Moderatorship Examination Guidelines  
November 15, 2006

The Moderatorship examination in Mathematics for students of Mathematics and Theoretical Physics (and for students of Mathematics within Two-subject moderatorship) is in two parts. The JS and SS examinations count equally.

The grading scheme for Moderatorship examinations has third class honors (lowest passing grade) at 40% and a first class honors at 70%. There are intermediate thresholds at 50% and 60% for second class honors (2nd division and 1st division). Although there are failing grades of F.1 (30%-39%), F.2 (0-29%) these do not have any direct significance. However, a student’s average mark (plus the number of courses passed in the case of JS Maths) determines his or her results and care should be taken at all ends of the spectrum that the mark returned reflects the students work.

In particular, the questions and the marking scheme on the papers must allow weak students to show what they know, but should not allow the best students to get excessively good marks. That said, only truly exceptional students can deserve high marks. It is the practice in Mathematics to recommend those with an overall Moderatorship marks above 80% to the Board for the award of a Gold Medal.

In practice this means the following:

• Questions should cover a lot of the course
• Individual questions should have a part that is within the reach of relatively weak students who have studied and understood the part of the course to which the question refers;
• All or most individual questions should have a part that allows the best students to show originality (for example an unseen problem or a necessity to draw together material in a way that is not verbatim in the course notes);
• Well-designed examination papers should normally result in average marks for the course in the range 50–65%. Where it does not happen an explanation should be sought. This may be that a small group were exceptionally good or exceptionally weak - this will often be apparent from their other marks - or even a large group can sometimes pull one another down or up. Students should not make the mistake of thinking ‘everybody can’t fail’.
• In cases where the examination results are not in this range, a piecewise linear monotone scaling may be applied to the results.

The procedure is that the Moderatorship examination question papers must be sent to the external examiner for comment/approval before the papers are sent off to the Senior Lecturer’s office for duplication. The College Assessment and Examination Procedure Regulations state that for each course the External Examiner should be supplied with
1. A Course Outline
2. Examination
3. Model Solutions
4. A marking scheme
5. An indication of what is pure bookmark and what is not

Note: To make comparability across papers easier, we had agreed with the Extern, that each question will be marked out of 20 and then 120 scaled to 100 at the end. Last year he indicated this was not necessary.

This year it is hoped that we will follow the procedures outlined in the second document “A Modest Proposal”.

The external examiners visit Dublin at the end of the examining period when the marking has been completed, to review the marking of the scripts and to make recommendations about standards. They are then present at the Moderatorship examiners meeting where their opinions, if any, carry strong weight.

Though it is permissible for an element of continuous assessment to be included in the final result for a course at Moderatorship level, care must be taken. There must be a system for making sure that a record is kept of all such work submitted and students must be clearly informed about deadlines, etc. Especially if the weight given to such continuous assessment work is large (say more than 15%), the work must be kept for evaluation by the external examiner and the marks for the work must not be given to the students before the external examiner has a chance to recommend modifications.

### Dates for 2007

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Date(s)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exams needing typing, in the office</td>
<td>by the 24th of February</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exam meetings to take place</td>
<td>Mon 5th - Fri 9th of March</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exams to externs by</td>
<td>Fri the 16th March</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exam period</td>
<td>21st of May - Fri 15th June</td>
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<tr>
<td>All Examinations except exceptional ones</td>
<td>will be before Fri the 8th of June</td>
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<tr>
<td>All results due</td>
<td>by Wed the 13th of June except for exceptional ones due as soon as possible</td>
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<tr>
<td>Preliminary Meetings will be</td>
<td>on Mon the 18th of June</td>
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<tr>
<td>Examiners Meetings with Externs</td>
<td>- probably Thurs the 21st of June</td>
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Everybody must be present from Thurs the 14th - Thurs the 21st of June

• Note that we will retain in storage in the Department

1. The scripts
2. The marking scheme used
3. Model answers

4. Original sheet of (anonymous) marks which includes a tabulation of the marks awarded for each question and scaling method used if any

5. Print out of names, exam numbers and marks which will also show any continuous assessment marks added in.

All this material should then remain available for 13 months.

- Individual students can make appointments with their examiners to view and discuss their scripts ‘at reasonable times’. For such appointments, the examiner will temporarily check out the relevant script from the store.

If any examiner is away for a period, another member of staff should be designated to discuss papers with students. For this to be useful it means that scripts must be properly annotated with the marks and the rationale for them.

Thus comments, ticks, crosses and numerical marks should be written on the scripts and should correspond to the marking scheme used.

**Maths Office**

As the Maths Office is the first point of call for the Examinations Office if a problem arises, it is vital that each examiner give their contact details/mobile phone number to Karen or Helen. If an examiner will not be present on the day of their exam it is their responsibility alone to ensure that the contact details of the replacing member of staff are given to the Maths Office. This will avoid any confusion on the day of the exam and any embarrassment for the School.

Donal O’Donovan November 15, 2006