

## **Notes on Tripos Examinations: Summary**

- 1 These Notes are in three parts:
  - a) General notes on assessment criteria, marking and classing;
  - b) Detailed notes on criteria for marking;
  - c) Special notes on the assessment of gobbets and translation exercises, long essays, portfolio essays and dissertations.

### **2 Marking scripts**

The general criteria for assessment are described in §1. These are expanded in the detailed notes, and in the special notes for gobbets, translation exercises, long essays, portfolio essays and dissertation. Mark ranges are set out in §3. It should be noted that the criteria for marking long essays and portfolio essays, for marking dissertations and for marking examination essays differ in some important respects. Instructions for arriving at the mark of a script are set out in §4, with notes on special cases; and there is new guidance on marks in the first class, with consequent implications for both divisions of the second class. There is a note on borderline marks in §5. Examiners are expected to take account of progression between successive Parts of the Tripos as indicated in §2.

### **3 Examiners' comments**

There is an important note on Examiners' comments in §9.

### **4 Agreeing marks**

Each script is marked independently by two internal examiners. The way in which agreed marks are arrived is discussed in §6, with an important note on borderline marks in §5.

### **5 External examiners**

The role of external examiners, both in judging the standard of marking as a whole and in adjudicating in particular cases, is discussed in §8, with cross references to the issues of borderline marks and agreed marks in §§5-6.

### **6 Classing**

The rules for classing are described in §7. Assessors are not normally involved in examiners' meeting where classing takes place, so any comments they particularly wish to be conveyed to the examiners' meeting about particular scripts should be given to an examiner, preferably in the same paper, in advance.

**Theological and Religious Studies Tripos:  
Assessment Criteria, Marking and Classing**  
(Revised 01 November 2012)

**1 Criteria for assessment**

Regulation 14 states that 'The Examiners and Assessors shall have regard to the style and method of a candidate's answers and shall give credit for excellence in these respects'. All answers should therefore be written in clear, grammatical English prose, setting out clearly defined arguments.

In assessing individual answers, scripts and whole performances, examiners should have regard to three principal criteria:

- a) the extent to which the candidate addressed the question(s) asked;
- b) the quality of the argument offered;
- c) the range and depth of the knowledge and understanding shown in relation to the question(s) asked.

It is recognised that these criteria overlap; nevertheless they should be the starting point for the allocation of a mark. Examiners' notes under these headings are intended to facilitate discussion in examiners' meetings. They should be destroyed when the final marks and classes have been agreed.

**2 Progression**

Candidates for the Theological and Religious Studies Tripos are expected to show progression in achievement from Part I to Part IIA, and from Part IIA to Part IIB. Thus particularly in relation to criterion (c), candidates will be given credit for the knowledge they have of the subject matter at Part I, but will be expected to display a critical understanding of issues as well by the time they reach Part IIB.

**3 Mark Ranges**

The range of marks for each class is as follows:

Class I	70-100
Class II.1	60-69
Class II.2	50-59
Class III	40-49
Ordinary	30-39
Fail	0-29

In order to maximise the use of the full mark range, the First Class can be notionally divided as follows:

Low First: 70-74; Solid First 75-79; Good First 80+

(This means that examiners should expect to be more generous in giving marks above 70; at present the equivalent of 75 would be very good.)

**4 The mark for a Paper**

Examiners should mark each question attempted out of 100, and average the marks for each question (taking account of any weighting of marks indicated on the question paper) in reaching a mark for the Paper as a whole. An answer which does not address the question set, however, well-informed, should not be given a mark higher than 59. Where one answer deserves special

attention for one reason or another, examiners should draw attention to this in one of the following ways, and **not** by making any adjustment in the averaged numerical mark.

a) Above-average answers. Scripts which contain one question of a quality above the average for the script as whole: it is suggested that a II.1 script with a first class answer, or a II.2 script with an upper second answer **should be given an asterisked mark** (e.g. 68\* or 58\*).

b) Short measure. A mark is expected for each answer which should be recorded in the examiner's markbook. It follows that failure to write an answer will diminish the overall mark by the appropriate proportion (i.e. 25% in a four-answer paper, 33% in a three-answer paper etc). Where there are notes instead of an essay an answer should be given on the basis of what is there, not what it might have become. Any mark for a paper which reflects short measure **should be indicated by X after the mark** (e.g. 55X). The Examiners may be permitted to treat such a mark favourably if the quality of other papers suggests that this is fair; but a string of Xs will suggest the opposite treatment.

