EXAMINATION FOR THE DEGREE OF M.SC IN LAW AND FINANCE

REPORT OF THE BOARD OF EXAMINERS FOR 2021-2022

1. Introduction

This report contains a commentary on various central aspects of this year's examinations, and raises any points which the Examiners believe may be important for those who have oversight of the examination of MSc in Law and Finance (MLF) candidates in future years.

2. Timetable

The setting of the timetable for this year's examinations followed previous years. The Michaelmas Term (MT) and Hilary Term (HT) examinations for the MLF core courses, First Principles of Financial Economics (FPFE) and Finance respectively, were set in the week after the final class, to give candidates the opportunity to revise for their papers after these finance courses had been completed. The Trinity Term (TT) examinations for the law electives commenced at the end of 8th Week and continued until the end of 10th Week. The Finance Stream courses were all assessed by summative coursework in 2021-22.

This was the eighth year that the Finance Stream has been offered as part of the MLF programme. It allows candidates to opt to study a finance component in lieu of one of the two law courses that candidates are otherwise required to take. The Finance Stream consists of a compulsory course in Corporate Valuation and one finance elective. Candidates taking the Finance Stream were assessed by a 100% individual assignment for the compulsory Corporate Valuation course, which was submitted during the HT vacation. For their finance elective in TT, candidates were assessed by individual or group coursework due in Week 5 of TT.

Delivering the Finance Stream involves a degree of administrative complexity and uncertainty since the Law Faculty and Saïd Business School (SBS) operate different course and exam schedules and employ differing timelines for timetabling courses. Coordinating teaching and assessment timetables continues to be a challenge for MLF finance electives because these need to be compatible across other programmes in the Law Faculty and SBS. The Master of Business Administration (MBA)/MSc in Financial Economics (MFE) and MLF marks for SBS courses are also moderated by different Exam Boards. Since 2019-20, the TT finance electives have been split into 'Block 1' and 'Block 2' teaching and assessment blocks; Block 1 electives run intensively in Weeks 1-4, with assessment in Week 5, while Block 2 electives run intensively in Weeks 6-9, with assessment in Week 10. This has created additional considerations in terms of mitigating teaching and assessment clashes between law and finance electives in TT. Block 2 finance electives are taught during Weeks 8 and 9 of TT, which is when law elective examinations take place. No MLF student took a Block 2 elective in 2021-22, which eased some of these planning pressures. To accommodate those assessments taking place in Week 10 of TT for Block 2 electives, and because finance electives choices are only finalised in-year, the date of the final meeting of the MLF Board of Examiners has been scheduled later since 2019-20. MLF Finance Stream students were notified in advance of TT regarding the pattern of SBS teaching and assessment in 2021-22 to enable them to make an informed decision regarding their choice of finance elective from the available menu of Block 1 and Block 2 electives.

Building on the experience of delivering the Finance Stream since its inception, effective communication with SBS regarding the provision of information about course timetabling and assessments, continued to support a structured approach to managing the Finance Stream, now in its eighth year, and that candidates' final marks for finance electives were communicated to the MLF Exam Board in good time for their final meeting. The administrative support provided by a dedicated SBS Programme Support Administrator, acting as an MLF course liaison at SBS for the sixth year running, continued to be a valuable aid in ensuring the smooth running of the Finance Stream. The operational issues involved in managing the Finance Stream do not detract from the desirability of continuing to offer a Finance Stream in future years, and the MLF Finance Stream will continue to be offered in the academic year, 2022-23. The Finance Stream continues to be a popular choice amongst MLF students; two thirds of the cohort opted to take it in 2021-22.

For the eighth year running, the assessment regime for FPFE incorporated a piece of assessed group work, worth 20% of the overall course mark, to spread the burden of course assessment over a variety of different points in time and modalities in the first term with the objective of reducing levels of student anxiety, and to provide students with an early indication of their performance on course before the examination for this core course. There was no summative group work for the MLF core course, Finance; course assessment took the form of 100% examination in 2021-22.

3. **Electives**

MLF Numbers by Stream 2021-22	Number of MLFs	Percentage of cohort
Total cohort number	48	
Law Stream	16	33%
Finance Stream	32	67%

MLF candidates taking the Law Stream take two law electives (or one law elective and the dissertation option) from a set menu of available options that are also open to BCL and MJur candidates. Sixteen candidates out of this year's cohort of 48 candidates (33%) took the Law Stream. There were 9 standard law elective options available to MLF candidates in 2021-22, together with 6 half options. MLFs were permitted to take two of these half options in lieu of one law elective. This year, between them, MLF candidates studied 12 law electives, including 2 half options, and 3 elective options outside the standard menu. One candidate wrote a dissertation this year. The most popular law elective was Principles of Financial Regulation. Law elective numbers for 2021-22 are set out below:

MLF Law Electives 2021-22 (12)

Law Electives	MLF Numbers
Advanced Property and Trusts --	2
BCL Dissertation	1
Business Taxation in a Global Economy	6
Commercial Negotiation and Mediation	4
Commercial Remedies --	2
Comparative Corporate Governance *(half option)*	9
Competition Law	1
Corporate Control *(half option)*	9
International Environmental Law --	1

Law and Computer Science	4
Legal Concepts in Financial Law	2
Principles of Financial Regulation	32

-- Non-standard MLF electives.

Law electives are normally assessed by timed, written examinations at the end of Trinity Term. While most electives continued to be assessed by examination at the end of TT (in the form of online, open-book examinations), some elective courses, including the 2 half options taken by MLFs, were assessed in-year via an alternative assessment format (essays) for a second year running. Also following last year's practice, Commercial Negotiation and Mediation offered candidates the option of being assessed either by in-year essay assessment or by an end-of-year examination in 2021-22. Details of the different assessment formats for the MLF law electives in 2021-22 are set out below:

MLF law electives with Trinity Term online open-book exams in 2021-22 (8)

Law Electives	MLF Numbers
Advanced Property and Trusts **--**	2
Business Taxation in a Global Economy	6
Commercial Negotiation and Mediation	1
Commercial Remedies **--**	2
Competition Law	1
International Environmental Law **--**	1
Legal Concepts in Financial Law	2
Principles of Financial Regulation	32

-- Non-standard MLF elective.

MLF law electives with in-year/alternative assessment in 2021-22 (5)

Law Electives	MLF Numbers
Commercial Negotiation and Mediation	3
Comparative Corporate Governance *(half option)*	9
Corporate Control *(half option)*	9
Law and Computer Science	4
BCL Dissertation	1

-- Non-standard MLF elective.

Candidates taking the Finance Stream take one law elective and one finance elective, and the mandatory Finance Stream course, Corporate Valuation. Thirty-two candidates out of this year's cohort of 48 candidates (67%) took the Finance Stream. SBS made changes to the Private Equity and Debt course in 2021 (a standard MLF TT elective option). The course continued with a new title in 2021-22, 'Buyside Private Equity – The Essentials', and with the establishment of a new, related course, 'Buyside Private Equity – Advanced'. Finance Stream students were therefore able to choose their TT finance elective from a selection of 6 standard options in 2021-22. This year, between them, MLF candidates studied 4 finance electives from the standard menu. The most popular finance electives were Buyside Private Equity: Essential and the Entrepreneurial Finance Project. All courses, including the mandatory Hilary Term course, Corporate Valuation, were assessed by summative

coursework in 2021-22, either by group assignment or individual assignment, the same as last year. The finance electives were taught and assessed in specific blocks of term. Finance elective numbers for 2021-22 are set out below:

MLF Finance Stream: Finance Electives 2021-22 (4)

Finance Electives	Block 1 Electives (taught Weeks 1-4)	MLF Numbers
Buyside Private Equity – Advanced		3
Buyside Private Equity – The Essentials		11
Entrepreneurial Finance Project		11
Investing in Public Equity		7

Finance Electives	Block 2 Electives (taught Weeks 6-9)	MLF Numbers
Investing in Private Markets		0
Mergers, Acquisitions and Restructuring		0

4. **Examining methods and teaching: COVID-19 adjustments and impacts**

Teaching for the MLF core courses and the law and finance courses was delivered as planned in 2021-22. There was little disruption arising from the COVID-19 pandemic/other circumstances. Teaching for MLF core courses was conducted in-person in 2021-22 and in-person attendance was expected. Hybrid provision (live streaming via Teams or Zoom and/or recordings of lectures) was made available for those unable to attend classes in-year owing to illness/COVID-19 or other mitigating circumstances, and for those who were non-resident at times. Students by and large responded positively to the return of in-person teaching in 2021-22, and the quality of overall in-person student engagement and attendance was generally good, although there were some for whom COVID-19 and/or seasonal illness prevented in-person attendance on occasion throughout the year. MLF candidates were advised of the MCE process on a regular basis to ensure they reported where their examinations/assessments had been particularly affected by individual circumstances.

All assessment for the MLF core courses, law elective courses and Finance Stream courses was delivered as planned in 2021-22. There was no disruption to assessment arising from the COVID-19 pandemic/other circumstances. No assessments were cancelled or converted to an alternative format during the year. No mitigating actions were required in 2021-22 to ensure that candidates were not disadvantaged by the conditions in which they revised for and sat assessment and that outcomes were comparable with previous years. No changes were made to the MLF final outcome rules in 2021-22 as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Below is a summary of MLF course assessment in 2021-22.

MLF Core Courses

- First Principles of Financial Economics (FPFE)
  There was no change to the assessment structure of FPFE. The course was assessed by 20% group work, 40% essay and 40% examination as in previous years. There was a change to the physical arrangements for the examination. This was scheduled at the end of MT as usual, but reverted to being an in-person examination in 2021. This was possible following the easing of

COVID-19 pandemic restrictions in 2021. The examination took place online in 2020. Pre-COVID-19, it was held as an in-person, invigilated exam at the Examination Schools. Course assessment was delivered as planned in 2021-22, as published at the start of the academic year.

- Law and Economics of Corporate Transactions (LECT)
  There was a small change to the assessment structure of LECT. Historically, this core compulsory course has been assessed by 100% essay and group work (presentations assessed on a pass/fail basis). In addition, during HT, students complete another group work exercise which has been an informal assessment to date. Following receipt of consistent student feedback in 2019-20 and 2020-21 that the informal group work completed during HT should carry with it some formal reward, the decision was made to convert the HT group into a formal assessment (so not a COVID-19 adjustment). The HT group work was therefore formalised in 2021-22 to be marked on a pass/fail basis and the MLF exam conventions were updated to reflect the need for candidates to pass both LECT group work assessments to pass the course. LECT was therefore assessed as follows in 2021-22, as published at the start of the academic year: (1) pass/fail group work assessment in HT; (2) pass/fail group work assessment in TT; and (3) the 100% essay submission in TT.

  The HT and TT group work assessments took place as planned in 2021-22, and fully in-person this year following the easing of COVID-19 pandemic restrictions. A hybrid format (in-person and live streaming) was utilised in 2020-21. Arrangements for the written assessment (a 5,000-word essay worth 100%) remained unchanged. The essay was released on Friday of Week 1 TT with a submission deadline of Friday of Week 7 TT as normal.

- Finance
  There was a change to the assessment structure of Finance. Pre-COVID-19, this core compulsory course has been assessed by 80% examination (an invigilated, in-person exam) and by 20% group work in HT. In March 2020, the first national lockdown was imposed only a few days before the scheduled examination, which was successfully converted to an online, closed-book examination at short notice. The group work had already taken place shortly before COVID-19. In 2020-21, due to COVID-19 conditions, the Finance course requested a temporary COVID-19 adjustment to the assessment method to trial a 100% written submission. The main assessment was therefore converted from an 80% closed-book, quantitative exam to a 100% open-book, take-home essay-based assessment, which tested candidates on their ability to think deeply and laterally. The assessment was released on Friday of Week 6 HT with a submission deadline of Friday of Week 8 HT. In 2021-22, the course re-introduced a 2-hour, timed examination, worth 100%. The course determined that the most suitable assessment method for the Finance course (a significant part of which is quantitative, i.e., including the use of calculations) is by way of an in-person, timed examination. Finance will be assessed by 100% examination again in 2022-23. The exclusion of assessed group work from Finance may be temporary following the easing of the COVID-19 pandemic or may be a longer-term change. Assessment for the course will be kept under review by the programme.

Law Electives

- Assessment Format
  Law elective examinations took place as online, open-book exams in 2021-22 via Inspera, the University's online assessment platform. Online examinations first took place in 2019-20 owing to the COVID-19 pandemic. The online open-book format has not generally affected the form, structure, and number of questions for each paper. The standard time duration for most papers was three hours in 2021-22. The mode of completion was Typed. There was no technical time for online exams with a typed mode of completion in 2021-22. The late upload policy only applies to exams with a handwritten/upload or mixed mode of completion, and not typed exams. Candidates undertaking exams with a typed mode of completion have their exam responses automatically captured by the system and therefore are not able to submit late. MLF candidates had two online open-book examinations for law elective courses in TT, unless they took the Finance Stream, which was assessed by summative coursework in HT and TT, or took law elective options or half law options using alternative methods of assessment in-year. No in-year changes were made to assessment rubrics once they had been published; course assessment was delivered as planned for the MLF law electives.

