



# **PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION FOR**

  

## **BA IN MODERN LANGUAGES**

**This document describes the Modern Languages course, in which students study one or two modern languages and the literatures associated with them (French, German, Italian, Russian, Spanish, Czech (with Slovak), Medieval and Modern Greek, or Portuguese). Any one of the languages except Czech and Slovak may be combined with Linguistics.**

<b>1</b>	<b>Awarding institution/body</b>	University of Oxford
<b>2</b>	<b>Teaching institution</b>	University of Oxford
<b>3</b>	<b>Programme accredited by</b>	N/a
<b>4</b>	<b>Final award</b>	B.A. (Hons)
<b>5</b>	<b>Programme</b>	Modern Languages
<b>6</b>	<b>UCAS code</b>	T901 (four year course, including a compulsory year abroad)
<b>7</b>	<b>Relevant subject benchmark statement</b>	Languages and related studies
<b>8</b>	<b>Date of Programme Specification preparation</b>	February 2002 (revised August 2008)
<b>9</b>	<b>Educational aims of the programme</b>	<p>The programme aims to enable its students to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acquire a knowledge of one or more foreign culture(s) and the related languages, characterised by range, depth and conceptual sophistication;</li> <li>• Achieve a high level of competence in the spoken and written language(s) they are studying, and to communicate effectively in formal and informal registers;</li> <li>• Develop the skill of independent thinking and writing, drawing on technical skills in literary and linguistic investigation, and on a sensitive understanding of foreign cultures in the past and in the present;</li> <li>• Promote skills of relevance to further professional development of cultural, literary and linguistic understanding, and which are transferable to a wide range of contexts in the workplace and in later life;</li> <li>• Engage and enhance their critical skills, imagination and creativity as an intrinsic part of an intense learning experience.</li> </ul>

<b>10</b>	<b>Programme outcomes</b>		
A	<i>Knowledge and understanding of:</i>	<i>Related teaching/learning methods and strategies</i>	
1	<b>How primary evidence is employed in literary-critical, linguistic and philological analysis and argument;</b>	The detailed study of linguistic structures, literary texts, and films and other artefacts from a range of periods is essential to the course. Literary works are read in their original language, as is some of the associated critical writing. Close attention is paid in lectures, classes and tutorials to the texts' generic, cultural and linguistic specificity.	
2	<b>A broad range of literary and, where chosen, linguistics topics relating to the language(s) studied;</b>	Students may study broad topics in the literature of different periods of their choice, ranging from the medieval to the modern, and may also choose from a further wide range of courses more focussed on specific literary and linguistic topics.	
3	<b>Relevant linguistic skills;</b>	Students have a variety of language classes throughout their course, and also spend their third year abroad to develop their written and oral skills in the language(s) studied.	
<p><i>Assessment:</i></p> <p><i>Most aspects of the required knowledge and understanding are tested through written examinations held during the course of the third and the twelfth terms of the programme. Within a range of Special Subjects studied, some options involve coursework; students can also undertake an optional dissertation ('Extended Essay'). Oral language skills are tested in examinations in the final term of the course. Extensive preparation for the organisation and communication of such knowledge and understanding is provided in both weekly tutorials and practice examinations. Understanding is particularly assessed on a continuous formative basis through the weekly tutorial or seminar, and through language classes.</i></p>			
B	<i>Intellectual skills: the ability to</i>	<i>Teaching/learning methods and strategies</i>	
1	<b>Exercise critical judgement and undertake sophisticated analysis;</b>	There is emphasis throughout the programme on the skills relevant to the careful and critical reading and exegesis of primary texts. The ability to gather, sift, synthesise and interpret secondary	

