

History and Politics Part IB 2019-20

‘Historical Project’ (HP2) Long Essay Guidance

HP2 gives students an opportunity to engage closely with a historical problem and to develop their extended writing skills. Questions on the paper have been devised by multiple supervisors with diverse interests; the paper therefore lends itself to a range of approaches. Some questions are likely to entail close reading of primary source material and an examination of the problems involved in using such sources. Other questions explore crosscutting themes, potentially over longer periods of time, and may foreground critical historiography; or questions may entail a combination of theme-based and source-based approaches. Some options may also involve the use of visual material.

The Essays

‘Historical Project’ (HP2) consists of two Long Essays of 3,000-5,000 words each on questions chosen from a prescribed list, one in Michaelmas Term (submitted in January) and one in Lent Term (submitted in April), with the aid of three hours of supervision in each case.

The final list of questions for 2019-20 will be circulated on 1st August 2019 and students must choose four questions and submit them, in rank order, to the Paper Convenor, Dr Geraint Thomas, glt22@cam.ac.uk, by 16 August 2019. Students should not choose questions on topics which they will be studying in their other Part IB papers.

Dr Thomas will then allocate students to supervisors; students will be informed of the outcome just before the start of Michaelmas Term.

While the Faculty endeavours to permit students to write essays on their preferred topics, students may be asked to write on one of their reserve questions. This is to ensure that all students receive adequate supervision. Students who miss the deadline for essay choices may be asked to wait until the selection process is over before their cases are dealt with.

Supervisions

The paper is taught by three hours of supervision per Long Essay. Supervisions for the first essay will take place in Michaelmas Term and supervisions for the second essay will be given in Lent Term.

It is expected, but not required, that the supervision will take the form of three one-hour supervisions. The first supervision will typically consider the nature and scope of the question, and a student’s approach to it. A reading list should be provided by the supervisor,

though it is expected that students will identify their own sources in addition to these foundational texts. The second supervision will discuss progress, normally on the basis of a written outline or plan. The third will review a first draft. Supervisors will not read more than one draft of the essay, and will not offer more than three hours of supervisions. Students are expected to work for the essay during term time and supervisors will expect to give supervisions during term time. Other than in exceptional circumstances, where a student's Director of Studies has provided evidence that they have been unable to work for some period of the term, supervisors can—and often will—refuse to read drafts during the vacation.

Skills Examined

The basic skills to be tested are similar to those expected in a supervision essay: the ability to argue clearly and cogently; to expound the issues involved in a given topic or problem; to evaluate interpretations and their relevance to the evidence on which historical argument is based. The Long Essays therefore provide the opportunity for students to show how well they have grasped the general issues implicit in the question and their ability to analyse them in terms of a particular question posted. Students may be expected to show some initiative in finding and identifying literature on their subject, but supervisors will provide sufficient material to make a start.

It is essential that essays answer the question, and they must make an argument in doing so. The Examiners expect a clear argument in answer to the question, evidence of having read the important literature, and independent thinking. They have no fixed expectations for the nature, direction, or conclusion of answers to any of the questions set, and in consultation with their supervisor, students are free to approach them in a way that particularly interests them. Essays may, therefore, vary in the extent of their treatment of historiography depending on the approaches of particular questions, but, because many HP2 questions will focus particularly on primary source material, students are expected, where appropriate, to pay special attention to evaluating sources, e.g. by discussing and comparing their reliability and explaining their value for the historian. Sophisticated discussion of such matters raised by a question or topic may constitute the main contents of an essay. In other cases, however, students may be expected to concentrate on secondary literature; advice will be given about the most suitable approach appropriate to each question. In addition, students should show ability to use footnotes and to present an adequate bibliography of the sources and literature used. The [Faculty Style Guide](#) (available on the website) gives detailed guidance about word count, presentation, footnotes and bibliography, and is essential reading.

Directors of Studies have no involvement in the preparation of the Long Essays. While they may assist in planning of work schedules, they must on no account be approached to discuss content or to read or comment on drafts of the Long Essays, nor is it permissible to ask other teachers or graduate students to do so. The Paper Convenor is available to answer questions regarding the general scope of the paper, its administrative processes, and assessment criteria.

Marking Criteria

A Long Essay should form a coherent whole and should show that the candidate is aware of conceptual and methodological issues. The essay may excel in a number of different ways: through an especially astute interpretation of the prescribed sources, by constructing an unusually sophisticated and focussed argument, or by combining these two approaches.

Long Essays will be assessed in terms of the following three criteria, though their application and the balance among them may differ according to the nature of the question:

- (i) understanding, analysis and interpretation of primary and/or secondary sources;
- (ii) development of a coherent and substantial argument which illuminates the question;
- (iii) effectiveness of writing and quality of presentation.

Few Long Essays will satisfy all criteria equally, but patterns characteristic of each class of degree may be identified in broad terms. Examiners should assess candidates against all three criteria in their comments books. The final mark will be a balance among them.

Candidates should follow the History Faculty Style Guide, which is available online, and should include a bibliography of relevant materials and secondary works consulted. Failure to comply with guidelines on footnoting, bibliography or style may be penalized by the examiner. In the case of serious breaches this may jeopardize the class awarded.

80-100: A Long Essay in this band will engage exceptionally closely with the question and address its implications in a sophisticated manner. It will display an unusually effective command of a wide range of relevant material and mobilise this knowledge to good effect to develop a compelling argument. Writing will be clear, authoritative and to the point. Work in this category is likely to be original in the sense of putting forward persuasive and wellsupported new ideas or making unexpected connections.