Finance Stream Courses

- Assessment Format
  All Finance Stream courses, including the mandatory HT course, Corporate Valuation, were assessed by summative coursework in 2021-22 – either by group assignment or individual assignment. No courses were assessed by examination in 2021-22. No in-year changes were made to assessment rubrics once they had been published; course assessment was delivered as planned.

5. **Comments on the examination/any individual papers**

- Finance
  Unfortunately, a different version of the formula sheet to the one used on course by MLF students was provided in the exam room for the core course examination for Finance, which was held in Week 9 HT; two formulas were missing, which were relevant to completing part of an optional multi-part problem, Q.6 on the exam paper (Q.6 (d) specifically), in Section B of the exam paper (candidates had the choice of completing either multi-part Q.5 or Q.6 in Section B (worth 40%)). The effects of not having the correct formula sheet were minimal. The options question was optional and only a small number of students chose to answer it, and the formulas were not necessary until the second half of what was a multi-part problem, which could still be solved without the use of the formula sheet. Only a small handful of candidates who sat the examination were affected (i.e., those taking optional Q.6) and their scripts were marked in a way that adjusted for the missing formulas. The markers knew the paper and were best placed to understand the impact of not having the two formulas. The cohort was advised that the impact had been recorded and would be considered by the MLF Board of Examiners with appropriate mitigating action being taken under the group MCE process. Any candidate who believed that they were unduly impacted beyond the rest of the cohort were invited to detail this through the individual MCE process.

  The absence of the missing formula was considered by the MLF Board of Examiners under the group MCE process to determine whether any mitigation should be undertaken for the entire

cohort on the basis that some candidates may have been prejudiced by having lost time/marks or had their choice of questions restricted. The Board noted that it was not possible to identify candidates that may have been affected where impact was not explicit, i.e., those that answered Q.5, but who may have lost time/marks reviewing Q.6, or who may have done better if they had completed Q.6 but were dissuaded from doing so due to the missing formula, or in the absence of an individual MCE. In recognition of this, and to address any residual impact, the Board removed the re-sit cap for the small group of students who failed the exam and needed to re-sit, giving them the opportunity to sit the exam again at no disadvantage and to perform as well as they might have done had the missing formula been provided. Reviewing the marks' profile for the exam and noting feedback from the course convenor, it was not considered appropriate to disregard the paper entirely or elements of the paper or to apply scaling.

The Finance exam distribution was discussed with the markers and the MLF Board of Examiners was assured that (i) the exam was of comparable difficulty to previous years; (ii) the marking was done as consistently as possible with previous years. The Exam Chair confirmed that course convenor had checked the exam paper with the course's other course convenor for 2021-22 before being finalised. For those candidates sitting close to a merit or distinction boundary, or any other candidate that felt they had been unduly impacted, it was open to them to submit an individual MCE setting out how they had been impacted for consideration at the final MLF exam board meeting.

The MLF Board of Examiners reviewed the Finance marks at their final meeting, noting the consideration that had already taken place under the group MCE process. Any individual MCEs submitted in relation to the HT Finance exam and/or re-sit regarding the formula sheet matter and/or other mitigating circumstances were considered carefully. The Board noted the degree outcomes for the handful of candidates who had been identified by the Finance markers as being explicitly impacted by the formula sheet matter and for the re-sit candidates. The Board had no further comments regarding the formula sheet matter; they were content that they had done everything possible to mitigate any impacts (both explicit and non-explicit/residual) under the group MCE process to ensure that no candidate was disadvantaged, with any further actions being taken in response to individual MCEs. The Board noted the risk factor posed by the formula sheet and emphasised the importance of ensuring a rigorous approval and communications approach with the course convenor(s) to ensure that the correct version is used in the exam room.

6. **Statistics**

The 2021-22 MLF cohort comprised 48 students. Attached at Appendix 1 are the number of entrants, distinctions, merits, passes and fails from 2011-2022. This is the fourth year of awarding Merit for the MLF. The Merit classification was introduced in 2018-19. No candidate failed the MLF programme in 2021-22, and no MLF candidate needed to be awarded a 'Declared to Deserve Master's' degree. Ten candidates received a Pass classification in total: 8 male candidates and 2 female candidates. The 2021-22 classification numbers are set out below:

	2022					
	Male		**Female**		**Total**	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Dist	13	46	3	15	16	33
Merit	7	25	15	75	22	46
Pass	8	29	2	10	10	21
Fail	0		0		0	
Total	28		20		48	

Merit

Twenty-two out of 48 (46%) candidates were awarded merit in 2021-22. This is roughly in line with the proportions in 2020-21 (45%), 2019-20 (41%) and 2018-19 (41%). This number comprised 7 male candidates, out of a total of 28 (25%) male candidates, and 15 female candidates, out of a total of 20 (75%) female candidates. It is not yet possible to draw conclusions based on trends, as this is the only the fourth year that merit has been awarded and two of those years (2019-20 and 2020-21) were exceptionally impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The introduction of the merit classification has not reduced the proportion of candidates achieving a distinction; the proportion is greater than in the years preceding the introduction of merit, except for 2013-14 when 39% of the cohort achieved distinction. However, it has impacted the number of candidates receiving a pass, reducing the proportion to 21%, 21%, 11% and 28% in 2021-22, 2020-21, 2019-20 and 2018-19 respectively. In years prior to the introduction of the merit classification, around 75% of the cohort received a pass. This suggests that a good proportion of passes awarded in previous years were at what is now classed as merit level. The MLF Board of Examiners have observed some of the difficulties presented by the introduction of the merit classification; that it detracts in part from the achievement of passing the programme, especially where a pass candidate may have a better overall marks' profile than a merit candidate but are ineligible for the award of merit or distinction under the MLF outcome rules where they have one pass mark in the 50s.

Distinctions

Sixteen out of 48 (33%) candidates were awarded distinctions in 2021-22 by the MLF Board of Examiners following consideration of MCEs. This is the third highest proportion of distinctions achieved by a cohort (alongside the 2020-21 cohort, also with 33%) since the programme's inception and represents an increase in the proportion of candidates obtaining this outcome compared to previous years. Since 2011, 23%-25% of the cohort have received a distinction, except in 2013-14 when the proportion was higher (39%). In the years 2019-20 and 2018-19, the proportions were 48% and 31% respectively. The 2021-22 cohort therefore performed well in comparison with previous years, with distinction outcomes in line with what might be expected based on the performance of previous cohorts, following an upward trend (with 2019-20 being a particularly outstanding year). Following the easing of the COVID-19 pandemic, time will indicate to what extent this reflects a general trend of a greater proportion of distinctions being awarded each year compared to the early years of the programme.

Three female candidates, out of a total of 20 (15%) female candidates, obtained distinction this year. This is the same proportion as last year (2020-21) when 4 out of 27 female candidates obtained

distinction. It is a lower proportion than in 2019-20, when 48% (10 out of 21 female candidates) obtained distinction, and in 2018-19 when 21% (3 out of 14 female candidates) obtained distinction.

Thirteen male candidates, out of a total of 28 (46%) male candidates, obtained distinction this year. This is the same proportion as last year (2020-21) when 18 out of 39 male candidates obtained distinction. It is a slightly lower proportion than in 2019-20, when 48% (12 out of 25 male candidates) obtained distinction, but a higher proportion than in 2018-19 when 36% (9 out of 25 male candidates) obtained distinction.

The proportions of candidates achieving distinction, merit and pass are largely the same as last year (2020-21), 33%, 46%/45% and 21% respectively. The proportion of male and female candidates obtaining distinction are also the same as in 2020-21, 46% and 15% respectively. The proportion of female candidates obtaining distinction is lower than in 2019-20 (48%) and 2018-19 (21%), but female candidates performed strongly at merit level this year with 75% obtaining merit, the largest proportion of merits obtained since the classification was introduced in 2018-19. A greater proportion of distinctions was obtained by male candidates as in previous years, the exception being 2019-20 when the same proportion of female and male candidates obtained distinction (48%), the first time since the course's inception. Overall, a greater proportion of female candidates obtained distinction or merit compared to male candidates in 2021-22 (90%/71%).

The MLF Board of Examiners observes the gender attainment gap at distinction level, noting that female candidates continue to perform well overall. They obtained a large proportion of merits in 2021-22. Two general observations have been made based on an initial review of the latest and historical data: a more diverse assessment regime does not necessarily lead to a reduction in the gender attainment gap (as evidenced by the MLF, which already has quite a diverse assessment regime, in comparison with BCL programme, which has quite a homogeneous assessment regime); and a better gender balance in the cohort may have a more significant impact, as evidenced by the historical data for 2019-20. Disparity and variation in performance between gender groups must be treated with some care in a programme such as this, in which the number in each cohort is relatively small. The proportion of men and women achieving distinctions will continue to be monitored in carefully in future years.

Distinctions awarded for MSc in Law and Finance 2011-2022
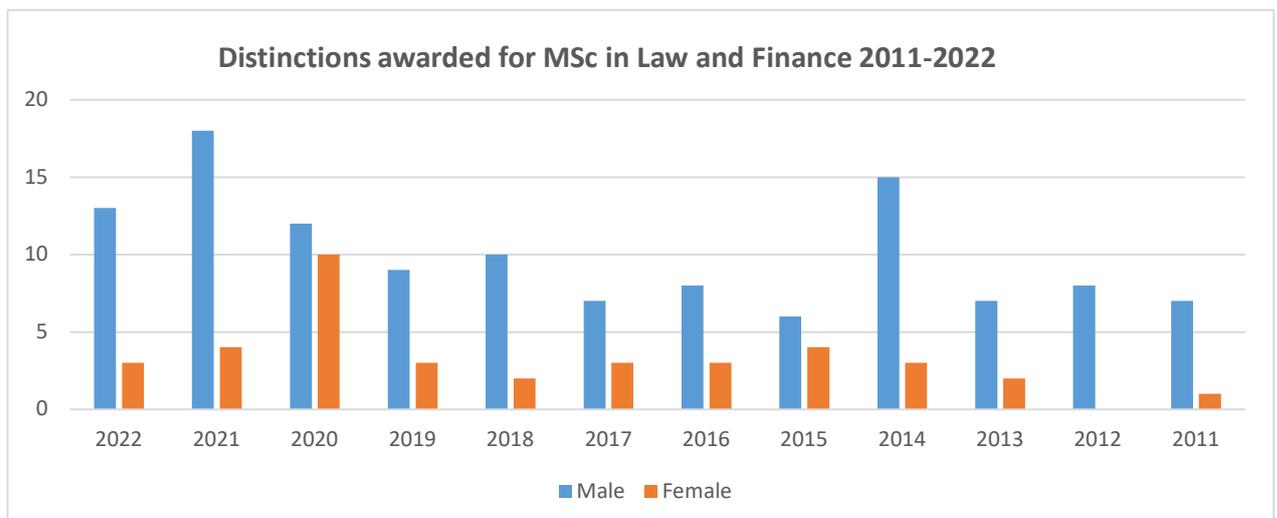
7. **Turnitin**

Turnitin software was used to check for plagiarism in relation to the assessed essays which are submitted for the MLF core courses, FPFE and LECT, and for some law elective courses. Candidates submitted electronic copies of their essays via Inspera, which checks essays through Turnitin directly.

8. **Plagiarism and late submission of essays and coursework**

Candidates receive guidance on the issue of plagiarism, including through a talk given by the MLF Chair of Examiners, and are referred to the University's regulations and policies, as well as the study skills guidance and training opportunities on the Oxford Students' website, to ensure they are clear on what good academic practice looks like for the purpose of MLF examinations and assessments, both at the start of the academic year and at regular intervals throughout the programme, as MLF candidates are assessed in all three terms. Moving examinations to an online setting has raised further possibilities for collusion and plagiarism.

9. **Setting of papers**

The MLF Board of Examiners reviewed all draft papers carefully for the MLF core courses, making text changes for clarity and consistency and referring any queries back to the setter as needed, which were then discussed and resolved. This process ensures consistency of style and standard across papers, and normally obviates queries during the examinations themselves.

10. **Information given to candidates**

The MLF Examination Conventions for 2021-22 are attached as Appendix 3. These Conventions, and all subsequent versions, are made accessible on Canvas for MLF candidates to view, to which their attention is drawn at the start of each term. In advance of examinations and assessments each term, candidates are referred to the University's Examination Regulations and the examination and assessments information on the Oxford Students' website, including a summary of key regulations applicable to all examinations.

11. **Online assessment**

Despite a small number of candidates uploading the wrong version of their assessed work, or submitting late, online assessment in Inspera otherwise proceeded smoothly for MLF candidates in 2021-22. Where any individual candidate issues did arise, and it was appropriate to do so, candidates were encouraged to submit a Mitigating Circumstances Notice to Examiners (MCE) for consideration by the MLF Board of Examiners.

