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Vice Chancellor,  
c/o Catherine Whalley,  
University Offices,  
Wellington Square,  
Oxford OX1 2JD

Dear Vice Chancellor,

This letter contains the second part of my report as the external examiner for Part A Examinations of the School of Mathematics.

First of all, I would like to thank the chairman of the examination board, Dr Earl, the other examiners and the administrative support team for assisting me. My overall assessment is that the Part A Examinations were well organized.

B1. Academic standards

- a. The syllabuses for Part A are comparable with those offered by the other leading UK Universities. There was a good coverage of the syllabuses of Part A in all examinations. The examiners maintained the highest academic standards.
- b. Student achievement was similar to other UK Universities with many excellent scripts ranked in the first class. Performances had been carefully analyzed by the examiners to ensure that the students taking Mathematics & Philosophy were not disadvantaged.

B2. Rigour and conduct of the assessment process

Considerable efforts had been made to ensure that the students were treated

fairly. The examiners took care to ensure that within each question there was a balance of bookwork, seen and new material. As a result, many exams showed a good spread of marks.

### B3. Issues

One of the applied courses had by far the lowest marks of all the Part A exams. This issue was mitigated by the use of scaling. I suggest that the questions on this course are made less challenging to reduce the requirement for scaling.

An issue arose with a question which was too similar to the previous year's exam. I recommend that examiners carefully check their questions against the questions from the previous year, this being particularly important if a new examiner is appointed.

### B4. Good practice and enhancement opportunities

There were numerous examples of good practice: (i) the balance of bookwork, seen and new material within each question; (ii) the careful scrutiny of examination questions; (iii) detailed reports on each examination question; and (iv) the judicious use of scaling maps. The administrative support was also excellent throughout the assessment process.

Yours sincerely,

W. R. Smith