

EXAMINATION CONVENTIONS

FOR THE HONOUR SCHOOL OF MODERN LANGUAGES

These conventions are based on the conventions drawn up for use across the Humanities Division. They incorporate minor amendments by Examiners in Modern Languages and, as from Michaelmas Term 2007, the abolition of the alternative route to a First.

Note: in these conventions the terms ‘script’ and ‘paper’ should be taken to include theses, extended essays, and other pieces of work submitted for assessment as part of the examination.

In what follows, any references to action by Faculty Boards are to be understood as permitting the delegation of this responsibility to appropriate committees, such as the standing committees for Joint Honour Schools.

1. MARKING CONVENTIONS

- 1.1 Normally each script should be marked by two markers. The marks must fall within the range of 0 to 100 inclusive. Examiners should be encouraged to award marks in the 75 – 85 range to good scripts, though marks above 85 should be reserved for scripts that are quite outstanding (see the annexed descriptors). It is not permissible to exclude the use of certain marks (e.g. 69, 59 etc).
- 1.2 Each initial marker must determine a mark for each script independently of the other marker. The initial markers should then confer in order to reduce or resolve differences. Conferring should not debar markers from also re-reading where that may make it easier to reach an agreed mark. If a third reading is called for, the third reader should not mark ‘blind’ but with knowledge of the marks of the first and second markers.

Examiners are recommended to adopt the following practice:

- (a) if the two initial marks for a script are within 5 of each other, and the script is not on a class borderline or the 74/75 borderline, the final mark for the paper is the average of the two marks;
 - (b) all other scripts need further attention.
- 1.3 Marks assigned as a result of conferring or re-reading may not fall outside the range of the initial marks, except where the Board of Examiners is agreed that they should do so and can provide clear and defensible reasons for its decision.
 - 1.4 If conferring or re-reading (which markers may choose to do more than once) does not reduce the gap between a pair of marks to a point where a mark can be agreed between the markers, the script must be third-read by a third examiner who may of course be an external examiner.

- 1.5 In cases where the mark of the third reading falls within the range of the original marks, the mark of the third reading shall be taken to be the agreed mark. In cases where the mark of the third reading does not fall within the range of the original marks it shall be at the discretion of the board what action to take.
- 1.6 Positive descriptive criteria for each class/range of marks for the Honour School of Modern languages have been drawn up by the Faculty Board. (The descriptors are annexed.)
- 1.7 *Viva voce* examinations will not be held in the School of Modern Languages.
- 1.8 The conventions on short weight shall be the same as those used in previous years in the School of Modern Languages:
 Resolution of short weight is a matter for the discretion of the examiners in each language. Short weight in a single answer does not automatically impose deduction; however, failure to answer the required number of questions on a paper does, and the maximum deduction which may be imposed is equal to the value of the unanswered question or questions. The record of marks available for the General Marks Meeting should give the agreed mark, with the comment ‘short weight’
 In Papers I and II, the maximum deduction that can be made for short weight should be equivalent to the proportion of the answer that is missing.
 Where there is an infringement of rubrics, the examiners in each language should decide on the appropriate penalty. The record of marks available for the General Marks Meeting should give the agreed mark with the comment ‘rubric infringement’.
- 1.9 The mark for the optional Extended Essay may be used to replace that of the weakest ‘content’ (i.e. non-language) paper with a mark over 50. For two-language candidates the ‘content’ paper thus replaced may be in either language.

2. CLASSIFICATION CONVENTIONS

- 2.1 The following criteria must be used to determine a candidate’s overall classification.

First:	Average mark of 68.5 or greater. At least two marks of 70 or above. No mark below 50.
Upper Second:	Average mark of 59 or greater. At least two marks of 60 or above. No mark below 40.
Lower Second:	Average mark of 49.5 or greater. At least two marks of 50 or above. No mark below 30.
Third:	Average mark of 40 or greater. Not more than one mark below 30.
Pass:	Average mark of 30 or greater. Not more than two marks below 30.

The oral examination in any language is half-weighted. Distinction in an oral will be awarded for a mark of 70 or above.

- 2.2 To attain a First, a candidate must obtain at least one mark of 70 or above in a content paper (i.e. any of papers IV to XIII, or the Extended Essay).
- 2.3 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.
3. In cases of difficulty or dispute the advice of external examiners must be given particular weight.

Confirmed for 2010: October 2009. – FHS 10.FHS CONVENTIONS.2010