12. **Materials provided in the examination room**

Calculators were provided in the exam room for the examinations for the MLF core courses, FPFE and Finance. From next year they will no longer be provided as standard in the exam room; instead, candidates will be permitted to take one calculator from an approved list into the exam room. This aligns with Saïd Business School practice. A formula sheet was also provided in the exam room for the HT Finance examination as usual. Where any examination materials were required for online examinations for law elective courses, these were made available to candidates on Canvas for the examination.

13. Illegible scripts

No MLF candidate had an illegible examination script needing to be typed in 2021-22. Except for the written examinations for the MLF core courses, FPFE and Finance, all MLF exam scripts and summative submissions are submitted electronically to Inspera, so are mostly now typed scripts.

14. Marking and remarking

Scripts were marked and, where required, were second-marked (blind), in accordance with the established practice as set out in the MLF Examination Conventions, with a final mark agreed between the two markers before the relevant exam board meeting. For the finance courses taken by Finance Stream candidates, individual coursework submissions were double-blind marked by two assessors, in accordance with the marking procedures.

Thanks

The Examiners would like to conclude by thanking the External Examiner, Prof Rosa Lastra, for her advice and sound judgment throughout the exam board process this year, and for her support and active engagement for the past three years, as she now completes her term serving as external examiner. The Examiners also thank Prof Oren Sussman for his support as SBS examiner during the past two years whose term now ends; and Prof John Armour for his oversight of the MLF Board of Examiners as Exam Chair in 2021-22. The Board also thanks Catherine Chandler for her administrative support throughout the year.

J. Armour (Chair)
O. Sussman
T. Wetzer
R. Lastra (External)

Appendices to this Report:

Appendix 1: Statistics for the MLF 2021-2022 Examinations
Appendix 2: Marks Distributions
Appendix 3: MLF Examination Conventions
Appendix 4: Finance Stream Assessment Information
Appendix 5: MLF Course Prizes
Appendix 6: Reports on Individual Papers
Appendix 7: External Examiner's Report

APPENDIX 1:

STATISTICS FOR THE MLF 2021-2022 EXAMINATIONS

	2024						2023						2022					
	Male		Female		Total		Male		Female		Total		Male		Female		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Dist													13	46	3	15	16	33
Merit													7	25	15	75	22	46
Pass													8	29	2	10	10	21
Fail													0		0		0	
Total													28		20		48	

	2021						2020						2019					
	Male		Female		Total		Male		Female		Total		Male		Female		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Dist	18	46	4	15	22	33	12	48	10	48	22	48	9	36	3	21	12	31
Merit	18	46	12	44	30	45	9	36	10	48	19	41	11	44	5	36	16	41
Pass	3	8	11	41	14	21	4	16	1	5	5	11	5	20	6	42	11	28
Fail	0		0		0		0		0		0		0		0		0	
Total	39		27		66		25		21		46		25		14		39	

	2018						2017					
	Male		Female		Total		Male		Female		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Dist	10	32	2	11	12	24	7	27	3	21	10	25
Pass	21	68	15	83	36	73	19	73	11	79	30	75
Fail	0		1	6	1	2	0		0		0	
Total	31		18		49		26		14		40	

	2016						2015						2014					
	Male		Female		Total		Male		Female		Total		Male		Female		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Dist	8	29	3	17	11	24	6	21	4	27	10	23	15	56	3	16	18	39
Pass	20	71	15	83	35	76	23	79	11	73	34	77	12	44	15	79	27	59
Fail	0		0		0		0		0		0		0		1	5	1	2
Total	28		18		46		29		15		44		27		19		46	

	2013						2012						2011					
	Male		Female		Total		Male		Female		Total		Male		Female		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Dist	7	28	2	18	9	25	8	38	0	0	8	25	7	30	1	9	8	24
Pass	18	72	9	82	27	75	13	62	11	100	24	75	15	65	9	82	24	71
Fail	0		0		0		0		0		0		1	4	1	9	2	6
Total	25		11		36		21		11		32		23		11		34	

N.B. All percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole number, which may result in the overall percentage result totalling 99 or 101 instead of 100.

The 2021-22 MLF cohort comprised 48 students.

MLF classifications by gender: 2011-2022
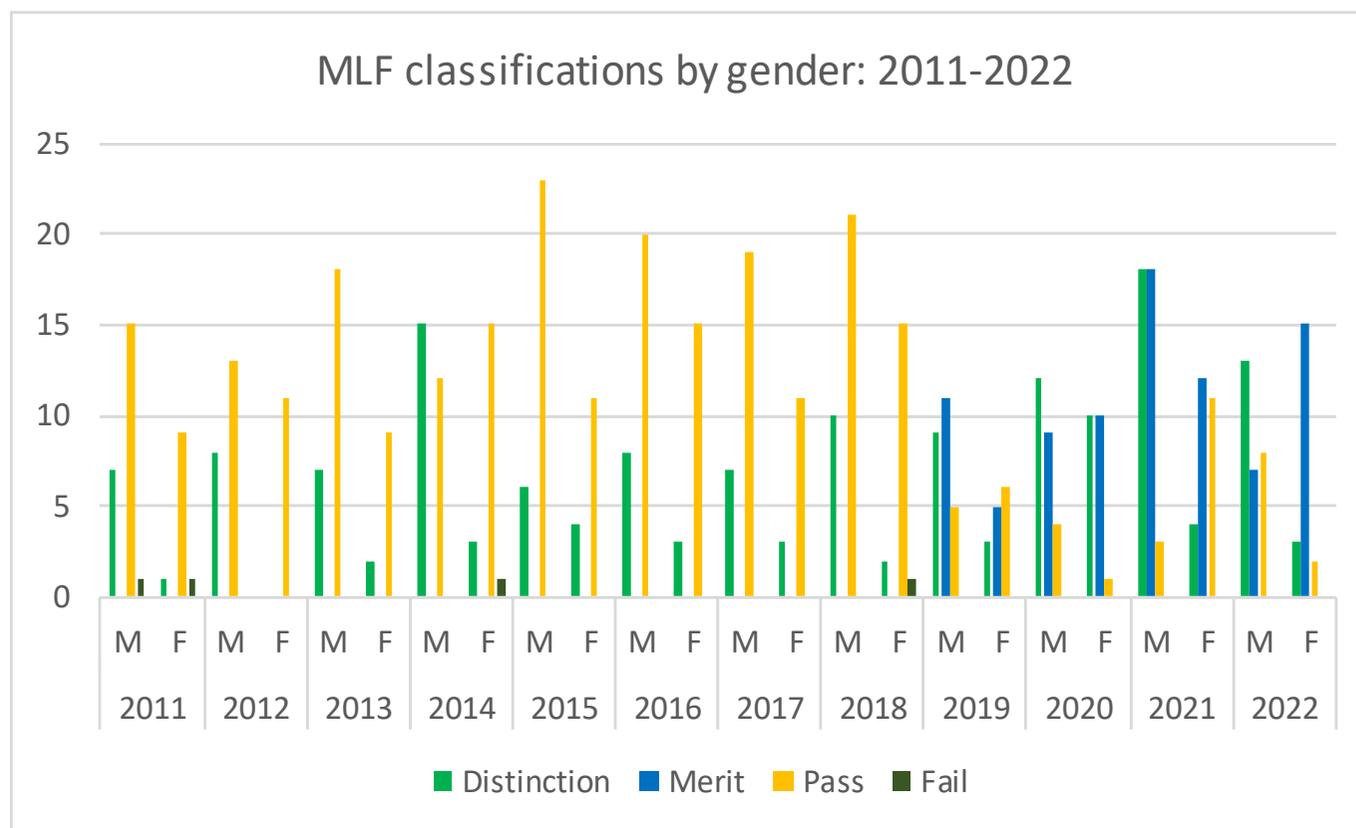
APPENDIX 2:

FINAL MARKS STATISTICS, MLF 2021-2022
MARKS DISTRIBUTIONS, AS PERCENTAGES

Paper name	Avg. Mark	No. Sitting	Mark rangers (%)					
			49/less	50/54	55/59	60/64	65/69	70/over
MLF Core Courses								
First Principles of Financial Economics	69	48			6	19	25	50
Finance	72	48		13	6	13	10	58
Law and Economics of Corporate Transactions	67	48				6	71	23
Law Electives								
Advanced Property and Trusts	69	2					50	50
BCL Dissertation	68	1					100	
Business Taxation in a Global Economy	66	6				17	67	17
Commercial Negotiation and Mediation *(Exam)*	65	1					100	
Commercial Negotiation and Mediation *(Essays)*	65	3				67	33	
Commercial Negotiation and Mediation	65	4				50	50	
Commercial Remedies	62	2				100		
Comparative Corporate Governance *(half option)*	67	9				11	67	22
Competition Law	68	1					100	
Corporate Control *(half option)*	69	9					33	67
International Environmental Law	73	1						100
Law and Computer Science	70	4					50	50
Legal Concepts in Financial Law	69	2					50	50
Principles of Financial Regulation	67	32		3	3	6	59	28
Finance Stream Courses								
Corporate Valuation	66	32			6	34	38	22
Buyside Private Equity – The Essentials	70	11		9		18	18	55
Buyside Private Equity – Advanced	68	3					33	67
Entrepreneurial Finance Project	64	11			9	36	55	
Investing in Public Equity	60	7		14	43	29		14

N.B.   'Average mark' is given to the nearest one decimal point.

All percentages for 'Mark rangers' have been rounded to the nearest whole number, which may result in the overall percentage result totalling 99, 101 or 102 instead of 100.

APPENDIX 3:

MLF EXAMINATION CONVENTIONS

**MSc Law and Finance
Examination Conventions
Academic Year 2021-22**

Version	Action	Date
Version 1.0	**Published for the start of the new academic year, 2021-22**	**27/09/21**
Version 2.0	**Standard updates and clarifications:** - **Updated text under '2. Rubrics for Individual Papers' regarding the TT online examinations for law electives, and the availability of the rubric for the compulsory Finance Stream course, Corporate Valuation.** **Material changes:** - **Updated text under '4.9 Penalties for late submission of online examination scripts' (applicable to online open-book exams with a handwritten/upload or mixed mode of completion, including those who handwrite an online exam as an exam adjustment).**	**17/01/22**

Version 3.0	**Standard updates and clarifications:**
	- **Updated text under '2. Rubrics for Individual Papers':**
	  ○ **advising of the publication of the latest version of the BCL-MJur Examination Conventions 2021-22 (V 2.1) and the BCL-MJur Notice to Candidates (April 2022), containing important exam information and instructions regarding the law elective online examinations in TT and;**
	  ○ **confirming the mode of completion, word limits and time periods for the law elective exams and;**
	  ○ **advising of the availability of the rubrics for the TT finance elective courses for the MLF Finance Stream.**
		26/05/22

Contents

1. Introduction

Examination conventions are the formal record of the specific assessment standards for the course or courses to which they apply. They set out how examined work will be marked and how the resulting marks will be used to arrive at a final result and classification of an award.

The supervisory body responsible for approving these examination conventions is the Social Sciences Board's Quality Assurance Committee.

Certain information pertaining to assessments (for example, rubrics for law and finance electives) will be finalised by the Examination Boards in the course of the year and it will be necessary to issue further versions of this document. It is intended that an updated version of this document is published for the start of Hilary Term, when information about the law electives and Finance Steam courses becomes available. A further updated version is planned for the start of Trinity Term, once the details of the law elective papers and assessments for the finance electives have been finalised. When changes are made the Faculty will publish a new version together with a list of the changes and students will be informed by email. Amendments and modifications to these conventions must be approved by the MLF Exam Board, who are responsible for the course and the examination, and the supervisory body.

This is Version 3.0 of the MLF 2021-22 Examination Conventions. If there are any minor changes to this current version of the Exam Conventions, then a new version – 3.1 – will be created. If there are any major changes then the new version will be renumbered as Version 4.0. Each time a new version is issued, you will be informed by email, and the updates will be listed in the version table above. This version and subsequent versions can be obtained from the [MSc in Law and Finance Canvas page](#).

2. Rubrics for Individual Papers

Candidates must complete the following courses:

(*a*) Three core courses; *and*

(*b*) either

two law electives, *or*

one law elective and an individual dissertation, *or*

one law elective and the Corporate Valuation course plus one finance elective, as prescribed for the Master in Business Administration or MSc in Financial Economics (i.e. the 'Finance Stream').

Candidates may, in place of one of their law electives, complete two half law options.

Core Courses:

(i) First Principles of Financial Economics (FPFE)

  I.   Practical group work exercise (worth 20%). Students will be divided into groups for the assessment, which will be released on the University approved online submissions platform at 12 noon on Wednesday of Week 5 Michaelmas Term (MT). Answers (one set per group) will be required by 12 noon on Friday of Week 6 MT. Where you are asked to "Explain your answer", do not use more space than the number of lines that are allocated for that purpose. (See also 3.3 below).

  II.   1,500 word assessed essay to be submitted by 12 noon on Friday of Week 10 MT (worth 40%). Footnotes are included in the word limit. A bibliography is optional, and is not included in the word limit. The title for the essay will be prescribed by the MLF Board of Examiners and published on the University approved online submissions platform at 12 noon on Friday of Week 8 MT. (See also 3.1 below).