		material is also recognised as making a particular contribution to the development of sophisticated analytical skills.
2	<b>Argue persuasively;</b>	Practical rhetorical skills are honed within the weekly tutorial context, and in the classes associated with some elements of the course. Student essays and presentations must display the ability to identify issues, to formulate arguments that are susceptible to demonstration, and to marshal evidence and analysis in a logical and coherent way.
3	<b>Approach problems with creativity and imagination;</b>	Developing the creative thinking and encouraging the exercise of disciplined imagination of all students is integral to the programme. These attributes are regarded as essential if students are to comprehend the values and expectations of present and past societies, and foreign cultures and languages.
4	<b>Develop the exercise of independence of mind, and a readiness to challenge and criticise accepted opinion.</b>	The study of a foreign culture develops an awareness of contrasts with our native culture. All our learning strategies are designed to inculcate independence of thought, most particularly the vigorous argument that we seek to encourage in our regular tutorials. On literary and linguistic or philological topics, students are expected to acquire familiarity with different and sometimes conflicting approaches and interpretations, and to develop their own views through critical engagement with the work of others.
<p><i>Assessment:</i></p> <p><i>The formative assessment provided by weekly tutorials is critical to the development and monitoring of the intellectual skills set out here. Students receive weekly scrutiny of these skills through their presentation and defence of written essay material in front of an established academic and, usually, one or more of the student's peer group.</i></p>		
<b>C</b>	<b>Practical skills: the ability to</b>	<i>Teaching/learning methods and strategies</i>

1	<b>Write well in a manner which can be adapted for a variety of audiences and contexts;</b>	The continuous scrutiny of written work, whether produced for tutorials, language classes or examinations, aims to promote writing which is marked by well-structured and coherent argument, in a prose that is clear, appropriate and fluent.
2	<b>Engage in oral discussion and argument with others, in a way that advances understanding of the problems at issue and the appropriate approaches and solutions to them;</b>	The weekly tutorials and other classes or seminars provide ample opportunity to develop and refine high-level skills in oral presentation and discussion.
3	<b>Ensure that a range of evidence and opinion can be brought to bear on a problem, and to develop research skills to this end;</b>	Emphasis is placed on showing a familiarity with a variety of bibliographical resources and on demonstrating an ability to identify and retrieve primary sources and secondary literature in English and other languages.
4	<b>Employ advanced language skills in oral and written contexts.</b>	A range of language classes is provided throughout the undergraduate course. Conversation, discourse and comprehension classes with native speakers develop oral and aural skills in formal and informal contexts. Classes on the written language teach formal grammar and extend students' accuracy and knowledge of different registers through translation into and out of the language(s) studied, and through essay composition and other exercises.
<p><i>Assessment:</i></p> <p><i>Formative assessment through the weekly tutorial, seminar presentations where appropriate, and language classes enables a continuous monitoring of the development of practical skills. Termly reports from tutors and language teachers identify both points of excellence and of concern, while more formal assessment through termly College-based examinations ('collections') provides opportunities to monitor and provide feedback on skills associated with timed written examinations.</i></p>		
<b>D</b>	<b>Transferable skills: the ability to</b>	<i>Teaching/learning methods and strategies</i>

1	<b>Find information, organise and deploy it;</b>	Information retrieval from printed materials, together with the regular use of IT (library catalogues etc.), is integral to all aspects of the programme.
2	<b>Draw on such information to consider and analyse complex problems, in ways that are imaginative and sensitive to the norms and traditions of other cultures;</b>	These are the skills at the heart of our programme. They are eminently transferable to contexts beyond the university.
3	<b>Work well independently, with a strong sense of self-direction, but with the ability to work constructively in co-operation with others;</b>	The tutorial system is designed to promote independent research skills, while Faculty and College-based seminars for certain options encourage collaboration.
4	<b>Structure and communicate ideas effectively in a variety of written and oral formats;</b>	Fostering the ability to present ideas effectively and to respond constructively to the ideas of others is integral to the nature and construction of the programme.
5	<b>Plan and organise the use of time effectively;</b>	Students who are expected to produce up to four pieces of written work per week (tutorial essay plus language work) learn how to organise their time very efficiently.
6	<b>Employ language skills at an advanced level.</b>	Graduates of this programme will have received extensive language training and will normally have spent a year abroad in the relevant country(-ies), refining their language skills in a variety of practical contexts.
<p><i>Assessment:</i></p> <p><i>The transferable skills identified in (1)-(6) above are essential elements of this programme. As such they become the focus of much of the regular comment provided by tutors and language teachers in their weekly contacts with students, and in the various modes of formal feed-back provided to students throughout the course.</i></p>		

## General teaching/learning methods and strategies

Each of the student's examination options has an appropriate teaching strategy, according to the nature of the academic task, the subject matter, and the option's place in the cumulative process of learning over the four years of the course. Lectures, classes and tutorials are all used to provide different kinds of learning experience.