It should be emphasised that all examiners **must** indicate short measure or notes, in order to secure fair treatment of all candidates.

c) Breach of rubric, e.g. more than the appropriate number of questions in a section attempted etc., **should be indicated by a ringed mark**.

d) Marks in Long essays, portfolio essays or dissertations to which a penalty has been applied **should be indicated by the suffix P after the mark**.

e) Other peculiarities, which an examiner thinks require discussion by the Examiners collectively, **should be indicated by an exclamation mark**.

The Examiners' Meeting is expected to discuss any such marks briefly in order to reach an agreed view of how the candidate should be treated. It is important that all examiners should follow these conventions in order that it may be apparent whether there is any pattern across the marks as a whole, for example, in producing short measure. This will make it easier to decide whether any allowance should be made for such unusual features.

## 5 Individual and Agreed Marks

The two examiners for a paper are expected to reach an agreed mark for each candidate between them. This agreed mark should be based on a considered judgement of the quality of the script, not simply an arithmetical convention (e.g. ‘splitting the difference’). If they do reach an agreed mark, that should be regarded as final, unless it becomes necessary to re-read all the candidate’s scripts because the overall result is borderline.

If examiners are unable to reach an agreed mark, the script should be submitted to an external examiner for adjudication. The final mark should then be determined as a result of discussion between all three examiners; if agreement is impossible the external examiner shall determine the final mark.

If the examiners’ initial marks differ by no more than three marks, they may resolve the difference between them without consulting an external examiner, unless one of them wishes to do so. If the initial marks differ by between three to seven marks, they may resolve the difference themselves unless one examiner wishes to consult an external examiner; but if there is a difference of class an external examiner should be consulted. If the initial marks differ by eight marks or more, an external examiner should be consulted.

A clear record should be kept of such cases, so as to ensure equitable treatment between papers: it is unfortunate if it transpires that several scripts for one paper were re-read whereas in another paper fewer scripts were re-read even though the level of discrepancy was comparable.

Individual and agreed marks will be included on the first Mark Sheet, primarily to make sure that any transcription errors can be easily checked. **The Final Mark Sheet should only include agreed marks.**

It is not the practice of the Faculty of Divinity to scale marks for each paper.

## 6 Rules for classing

a) Candidates for Part I will normally have five marks; candidates for Parts IIA and IIB will normally have four marks. (Special considerations apply when candidates opt to offer an additional paper. For these considerations, see the note below.)

b) A candidate’s final class will be that in which the majority of marks fall, providing that no marks are more than one class below that preponderant class. Thus three first class marks usually give a First, three lower seconds a Lower Second etc. There are special rules for fail marks (see below, e and f).

c) Where there is no clear preponderance of marks in a single class, or where one mark is more than one class below that preponderant class, a candidate’s final class will be determined by the unrounded mean average of their marks, subject to the following conditions:

(i) For a First, there must be two marks of at least 70 and a mean average of at least 69.

(ii) For an Upper Second, there must be two marks of at least 60 and a mean average of at least 60.

