1) Statement of the learning goals for the assessment that you are reviewing.

At this time we are assessing our first qualifying exam and the first year courses that are preparation for this exam. The purpose of the First Exam is to verify that before progressing to a greater degree of specialization, the student has achieved a requisite degree of mastery, at the first year graduate level, of a significant cross-section of contemporary mathematics. The general wish of the Program is that a student will have concluded the entire First Exam series by the first September after the conclusion of their first year of study. This cannot be achieved in all cases, for various individual reasons, but this goal of the Program is communicated to all students upon their arrival in the Program.

Currently students may choose three among six different topic exams. We are evaluating whether to change the number of topics and the number of choices available. Our aim is to make sure students have an appropriate breadth of knowledge before they specialize and to make it possible for students to move through the program in a timely fashion.

2) A description of what data or other information you are drawing on to conduct your review (e.g. students’ exam results, students’ job placements).

We have collected the syllabi for the first year courses. We have looked at when students are taking the exams and have conducted informal discussions with faculty and students. We are evaluating whether it is feasible to cover enough material in the standard curriculum in one semester.

3) Your findings. Is the assessment (and preparation for it) effective?

There is general satisfaction with the level of the exams. The current first year courses cover more material than is on the exams, but the first semester courses do not cover enough. This is a work still in progress for us.

4) Proposed changes, if any, to the assessment, the learning goals for it, the curriculum/preparation leading up to it.

There are three alternatives on the table to restructure the first year courses and the exams accordingly and we expect to come to a decision in fall 2013.

5) The next steps that will be taken. (There should be a follow-up on these in the report for the next cycle.)

We expect to come to a decision on our restructuring plans and to put the new structure in place by fall 2014.