1

### **Lectures:**

The first year of the Modern Languages course offers a fixed syllabus for each student in each language, and lecture courses are closely tied into this syllabus. They are used to provide a detailed introduction to material set for examination, as well as a broader sense of culture and history, and of the discipline to be studied. Later in the course a wide variety of lectures is offered to match the broad range of options available to students. Lectures provide examples of how complex materials can be organised into intellectually persuasive patterns by introducing different critical approaches to the material being studied, and so enhance the development of intellectual and practical skills.

2

### **Language classes:**

Language skills are developed in oral and written classes, often conducted by native speakers. These classes run alongside tutorials and lectures on literary and linguistic topics, and they are both an essential foundation of the skills acquired through the course, and a means of enabling those skills to be put to broader use.

3

### **Tutorials and seminars:**

The tutorial - usually a weekly meeting between one member of the academic staff, expert in the subject matter of the course, with one or two students, each of whom has prepared an essay on an agreed topic – is at the heart of the learning experience in this programme. Essays are written after the tutor has discussed possible approaches to a topic and provided a reading list. The essays are discussed rigorously and constructively in terms of substance and style, and the broader themes they raise are discussed during the tutorial. The tutorial is the major vehicle through which the learning outcomes of this programme are secured, both the students' acquisition of knowledge and the fostering of their intellectual capacities and their practical skills. Some options are taught in larger groups through seminars in which students present papers and submit their ideas to the critical scrutiny of their peers. Essay work builds on group discussion.

11

**Programme Structures and Features**

Progression through the programme is a process of interlinked consolidation and development. The base line is provided by student performance at the highest level prior to admission (see **13** below).

On admission students will have demonstrated

- The ability to use the language or languages they are taking from A-level with an appropriate degree of accuracy and complexity both in spoken and in written form, and/or the linguistic aptitude and preparatory work of an order indicating they can succeed in studying a language *ab initio*
- Analytical skills and an ability to distinguish and assess different points of view and make connections between ideas
- Some familiarity with and interest in the relevant culture(s) and/or literature(s)

Drawing on and reinforcing this foundation, the programme expands the students' knowledge, and enhances their language skills and intellectual qualities as a cumulative process. Alongside a constant process of formative assessment, the basic rhythm of the programme is provided by formal procedures of Assessment at the end of the first year (Preliminary Examination) and then at the end of the final (normally fourth) year (Final Honour School).

Normally, students spend their third year abroad and complete the course at the end of their fourth year. The main purposes of the year abroad are to facilitate the refinement of language skills in a variety of practical contexts; to acquire first-hand knowledge of everyday life in the culture(s) of the language(s) studied; and to develop the ability to operate independently in a country where the target language is dominant. Students are strongly recommended by the Faculty to apply through the Central Bureau for Educational Visits and Exchanges for an Assistantship, where this is available. The Faculty holds information sessions both on the assistantship scheme and on alternative arrangements. College Tutors are responsible for advising individual students on their placements, for agreeing an individual programme of academic work to be carried out during the year, and for overseeing progress and achievement.

A	<p><i>Learning in the first year</i></p> <p>Students work on courses that prepare them for examination in the Preliminary Examination at the end of the first year. Students may study two languages, which have equal status; they may study one language and linguistics, in which case the courses for the language side will be as for students studying that language together with another language; or they may study either French or German 'sole', in which case they take additional courses relating to that language. The outline below assumes a student studying two languages.</p>	
	<i>Course</i>	<i>Comment</i>
	<b>Two language papers in each language</b>	A range of language skills are developed. The exercises on these papers vary between languages, building upon existing communicative skills by extending students' knowledge of grammar, vocabulary and

