53%).

All 15 candidates submitted a Compulsory Interdisciplinary Dissertation: the average mark was 69.1, with a range from 63 to 80 and 7 (46%) gaining marks of 70 or above. (This compares favourably with the History Thesis, where the average mark was 68.2 and where 44% of candidates gained marks of 70 or above.)

15 candidates submitted three History of the British Isles take-home essays: the average mark was 67.9 with a range from 60 to 77.

9 candidates took an English Further Subject: the average mark was 67.3, with a range from 60 to 76.

14 candidates took a Period paper in English Literature: the average mark was 67.8, with a range from 64 to 75.

10 candidates submitted the Shakespeare paper: the average mark was 67.9, with a range from 59 to 77.

9 candidates took a European and World History paper: the average mark was 67.1, with a range from 58 to 73.

9 candidates took a History Further Subject: the average mark was 68.2, with a range from 66 to 74.

3 candidates took a History Special Subject paper, with an average mark of 68.3 for the gobbets paper and 67.7 for the extended essay.

## **D. COMMENTS ON PAPERS AND INDIVIDUAL QUESTIONS**

N/A

## **E. COMMENTS ON THE PERFORMANCE OF IDENTIFIABLE INDIVIDUALS AND OTHER MATERIAL WHICH WOULD USUALLY BE TREATED AS RESERVED BUSINESS**

I would like to make some observations about the inadequacies of the Mitigating Circumstances procedures. As directed by the Assessment Framework, MCEs were graded by an MCE Committee (myself and Professor McCullough) in advance of the Board meeting. I would make two observations about this process: Firstly, it is absurd that academic staff members are casting their non-expert judgements over complex medical and personal circumstances. Secondly, the process revealed significant cultural differences between the

two Faculties in terms of what the various levels of seriousness (1-3) might mean. This is not the first time that I have come across this in chairing Joint Boards. In my view the MCE system in its current form is not fit for purpose, and requires urgent reform.

**F. Members of the Board of Examiners**

Dr Jon Parkin (Chair)

Professor Stephen Baxter

Professor Christina de Bellaigue

Professor Matthew Bevis

Professor Nandini Das

Professor Peter McCullough

Professor Michael Braddick (external examiner in History)

Dr Isabel Davis (external examiner in English)