70-79: A Long Essay in this band will have analysed the question, understood its larger context, and developed a cogent argument based on a close engagement with the relevant primary and/or secondary sources: either the thematic issues or the sources may be foregrounded depending on the nature of the question and the approach adopted. First-class work will display understanding of the provenance, context, and meaning of sources and the relationship among them and a thorough knowledge of the relevant secondary material. The narrative will serve an overall argument which is stated clearly in the introduction and developed systematically throughout. The writing will be lucid and persuasive, and the presentation will be consistently good.

60-69: Work within this band will display a good-to-high level of competence, and may show many of the qualities of a first class Long Essay, albeit in less sustained form. The Long Essay will be situated within an appropriate context and there will be a fair understanding of the state of knowledge and debate. The work will have an overall structure. Only the better candidates in this class are likely to reflect on the limitations of their own work. The writing will be clear and the presentation will generally be good.

50-59: Some Long Essays in this category will display all the weaknesses of low II.i work, generally in more pronounced form. Others will have a major flaw which prevents a higher mark. The engagement with the primary sources and/or secondary literature may be limited either in scope or in the level of understanding, so that much space is filled with 'background'. Alternatively, the study of sources may be flawed by an inability to relate the material to a wider thematic context. In either case the Long Essay will be structured by the information available rather than by the need to answer a clearly formulated question. The structure is, therefore, likely to be clumsy and either episodic – perhaps with several brief but barely connected sub-sections – or dominated by breathless narrative. 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. The essay may be let down by poor presentation, sporadic footnotes and/or an incomplete or disorganised bibliography.

40-49: A Long Essay in this category will meet the requirements of length and presentation but have nothing of interest to say, or say it remarkably badly. This could be due to failure to examine key pieces of evidence or inability to understand the question and construct a suitable argument in response to it. Either case might be compounded by ignorance of the general area of study and the literature about it. The Long Essay might consist of undigested primary or secondary material presented in an unstructured form and with virtually no relation to an argument. Chronology might be non-existent or the argument transparently unsustainable. A Long Essay 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.

0-39: A Long Essay should be placed in this category if it fails to meet the criteria for a higher mark: that is, if it fails to develop even a superficially effective response to the question.

Each individual essay will account for 50% of the marks for the Historical Project paper.

Essays that are in breach of the minimum or maximum word count (3,000-5,000 words) will be penalised by the Board of Examiners.

Submission of Long Essays

Students are required to submit **TWO hard copies** and **ONE digital copy** of each of their Long Essays, on the day that the essay is due. All copies of the Long Essays must be typed, unless permission to the contrary has been granted in advance by the HP2 convenor, which will only happen in exceptional cases.

The Long Essays must be submitted to the History and Politics Administrator in the History Faculty; the first Essay is due by 3.00pm on the first **Thursday** of Lent Full Term and the second is due by 3.00pm on the first **Thursday** of Easter Full Term.

If, due to medical or other grave cause, the student is unable to submit on time, the student's College **must** apply to the Secretary of the Examination Access and Mitigation Committee (EAMC) for an extension to the deadline. The Chair of Examiners should not be approached directly. Applications must be made at least a week before the scheduled deadline to enable the Secretary to consult the Chair of Examiners. Any extension granted will be for a specified period.

An essay submitted later than either the scheduled or extended deadline will be penalised as follows:

- In the first 24 hours: 1 mark per examiner for the first hour or part thereof, another mark per examiner for the second hour, and a third mark per examiner for any further delay up to 3.00 pm the next day.
- Next 6 working days (i.e. excluding Saturday/Sunday) or part thereof: 3 marks per examiner per day.
- Work submitted any later than this will be marked 0.

The two hard copies and the electronic copy must be submitted by the specified deadline and must be identical.

A **completed Cover Sheet** should be stapled or securely attached to the front of each hard copy of the Long Essay, ensuring that all information is clearly legible. Pages should be numbered, and the full title of the essay should be inserted at the top of the first page of all copies.

Students are required to submit the **digital copy** of each of their Long Essays to Turnitin UK via **Moodle**, the content of which must be identical with that of the hard copies. Further instructions for the digital submission will be issued prior to the submission date.

Turnitin UK text-matching software is an online service that compares submitted work for matches with a database of material available online and with a 'private' database of previous submissions. Fifteen percent of each submission will be selected for scrutiny by the Academic Secretary, acting as Faculty Academic Integrity Officer. Normally, this will be work highlighted by the Turnitin software as containing a significant amount of recognised text. Work recommended by Examiners for further investigation may also be selected for scrutiny. Originality reports for scrutinised work will be referred to the Examiners responsible for the academic assessment of the work if there is prima facie evidence of plagiarism or poor academic practice.

Students will be asked to confirm their awareness of this process on a separate (unbound) **Declaration form**, which is to be handed-in at the time of submission. Identifying information must not appear anywhere other than on this form. The Declaration contains a statement about plagiarism, which is the unacknowledged use of the work of others as if it were original work. All material must be fully referenced and acknowledged. Plagiarism is a serious offence and will not be tolerated by the Faculty of History. Further information about the Faculty's use of Turnitin and how to avoid plagiarism, can be found on the Faculty

website: Guidance on Plagiarism. The University also publishes detailed guidance here:
<http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/univ/plagiarism/students/>

Students are reminded to take care of their work and to back-up text, keep extra copies separately etc. Students, and not the Faculty, are responsible for submitting their essays on time. Computer difficulties, stolen equipment, failure to allow sufficient time for printing problems etc. **will not be accepted** as excusable reasons for late submission.

Marks for the essays will not be released to students until after the end of Easter Term, when the class list is published. Please note that essays will not be returned after the completion of the class list, but will be retained by the Board of Examiners for 6 months like any other examination script. If students wish to keep a copy for their own purposes, they should bear this in mind before submitting the Long Essays.