		register. This is achieved by a mixture of language exercises, guided composition in the language, comprehension exercises, and more formal translation into and out of the language.
	<b>Two literature papers in each language (except Russian <i>ab initio</i>, where two further language papers are set)</b>	The precise content of the literature papers varies between languages. In every case, however, they require a mixture of close commentary and essay writing on literary texts from a range of periods and genres. The commentary exercise develops students' ability to analyse detailed features of language and genre, whilst essay writing teaches them how to produce more general structured arguments. Texts are chosen for their accessibility to students, many of whom have not studied literature in the sixth form, and to give them an idea of the periods, authors and genres they can go on to study in greater depth later in the course.
<p>Common to all these elements is the assumption that students will build on their previous training, and that the path to a more advanced level of intellectual analysis and command of a foreign language cannot be too steep in its initial stage. Bibliographies of secondary material are provided, offering a carefully focused range of historical and critical approaches to the primary texts being studied. Key issues are addressed in lectures and tutorial work, and are subsequently examined through formal written examination papers.</p>		
<p><i>Assessment:</i></p> <p><i>The student's progress is monitored continuously in the tutorials and language classes. The regularity and relative informality of the weekly tutorials give students easy access to assistance if they encounter academic or personal problems, or both together. In the course of the year, students will sit a practice examination in their colleges on the work done in the preceding term and receive diagnostic feedback from their tutors. The examination at the end of the year provides a sound assessment of the students' achievements and progress in the first year.</i></p>		
<b>B</b>	<p><b><i>Learning in the second to fourth years</i></b></p> <p>Students work on the following course elements in their second and fourth years, plus an optional extended essay; their progress is assessed in an examination (Final Honour School) at the end of the fourth year. The course work includes:</p>	
	<i>Course</i>	<i>Comment</i>

	Translation into the language(s)	This is taught by regular language classes in small groups, often conducted by a native speaker of the language. Time is spent doing practice translations, and the classes also concentrate on improving knowledge of vocabulary and register, and on increasing understanding of key grammatical problems.
	Translation from the language(s) into English	This is also taught in regular classes, which concentrate on problems of vocabulary and register, and of finding adequate matches for the source text in English.
	Essays	The essay is designed to test students' ability to write on an intellectually demanding topic with grammatical accuracy and linguistic sophistication, and in an appropriate register. Additional instruction geared specifically to the essay is provided in the final year.
	A period of literature in the language(s)	Within the period they have selected (medieval, early modern, modern) students can choose from a wide range of authors, movements or genres. Throughout the year lectures are offered on relevant period topics, and students' particular interests are pursued with the guidance of their tutors, and through their regular tutorial essays. The course provides a broad understanding of a particular period by making it possible to study historical, cultural, literary and philosophical materials. Literary works are set against their broader historical and cultural contexts.
	Choice of papers in literature and linguistics	<p>To be chosen from the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Historical linguistics</li> <li>• The early or contemporary state of the language</li> <li>• Medieval texts</li> <li>• Prescribed authors</li> <li>• Special Subject (range of subject choices)</li> </ul> <p>They must include one paper in linguistics or pre-modern literature.</p> <p>These papers are taught in lectures, tutorials and sometimes seminars, and allow the students to follow their own particular interests</p>

		by steering their course towards either literature or linguistics. They may concentrate on diachronic and/or synchronic linguistics, medieval set texts, focus on the close study of authors, or select from a rich diversity of Special Subjects, many of which are assessed by dissertation or by a portfolio of essays.
	<p>Oral work</p> <p>The oral examination in each language counts as half a paper</p>	The colleges and the university employ a number of native speakers whose principal duty is the preparation of students for the oral examinations. In regular meetings either in small groups or individually, students practise the various component parts of the oral examination (comprehension, formal presentation, more informal conversation), and concentrate on accent, linguistic range, and fluency.
	<p>Optional Extended Essay</p> <p><b>An approved subject within the scope of the Honour School of Modern Languages</b></p>	Work is normally begun on the optional extended essay written on a subject of the student's own devising during the year abroad. It provides an opportunity for the student to pursue a special interest in more depth than is normally offered in the other papers. It provides an excellent opportunity for academically able students to develop research skills. It is designed to encourage students to develop written presentation skills, and to demonstrate their ability to marshal evidence and to sustain an argument in an extended piece of writing. Students receive supervision from an appropriate tutor.