  III.   2 hour written examination taken in Week 9 MT (worth 40%). The examination will comprise 10 compulsory questions, each worth 10 marks. All questions will be quantitative (though not necessarily numeric) and will require a brief and unambiguous answer. SHARP EL-531 model calculators will be provided in the examination room. Where you are asked to "Explain your answer", do not use more space than the number of lines that are allocated for that purpose.

(ii) Finance

  i.   2 hour written examination taken in Week 9 HT (worth 100%). The examination will comprise 2 sections. Section A (worth 60 marks) will contain 4 compulsory questions; section B (worth 40 marks) will contain 2 longer questions, of which one must be answered. SHARP EL-531 model calculators and a Formula Sheet will be provided in the examination room. All areas of the Finance course may be examined.

(iii) Law and Economics of Corporate Transactions (LECT)

  ii.   Group work assessments marked as pass or fail, undertaken in Hilary Term and Trinity Term, which consist of assessed conduct of case studies involving preparation and presentation of proposals, and attendance at the deals presentation classes. Students will work in small groups to answer a problem. Each group will have a different submission deadline, and these will be set and announced by the course convenor at the start of each term. Students are required to pass both group work assessments in HT and TT in order to pass the course.

  iii.   5,000 word assessed essay to be submitted by 12 noon on Friday of Week 7 TT (worth 100%). Footnotes are included in the word limit. A bibliography is optional, and is not included in the word limit. The title for the essay will be prescribed by the MLF Board of Examiners and published on the University approved online submissions platform at 12 noon on Friday of Week 1 TT. (See also 3.1 below).

Law Elective Courses:

The rubrics for law elective courses with online examinations in Trinity Term, which includes confirmation of time periods and word limits for all papers, and the examination materials that will be made available for particular papers, have been agreed by the Law Faculty's Examination Board, and are now set out in the BCL-MJur Conventions 2021-22 V 2.1 on the BCL/MJur Canvas page (canvas.ox.ac.uk/courses/120541).

The form and rubric of online examination papers can be found as Appendix A to the BCL-MJur Conventions 2021-22 V 2.1.

The examination materials which will be made available for particular papers can be found as Appendix B to the BCL-MJur Conventions 2021-22 V 2.1.

Important supplementary information and exam instructions regarding the law elective online examinations in TT is set out in the BCL-MJur Notice to Candidates (April 2022), which is now available on the BCL/MJur Canvas page (canvas.ox.ac.uk/courses/120541).

The examination timetable for the law elective online examinations in TT can be found on the University website.

For law elective courses with in-year/alternative forms of assessment, please refer to individual BCL Canvas course pages for assessment information.

Examples of rubrics and materials from previous years can be found by viewing BCL/MJur past examination papers at https://weblearn.ox.ac.uk/portal/hierarchy/oxam. The rubrics and materials that were provided for the online law elective examinations in 2020-21 can be found in the BCL-MJur Exam Conventions 2020-21 on the BCL/MJur Canvas page.

Law elective TT online examinations

Mode of completion: all timed exams will be completed on the Inspera system (www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/exams/online-exams). Inspera recognises three modes of completion: typed, handwritten/upload, and mixed mode (a combination of typed and handwritten). The mode of completion for law elective timed examinations will be **typed**. Candidates type their answers directly into the Inspera system rather than creating PDFs for uploading. Exam responses are automatically captured throughout the exam and at the end. If a candidate decides to type outside of Inspera, with the intention of copying and pasting their answers into Inspera before the end of their exam, they do so at their own risk. Any work not entered into Inspera by the end of the exam duration cannot be marked. Any student who, for reasons of disability/medical condition, is not able to undertake an exam using this mode of completion will be able to apply through the exam adjustments process to undertake it in a different mode (i.e., by handwriting).

Technical time allowance: for online open-book exams that have a typed mode of completion, there is no technical time allowance. For online open-book exams that have a handwritten/upload or mixed mode of completion, candidates will have a technical time allowance of 30 minutes added to their exam duration in Inspera for scanning and uploading exam response(s).

Late submission penalties: candidates undertaking exams with a typed mode of completion have their exam responses automatically captured by the system and therefore are not able to submit late. For online open-book exams with a handwritten/upload or mixed mode of completion, see section 4.9. for penalties for late submission of exam responses.

Word limits: candidates are referred to Appendix A in the BCL-MJur Conventions 2021-22 V 2.1, which confirms the time periods and word limits for law elective online papers, and the BCL-MJur Notice to Candidates (April 2022), specifically item 12:

> *Candidates should not write more than the following numbers of words in their answers in open-book examination scripts:*
>
> *(a) For exams with 4 questions: a word limit of 2000 words for each question;*
>
> *(b) For exams with 3 questions: a word limit of 2000 words for each question;*
>
> *(c) For exams with two questions, please consult the rubrics referred to in the Examination Conventions.*
>
> *Where a question contains two or more compulsory parts, the word limit applies to the whole question rather than to each individual part.*
>
> *Whilst no penalty will be applied where a candidate exceeds the relevant limit, if they do so, the examiners will not read the additional words.*

Time period: the standard time period for law elective online open-book exams will be three hours, though there are certain exceptions (Advanced Property and Trusts, Modern Legal History, Taxation of Trusts and Global Wealth). Candidates are referred to Appendix A in the BCL-MJur Conventions 2021-22 V 2.1, which confirms the time periods and word limits for all papers. Those with permission to handwrite will have an additional 30 minutes of technical time to upload their exam responses.

Citation of materials: candidates are referred to the BCL-MJur Notice to Candidates (April 2022), specifically section item 11:

> *Candidates are not expected to cite materials in their open-book examinations in any way differently from how they would have cited them in closed-book examinations. As a result, short form names for cases (e.g. Smith v Bush), abbreviated forms of legislation (e.g. Human Rights Act or 'HRA'), and simple reference to surnames for authors (e.g. "As Enriques has argued...") can all be used as they would be in a closed-book examination. The examiners do not expect references to be placed in footnotes or endnotes (let alone in any particular form, such as OSCOLA), but if a candidate does use footnotes or endnotes, then they will count for the word limits set out below, section 12.*

Candidates should also refer to penalties for poor academic practice set out in Section 4.7 below.

Optional Dissertation:

An MLF student may offer a 10,000-12,500 word (including footnotes but not including tables of cases or other legal sources) law dissertation, in lieu of one law elective. Permission to write the dissertation must be granted first (see the MLF Student Handbook for how to request permission and the deadline by which this must be sought), and will depend in part on whether an appropriate supervisor is available. The dissertation must be submitted by 12 noon on Friday of Week 5 TT. (See also 3.2 below).

Finance Stream Courses:

The rubric for the compulsory Finance Stream course, Corporate Valuation, which is taken in Hilary Term by all Finance Stream students, is now available on the [MSc in Law and Finance Canvas page](). The rubrics for the Trinity Term finance elective courses are also available on the [MSc in Law and Finance Canvas page]().

3. Submission of Assessed Essays, the Dissertation and Group and Individual Assignments

3.1 Submission of assessed essays

For FPFE and LECT, work is assessed by means of submission of an essay.

These essays must be submitted electronically to the University approved online submissions platform by their submission deadline. Late submission may be penalised (see 4.5 below).

Candidates will be contacted by email before the submission deadline with details of how to submit the FPFE and LECT essays. Candidates will be required to complete an online Declaration of Authorship for each essay assessment. All essays will be checked for plagiarism using the Turnitin software.

Each essay must have a cover page containing the title, your candidate number and the number of words used in the essay. Neither your name nor the name of your college must appear anywhere on your essay. The word count that appears on the cover sheet must be the actual word count produced by the software in which the essay is produced. The word count for essays must include all footnotes, but not any bibliography. All essays will be checked to confirm the word count. Disregard of word limits may be penalised (see 4.6 below).

Regarding referencing for the FPFE and LECT essays, for those candidates who choose to follow OSCOLA convention, short-term citations in the document as footnotes will be acceptable on the condition that the corresponding full/long-form citations must then also appear in a bibliography to accompany the essay.

3.2 Submission of dissertations

If you are offering a dissertation you must read very carefully the requirements set out in the [Examination Regulations, Degrees in Civil Law, Magister Juris, and Master of Philosophy in Law, Schedule B](#), which also applies to the MLF.

The dissertation must be submitted electronically to the University approved online submissions platform by 12 noon on Friday of Week 5 TT. On submitting the dissertation, candidates will also be required to submit an online Declaration of Authorship. Candidates will be contacted with details of how to submit the dissertation. The examiners shall exclude from consideration any part of the dissertation which is not the candidate's own work or which has been or will be submitted to satisfy the requirements of another course, and the examiners shall have power to require the candidate to produce for their inspection the work so submitted or to be submitted.

Dissertations must be typed, and the number of words must be stated on their first page. The word count that appears on the dissertation must be the actual word count produced by the software in which the dissertation is produced. The word count for dissertations must include all footnotes, but not any bibliography, tables of cases or other legal sources. The dissertation must bear your candidate number. Neither your name nor the name of your college must appear. All dissertations will be checked to confirm the word count and to check for plagiarism, using the Turnitin software.

There is a common approved Faculty format for all law dissertations and theses, which can be found in the MLF Student Handbook.

3.3 Group work: FPFE and LECT

For FPFE, groups must submit answers (one set per group) to all questions by the deadline, by submitting an electronic copy to the University approved online submissions platform. An online Declaration of Authorship must be completed by each group for the assessment. Details about how to submit your group's submission will be provided to all candidates by email before the submission deadline.

For the LECT group work in Hilary and Trinity Terms, the course convener will issue a memo to the class setting out the method of submission and the assignment deadlines before the start of each term.

3.4 Finance Stream: individual and group assignments

Please refer to SBS Assessment Information Sheets for guidance about submitting individual and group assignments for Finance Stream courses.

A statement must be submitted with all individual written assignments declaring that the work is that of the individual candidate. In the case of group assignments, a statement must be submitted declaring that each student has contributed significantly and proportionately to the work. All materials taken from published or transmitted sources must be clearly referenced by standard academic methods such that the Examiners will be able to trace the sources without difficulty.

4. Marking Conventions

4.1 University scale for standardised expression of agreed final marks

Agreed final marks for individual papers will be expressed using the following scale:

70-100	Distinction
65-69	Merit
50-64	Pass
0-49	Fail

4.2 Qualitative marking criteria for different types of assessment

The marking criteria for the MLF core course assessments are as follows:

4.2.1 Qualitative marking criteria:

LECT and FPFE essays and the LECT group work:

- The qualities a Distinction will demonstrate include acute attention to the question(s) asked; extensive and detailed knowledge and understanding of the topic addressed; excellent synthesis and analysis of materials; clear and well-structured answers which show an engagement with theoretical arguments and substantial critical facility.
- The qualities a Merit will demonstrate include serious attention to the question(s) asked; a very good knowledge and understanding of the topic addressed; well-structured arguments, which show a solid familiarity with the theoretical arguments pertinent to the topic.
- The qualities a Pass will demonstrate include a level of attention to the question(s) that is satisfactory to good; a satisfactory to good knowledge of the topics in question; appropriately structured arguments; and some familiarity with theoretical arguments pertinent to the topic.

- A Fail overall will demonstrate a lack of the qualities required above in respect of one or more papers.

4.2.2 Quantitative marking criteria:

FPFE group work, examination and essay:

- The qualities a Distinction will demonstrate include a thorough ability to derive, present and explain quantitative results, whether numeric and/or diagrammatic, in different settings. Calculations are presented with comprehensive explanation of method.
- The qualities a Merit will demonstrate include a good to thorough ability to derive, present and explain quantitative results, whether numeric and/or diagrammatic, in different settings. Calculations are presented with adequate to comprehensive explanation of method.
- The qualities a Pass will demonstrate include a satisfactory to good ability to derive, present and explain quantitative results, whether numeric and/or diagrammatic, in different settings. Calculations are presented with adequate explanation of method.
- A Fail overall will demonstrate a lack of the qualities required above.

Finance examination:

- The qualities a Distinction will demonstrate include an outstanding ability to present and apply quantitative and analytical methods in different settings. Calculations are presented with outstanding clarity and accuracy.
- The qualities a Merit will demonstrate include a commendable ability to present and apply quantitative and analytical methods in different settings. Calculations are presented with commendable clarity and accuracy.
- The qualities a Pass will demonstrate include an adequate ability to present and apply quantitative and analytical methods in different settings. Calculations are presented with adequate clarity and accuracy.
- A Fail overall will fail to demonstrate the qualities required above.

See section 5 below for further information about how the different classifications are calculated overall.

For law elective courses, see the BCL/MJur Examining Conventions 2021-22 for details of the marking criteria for different assessment types.

For Finance Stream courses, see the MBA Examining Conventions 2021-22 for details of the marking criteria for different assessment types.

4.3 Verification and reconciliation of marks

For each paper there will be a team of at least two markers. LECT and the law elective papers are marked by markers from the Law Faculty. Finance, FPFE and the Finance Stream courses are marked by markers from the Saïd Business School.

The markers operate under the aegis of the MLF Board of Examiners and the whole Board meets to discuss and finalise marks, providing an extra layer of assurance in terms of the objectivity of the process, and a means of resolving any situation where two markers are unable to reach agreement.