(iii) For a Lower Second, there must be two marks of at least 50 and a mean average of at least 50.

d) A candidate who has first class marks in all papers and a mean average of at least 72 will be awarded a starred First (or ‘distinction’).

e) If a candidate fails one paper, determination of their class will depend on the severity of the failure. In the case of a mark in the 30s, classification will be determined by the unrounded mean average as prescribed in rule c. In the case of a mark below 30, the final class will be one class below that indicated by the unrounded mean average, except where the mean average is already in the Third class, in which case it will remain a Third. Thus 75, 72, 69, 28 would give a Lower Second (mean average 61, lowered by a class); but 75, 72, 69, 38 would give an Upper

Second (mean average 63.5); and 65, 57, 42, 28 would give a Third (mean average 48, not lowered any further by the fail mark).

f) If a candidate fails more than one paper then he or she has failed the examination, will not be classed, and will not appear on the Class List.

***Note on criteria for classing - Diploma candidates:***

In order to pass, a candidate must achieve an average mark of at least a 2.2 in both the examined and the dissertation part of the degree. In order to achieve a distinction, a candidate must achieve an average mark of a distinction in both the examined and the dissertation part of the degree.

***Note on additional papers offered:*** It is possible to offer an additional paper in Parts IIA and IIB. The general rule is that the mark in an additional paper is only counted if it is to the candidate's advantage. However the mark in any paper which candidates are required to take by the Regulations cannot be replaced by that in an additional paper. Since the precise rules are complex, it is recommended that, before the first marks meeting is held, the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of Examiners should examine the mark list and indicate any marks which may be disregarded and enclose them in a square.

a) In Part IIA, candidates who have taken Part I the year before may offer as an additional paper *either* a language in Paper A1 other than the one taken in Part I *or* a second language in Paper B1. It is possible to count either language in Paper B1 but the second language may not be substituted for another paper in Group B.

Candidates who have changed Tripos or who are Affiliated Students have to offer Paper A1 (unless exempted) or Paper B1. They may offer as an additional paper *one* of the following:

(i) another paper from Group B, which may be counted instead of any other Group B paper, except that one paper from Papers B2-B5 must be included.

(ii) a language in Paper A1 other than that for which exemption has been granted, which may be counted instead of any other Group B paper, except that one paper from Papers B2-B5 must be included.

(iii) a second language in Paper B1, but the second language may not be substituted from another paper in Group B.

b) In Part IIB, candidates may offer as an additional paper:

*either* a language from Papers A1 or B1 not previously offered, or a second language in Paper C1: none of these may be substituted for the four papers required from Group C and Group D, nor can both languages in Paper C1 count as substantive papers

*or* another paper from Group C, which may be substituted for one of the Group C papers but not for the Group D paper if the candidate is already offering three Group C papers.

**7 The Use of External Examiners**

a) External examiners should normally be sent a total of 6 scripts or two from each class, though the internal examiners may send them more than this if they wish, and external examiners may ask to see more. The purpose of seeing such scripts is not to give them new marks but to form a judgement on whether the marking is appropriate. If external examiners have any doubt about the internal marks, they should normally ask to see more scripts before proposing adjustments in any individual case. In particular, marks for particular scripts (other than difficult or borderline cases covered by §8(b) below) should not normally be raised or lowered unless the whole range of scripts has been seen, in order to avoid the selected candidates being advantaged or disadvantaged relative to others.

b) External examiners may be invited to adjudicate in difficult or borderline cases, as described in §§5-6.

c) External examiners will be expected to comment on the standard of work for papers allocated to them, as well as making other comments on the way in which they regard the examination as having been handled.

#### 8 **Examiners' Comments**

a) Examiners are expected to make notes about each script in order to be able to explain their marks to their colleagues and to the Examiners' Meeting as a whole if necessary (see §1). Such notes should be destroyed when the final marks and classes have been agreed.

b) Examiners are also expected to write short comments on the performance of candidates in the papers they have marked. The purpose of such comments is to explain the mark for the paper as a whole, rather than to refer to particular answers in detail. Responsibility for this normally falls to the first examiner and the comments will normally be written when an agreed mark has been determined. In many cases, but not all, it will be possible to complete these comments before the final Examiners' Meeting; and revisions should be made immediately after the final meeting, so that these comments may be transmitted to Directors of Studies along with the agreed marks and classes.