*Assessment:*

*As in the First Year, the students' progress is monitored continuously in the tutorial. Students receive a great deal of commentary on their contributions, in relation both to their class-presentations and their engagement in general discussion, from the leaders of the various classes. In the course of the year, students sit practice examinations in college on the work done in the previous term and receive diagnostic feedback.*

*The examination at the end of the final year consists of:*

- *2 oral examinations (an oral examination in each language studied) involving an aural comprehension and short presentation by the candidate and subsequent conversation; each counts as half a paper*
- *4 language papers examined by invigilated examination*
- *5 papers in literature and/or linguistics examined by invigilated examination or, in the case of a Special Subject, this may be examined by dissertation or essay portfolio, depending on the designated examination method for the specific Special Subject.*
- *Optionally, 1 Extended Essay, submitted at the end of the second term of the final year. The Extended Essay may replace the candidate's lowest performance in a content paper.*

*Overall, this pattern provides a robust assessment of students' progress and achievements through the programme in relation to the Learning Outcomes discussed in Section 10.*

<b>12</b>	<b>Support for students and their learning</b>	
<b>A</b>	<p><b>Libraries</b></p> <p>Reflecting the nature of the discipline as primarily text-based, and the essential requirement for adequate Library resources, Modern Languages students at Oxford have access to a uniquely wide range of library holdings: the Taylor Institution Library, which is the largest research library in Britain devoted to Modern Languages; the Bodleian Library with its associated central libraries; the Modern Languages Faculty Library, which offers extensive holdings on open shelves, with multiple copies of essential titles and generous borrowing facilities; College libraries geared to the needs of their undergraduates. Students also have access to the libraries of other faculties. The OLIS cataloguing system incorporates the holdings of all major University and faculty libraries and most college libraries.</p> <p>The range of general and specialised Library resources, and the quality of holdings and accessibility support the breadth of the outline papers and the range of more detailed text-based papers in the syllabus.</p>	

<p><b>B</b></p>	<p><b>IT resources</b></p> <p>There is an extensive network of IT resources and support within Oxford.</p> <p>Colleges provide good IT resources and Support Officers prepared to train and assist students.</p> <p>The Oxford University Computing Services also provide facilities for undergraduates, and a variety of training programmes, several of which are specifically geared to students in the Humanities.</p> <p>The use of IT within the undergraduate degree course is significant and growing. Bibliographies, learning materials and past exam papers can be downloaded from the Web. Undergraduates are encouraged to develop their IT skills.</p> <p>The Language Centre offers state-of-the-art language teaching and learning facilities, with IT, video and audio facilities, satellite television, a well-stocked library, and extensive video, audio and computer-assisted language learning materials. Practice materials for the Modern Languages oral examination are available for finalists.</p>
<p><b>C</b></p>	<p><b>Academic Support</b></p> <p>At undergraduate level, college tutorials provide the primary medium for academic guidance and support. Work is tailored to the individual student's interests, abilities and potential. The aim is to stretch students intellectually in order to ensure that they realise their full academic potential, while providing close personal supervision to ensure that the burden of work is appropriate. Weekly essays encourage ambitious and intensive engagement with a wide range of topics, and tutorial discussion provides the opportunity for students to test their ideas in a supportive environment.</p> <p>The structure of the course, and short descriptions of its various elements, are available in the <i>Examination Decrees and Regulations</i>, and in more user-friendly form in the Course Handbooks for each language (also available on the Faculty Website). The student's college tutor provides accessible personal guidance on the range of options available and enables the student to develop strengths and address weaknesses in a structured programme of study. College tutors facilitate informal but informed discussion of students' individual academic profile and aspirations. They monitor their students' progress through the syllabus, they help them in the choice of courses, arrange the teaching for the courses that they have selected, and report on their progress to the students themselves and to their college. Colleges have structured mechanisms for ensuring that students are making academic progress in accordance with their potential (collection of termly reports; meetings between the student, their tutor, and the head of house; tutorial meetings). Problems are thereby normally addressed at a very early stage, contributing to a very low drop-out rate.</p>

