FINAL HONOUR SCHOOL OF HISTORY AND MODERN LANGUAGES EXAMINERS' REPORT 2024 FINAL

Part I

A. Statistics

All candidates

Class	No						%					
	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019
I	13	8	11	10	17	11	56.5	53.3	57.9	40	77.2	64.7
II.1	9	6	8	14	5	6	39.1	40	42.1	56	22.8	35.3
II.2	1	1	-	1	-	-	4.3	6.7	-	4	-	-
DDH	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

All candidates, divided by male and female

Class	Number										Percentage (%) of gender									
	2024		2023		2022		2021		2020		2024		2023		2022		2021		2020	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
I	5	8	1	7	5	6	4	6	9	8	62.5	53.3	50	53.9	71.4	50	36.4	42.9	100	61.5
II.1	3	6	1	5	2	6	6	8	0	5	37.5	40	50	38.5	28.6	50	54.5	57.1	0	38.5
II.2	-	1	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	6.7	-	6.7	-	-	9.1	-	-	-
DDH	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

B. NEW EXAMINING METHODS AND PROCEDURES

This year the pre-pandemic classification rules came fully into force for the HML finalists. The Oral examination was once again marked, and counted as 0.5 of a paper and the candidates classified on 9.5 papers as in the pre-pandemic years.

C. INFORMING CANDIDATES OF EXAMINATION CONVENTIONS

Candidates were informed of the changes to the Examination Conventions through direct email correspondence to individual candidates at various dates in Hilary and Trinity Terms.

Part II

A. GENERAL COMMENTS ON THE EXAMINATION

A number of candidates experienced problems in the examination venues, particularly with (sometimes significantly) delayed starts to examinations. Some Mitigating Circumstances submissions were made to the HML Board relating to these issues. The difficulties at examination venues in Trinity term arose as a result of the need to relocate some examinations at short notice, owing to protest activity around the University.

At the Final Exam Board meeting, there was some discussion of the high percentage of candidates in this degree gaining Firsts, i.e. over 50%, which is higher than in the History single honours school in 2024, for example. Both internal and external members of the Board commented that History and Modern Languages degrees, both at Oxford and at other UK universities, tend to attract a high calibre of candidate, and it was felt that the number of Firsts in this cohort reflected that. A very small percentage of those receiving Firsts were in the scrutiny zone; the great majority of these Firsts had averages securely above the classification line.

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

The male/female ratio of candidates sitting FHS examinations for this degree varies quite a lot from year to year, although there is a clear historic preponderance of female candidates (this year 15 F, 8 M). In terms of results, this year 62% of male candidates received Firsts, compared with 53% of female candidates. This is a less evenly distributed set of Firsts than in FHS 2023 (50%/53%). On such small statistical runs, and with a pattern over the past five years which usually but not always sees a higher percentage of male candidates secure Firsts, it is difficult to draw firm conclusions about trends or causation.

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

[COMPARISON OF BRIDGE ESSAY MARKS OVER RECENT YEARS]

HML Bridge Essays	2024	2024%	2023	2023%	2022	2022%	2021	2021%	2020	2020%	2019	2019%
70+	13	56.5%	6	40%	5	26.3%	8	32%	8	36.4%	4	23.5%
65-69	8	34.7%	6	40%	7	36.8%	8	32%	9	40.9%	9	52.9%
60-64	1	4.3%	3	20%	6	31.6%	7	28%	4	18.2%	4	23.5%
50-59	1	4.3%	0		1	5.3%	1	4%	1	4.5%	0	
less than 50	0		0		0		1	4%	0		0	
Candidates	23		15		19		25		22		17	

As the table above demonstrates, a higher percentage of Bridge Essays received First Class marks this year than in the past five years, i.e. 56.5%, up from 40% in 2023. It is hard to

know what factors might lie behind this, and indeed if this is more than simply random statistical variation. Overall, it does seem that the 5-year trend is for Bridge Essay marks to be moving upwards. The topics written on in 2024 covered a very rich range of periods, topics and problems.

23 candidates took a paper in European and World History; the average mark was 66.6 with a range from 59 to 73, and 7 candidates (30.4%) gaining first class marks.

17 candidates took a Further Subject in History; the average mark was 68.5, with a range from 56 to 78, and 6 candidates (35%) gaining first class marks.

15 candidates took a History Special Subject; the average marks were 68.5 for the gobbets, and 68.9 for the extended essays; four candidates gained first class marks in both papers, with a further four gaining a mark of 70 or more in the gobbets paper, and four in the extended essay.

23 candidates took a ML Period paper; the average mark was 70.2, with a range from 60 to 78 and 14 candidates (60.9%) gaining first class marks.

21 candidates took a ML Modern Prescribed Authors paper; the average mark was 69.8, with a range from 60 to 78 and 12 candidates (57.1%) gaining marks in the 70s.

9 candidates chose to take a Paper XII paper; the average mark was 68.1, with a range from 56 to 73, and 5 candidates (55.5%) gained first class marks.

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

One candidate was awarded the Gibbs Prize Proxime Accessit for the best performance by a joint school candidate in their History papers; three other candidates were awarded the Arteaga Prize for best performance in Spanish FHS, David Gibbs Prize for best performance in Joint Schools with Mod Langs (top of 3 such prizes awarded), and the Dolores Oria Merino Prize for best performance in Spanish Prose (Paper I).

E. Members of the Board of Examiners

Prof Natalia Nowakowska (Chair)
Prof Ian MacLachlan (Modern Languages Coordinator)
Prof Jamie Belich
Prof Paul Betts
Prof Rajendra Chitnis (Cze)
Prof Jennifer Yee (Fre)
Prof David Groiser (Ger)
Prof Andrew Kahn (Rus)
Prof Oliver Noble-Wood (Spa)
Prof Jon Wilson (External Examiner for History)
Prof Julia Sutton-Mattocks (External Examiner for Modern Languages)