Where a mark given for a particular element of a course converts into a decimal mark for the overall mark, decimals ending in .5 or above are rounded up, and those ending in .4 or below are rounded down.

After marking has been completed, the MLF Exam Board meet at the end of the academic year and agree a final classification/result for each candidate, having taken account of medical and other special case evidence and having made appropriate adjustments for such matters as absent answers and breach of rubric. The MLF Board of Examiners also agree on the award of the MLF course prize at this stage.

<u>Marking carried out for MLF core courses (FPFE, LECT and Finance) and law elective courses</u>

The Law Faculty does not operate a marking regime involving the blind second-marking of all scripts. However, extensive second-marking according to a system approved by the MLF Exam Board and supervisory body does take place and the Faculty takes a great deal of care to ensure the objectivity of marking procedures.

For each paper, a minimum sample of 6 scripts, or 20% of the scripts, whichever is the greater number, will always be second-marked, together with (if not already part of the sample):

- any other script/essay which the first marker found difficult to assess (including, potentially those where not all questions have been answered, as well as those of potential course prize winners), and
- any script or essay for which the first mark places a candidate on a borderline that may affect the awarding of merit or distinction (i.e. 58, 59, 63, 64, 68 or 69), and
- any script or essay for which the first mark is below 50.

For all second-marked papers, the markers meet to compare their marks and consider any differences arising, following which a single mark is agreed by the two markers for each question, and for the paper's mark overall. In the event that the two markers are unable to agree a mark, the issue will be referred to the Chair of the MLF Board of Examiners for resolution by the MLF Exam Board. In exceptional (e.g. medical) circumstances, third readings may take place.

<u>Marking carried out for Finance Stream courses</u>

For Finance Stream courses, see the MBA Examining Conventions 2021-22 for details of the verification and reconciliation of marks.

MLF students will be integrated into groups with MBA and Masters in Financial Economics (MFE) students for the group formal coursework elements of the finance electives. The marks for these course elements are then sent to the relevant boards of examiners for each of the MBA and MFE, and for the MLF. Each examination board is responsible for the appropriate moderation of results and it is therefore possible that the final mark given to MLF students for their group work may differ from that given to the MBA and/or MFE students that were in the same group and submitted the same piece of group work.

4.4 Short-weight convention and departure from rubric

For MLF core courses and law elective papers, the mark for a completely absent answer in any script will be zero, and the mark for a part answer will be such a mark above zero as is appropriate, relative to more successful answers, in terms of the quality of what has been written, and the extent to which it covers the question.

The overall mark for a law elective script will be arrived at by averaging the number of marks to two decimal places, including zeros, over the number of questions that should have been answered on the paper.

If a candidate completes the correct number of questions, but fails to answer a question which is compulsory (e.g. where the candidate does not answer a problem question as required by the rubric of that paper), up to 10 marks may be deducted.

Candidates who write answers in note form may also expect to have their overall mark for the paper reduced.

For Finance Stream courses, see the MBA Examining Conventions 2021-22 for details of the short-weight convention and departure from rubric, which will apply.

4.5 Penalties for late or non-submission

Non-submission

Failure to submit a required element of assessment will result in the failure of the assessment. The mark for any resit of the assessment will be capped at a pass (50). ([Examination Regulations, Regulations for the Conduct of University Examinations, Part 14](#)).

Late submission

Application to the Proctors for permission for late submission of work should be made by the candidate's college on the candidate's behalf.

    i.   FPFE and LECT essays, law elective essays, the Dissertation, and FPFE and LECT group work: The scale of penalties agreed by the MLF Exam Board in relation to late submission of assessed items without permission is set out below. Details of the circumstances in which such penalties might apply can be found in the [Examination Regulations, Regulations for the Conduct of University Examinations, Part 14](#).

Late submission	Penalty
Up to one day *(submitted on the day but after the deadline)*	-5 marks (- 5 percentage points)
Each additional day *(i.e., two days late = -6 marks, three days late = -7 marks, etc.; note that each weekend day counts as a full day for the purposes of mark deductions)*	-1 mark (- 1 percentage point)
Max. deducted marks up to 14 days late	-18 marks (- 18 percentage points)
More than 14 calendar days after the deadline	Fail

    ii.   Formal coursework (individual and group) and practical work for Finance Stream courses: see the MBA Examining Conventions 2021-22 for details of the penalties for late or non-submission, which will apply.

For information on penalties for late submission of online examination scripts, see 4.9 below.

4.6 Penalties for over-length work and departure from approved titles or subject-matter

For MLF core courses and the Dissertation, where a candidate submits a dissertation or other piece of written coursework which exceeds the word limit prescribed by the relevant regulation, the Examiners, if they agree to proceed with the examination of the work, may reduce the mark by up to 10 marks. ([Examination Regulations, Regulations for the Conduct of University Examinations, Part 16, Regulation 16.6](#)).

For the FPFE and LECT assessed essays, the Examiners have determined that an allowance of an extra 3% should be permitted to candidates above the word limit (to make allowance for the manner in which word-count software operates, which often causes legal citations to inflate the word count). Where a submitted essay exceeds this additional allowance, the Examiners, if they agree to proceed with the examination of the work, may reduce the mark by up to 10 marks.

For law elective courses, see the BCL-MJur Examining Conventions 2021-22 for details of the penalties for over-length work and departure from approved titles or subject-matter, which will apply. Word limits for the law elective online open-book examinations in TT are listed in the rubrics at Appendix A of the BCL-MJur Examination Conventions 2021-22 (V 2.1). Whilst no penalty will be applied where a candidate exceeds the relevant limit, if they do so, the examiners will not read the additional words.

For Finance Stream courses, see the MBA Examining Conventions 2021-22 for details of the penalties for over-length work and departure from approved titles or subject-matter, which will apply.

4.7 Penalties for poor academic practice

The MLF Exam Board shall deal wholly with cases of poor academic practice where the material under review is small and does not exceed 10% of the whole.

Assessors should mark work on its academic merit with the Board responsible for deducting marks for derivative or poor referencing.

Determined by the extent of poor academic practice, the Board shall deduct between 1% and 10% of the marks available for cases of poor referencing where material is widely available factual information or a technical description that could not be paraphrased easily; where passage(s) draw on a variety of sources, either verbatim or derivative, in patchwork fashion (and examiners consider that this represents poor academic practice rather than an attempt to deceive); where some attempt has been made to provide references, however incomplete (e.g. footnotes but no quotation marks, Harvard-style references at the end of a paragraph, inclusion in bibliography); or where passage(s) are 'grey literature' i.e. a web source with no clear owner.

If a candidate has previously had marks deducted for poor academic practice or has been referred to the Proctors for suspected plagiarism the case must always be referred to the Proctors.

In addition, any more serious cases of poor academic practice than described above should also always be referred to the Proctors.

Summative submissions to the University approved online submissions platform will be checked for plagiarism using the Turnitin software.

Where assessment includes open-book examinations, candidates will be required to sign up to the University's [honour code](#). While it is not permissible to submit work which has been submitted, either partially or in full, either for their current Honour School or qualification, or for another Honour School

or qualification of this University (except where the Special Regulations for the subject permit this), or for a qualification at any other institution, it is permissible to use work that has been written during the course of a candidate's studies (e.g. collections, tutorial essays).

4.8 Penalties for non-attendance

Failure to attend an examination will result in the failure of the assessment. The mark for any resit of the assessment will be capped at a pass (50). ([Examination Regulations, Regulations for the Conduct of University Examinations, Part 14](#)).

4.9 Penalties for late submission of online examination scripts

Candidates undertaking exams with a typed mode of completion have their exam responses automatically captured by the online examination platform and therefore are not able to submit late. This section applies to all candidates with a handwritten/upload or mixed mode of completion, including those who handwrite an online exam as an exam adjustment.

Candidates are expected to start their exam promptly at the published start time for their relevant time zone, unless they have an agreed alternative start time.

Candidates should upload their exam response within the time allowed for their online examination (inclusive of any additional time for exam adjustments and technical time). Any exam response submitted after the exam duration will attract a fail mark (0) unless a successful application to have it accepted as in time has been made.

When a candidate submits their exam response after the end of their exam duration, they can apply to have it accepted as if in time by the Proctors using the online help form. If the exam response is not accepted as if in time, the penalty of a mark of 0 shall be applied by the MLF Exam Board. The penalty applies to the paper as a whole even if the examination is only one part of the assessment of that paper.

5. Progression Rules and Classification Conventions

5.1 Qualitative descriptors of Distinction, Merit, Pass, Fail

Distinction (70% and above): Distinction-level performance represents an excellent level of attainment for a student at MLF level. They exhibit the following qualities:

- acute attention to the question asked;
- a deep and detailed knowledge and understanding of the topics addressed and their place in the surrounding context;
- excellent synthesis and analysis of materials, with no or almost no substantial errors or omissions, and coverage of at least some less obvious angles;
- excellent clarity and appropriateness of structure, argument, integration of information and ideas, and expression;
- identification of more than one possible line of argument;
- advanced appreciation of theoretical arguments concerning the topics, substantial critical facility, and personal contribution to debate on the topic.

Merit (65-69%): Merit-level performance represents a level of attainment which, for a student at MLF level, is of a particularly high value. They exhibit the following qualities:

- high quality synthesis and analysis of materials, with few substantial errors or omissions;
- clarity and appropriateness of structure and expression;

- proven ability to integrate information and ideas;
- well-structured arguments which show a solid familiarity with the theoretical arguments pertinent to the topic;
- consistent appreciation of theoretical arguments concerning the topics, substantial critical facility, and personal contribution to debate on the topic.

Pass (50-64%): Pass-level performance represents a level of attainment which, for a student at MLF level, is within the range acceptable to very good. They exhibit the following qualities:

- attention to the question asked;
- a clear and fairly detailed knowledge and understanding of the topics addressed and their place in the surrounding context;
- good synthesis and analysis of materials, with few substantial errors or omissions;
- clear and appropriate structures, arguments, integration of information and ideas, and expression;
- identification of more than one possible line of argument;
- familiarity with theoretical arguments concerning the topics, and (especially in the case of high pass answers) a significant degree of critical facility.

Fail (below 50%): Qualities required for a pass-level performance are absent. In assessing the optional dissertation, examiners are particularly instructed by the Examination Regulations to judge "the extent to which a dissertation affords evidence of significant analytical ability on the part of the candidate".

5.2 Final outcome rules

All MLF courses have equal weight and contribute to the overall final classification for the programme.

For courses which are made up of a number of marked elements, each element is marked against the marking criteria and weighted to the correct percentage for its contribution to the overall mark for the paper (see section 2 above). The final outcomes rules are as follows, bearing in mind that the examiners have some discretion to deal with exceptional circumstances, in accordance with the Examination Regulations:

(a) For the award of the degree of MLF there must be no course mark lower than 50, and all pass/fail course assessment components must be satisfactorily completed. A mark lower than 50, but of 40 or above, may be compensated by very good performance elsewhere, but a mark of 39 or below is not susceptible of compensation.

(b) For FPFE, which has more than one marked component, students must attain a mark of 50 overall rather than in each individual component.

(c) The award of a **Merit** in the MLF will be given to a candidate who:
   i.   secures marks of at least **65** in no fewer than **two** courses, and
   ii.   achieves marks of not lower than **60** in all courses with satisfactory completion of all pass/fail course assessment components.

(d) The award of a **Distinction** in the MLF will be given to a candidate who:
   i.   secures marks of at least **70** in no fewer than **three** courses, which must include:
        1)   at least one finance course; **and**
        2)   at least one of either a law elective **or** the LECT course

and

ii.   achieves marks of not lower than **60** in all courses with satisfactory completion of all pass/fail course assessment components.

For these purposes 'finance course' comprises Finance, the FPFE, and the Finance Stream courses; and 'law electives' includes the dissertation.

A 'law elective' can be met by completion of two half law electives, with the marks averaged to obtain a final overall mark for that 'law elective'.

The group work assessment for the LECT course is assessed on a pass/fail basis only.

Where, for good reason, a candidate is unable to join an assignment group, for a group assessment, the MLF Board of Examiners may at their own discretion accept an individual submission for assessment according to the same standards. Students must request permission from the MLF Board of Examiners to submit an individual piece of work before doing so.

Candidates who have initially failed a course will not be eligible for the award of a Distinction or Merit.

Note that the aggregation and classification rules in some circumstances allow a stronger performance on some papers to compensate for a weaker performance on others.

5.3 Use of vivas

Viva voce examinations are not used in the MLF.

6. Resits

Candidates are permitted on only one occasion to resubmit or retake failed assessment items on any course on which they have failed to obtain an overall mark of 50.

Normally the resit for a failed examination will be a new examination paper and the resit for a failed assessed essay will be a new assignment. The resit for any failed group work may be an examination or an assignment, at the discretion of the course tutor.

Where a candidate fails a course made up of several marked components (e.g. FPFE), the element to be retaken may be an examination or an assignment or both, at the discretion of the course tutor, taking into account the marks already achieved in the various components.