D	<p>There is an extensive network of welfare support within the University and colleges. While the University provides important central facilities, notably the Counselling Service, the main source of support is in practice the student's college. Colleges provide access to a range of individuals and students are encouraged to discuss problems at an early stage with one or more of the following: academic tutor (who also has a pastoral role), moral tutor, Chaplain, Welfare Officer, Tutor for Women, Senior Tutor.</p> <p>Colleges administer hardship funds and every effort is made to ensure that students experiencing unexpected hardship mid-course are able to continue with their studies.</p>
13	<p><b>Criteria for admission</b></p>
A	<p><b>School/College leavers</b></p> <p>Applications are made to the colleges of the University, not to the Faculty. Applicants who are offered places will usually be required to attain minimum grades of AAA at A-level, or equivalent marks in other qualifications such as Scottish Highers or the IB. Offers are made on the basis of students' academic record, and their performance in interviews held in the colleges in December and a written test. Applicants are asked to submit examples of their work in the language(s) they are proposing to offer from A-level to the college to which they are applying. The work is assessed and discussed by the college's Modern Languages tutors who subsequently also conduct the interviews. Further elements taken into account in assessing the academic potential of candidates are: GCSE score; school reference; personal statement on UCAS form; any special circumstances to which the school alerts the college; a 1/2 hour grammar test in each language the student is offering from A-level. The purpose of the interviews is to determine those students, from an excellent cadre of applicants (typically with A and A* marks at GCSE and predictions of three or four A grades at A-level), who might best benefit from the intensive, tutorially based learning methods employed in the University (see <b>10</b> above).</p>
B	<p><b>Mature and overseas students</b></p> <p>Applicants in these groups are considered on an individual basis, but the submission of written work, its discussion at interview, and performance in the grammar test remain important to the Admissions process.</p>
14	<p><b>Methods for evaluating and improving the quality and standards of teaching and learning</b></p> <p><i>Quality and standards of teaching and learning are evaluated and improved through the various mechanisms described below.</i></p>

### In particular **quality and standards of teaching are improved**

- By regularly responding to the different elements of feedback listed below
- By attendance at the courses provided annually by the Institute for the Advancement of University Learning (IAUL): all new lecturers must attend an induction course at the start of their term of office, and IAUL offers a wide range of in-service courses (on lecturing, on small-group teaching, on assessment etc.)
- By attendance at the courses mounted throughout the academic year by Oxford University Computing Service (OUCS), which enable staff to enhance their teaching
- By engaging in an annual appraisal with an appraiser (each member of the Faculty is assigned to an appropriate appraiser).
- By undergoing an obligatory probation period of five years after first appointment: a full appraisal of the contribution (including teaching) of new staff is carried out after this period before their appointment can be made permanent
- By consultation with the Faculty mentor to which each new member of staff is assigned on first appointment.

The prime sources for **evaluating and improving the quality of teaching and learning** are the reports of both internal and external examiners and monitoring arrangements established by the colleges. Examiners' reports are discussed annually by each Sub-faculty, and the reports and the Sub-faculties' comments are then considered by the Academic Policy Committee which in turn makes proposals on examining to the examiners and to the Faculty Board, as appropriate. The Academic Policy Committee in particular makes recommendations to the Board for formal changes in regulations etc., and to examiners on setting and conventions for papers; it also helps to provide feedback for external examiners. The Faculty Board, in the term following the examinations, considers external examiners' reports, sub-faculties' comments on the reports, and the recommendations of the Academic Policy Committee: any remedial changes requested are implemented as soon as is practicable.

Another key source is student feedback on lectures and seminars. This is also regularly solicited, through the questionnaires issued before the end of each course of lectures, classes or seminars, and student comments are reviewed by the lecturer(s). Student concerns are also discussed in the termly meetings of the Joint Consultative Committee (JCC), formed by student representatives and officers of the Faculty. The JCC conducts its own surveys of student opinion through questionnaires, the results of which are discussed by the committee and reported to the Undergraduate Studies Committee. Student opinion on new course proposals or suggested changes to the curriculum are solicited via the JCC and given serious consideration. These and any other views are also presented by the undergraduate representative and discussed at each Sub-faculty's termly meeting. In addition to questionnaires and the JCC meetings, students are also invited to comment at any time, with full anonymity if they wish, on any aspects of the course.

