

FACULTY OF MUSIC
St Aldate's, Oxford 1DB
tel: 01865 276127; fax 01865 276128
Owen.Rees@music.ox.ac.uk



The Vice-Chancellor
University of Cambridge

12 December 2015

Dear Vice-Chancellor,

**MMus in Choral Conducting 2015
External Examiner's Report**

This was my second year as external examiner for the MMus in Choral Conducting. I was once again provided with all necessary materials (including marking guidelines) and clear guidance by the two internal examiners and the administrative team. At the end of this year's examination process, on 24 July, I participated in a meeting with the internal examiners and Professor Cross as part of the Teaching and Learning review of the course and its examination. The written examination paper was discussed and amended in a meeting with the internal examiners.

Two of the candidates presented choral recitals in the chapel of St Catharine's College on 9 March, both achieving solid marks for carefully conceived and well prepared performances. The conducting examination took place on 4 May in the chapel of Robinson College. The standards achieved by the candidates in this element of the assessment were impressive, all marks being in the high 60s or 70s.

I sampled examination scripts of three of the candidates, as well as three extended essays and two editing projects.

The strength of this year's cohort was impressive: two candidates achieved distinctions, one a high pass, and one a pass. Once again, the range of topics covered in the submitted written work and editions was notable, and these submissions reflected some original research of considerable value. I am happy to confirm that the standards achieved were entirely appropriate to the examination and to a Masters'-level qualification, and it is clear that the programme is successful in attracting and training students of high calibre. The examination process was conducted with

exemplary expertise and fine judgement by the internal examiners, and the results were a very fair reflection of the candidates' achievement.

The proposed new course structure, discussed in the final examiners' meeting, seems eminently sensible and to represent an advance in terms of the coherence of the course. There will be four elements: two coursework essay of 3,500 words each, the choral recital (now compulsory, and reflecting some scholarly research, ideally linked to the candidate's extended essay or editing project), the conducting examination, and one of: a 7,000-word essay, a keyboard recital (organ or continuo), or an editing project.

I support the decision that, in future, marks for submitted coursework will be made available to candidates during the course of the academic year, following approval of those marks by the Degree Committee, and that marks for the choral recital will be made available to candidates after the second Degree Committee meeting of Easter Term.

I am most grateful once again for the welcome and hospitality I received from the internal examiners.

Yours faithfully,



Prof. O. L. Rees