Where possible (the exception being the law elective written examinations), any resits will take place one term after the original fail mark, as set out below:

- FPFE: in Hilary Term
- Finance: in Trinity Term
- Corporate Valuation: in Trinity Term
- Finance Stream elective: the following Michaelmas Term
- LECT: in September of the same calendar year
- Law electives: June or July of the following year.

If one or more of the subjects studied by the candidate are not available when the candidate comes to be examined, papers shall nevertheless be set for that candidate in those subjects.

Where a candidate has failed a course as a result of poor academic performance (i.e. academic failure), the mark for the resit of an assessment item will be capped at a pass, so candidates that

resit will not be awarded a mark of above 50 for that particular assessment item. This will not affect marks awarded for other assessment items for that particular course.

Where a candidate has failed a course as a result of non-submission of an assessment item or as a result of non-attendance at a timed examination (i.e. technical failure), the mark for the resit of the assessment item will be capped at a pass (50), and the entire course mark will also be capped at a pass (50).

Candidates who have initially failed a course will not be eligible for the award of a Distinction or Merit, i.e. candidates who resit following an academic or technical fail will not be eligible for the award of a Distinction or Merit.

For Finance Stream courses, see the MBA Examining Conventions 2021-22 for information about resits.

7. Consideration of Mitigating Circumstances

A candidate's final outcome will first be considered using the final outcome rules as described above in section 5. The Exam Board will then consider any further information they have on individual circumstances.

Where a candidate or candidates have made a submission, under Part 13 of the Regulations for Conduct of University Examinations, that unforeseen circumstances may have had an impact on their performance in an examination, a subset of the board (the 'Mitigating Circumstances Panel') will meet to discuss the individual applications and band the seriousness of each application on a scale of 1-3 with 1 indicating minor impact, 2 indicating moderate impact, and 3 indicating very serious impact. The Panel will evaluate, on the basis of the information provided to it, the relevance of the circumstances to examinations and assessment, and the strength of the evidence provided in support. Examiners will also note whether all or a subset of papers were affected, being aware that it is possible for circumstances to have different levels of impact on different papers. The banding information will be used at meetings of the MLF Board of Examiners to decide whether and how to adjust a candidate's results. Further information on the procedure is provided in the Examinations and Assessment Framework, Annex E and information for students is provided at https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/exams/problems-completing-your-assessment.

Candidates who have indicated that they wish to be considered for a Declared to Deserve Masters (DDM) award will first be considered for a classified degree, taking into account any individual mitigating circumstances notices (MCEs). If that is not possible, and the candidate meets the criteria for a DDM award, they will be awarded DDM.

8. Details of Examiners and Rules on Communicating with Examiners

The external examiner for the 2021-22 MLF academic year is Professor Rosa M Lastra (Queen Mary University of London). The internal examiners are Professor John Armour (Chair), Professor Oren Sussman and Dr Thom Wetzer.

Candidates should not under any circumstances seek to make contact with individual internal or external examiners.

APPENDIX 4:

MLF 2021-2022
Corporate Valuation
Assessment Information Sheet
Hilary Term Elective

Assessment Summary

Component	Weighting	Submission Date	Time	How to Submit	ID Number
Individual Assignment	**100%**	**Friday 1 April 2022**	**By 12 noon**	**Upload to SAMS**	**Candidate Number (7 digits)**

Assessment Details

For this course you are required to submit an individual assignment, which will involve questions based on a case study. **The questions are both qualitative and quantitative** and ask for knowledge and analysis. The underlying themes are to assess corporate value in a specific corporate context and to make use of this assessment in strategic and financial decision-making. The marking distribution will reflect the students' grasp and synthesis of economic and financial knowledge gained in the course — that is, their ability to move beyond quantitative financial modelling which relies on management forecasts provided in the case studies to a more nuanced quantitative and qualitative analysis which questions the robustness and plausibility of management forecasts.

Case Study: *The Walt Disney company's stock: Buy, hold, or sell? (Ivey case 9B20N005)*

Ivey Case 9B20N005 is your assessed case study, which you should work on individually and submit by the deadline and method stated above.

Assignment Questions

   (a) Build a DCF valuation model for the company as of November 7, 2019. What is a fair price for the company? Explain your assumptions and any significant issues that impact your analysis. [60 marks]
   (b) Use relative valuation multiples to value the company. Explain your choice of comparable companies. [40 marks]

The assignment should clearly state the objective of the analysis, the valuation premises and methodology and the assumptions you make in order to answer the questions. The assignment should consist of text with accompanying tables and figures that illustrate how you arrive at your answers.

The assignment should be accompanied by the submission of the excel sheets you use to perform your calculations. But the excel sheet is not a substitute for the assignment. The assignment should be self-contained. Since SAMS will only allow one file submission, please submit both files in a zipped folder.

The assignment needs to be presented in such a way that it is clear to the marker how your analysis has been performed. Language is important: Please spell- and grammar-check your assignment. **The word limit for the assignment is 2,500 words excluding any technical appendices, footnotes or references. This word limit does not apply to the accompanying excel sheet.**

The precise meaning of a case is sometimes unclear. If you think that the wording is in some way ambiguous then you should state clearly your interpretation of the case, and you should identify any assumptions which you make. If you are clear and your interpretation is reasonable then you will not lose marks simply because your answer is not identical to mine. You will however lose marks if your working is unclear. Pay special attention to the format of your document: it needs to be presented in such a way that it is clear to the marker how your analysis has been performed.

Investing in Public Equity
Assessment Information Sheet
Trinity Term Elective

Assessment Summary

Component	Weighting	Submission Date	Time	How to Submit	ID Number
Individual Assignment	**100%**	**Friday Week 5 Trinity Term (27 May 2022)**	**By 12pm**	**Upload to SAMS**	**Candidate Number (7 digits)**

Assessment Details

The word limit for this individual assignment is 2000 words. Word counts cover the main body of text, including in-text citations, tables, figures, and diagrams, and excluding appendices, footnotes, and references.

The investment committee of Queen's College at Oxford is soliciting your opinion on what the right asset allocation should be for the college endowment. More specifically, it requires you to write their 'long-term investment policy' document. To guide you, the committee asked twelve specific questions on the central issues they would like to be addressed in this document (see the Queen's College case study). A sub-committee made up of eminent professionals will review your report. Please be mindful that the Investment Officer is employed for only two days a week and fellows are very busy, having a number of dinner and meeting obligations. It is thus important that you are concise, clear and stick to 2000 words.

For the avoidance of doubt, no fee will be payable for your report. We should also make you aware that we have approached several students for similar reports and we reserve the right to assign a numerical grade to your analysis. Furthermore, our committees may at their discretion comment on, compare, dissect, or rank any submitted reports. You will also understand that at this stage we are not able to give you any additional information regarding Queen's college or any other asset management companies. Consequently, you will have to rely on public information, and please make no request for information to any individual or company (e.g., Vanguard, JP Morgan, OUEM or DFA). If you need to make an assumption, please do so explicitly in your paper just like you would do in a professional context.

Other information and requirements:
- This is a hypothetical request and exercise for course assessment purposes.
- Assume the twelve specific questions on the central issues stated in the Queen's College case study are still current.
- You are expected to utilise and apply the knowledge gained from the topics covered in this elective plus your own research and analysis.
- You are required to submit a 2000-word essay, in a report-format.
- The 2000 word limit covers the main body of text, including in-text citations, tables, figures, and diagrams, and excluding appendices, footnotes, and references. Include the word-count of your report on the cover page.
- Please deliver by uploading to SAMS with the appropriate declarations as to the report being your own work.

The twelve questions:

1. Do we want to reconsider the overall property–equity split in the endowment?
It is customary for older and richer Oxbridge Colleges to have substantial directly owned property holdings. They generate useful cash, and hopefully offer some protection against inflation, plus occasional windfalls from small-scale development or (if we are lucky) major regional schemes. Our policy target allocation is quite high, however; do we still think it is right? Also, we recently launched a new housing schemes for fellows whereby the college acquires houses in Oxford in order to provide subsidized accommodation to fellows. We expect to buy about £5 million of houses, in total, through that scheme. This is not done from the Endowment budget. Yet, should this affect our portfolio allocation? Also, we feel comfortable investing only in the UK and directly (via local real estate agents we have long term relationship with). And because we found residential real estate to be too high maintenance and as we do not have access to things like data centers (too big), we have invested in shops, bars and were looking into hotels. But all this commercial real estate is not looking promising due to the pandemic and changing habits. In addition, it is actually not cheap at present. Hotels and the like are still going for a high price. We are under-allocated to real estate at present. Do we change the policy, or keep it, but if we do, what do we buy and why?

2. We used to have passive funds in developed markets and active funds elsewhere? We now have basically passive funds for everything. Do we stick to this strategy? Should be factor tilt or just hold the market portfolio in each country as we currently do? Some people are now saying that factor investing is passe and it is about thematic investing actually. And do we continue to invest via index funds, or do we invest via ETFs? What are the pros and cons?

We debated this at length in the last review, and I think it is fair to say that the committee was not unanimous in agreeing the current policy. The rationale of the policy is that we think, put very simply, that there are inefficiencies in developing markets which a good manager can identify and exploit. One anomaly which I would like to resolve is that of Japan; by any reasonable standard this is a developed market, and I would rather we switched our investment to an appropriate ultra-low-cost ETF.

3. Do we want to re-examine the geography of our equity allocation?
For an institutional endowment we are very unusual in having such a high allocation to developing markets. Personally, I think that it would be remiss not to re-examine this now; it is such a striking policy that even if we think we are comfortable with it, we should consciously challenge ourselves to (re-)justify it.

4. Do we wish to continue to reduce our private equity and hedge fund allocation to zero? Even though PE, in particular, is becoming larger and larger ($10 trillion AUM in PE funds on the last count).

5. Similarly, would we like to explore the possibility of investing in commodities? And if we were to, how?
Strikingly, commodities are one of three fundamental asset classes in which we have no formal allocation. And this year prices have gone through the roof. Of course, we do have substantial secondary exposure (via farms, several of our stock holdings etc.).

6. Do we want to re-examine the geography of our property allocation? In particular, the farms. There is intense competition in the UK for farms in particular because the Oxbridge college have large targeted allocations to this asset class. Perhaps this push prices up and yields down. Farm land in other regions of Europe (and beyond) is apparently much cheaper. But we never seriously researched this point.

7. What do we do with our cash?
We currently have circa £20 million in cash coming from a bond issuance. We therefore pay

interests but keep this cash on our account (earning zero) and do not need it. But if we spend it, what do we buy? Is it really the right time to buy equity? Everything is so expensive.

8. We are unusual in having the opportunity to invest in OUEM, a ready-made professionally managed endowment offering exposure to a wide variety of asset classes with minimal fees. Do we want to reconsider whether some fraction of our target allocation should be achieved via investment in OUEM?

9. Would we like to consider allocating some of the endowment to fixed-income securities?

10. Does the committee want to develop a sustainable investment policy? I would like to hear what the committee thinks. The reason I raise it is simply because it is topical and people – including Fellows, junior members, and Old Members – ask me about it.

11. One of our loans is expiring. Shall we borrow another £20 million? Interest rates are still very low.

12. Any other changes we should make / think about?

Entrepreneurial Finance Project
Assessment Information Sheet
Trinity Term Elective

Assessment Summary

Component	Weighting	Submission Date	Time	Group Size	How to Submit	ID Number
Group Project	**100%**	**Friday Week 5 Trinity Term (27 May 2022)**	**By 12pm**	**3 or 4**	**Upload to SAMS**	**Candidate Number (7 digits)**

Assessment Details

The final project will be a take-home assignment. The assignment will consist of providing a full investment analysis of an entrepreneur's business plan. This will require using both conceptual and quantitative frameworks discussed in class. On Canvas there will be a number of materials related to the business plan, including some financial projections. This project will require some creative thinking for solving business problems.

All students will be randomly allocated to teams of 4 students (or 3 if no 4th person is available).

The assignment will consist of addressing the following issues:

1.) A critical evaluation of a business plan from an investor perspective, using the frameworks discussed in class. This part will consist of approximately 1500 words, and will account for 20% of the grade.

2.) A critical review of the financial projections from the business plan, alongside with a proposed alternative model of financial projections. This part will consist of approximately 1000 words and a new spreadsheet built by the student. This part will account for 20% of the grade.

3.) A proposed valuation using the VC method (discussed in class), using data on exit comparables. An explanation about the estimation choices made should accompany the calculations. This part will consist of approximately 1000 words and will account for 20% of the grade.

4.) An investment recommendation that includes:

    (i)   an explanation as to what due diligence remains to be done before a final investment recommendation can be made.

    (ii)   a brief summary of the key proposed investment terms, but without the legal details. The emphasis should be on explaining why certain terms have been chosen.

    (iii)   a clearly stated final recommendation whether or not an investment should be made, possibly contingent on the items specified in parts (i) and (ii).

This part will consist of approximately 1000 words and will account for 20% of the grade.

5.) A recommendation as to what mix of investor types the company should be seeking at this stage, and why. This part will consist of approximately 500 words and will account for 20% of the grade.