Feedback from undergraduates on tutorial provision is requested by their colleges and is reviewed by the Senior Tutor of each college. Regular meetings between each undergraduate and the Head or Senior Tutor of the College – collections – also provide opportunities for monitoring the teaching received by students.

## 15 Regulation of assessment

The Faculty Board, in the light of advice from the Academic Policy Committee, Joint Schools Committees, and the respective Boards of Examiners, has responsibility for reviewing the marking and classification conventions for all taught degrees, and for publishing these. The Faculty board, following recommendations from the Sub-faculties, appoints the internal Examination Boards for each of its degrees, and nominates external examiners. The external examiners are invited to serve by the Vice-Chancellor.

Boards of Examiners, under their elected chairs, are responsible for setting all papers, and marking candidates' scripts. They may also appoint Assessors to assist in the setting and marking of papers where the subject-matter is not within the expertise of the internal examiners. Each script is usually marked by two internal examiners or assessors; where there is a difference of marks they will discuss the script to obtain an agreed mark. If they are unable to agree, a third (internal or external) examiner will be asked to read the script and give it a mark. After scripts have been marked, the Board of Examiners meets to classify the students in accordance with the Examining conventions.

A key role is played in this by the External Examiners. They act as impartial advisers, providing the Faculty and the University with informed comment on two major issues:

- 1) to verify that the standards are appropriate to the award, in part by comparison with the standards in other comparable institutions, and to ensure that the assessment procedures and the regulations governing them are fair and appropriate;
- 2) to ensure that the conduct of the examination and the determination of awards has been fairly conducted, and that individual student performance has been judged in accordance with the regulations and conventions of the Examining Board; this will entail signing the Class List as an endorsement that the processes of examination and classification have been fairly conducted.

External Examiners are expected to report each year in which they act. Their reports are expected to cover the following points:-

- The standards demonstrated by the students
- The extent to which standards are appropriate to the award
- The procedures for assessments and examinations
- Whether or not external examiners have had sufficient access to, and the power to call upon, any material necessary to make the required judgments
- Students' performance in relation to their peers in comparable institutions
- The coherence of the policies and procedures relating to external examiners and their consonance with the explicit roles required of them
- The basis and rationale for any comparisons made

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The strengths and weaknesses of the students as a cohort</li> <li>• The quality of teaching and learning which may be indicated by student performance</li> </ul> <p>The report is addressed to the Vice-Chancellor, and is considered by the Humanities Board and by the university's Educational Standards and Policy Committee.</p> <p>The report is also scrutinized by the Faculty Board and its appropriate committees.</p> <p>Where an external examiner's report contains particular suggestions or criticisms, it is the responsibility of the Faculty Board to ensure that full consideration is given to these, to institute further discussion or action, and to inform the external examiner within a reasonable time of any action taken.</p>
<b>16</b>	<p><b>Indicators of quality and standards</b></p>
	<p>The last independent teaching review (TQA) of the Faculty was undertaken in January-February 1996. The Faculty achieved the highest grade in 4 out of the 6 categories of the review (Teaching, Learning and Assessment; Student Progression and Achievement; Student Support and Guidance; Learning Resources). The two areas which were judged less satisfactory by the TQA were Curriculum Design, Content and Organization; and Quality Assurance and Enhancement.</p> <p>The role of the External Examiners has been redefined in order to allow them to concentrate on their moderating and quality assurance roles. Their reports addressing issues relating to quality and standards are taken as indicators of quality.</p> <p>The Humanities Divisional Board and the Educational Standards and Policy Committee, with external representation conducted a review in Trinity Term 2008.</p> <p>A less formal measure of the quality of graduates from this programme is the fact that Oxford modern languages graduates enjoy a low rate of unemployment one year after graduation.</p>

Revised: 20.Nov.2009

Dcb.prog.specs BA.ML

EM

7/3/02