9 So far as possible, contingencies not foreseen here should be recorded and incorporated in future versions of this code of practice as to discourage the development of appeal to oral tradition in examiners' meetings.

### Detailed Notes On Criteria For Marking

Class	Numerical Range	Addressing the Question	Quality of Argument	Range of Knowledge/Understanding
I	70+	<p>Work which engages closely with the question and addresses its broader implications, demonstrating the ability to engage with abstract issues. The structure of the answer will allow a clear, coherent unfolding of the writer's argument. Descriptive and factual elements will be linked effectively to the argument, and their relevance to the issues under discussion made clear.</p> <p><b>Scripts which satisfy two of these three criteria should receive a low First mark and scripts which satisfy all three criteria should receive a solid or good First class mark.</b></p>	<p>Work which displays the ability to use the knowledge at the writer's disposal to the very best effect. Linguistically and structurally the writing will be clear, authoritative and to the point. Where relevant writers will be aware of scholarly debate in the field but will go beyond merely paraphrasing the ideas of others and demonstrate their own conceptual command. In this sense work should be original rather than derivative. It may, more rarely, also be original in the sense of putting forward persuasive and well-supported new ideas or making unexpected conclusions.</p>	<p>Work which displays an impressively wide range of knowledge and critical understanding, drawing on evidence relevant to the answer, knowledge of textual variants where appropriate and showing awareness of the conclusions of other writers. Awareness of argument and interpretation will be held in an appropriate balance with factual information, so that the work is neither too generalising nor too weighed down by detail. Writers will show the ability to evaluate the knowledge at their disposal, where necessary identifying apparent contradictions and resolving them.</p>
II.i	60-69	<p>Work within this class can cover a broad range of achievement. It will display understanding of the question and will deploy a range of relevant evidence in answering it. At best it will be regularly, but not consistently, analytical, perhaps failing to explore all the implications of the issue under discussion, or not bringing out the full relevance of the evidence cited. These weaknesses will be more marked at the bottom of the class.</p> <p><b>Scripts which satisfy all three criteria should receive 67+ and those which satisfy two criteria should receive 63+.</b></p>	<p>Work which displays the ability to deploy ideas and knowledge to create a sustained argument. The argument will shape the structure of the work rather than emerging piecemeal, but will lack the conceptual grasp of a first class answer, demonstrating rather the ability to synthesis the view of others. At the top of the range this will be done persuasively and efficiently, but work towards the bottom of the scale, although competently structured, will lack sharpness of argument and structure.</p>	<p>Work which at best reveals a high density of relevant knowledge and deploys it effectively, demonstrating an awareness of critical issues. Nevertheless the work falls short of the highest standards in some way, perhaps by an imbalance between information and interpretation, which becomes more marked at the bottom of the scale.</p>