The total word count is 5000 words maximum. Word counts cover the main body of text, including in-text citations, tables, figures, and diagrams, and excluding appendices, footnotes, and references.

Please ensure your group is set up on SAMS and that all members have accepted the invitation at least 24 hours prior to submission.

Please upload all individual documents in one zip folder to SAMS when submitting.

Buyside Private Equity: Advanced
Assessment Information Sheet
Trinity Term Elective

Assessment Summary

Component	Weighting	Submission Date	Time	How to Submit	ID Number
Individual Assignment	**100%**	**Friday Week 5 Trinity Term (27 May 2022)**	**By 12pm**	**Upload to SAMS**	**Candidate Number (7 digits)**

Assessment Details

The assignment is based on a case study and is detailed below.

There are 2 parts and answers should not exceed 2000 words in total.

Word counts cover the main body of text, including in-text citations, tables, figures, and diagrams, and excluding appendices, footnotes, and references.

Assignment Instructions – Smart Gaming Ltd

- Build a simple LBO model based on the information below, including the following:

  o flexibility for base, upside and conservative cases on sales growth

  o Exit Returns schedule (including both cash-on-cash and IRR) showing the returns to the financial sponsor equity
  [50% of marks]

- On a single A4 sheet in 12pt font, write a memorandum to the Investment Committee giving your recommendation as to whether or not the PE fund should proceed with this transaction.
  [50% of marks]

<u>Operating assumptions</u>

Revenues:

Smart Gaming Ltd develops games for smartphone users. The main product is sold for £19.90 per download (this is a one off cost). The company sold 1.5 million copies in 2011 (the first year it started trading) and 2.5m copies in 2012. Number of downloads is expected to grow by 30%, 20%, 15% and 10% going forward over the next few years. Every game sold generates an extra £5 revenue per year (i.e. in-game products and advertising) which is recurring and increases by 20% every year. However, only 30% of the users keep the app on their smartphone every year (that is, only 30% of the previous year user base keeps using the product).

Cost / cash flow items:

- Royalties to patent owners = £4.00 one-off per download
- Customer acquisition cost = £2.00 one-off per download
- Fees paid to smartphone companies = 15% of sale price one-off

- Rent = £150,000 annually, growing 5% every year
- License fee to telecom internet providers = $1.5 million annually, growing 3% every year
- Salaries and benefits = £1.75 million annually, growing 30% every year
- Other administrative costs = £450,000 annually, growing 25% every year
- Fixed assets depreciation: 5 years straight-line from 2012
- No change in working capital • Intangible / other assets: no change
- Capital expenditure: £300,000 per year
- Tax: 25%

Starting Balance Sheet:

Key Balance Sheet (in £ millions) :	
	2012
Cash	0.0
Receivables	0.2
Other assets	0.5
PP&E	0.3
Intangible	0.5
Total Assets	**1.5**
Payables	1.2
Other liabilities	0.2
Equity	0.1
Total Liabilities and Equity	**1.5**

Investment Assumptions

Assume acquisition price of 10.0x 2012 EBITDA (assuming a cash-free debt-free deal), be paid in cash. The transaction is expected to close at the end of 2012.

Other assumptions:

- *Senior Revolving Credit Facility*: 1.0x (unfunded at close) 2012 EBITDA, LIBOR + 400bps, 2017 maturity, commitment fee of 0.50% for any available revolver capacity. RCF is available to help fund operating cash requirements of the business (only as needed).

- *Subordinated Debt:* 3.0x 2011 EBITDA, 12% annual interest (8% cash, 4% PIK interest), 2017 maturity, bullet repayment (no early repayment).

- Assume that existing management expects to roll-over 50% of its pre-tax exit proceeds from the transaction. Existing management's ownership pre-LBO is 10%.

- Assume a minimum cash balance (Day 1 Cash) of £1 million (this needs to be funded by the financial sponsor as the transaction is a cash-free / debt-free deal).

- Assume that all remaining funding comes from the financial sponsor.

- Assume that LIBOR for 2012 is 1.00% and is expected to increase by 25bps each year.

- The M&A fee for the transaction is £1.0 million and will be paid out of the sponsor equity contribution upon close.

- In addition, there is a financing syndication fee of 1% on all the subordinated debt used. This fee will be amortized on a five-year, straight-line schedule.

- Assume New Goodwill equals Purchase Equity Value less Book Value of Equity.

- Assume Interest Income on average cash balances is 1%.

Buyside Private Equity: Essential
Assessment Information Sheet
Trinity Term Elective

Assessment Summary

Component	Weighting	Submission Date	Time	How to Submit	ID Number
Individual Assignment	**100%**	**Friday Week 5 Trinity Term (27 May 2022)**	**By 12pm**	**Upload to SAMS**	**Candidate Number (7 digits)**

Assessment Details

The assignment is based on a case study. There are 2 parts to the assignment, and both parts must be answered.

The word limit is 2000 words. Word counts cover the main body of text, including in-text citations, tables, figures, and diagrams, and excluding appendices, footnotes, and references.

Can financial acumen supercharge social impact?
The case of the redevelopment of Spofford in the Bronx

PART I: NYCEDC Investment Committee memo

The objective: Put yourself in Eric's shoes and write an internal memo for the Investment Committee at NYCEDC. Your memo should outline his counter-proposal to the developers' initial proposal regarding the structure of the junior debt tranche. Ultimately, your memo will be evaluated based on the soundness of your argument and the likelihood you can convince all parties that your proposal is a fair deal. In the write up, provide answers to the questions below.

Question a. Comparables analysis (20% - 400 words)
Both, the developers and NYCEDC, generated their own sets of market data to help drive revenue projections in the Spofford financial model. The developers submitted two sets of comparable prices: a time-series of the average rents in the area (Table 4 – Panel A) and prices of comparable individual transactions (Table 4 – Panel B), while Eric's team collected their own list of transactions, some relevant, some not (Table 4 – Panel C). Conduct a comparable transactions analysis to create a set of the most relevant comparables (a comp set) for rental rates PSF p.a. that will drive your revenue assumptions in the financial model (that you will build in Question b).

• Discuss, from Eric's point of view, why his team prefers not to base their analysis on the comp sets presented by the developers. What issues he might see with their data (Table 4 A and B)?
• What could motivate developers to present vastly different sets of comps from those collected by Eric's team? Explain in what way rental rate projections impact the quality of the financial model and the structure of the overall transaction?
• Using select data from Table 4, build a comp set of transactions that are relevant for the Spofford transaction. Take into consideration data and suggestions provided in the case,

including in grey boxes. Describe your criteria for comps selection and the process step by step. What is the result of your analysis, i.e. what rental rate(s) you will use in the model?
• In addition to your written explanation, paste in from Excel into your memo the comp set you have created.

Question b. Spofford financial model (40% - 1000 words)
Propose a mechanism that would help close the gap between the return expectations of NYCEDC and of the developers.

• To articulate and support your arguments, build a financial model and present it in the memo in a way that makes it easy to understand your assumptions, calculations, and reasoning.
• The model should include assumptions, projections (revenues, costs, and cash flows), a debt schedule, a schedule of developer fees, and returns analysis, as well as any other elements, such as sensitivity analysis of returns, that you find helpful in providing an answer.
• Explain what mechanism you propose to bridge the gap between return expectations of both sides. Given this mechanism, recommend an appropriate yield for the NYCEDC junior debt tranche. Explain why it is a fair yield, given the risk they are taking on. Similarly, calculate the expected return of the developers under Eric's proposal and explain why it is a reasonable return for them.
• Please do not paste in the full model. However, pasting in sections of the model to support your arguments is welcomed.

Bear in mind the expectations of the developers. Simply telling them that their forecasts are not realistic and that under more reasonable cash flow projections they meet their target returns, may not get you very far.

PART II: Reflection on impact investing

Question c. Commercial scenario (20% - 300 words)
NYCEDC's mission is to serve the local community through their impact investment programs. Therefore, certain elements of the deal would typically not be included in a pure commercial setup.

• If the developers had executed this deal in a pure commercial setup (i.e. without the involvement of a non-profit organization such as NYCEDC), how could your financial projections and deal structure have been impacted? (No need to re-run the model, a qualitative answer will be sufficient).
• Based on this analysis, discuss whether the participation of NYCEDC in the project is a source of any advantages and/or disadvantages for the developers. What conclusions can you draw about the additionality of NYCEDC's investment (comparing your answers to questions b and c)?

Question d. Social impact (20% - 300 words)
Comment on the social impact of the redevelopment of Spofford and provide your thoughts on what you believe should be the guiding investing principles for an organization like NYCEDC.

• How would you measure the social impact of this project? Who are the stakeholders? Who receives what benefits and who ultimately pays for them?
• What are your views on Eric's approach to impact investing? Is it a positive change (compared to the old NYCEDC's approach)? Why or why not? What effect this change could have on the partnership between NYCEDC and the developers in the future?
• If you were in Eric's position, would you have done anything differently? Why or why not?

Additional Information

Please use the case study that has been distributed to you electronically. The case study in the textbook differs slightly. In addition to the facts outlined in the case, we suggest the following set of assumptions to guide your analysis. You are welcome to make your own assumptions instead of those suggested below, however, please do not change the facts stated in the case.

• LISC Loan A terms
      o 30-year loan, amortized linearly over the full period
      o Per LISC's requirement, the loan will be refinanced after 8 years, and the new loan could be a 22-year loan, for simplicity, amortized linearly over this period. That way, the model's time horizon can be set as 30 years
• NYS and NYCEDC loans are the same: 30-year term, same interest rate, interest only, but you can add some features to the NYCEDC loan that the NYS loan does not include. For example, parent guarantees and cash sweeps.
• Deal structure should include a proposal for the payment of the developer fees. They can be either spread over time at a fixed rate (same amount paid each year over 30 years) or paid at a flexible rate (e.g. via a cash sweep).
• Assume developers sell the building after 30 years (end of year 2049) at market prices.
• It is customary to base the value of a building on NOI and a cap rate.
• Ignore taxes in your model.

APPENDIX 5:

MLF COURSE PRIZES

Core MLF Prizes

First Principles of Financial Economics: Thomas Harrison, Lincoln College

                    Ramon Callis, Exeter College

Finance: Shi Hao Foo, Merton College

Law and Economics of Corporate Transactions: Ivan Podkopalov, Harris Manchester College

Best overall performance in the MLF: Shi Hao Foo, Merton College

Law Faculty Prizes

No MLF students were awarded law elective prizes in 2022.

APPENDIX 6:

REPORTS ON INDIVIDUAL PAPERS

First Principles of Financial Economics
Examiner's Report
Michaelmas Term 2021

1. Structure

The students were required to submit practical work in groups of four, sit an exam, and submit an essay. The practical work had a weighting of 20% of the total mark, for which students in the same group received the same marks. The exam weighting was 40%, and the essay weighting was 40% of the total mark.

2. Statistics

The average mark was 69, with a standard deviation of 5.6.

24 out of the 48 students got distinction. No one failed.

The highest final mark was 78.

3. Examination

There were 10 questions in the examination. Each of them was worth 10 points, totalling 100.

The examination weighting was 40% of the total mark.

On average, questions 2 and 8 got the highest mark while question 7 got the lowest.

The average of the examination was 65, with a standard deviation of 13.2.

Some students performed extraordinarily well in the exam. Seven students failed the exam.

4. Assessed essay

The essay weighting was 40% of the total mark.

The average was 68, with a standard deviation of 1.6.

The essays were generally good. In most cases, students were capable of articulating the arguments that were presented in class, be it a verbal or more technical analysis.

5. Practical work

The practical work weighting was 20% of the total mark.

The average was 80, with a standard deviation of 0.

The students in the same group were awarded the same mark for the practical work.

All students did well in the practical work.

Most candidates answered this examination well, and a high number performed very well indeed. A small number of candidates had only a weak grasp on the material; some of their errors are highlighted in the text below.

The following table presents question-by question grade breakdowns. Questions 1 to 4 were compulsory, and candidates were required to select either Question 5 or 6. A complication in the assessment of this examination was that the wrong formula sheet was provided, one from a previous assessment that was missing formulas that could have been used to solve part (d) of Question 6. The examinations were reviewed to find any candidates disadvantaged by the missing formula, and their marks were adjusted accordingly. As the results in the table can be inferred to demonstrate, the post-adjustment difference in performance on Questions 5 and 6 was not statistically significant.

Question	1	2	3	4	5	6
Count	47	47	47	47	42	5
Max	15	15	14	14	40	28
Min	5	3	6	1	2	14
Avg	12.9	11.1	10.6	9.2	26.5	21.6
Std Dev	2.9	2.9	2.2	2.9	10.6	5.7

Section A. The four questions in this section were answered well by most candidates, and they became progressively more challenging.

Question 1.

Performance on the question was very high. Almost all candidates were able to use the CAPM formula correctly to determine beta in part (a). Most were able to use the CAPM relationships in part (b) to solve for idiosyncratic risk. Part (c) proved to be more difficult, with some candidates attributing an incorrect level of risk to the risk-free portfolio. In the question as a whole, there were a few candidates who confused standard deviation and variance and who made computational mistakes.

