

Part IIA Examination Guidelines

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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 II information

Summary of duties

The Principal Assessors are responsible for setting and marking the examination papers and preparing the cribs. The Second Assessors assist in these tasks. The Group Examiners have overall responsibility for ensuring that the quality assurance procedures are maintained within their group. Their level of responsibility is above that of the Principal Assessors.

Setting the paper

1. Questions should aim to examine the current year's work as listed in the objectives and syllabus for the module.

2. Papers should be set at a level of difficulty that will produce an average mark in the range 60% to 65% on each paper. All candidates who have attended lectures and worked through examples papers should be able to gain at least 40%.
3. It is recommended that Assessors set well-structured questions in order to arrive at the right level of difficulty. A convenient and well-trying structure is the three-part question which asks in turn for:
 1. a statement of principle;
 2. a straightforward application of the principle; and
 3. a development of the application at a deeper, more demanding level.

Marking and scaling

1. As the standard of questions may change from year to year and between modules, it is recommended that Assessors check that their setting and marking have not been either unduly severe or unduly lenient. Scaling should be used where necessary, and to the least degree consistent with producing the required change, to manage discrepancies between paper choices. The Chair, in consultation with the Assessors, will issue instructions as to how to proceed. In determining the target average for a module the past examination performance of the cohort of students may be taken into account. Where an Assessor finds a serious discrepancy arising, the Chair should be consulted and consideration given to either modifying the marking scheme or otherwise adjusting the marks.
2. Marks for written papers and coursework will be normalised according to procedures agreed by the Board of Examiners. Where marks have been normalised, the Examiners at their meetings will consider only the normalised marks in their discussions and in reaching their decisions.

Cribs and reports

1. The Faculty Board requires every Assessor 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 Assessor's file for the Assessor in the following year. Where raw marks have been adjusted, the effect of the adjustment on the raw marks must be recorded in the report.
2. Assessors are required to provide cribs for their papers. The Faculty Board recommends to Assessors the practice of including in the cribs comments that may serve as a useful guide to future students. Specific comments may be added after each solution. Alternatively the section of the Assessor's report that deals with individual questions may be reproduced on the last page of the crib. Assessors should update their crib in the light of examination marking where necessary and ensure that this updated version is supplied for putting on the web for future students.

Guidelines for Examiners and Assessors: Part IIA supplement

Style of the exam papers

The style of the paper should be in keeping with a Part II examination that is the final classified examination of the four-year course.

Prizes

See the [prize guidelines for Part IIA Examiners](#).

Additional information

- [Practical information about Part II exams](#)
- [Form & conduct of the examinations](#)
- [Part IIA coursework and exam credit notice](#)
- [Part II scaling description](#)