II.ii	50-59	<p>Work which may make some relevant points but is inadequately focussed on the specific question under discussion, leaving the reader to draw out the implications of what is being said. The structure of the answer is likely to be dictated by the information available to the writer, rather than by the requirements of the question under discussion. The implications of the question may have been overlooked or misunderstood.</p> <p><b>Scripts which satisfy only two of the above criteria should not be given a mark higher than 56.</b></p>	<p>Work in which the ideas and knowledge at the writer's disposal are presented as an end in themselves, rather than as an argument. Such argument as there is may be fragmentary or unfocussed, or may be explicitly addressed only in the opening and closing paragraphs. Linguistically as well as structurally the presentation of ideas may be rather clumsy, with points imperfectly explained. There is likely to be a sense of other people's ideas being repeated uncritically; and at worst the accretion of points may give rise to unreconciled contradictions, or raise issues which are not explored.</p>	<p>Work which displays a degree of knowledge sufficient to answer the question only at a relatively generalising level, in which statements are supported by trite or imprecise evidence, such as a tendency to simplify the arguments of other writers or to stumble over factual detail. <b>Well-informed work which fails to address the question should not be given a mark higher than 59.</b></p>
III	40-49	<p>Work which makes little sustained attempt to develop an argument in response to the question or which does so at a superficial level. The presentation of what the writer is able to remember will, to a very marked extent, take precedence over the development of an argument in response to the question.</p>	<p>Work which makes only a rudimentary attempt to develop a sustained argument, with the question treated as a peg upon which to hang any available ideas. Argument is likely to take the form of bald assertions, which may themselves be trite or hackneyed but which are not developed into a coherent line of thought. Structurally and linguistically the presentation may be muddled or unclear.</p>	<p>Work which demonstrates either too little knowledge or too little understanding to provide an acceptable argument, or at worst to sustain a full length answer. The information deployed may be misremembered or vague, or may reveal actual misunderstanding. The views of other writers may be distorted.</p>
Ord	30-39	<p>Work with only occasional glimmers of any argument, based mainly on what little the writer can remember.</p>	<p>Work which makes little if any attempt to develop a sustained argument. Any argument is likely to take the form of unsupported assertions. Structurally and linguistically the presentation is likely to be muddled or unclear.</p>	<p>Work which demonstrates only a vague knowledge or understanding, with either actual mistakes or insufficient detail. No reference to the work of other writers.</p>
Fail	0-29	<p>Work which makes no sustained attempt to develop an argument in relation to the question, or where what the writer can remember does not amount to an argument.</p>	<p>Work which makes no attempt to develop an argument, but simply makes unsupported and often disconnected assertions. Structurally and linguistically the presentation will be muddled, unclear or otherwise deficient.</p>	<p>Work which demonstrates knowledge that is so deficient, vague, distorted or inaccurate, as to provide no basis for an acceptable argument.</p>

## **Assessment of Gobbets and Translation Exercises, Long Essays and Dissertations**

### **1 Gobbets and Translation Exercises**

#### a) Gobbets:

I The standard for a II.i is met, and in addition there is a freshness of approach and/or control of the subject which makes the comments stand out from the majority.

II.i The literary and, where relevant, historical context is briefly but precisely indicated, and the comments mainly focus on one or two major points of interest in the extract, which are related concisely to wider issues. Important details are accurately elucidated. At the bottom of the class these elements will be partially present.

II.ii Too much space may be given to the context or to the elucidation of unimportant details. There may be errors of fact and the main point(s) may have been missed in what is otherwise a coherent and relevant comment.

III A rambling comment which is too general to relate to the specific text selected. Key figures or other items in the text may be wrongly identified or there may be other misunderstandings.

Ordinary Very little understanding is shown.

Fail Only a fragmentary response, with little or no understanding shown.

#### b) Translation exercises:

I A translation which is generally very accurate and reads well in English. Notes, if required, are to the point and sufficiently full. At the top of the range they may be extensive or show exceptional learning.

II.i An accurate translation which reads well in English. Notes have some relevant points but not all.

II.ii Translation is only fair; it may be too free (perhaps because of imperfect understanding of the original or reliance on memory). Notes lacking or with errors.

III Translation weak; shows serious lack of understanding of the original. Notes lacking or seriously wrong.

Ordinary A much weaker translation than for a III with no notes.

Fail An incomplete response.

NB A problem arises when a first-class translation is accompanied with no notes or poor ones, for example. A II.i mark would often be appropriate for this, but the examiner has to weigh the merits and demerits against one another in each case and decide accordingly.

### **2 Long essays**

Long essays should be seen rather as extended examination essays than as shortened dissertations; thus the main criteria to be used are those set out for three-hour examination essays. In particular, the specification of the topic is determined by the Examiners rather than the candidate, so that should play no part in assessment. However, what a candidate makes of a particular question is relevant, just as it is in three-hour examinations.