Question 2.

a. While most candidates were able to determine fees as a percentage of fair value very well, a few were confused about the determination of fair value or did not apply the 5% fee correctly.
b. This part was answered well. Common problems were incomplete descriptions of a difference between auctions and bookbuilding and the choice of two differences that were not clearly distinct.
c. The best responses went beyond a simple description of information revelation and conflicts of interest to explain how the theories accounted for underpricing. Some responses referenced empirical studies.

Question 3.

Almost all candidates were able to determine the price and duration of the bond. There were more difficulties with the application of the modified duration equation to determine the price change. Some candidates neglected to compare the predicted and actual price changes, and the explanation of the difference was challenging for many. It was not a full answer to say that duration is a linear approximation; some additional description of the curvature or convexity was required for full marks. In part (c), many candidates knew that the maturity of the zero-coupon bond should have the same duration as the bond in the previous part, but a substantial number said instead that it should have the same maturity. Only a small fraction of the candidates recognized that, because they had the same duration, the two bonds would have the same increase in price from an infinitesimal rate reduction.

Question 4.
a. Most candidates did extremely well hedging currency exposure. For those who made mistakes, it was common to divide rather than multiply or vice versa.
b. Almost all of the candidates were familiar with the basic idea of the agency problem. The best responses defined the problem precisely and very clearly described distinct methods of mitigation.
c. The basic idea that equity can be likened to a call option on a firm's assets with a strike price equal to the value of the outstanding debt was well understood. Some responses did not clearly differentiate between the volatility of the assets and the volatility of the equity, and some referred to a call option on the equity.

Section B.

Question 5.
a. and b. A large majority of students who answered Question 5 were able to solve for the earnings per share and value of a share. The most common error was the omission of taxes, and there were also some calculation errors.

c. Calculation of the debt/equity ratio was challenging for many candidates. Some calculated incorrectly, some calculated the wrong ratio, and others had difficulty determining the proceeds of the bond.

d. Most candidates successfully determined the number of shares, the price per share, and the per share earnings, but there were more problems with setting up and solving the problems. The inclusion of tax continued to be a difficult for some candidates.

e. Many candidates explained that the tax benefits of the bond issue increased the share price. Some candidates concluded incorrectly that the share price before and after the buyback differed.

Question 6.
Only a handful of candidates attempted question 6. They did very well on part (a) in calculating NPV and determining which project the firm would choose. Performance was also very good on parts (b) and (c), with only a few who struggled, so that it does not permit general characterization. Part (d) could be solved without the use of formulas, but some candidates had clearly expected to use the formula sheet. As described above, the marks for parts (d) and (e) were adjusted to remedy the omission.

The examination for Law and Economics of Corporate Transactions (LECT) consisted of a 5,000-word essay. Forty-eight candidates submitted essays, all of whom had already successfully completed the group work component of the course. The essays were generally of good quality and collectively demonstrated a solid to advanced understanding of the relevant concepts and issues, as reflected in the average mark of 67.3%. Overall, eleven candidates (23%) obtained distinction marks, thirty-four (71%) obtained merit marks, and three (6%) obtained pass marks. No candidate failed this paper. Candidates were reminded that, unlike the group work component of the course, they must not discuss the essay problem or their answers with other candidates; any such collusion is subject to a sanction.

In general, candidates who obtained high marks demonstrated serious engagement with both the question and stated facts, and specified clearly any assumptions their analysis is contingent upon. They clearly and explicitly linked the proposed solutions to their analysis of the problem and explained how the solution chosen compares against alternatives. In some cases, the solutions were detailed, creative, and original, showing a sophisticated understanding of the concepts and issues covered in the course. The best answers also sought to prioritise the significance of the issues discussed, demonstrated a keen sense of the linkage between the price and non-price terms of the transactional solutions to the relevant problems, and (crucially for this essay question) considered the interactions of various solutions that were advocated for.

Weaker answers, meanwhile, demonstrated a good theoretical understanding of the relevant concepts and issues in the abstract, but offered generic descriptions of key economic problems and possible solutions that sidestepped the salient issues. These answers were commonly poorly tailored to the facts of the case study, and in some instances directly contravened those facts. Many of the weaker essays also did not critically interrogate the facts as provided, or requested further information without explaining why that information would be salient to their analysis. Some of the weaker essays did not engage with (parts of) the exam question, leaving some of the more central questions unaddressed.

The first part of the question called for an assessment of the economic and legal risks associated with Porscharge's contemplated acquisition of a controlling stake in VST and with VST's business more generally. Virtually all candidates appreciated that identifying the asset from Porscharge's perspective was a key consideration when identifying and prioritising legal and economic problems or proposing solutions to them. Candidates differed on their assessments of (key) assets, with the most common options being (1) EV-related human capital (putting Velure and Greenacre at the heart of the transaction), (2) EV technology (in particular the Valkyrie EV Architecture), (3) VST's EV technology licencing business, (4) the Furiosa Due, or a combination of (some of) the assets mentioned before.

Most candidates recognised that, despite Porscharge's ongoing relationship with VST, there is an asymmetry of information in favour of VST when it comes to the state of its technology, the development on the Furiosa Due, and the distribution of human capital assets. Some identified potential red flags (e.g. associated with the delays in the development of the Valkyrie platform, the lack of clarity about the respective contributions of Velure and Greenacre, and the crash with the Furiosa). Stronger answers proceeded to evaluate the extent to which these are red flags, and the potential countervailing signals (e.g. the strong customer base as well as the praise from car enthusiasts and industry analysts). Good essays also highlighted the potential hold-up problems in VST's operations and the resultant costs. Examples involve the bespoke agreements with EV technology licensees, the contributions from key employees, and the (potential) agreement with QuantumScope. Stronger answers appreciated that in many cases VST's counterparty has made or will make asset specific investments too, so that the hold-up problem is two-sided.

In its business, VST has deployed various legal and economic strategies to mitigate asymmetric information problems, agency costs, opportunistic behaviour, hold-up costs, and futurity problems – for example in the

structure of its relationships with licensees. Stronger answers acknowledged those strategies, and the strongest answers analysed the degree to which these strategies might unravel because of Porscharge's proposed acquisition (e.g. given that Porscharge competes with some of VST's other clients) and evaluated the resultant costs.

The second and third part of the question asked candidates to, respectively, advise about how to best resolve the problems identified through the legal structure and pricing of the transaction and to identify any transactions other than Porscharge's investment in VST which may be necessary or desirable to maximise the value of the transaction. Stronger answers distinguished themselves by the rigour, specificity, and sophistication they exhibited in the design of transactional solutions, and explicitly linked these recommendations to the analysis of the problems they are designed to address. They also explicitly discussed the limitations of the proposed solutions.

Most candidates identified performance-based compensation as a solution to the agency problems facing key employees post-acquisition. Stronger answers provided specific suggestions, highlighting challenges in identifying appropriate proxies for success (e.g. given the uncertainty around the development of EV technology), and further refined this contractual solution so that it also facilitated information revelation regarding the quality of the Valkyrie EV Architecture and helped address the hold-up problems created by key employees. To protect the EV licencing business, most candidates sought to preserve incentive compatibility between VST, its investors, its employees, and its customers post-acquisition. The nature of the proposed solutions differed widely, ranging from ring-fencing measures involving subsidiarisation to state-contingent contracts. Stronger answers, again, distinguished themselves by their specificity and sophistication in the design of transactional solutions.

Most essays suggested that VST/Porscharge should enter into a separate transaction with QuantumScope. The essay question specified that "VST's board is unwilling to commit to acquire QuantumScope, instead seeking to enter into a "strategic partnership" with the company.". Weaker answers ignored this preference altogether and advised VST to acquire QuantumScope anyway, frequently without explaining why doing so might resolve the problems identified. Some stronger answers explained in detail why VST's board (or Porscharge) should reconsider their position, whilst most stronger answers provided detailed recommendations with respect to the proposed structure of such a "strategic partnership" as well as the benefits and shortcomings of that approach.

The strongest answers pointed out how various potential solutions to problems identified throughout the case study interacted, and how one solution might address multiple problems at once.

APPENDIX 7:

EXTERNAL EXAMINER'S REPORT
TRINITY TERM 2022

External examiner name:	Rosa Lastra
External examiner home institution:	Queen Mary University of London
Course(s) examined:	MSc in Law and Finance
Level: (please *delete as appropriate*)		Postgraduate

Please complete both Parts A and B.

Part A				
	*Please (✓) as applicable**	**Yes**	**No**	**N/A / Other**
A1.	Are the academic standards and the achievements of students comparable with those in other UK higher education institutions of which you have experience?	✓		
A2.	Do the threshold standards for the programme appropriately reflect the frameworks for higher education qualifications and any applicable subject benchmark statement? *[Please refer to paragraph 6 of the Guidelines for External Examiner Reports].*	✓		
A3.	Does the assessment process measure student achievement rigorously and fairly against the intended outcomes of the programme(s)?	✓		
A4.	Is the assessment process conducted in line with the University's policies and regulations?	✓		
A5.	Did you receive sufficient information and evidence in a timely manner to be able to carry out the role of External Examiner effectively?	✓		
A6.	Did you receive a written response to your previous report?	✓		
A7.	Are you satisfied that comments in your previous report have been properly considered, and where applicable, acted upon?	✓		
*** If you answer "No" to any question, you should provide further comments when you complete Part B.** Further comments may also be given in Part B, if desired, if you answer "Yes" or "N/A / Other".*				

Part B

B1. Academic standards

a. *How do academic standards achieved by the students compare with those achieved by students at other higher education institutions of which you have experience?*

   The standards are comparable.

b. *Please comment on student performance and achievement across the relevant programmes or parts of programmes and with reference to academic standards and student performance of other higher education institutions of which you have experience (those examining in joint schools are particularly asked to comment on their subject in relation to the whole award).*

   Very good student performance.

B2. Rigour and conduct of the assessment process

Please comment on the rigour and conduct of the assessment process, including whether it ensures equity of treatment for students, and whether it has been conducted fairly and within the University's regulations and guidance.

It was rigorous and fair.

As stated in the minutes of the MLF exam board on 18 July 2022 (Part B, Item 2), as external examiner I expressed some concerns regarding one of the issues related to the Finance TT exam sitting. I was satisfied with the response. The Board agreed that it was important to mitigate the risk of collusion and to remind students at every opportunity (as is current practice) of the University's policies and penalties in relation to plagiarism and collusion.

See also below in B3 for further comments on the Finance exam.

B3. Issues

Are there any issues which you feel should be brought to the attention of supervising committees in the faculty/department, division or wider University?

Technology and IT remained a challenge but were addressed by Sydney Hicks sydney.hicks@it.ox.ac.uk and the IT Department. The technical challenges did not impair the rigour and conduct of the assessment process.

With regard to Finance, I noted (as stated in Part 5. a of the Minutes) that communication issues had evidently arisen this year in relation to this course and that good communications with course convenors is essential to ensure these types of issues do not re-occur. As also noted in the minutes, the exams guidance provided to MLFs at the start of the academic year might be strengthened regarding communications between course convenors and students, underscoring the fact that students should not be contacting assessors/examiners directly regarding their exam scripts or marks.

I also noted (with regard to the Finance marks) that there was a greater variance in the marks for Finance compared to other courses, also observing a higher disparity between the top-end and bottom-end marks, and that Finance was the only course with fail marks this year (although some candidates failed the FPFE exam but passed overall). It was also noted that assessment and marks for this Finance course will be kept under review by the programme as well as the maths support offered to students.

B4. Good practice and enhancement opportunities

Please comment/provide recommendations on any good practice and innovation relating to learning, teaching and assessment, and any opportunities to enhance the quality of the learning opportunities provided to students that should be noted and disseminated more widely as appropriate.

See comments above.

The administrator in charge of this program, Catherine Chandler, does an excellent job. Indeed I would like in particular to commend her professionalism catherine.chandler@law.ox.ac.uk

B5. Any other comments

Please provide any other comments you may have about any aspect of the examination process. Please also use this space to address any issues specifically required by any applicable professional body. If your term of office is now concluded, please provide an overview here.

My term of office as external examiner is now concluded. It has been an honour to serve Oxford University in the MSc in Law and Finance program and to work with such distinguished colleagues. The last three years have been challenging, dominated by COVID-19 and the extraordinary circumstances that the pandemic triggered, affecting the way we teach, the way we examine and the MCE process (including the number and range of MCEs submitted). I think the Board has acted not just with professionalism, rectitude, honesty and integrity, but also with justice, fairness and compassion.

I very much appreciate the comments offered in point c of the minutes when the Exam Board formally thanks me for my input as External Examiner and for my support and participation as the arbiter of standards for the past three years, helping ensure the academic integrity of the programme, especially during the Covid (MCE) years. In particular I appreciate the last sentence: "the Board was exceedingly grateful to Prof Lastra for all her time and expertise."

Signed:	*Rosa Mari de l Lastra*
Date:	**14 August 2022**

Please ensure you have completed parts A & B, and email your completed form to: external-examiners@admin.ox.ac.uk **and copy it to the applicable divisional contact set out in the guidelines.**