GUIDELINES FOR AWARDING MARKS FOR B.A. EXAMS IN PHILOSOPHY

Work to be assessed towards an award should be assessed using the following criteria (not in order of importance):

- Relevance of answer to question set.
- Coverage of answer: appropriate range of facts, ideas and sources.
- Accuracy of information.
- Structure and organisation of argument.
- Quality of analysis, argumentation and critical evaluation.
- Quality of expression and presentation.
- Display of capacity for independent thought.

These criteria are used to categorise answers to exam questions and essays into the following classes.

0–19%    Fail—Totally inadequate answer in all areas, displaying scant evidence of understanding or knowledge.

20–29%   Fail—Inadequate answer in all areas, displaying very little knowledge or understanding.

30–39%   Potential Compensated Fail—The answer is only slightly below the pass standard and the examiners believe that the wider consequences of a fail need to be further examined, if for example the candidate could not graduate if the ‘fail’ were not compensated.

40–49%   Third—An answer that meets the minimum criteria to pass, showing some awareness of issues raised by the question and knowledge of relevant material, with weak performance on most of the criteria.

50–59%   Lower Second—A satisfactory answer, competent in some of the criteria but weak in others.

60–69%   Upper Second—A good answer. Very competent in some areas, or showing moderate competence in some and excellence in others.

70–79%   First class—An excellent answer in all or nearly all areas; showing a high degree of competence where excellence is not achieved.

80%+     First Class—An outstanding answer in all or virtually all areas, of a calibre beyond what is normally expected at undergraduate level.
The mark for a paper should normally be the average of the marks for each of the questions. Examiners are encouraged not to confine first class marks to the very low 70s—to appreciate that, for example, a script that is clearly first class might well deserve a mark of 75 or more.