The main points of difference to be borne in mind by examiners are as follows:

a) the pressure to write an essay in a given time is completely different, so no allowance should be made for short measure; equally, in view of the preparation and supervision time, the examiner is entitled to expect a more mature performance across the board, which should mean that the standard is more exacting for each class. A penalty of five marks is applied for late submission;

b) the ability to handle the topic in a controlled way and to justify the approach taken within the specified word limit is an important consideration;

c) proper presentation, such as the use of footnotes and a proper bibliography, is essential to secure a second class mark; and the ability to utilise footnotes in appropriate circumstances as more than simply references - for example, to indicate other points of view which are not being explored in detail - should be rewarded, just as the difference between a well-presented bibliography and a list of books should be reflected in the mark;

d) good and accurate use of quotations is much more important in a long essay than it can ever be in a three-hour examination;

e) examiners need to be alert to issues of plagiarism in long essays, as indicated in the Faculty Board's Notice on the subject.

### 3 **Portfolio Papers**

a) The portfolio must consist of six essays, selected from the approved list of topics published by the Faculty. The six essays must include one on each of the set novels, plus another on one of the general topics. The latter must give substantial treatment to at least two of the set novels. While the general essay will necessarily treat novels treated in the single-work essays, candidates should ensure that the choice of topic for the general essay allows them to avoid duplication of actual analysis;

b) the whole portfolio (of six essays) is submitted in evidence of breadth of coverage of the paper, but the cover sheet should specify which four of these are to be considered for the final mark. Portfolios that fail to exhibit the required breadth will be subject to a ten-mark penalty, i.e. effectively they drop a class, unless their final mark is 80+;

c) the general considerations set out in relation to Long Essays (see paragraph 2 above) are equally relevant to portfolio essays;

d) in all other respects the general criteria for marking set out above apply to portfolio essays;

e) examiners need to be alert to issues of plagiarism in portfolio essays, as indicated in the Faculty Board's Notice on the subject.

### 4 **Dissertations**

The chief criteria by which a dissertation may be assessed are by reference to topic, sources and treatment:

a) choice of topic; its situation within its theological or religious context; and its situation in current knowledge and debate;

b) identification and study of primary sources or fundamental issues; understanding, analysis and interpretation of sources; contribution to the subject from primary sources or reconsideration of existing literature on the subject;

c) organisation of argument and narrative; capacity to summarise findings; awareness of limits of knowledge; style of writing; quality of presentation.

Few dissertations will satisfy all criteria equally, but patterns characteristic of each class of degree may be identified in broad terms. The final mark will be a balance among them.

### Class I (70+)

The topic can be treated effectively within the word limit and with material reasonably available from a brief period of research (two to three months). The writer has conceptualised the topic and situated it within its larger theological or religious context, which is explained only to the extent needed to understand the dissertation's contribution. The state of knowledge of the subject is indicated and the inquiry is related to it, without merely paraphrasing the ideas of others. Primary sources, or other fundamental issues, have been identified with imagination – in the very best dissertations, probably with real flair – and have been studied assiduously, possibly using linguistic or other special skills. All successful dissertations must use some primary sources or tackle fundamental issues in Theology and Religious Studies. Normally these will enable a dissertation to make its distinctive contribution to the subject, perhaps by means of a case-study or the elucidation of a particular topic or set of issues. Some works will merit first-class marks more for their reconsideration of an argument, a situation, a theory or a set of ideas, than for original research as such. First-class work will display critical understanding of the provenance, context and meaning of sources or ideas and the relationship among them, together with a thorough knowledge of the relevant secondary literature. There will be a clearly structured argument, appropriately illustrated with narrative or other explanatory detail, but not in such a way that the underlying argument is obscured. Rather, the detail will serve an overall argument stated clearly in the introduction and conclusion, developed systematically and held before the reader throughout. Work of the highest quality will be aware of its limitations and of questions left unanswered. The writing will be lucid and persuasive; it may well be elegant. The presentation will be immaculate, with references to source materials and other authorities in a standard form, and a full bibliography of relevant materials and secondary works consulted, organised to the best convenience of the reader. The most outstanding dissertations may be considered as potential articles for reputable journals in the field.

