

Part IB Examiners and Assessors: Faculty Board Guidelines

Guidelines approved by the Faculty Board for use in 2017-18.

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Guidelines for Examiners and Assessors: key points for all Parts

1. Examiners and Assessors are required to adhere to the timetable and detailed instructions provided by the Chairman of Examiners.
2. Form and conduct notices that detail any changes to the examinations from the previous year are published annually in the [Cambridge University Reporter](#).
3. External Examiners have an important role to play in our examinations. In particular, Examiners should pay due attention to comments made on their draft question papers by the External Examiner.
4. The exam paper will show the approximate number of marks for each part of a question in the right margin, the mark to be level with the end of the paragraph(s) to which it refers.
5. Examiners must follow all aspects of agreed policies on security.
6. Symbols used in questions should be clearly defined except where the definitions are systematically provided in examination data books or data sheets.
7. **No comments whatsoever** should be made on the scripts.
8. Each Examiner should mark the scripts in accordance with the published Marking & Classing Criteria.
9. All aspects of the marking process must be fully auditable and defensible in case of an appeal. Examiners must mark the scripts in such a way that a third party (e.g. a checker, External Examiner or Chair of Examiners) can understand what process has been followed.
10. Where a candidate answers more than the required number of questions the Examiner should mark all the questions answered and then exclude from the marks recorded the question(s) scoring the lowest mark(s).

Useful links

- [Advice on examining \(staff only\)](#)
- [Marking & classing criteria](#)
- [Exam paper templates and style recommendations](#)
- [Data security & the production of exam papers](#)
- [Exam data retention policy](#)
- [Statement on Tripos transparency](#)
- [Script checking guidelines](#)
- [Regulations for the Engineering Tripos](#)
- [University guide to undergraduate examinations](#)
- [University guidance for staff on examinations](#)

Guidelines for Examiners & Assessors: Part I information

Summary of duties

Examiners and Assessors are appointed, on the nomination of the Faculty Board, by the General Board. Examiners who have taken part in an examination shall be present at the final Examiners' meeting unless they are prevented by grave cause and granted dispensation in advance by the Vice-Chancellor. Assessors set papers or parts of papers and advise Examiners on the performance of candidates in their subjects. Assessors may at the request of the Chairman be invited to attend meetings of Examiners for the purpose of consultation and advice, but shall not be entitled to vote.

Setting the paper

1. Part I papers are set jointly by the Examiner and Assessor, with an agreed division of effort.
2. Examiners and Assessors must consult the Lecturer(s) at an early stage, and certainly before any questions are set, in order to check that their proposed questions are appropriate. The Lecturer(s) should outline the central elements of the course and may suggest specific topics for examining. The Examiner should check with the Lecturer(s) if any special data books are required.
3. It must not be assumed that the treatment of topics in the syllabus will be the same as in previous years. Examiners should consult the reports of their immediate predecessors to ascertain how candidates coped with individual questions and what topics and styles of questions were found to be most difficult.
4. As the standard of questions may vary from year to year, it is recommended that Examiners check that their setting and marking have not been either unduly severe or unduly lenient (for target averages see the supplements). This should ensure that, after following Faculty Board's guidelines on the proportions of students in the various classes, the marks at class boundaries will roughly coincide with the goals set out in the [Marking & Classing Criteria](#).
5. It is the responsibility of the Examiners to ensure that the papers are error-free. The Faculty Board recommends the use of a reading meeting and believes that at least two independent solutions to each question should be prepared. The Board of Examiners should decide whether or not an Examiner will be required to act as an additional 'second checker'.
6. Lecturers (as checkers) should provide **independent** cribs for the questions that relate to their part of the course by the specified deadline. These should be returned to the Examiner. The Lecturer should confirm directly to the Chairman that he/she has provided a full independent crib.
7. Lecturers should be informed of any subsequent changes to the questions and both Examiners and Lecturers (as checkers) should sign off on the final version of the paper.
8. Examiners, after necessary consultation with Assessors, should provide feedback to the External Examiner on receipt of comments on their paper.

Marking

1. Scripts should be marked using the following guidelines:
 - i. mark to whole numbers (do not use half marks);
 - ii. tick or mark every page;
 - iii. put sub-marks in the margin and circle the total at the end of the question;
 - iv. the sub-marks on the scripts must correlate with the breakdown on the paper;
 - v. record the marks on the front cover;
 - vi. keep the scripts in the correct order;
 - vii. be consistent in the marking;
 - viii. mark the first 30 scripts in pencil, check the averages, and adjust the marking scheme if necessary, remarking the first 30 scripts;
 - ix. try to ensure that the average for the paper lies within the recommended guidelines.
2. Examiners and Assessors must personally sign off a hard copy of their mark-book. In doing so, the marker is taking full responsibility for the accuracy of the mark transcription.

Solutions and reports

1. The Faculty Board requires every Examiner to provide a written report on the examination to be sent to the Chairman at the time the marks are handed in. A copy of the report is to be placed in the Examiner's file for the Examiner in the following year. Where the raw marks have been adjusted by the Examiner, the effect of the adjustment on those marks must be recorded in the report.
2. Examiners are required to provide solutions for their papers. The Faculty Board recommends to Examiners the practice of including in the solutions comments that may serve as a useful guide to future students. Specific comments may be added after each individual answer; alternatively the section of the Examiner's report that deals with individual questions could be reproduced on the last page of the solution.

Guidelines for Examiners and Assessors: Part IB supplement

Character of the examinations

The character of the Part IB examination should reflect a transition from the straightforward 'prelim' style test of basic principles in Part IA to the more searching assessments of Parts IIA and IIB, where students will be tested on more advanced problems relating to engineering practice. With this in mind, it is recommended that questions should be structured so that about two-thirds of each question follows the IA style and is entirely straightforward. The remaining part should aim to be a little more demanding and should, as far as possible, integrate with and extend the earlier parts of the question. If this cannot easily be achieved, the question may be set in separate parts. In either case, setters and checkers should ensure that the greater part of each question is entirely straightforward.

The rubric for the two-hour papers (papers 1-7) should state that candidates are expected to attempt not more than four questions. Where appropriate, a paper may be divided into two or three sections that correspond to the main subject areas to be examined in the paper. The number of questions in the section should reflect the number of lectures in the corresponding subject areas.

Checking

The only checker is the course Lecturer (or Lecturers). It is essential that all Lecturers see the entire paper, even if they are only responsible for checking one question.

Target average

At the setting stage, Examiners should aim for a target average on the written paper in the range 60% to 65%. When coursework marks are included the overall average can be expected to increase by c.6%.

Checks should be made that the average mark is in line with the target average and the proportions in each class for the paper are broadly similar to the norm for the Tripos overall. Where there is a significant discrepancy the Chairman should be consulted and consideration given to either modifying the marking scheme or otherwise adjusting the marks. If after consultation it is agreed that the marks should be scaled this should be done to the least degree consistent with producing the required change.

Rex Moir Prize

The Rex Moir Prize shall be awarded annually by the Examiners to the candidate who has shown the greatest distinction in that examination.

Additional information

- [Practical information about Part I exams](#)
- [Part IB Coursework and Exam Credit notice](#)

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