### Class II.i (marks 60-69)

Work within this class can cover a broad range of achievement. It may show some of the qualities of a first class dissertation, but in less sustained form. It will display a high level of competence. The topic will have been chosen carefully to permit the study of primary sources or a set of issues of fundamental importance, and will be manageable within the time and space available, although in some cases it may be a little narrow and constitute a useful illustration of the familiar. The subject will be situated within its context and there will be a fair understanding of the state of knowledge and debate, but in both areas there may be some unnecessary background material or recapitulation of established views, while the writer may merely state the larger context and then neglect it for the detailed topic. Primary sources may have been examined with great industry or the issues considered with great care, but there may be gaps in either the sources or the issues discussed. There may be a tendency to reproduce or paraphrase rather than analyse the material under consideration, or there may be failures of understanding or neglect of difficulties. Although an argument will be stated, there may be a tendency to get lost in detail or to substitute narrative or exposition for critical analysis. The overall structure of the work may be no more than an introductory statement, a narrative or expository core, and an equally brief conclusion. Sometimes the argument may appear only at the end. Only the better candidates in this class are likely to reflect on the limitations of their own work. The writing will probably be lucid, but possibly lacking verve and vitality. Presentation will generally be good, penultimate with references to most authorities and a considerable bibliography, but important

works may have been overlooked or difficult material not discussed. These weaknesses will be more marked at the bottom of the class.

### Class II.ii (marks 50-59)

Some dissertations in this class will display all the weaknesses of low II.i work, generally in more pronounced form. Other dissertations will have a major flaw which prevents a higher mark. The topic may be too ambitious to handle in the space available or so familiar that there is little scope for an interesting contribution. The primary sources may have proved disappointing or not to have been studied with adequate time and attention, so that much space is filled with 'background'; the issues may not be presented adequately. Alternatively there may be an inability to relate the topic to the wider theological or religious context, which may be sketched vaguely and then forgotten while the writer plunges into detail. Treatment of the primary sources or issues may show failures of understanding or lack of curiosity. The dissertation may be structured by the information available rather than by the need to address a clearly-formulated question. The structure is likely to be clumsy, either episodic with barely-connected chapters, or dominated by extensive exposition. Any overall argument will at best be stated at the beginning and end, or possibly left for the reader to work out. Large issues may go unexplored. The capacity for brief summary or self-criticism is likely to be slight. The style may be unclear, repetitious and ungainly. Factual errors, non sequiturs, self-contradictions and obvious gaps in knowledge are likely. Presentation may be careful and even pedantic, but in other cases the typing will be poor, the footnotes sporadic and unstandardised and the bibliography ill-organised and incomplete.

### Class III (marks 40-49)

The few dissertations likely to fall into this category should probably have been abandoned long before. One reason for disaster may be a topic which did not permit serious study of primary sources or fundamental issues. Another could be failure to examine the obviously indispensable sources, primary or secondary. Either case might be compounded by ignorance of the general area of study and the literature about it. The result might be a dissertation which met the requirements of length and presentation, but had nothing of interest to say. Alternatively a dissertation might show major misunderstanding of the subject or the sources. It might consist of undigested primary or secondary material presented in an unstructured form with virtually no relation to an argument. The argument might be either disorganised or unsustainable. A dissertation of this quality might show signs of haste or inadequate command of written English. Although these faults could co-exist with excellent presentation, there would be a strong chance of error, disorder and a lack of references and bibliography.

### Ordinary or Fail (marks below 40)

It is rare for a dissertation to get a mark lower than a Third, since the quality of work required for a Third is already poor. An Ordinary or Fail mark would be justified when there was no case even for a Third, or where the dissertation was so idiosyncratic as to cause severe doubts about the candidate's command of the subject.

Dissertations handed in late without good cause (as determined by the Chairman and the Deputy Chairman) are liable to a penalty of five marks per day. There will also be a penalty of five marks in cases where CDs handed in with essays/ dissertations/portfolios do not match the hard copy.

(Approved by Faculty Board, 21 November 2002, and revised on 25 January 2007, 25 April 2008, 22 January 2009, 27 January 2011, 01 November 2012)