

Education Committee

Agenda for the meeting to be held on Tuesday September 2022 at 10.00

At the Royal College of Nursing, 20 Cavendish Square, London, W1G 0RN

1.	Welcome and Apologies for absence	
2.	Declarations of interest	
3.	Education Committee Minutes a) Minutes of meeting held on 10 May 2022 b) Minutes from the Joint meeting of Education Committee and Registration Committee on the 1 August 2022.	Paper Attached Paper Attached
4.	Matters arising	
5.	Education Department update	Oral Report
6.	Primary Qualifications Subcommittee (PQSC) a) Reports of sub-committee meeting held on 23 June 2022 b) Report of the sub-committee meeting held on 10 August 2022	Paper Attached Paper Attached
7.	Conflict of Interest Policy guidance for EC and PQSC	Paper Attached
8.	Gap analysis of the Office for Students' conditions against the Veterinary Surgeon and Veterinary Nurse accreditation standards	Paper Attached
9.	Covid temporary policy review: a) Covid updates from Schools b) EMS requirements c) EMS requirements - student re-sits	Oral Report Paper Attached Paper Attached
10.	ENQA Update	Oral Report
11.	The Future of EMS	Paper Attached
12.	AVBC consultation on new accreditation standards/methodology: Formal response	Paper Attached
13.	Accreditation agreements with members of the International Accreditors working Group (IAWG) a) AVBC Addendum b) AVMA Agreement	Paper attached Paper Attached

14.	CPD a) Update from the CPD Policy and Compliance subcommittee – minutes	Paper Attached
15	Exploring international marketing models for 1CPD and VetGDP.	Paper Attached
16.	Statutory Membership Examination (SME) a) Guidance 2023	Paper Attached
17.	PDP a) PDP Engagement	Paper Attached
18.	Advanced Practitioner Status (AP) a) Updates from the Task and Finish Groups b) Policy paper (telemedicine)	Paper Attached Paper Attached
19.	VetGDP Update	Oral Report
20.	Specialist Subcommittee: Nominations for new members	Paper Attached
21.	Risk register a) Items to add to the Risk Register	Paper Attached
22.	AOB	
	Date of next meeting	November 2022

Britta Crawford
Committee Secretary
August 2022
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020 7202 0777

Education Committee membership

Miss Abigail Callow

Dr Niall Connell

Ms Linda Ford

Mrs Susan Howarth

Professor Tim Parkin – also Chair of Specialist Recognition Subcommittee

Dr Kate Richards (Chair)

Professor Chris Proudman

Professor Stuart Reid

Professor Susan Rhind

Student Members:

Ms Anna Bradbury

Ms Kate Dakin

Operations Board member as observer: Mrs Susan (Sue) Paterson (all chair of VetGDP subcommittee)

Chairs of Education Subcommittees:

Dr Melissa Donald, CertAVP

Dr Joanne Dyer, PQSC and EMS co-ordinators Liaison Group

Professor Nigel Gibbens, Accreditation Review Group

Professor Stephen May, Panel of Assessors for Advanced Practitioner Status

Full terms of reference agreed by Council June 2015

1. The Education Committee shall set the policy for undergraduate and postgraduate education and training of veterinary surgeons and determine the requirements for those seeking registration, for the award of qualifications under the Charter, for continuing professional development, and for recognition as RCVS Advanced Practitioner and RCVS Specialist.
2. The Committee shall develop and keep under review education and training requirements for registration, and in particular shall:
 - define "day 1 competences" and advise on the content of the veterinary undergraduate curriculum;
 - oversee the approval process and ongoing monitoring of veterinary degrees and international recognition agreements, considering sub-committee reports on appointment of visitors, visitation reports, follow-up reports and annual monitoring reports from veterinary schools, sub-committee reports on overseas degrees from other accrediting bodies, and sub-committee reports on operation of the statutory membership examination;
 - make decisions on recognition of registrable veterinary degrees;
 - make recommendations to Council on the regulations governing the statutory membership examination and on the regulations governing practice by students.
3. The Committee shall develop and keep under review policy for continuing professional development, revalidation and postgraduate training and qualifications, and in particular shall:
 - define "year 1 competences" and monitor the postgraduate development phase;
 - set the requirements for and monitor continuing professional development within the profession;
 - develop and maintain a framework of College postgraduate awards, receiving reports from sub-committees on the standards for College-awarded certificates, diplomas and fellowships, examinations and accreditation of other recognised postgraduate qualifications as part of the framework;
 - define the requirements for RCVS Advanced Practitioner and RCVS Specialist status, receiving reports from sub-committees on the maintenance of lists for Advanced Practitioners and Specialists; and
 - recommend to Council amendments to the certificate and diploma and Fellowship bye-laws.
4. The Committee shall recommend fees to the Operational Board for candidates, examiners and visitors, Advanced Practitioners, Specialists and Fellows.

Action	Who
PQSC to move from four to six meeting per year.	JN
Amend conflict of interests policy	KW
Update appeals procedure in accreditation documentation.	JN
RCVS to inform VSC of the decision and update EMS pages on the website	DA
RCVS to consult with VSC on intercalation rules	DA
RCVS to share EMS stakeholder paper with VSC	DA
RCVS to draft full EMS plan and present to EC in May 2022	DA
Present the results of the CPD Audit at the next meeting	JST
Update ToR for PQSC and Specialist Subcommittee	DA
Findings of the AP task and finish group to be reported at September EC	RS
EC to recommend to FRC that honoraria for assessment for Specialist applications is introduced	DA
Education Department to implement updated application system for European Specialists	DA
Education Department to update Risk register	JST
RCVS to produce a comprehensive process for route to registration via the SME for all overseas veterinarians	JB

Summary	
Meeting	Education Committee
Date	10 September 2022
Title	Education Committee Minutes 10 May 2022
Summary	Education Committee Minutes 10 May 2022
Decisions required	To note
Attachments	None
Author	Britta Crawford b.crawford@rcvs.org.uk 020 7202 0777

Classifications		
Document	Classification ¹	Rationales ²
Paper	Unclassified	
Classified appendix	Confidential	1

¹Classifications explained	
Unclassified	Papers will be published on the internet and recipients may share them and discuss them freely with anyone. This may include papers marked 'Draft'.
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Private	The paper includes personal data which should not be disclosed at any time or for any reason, unless the data subject has agreed otherwise. The Chair may, however, indicate after discussion that there are general issues which can be disclosed, for example in reports to committees and Council.

²Classification rationales

Confidential	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. To allow the Committee or Council to come to a view itself, before presenting to and/or consulting with others2. To maintain the confidence of another organisation3. To protect commercially sensitive information4. To maintain public confidence in and/or uphold the reputation of the veterinary professions and/or the RCVS
Private	<ol style="list-style-type: none">5. To protect information which may contain personal data, special category data, and/or criminal offence data, as listed under the General Data Protection Regulation

Education Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on 10 May 2022

Members:	Dr Niall Connell	
	Ms Linda Ford	- Lay member
	Professor Tim Parkin	
	Mrs Susan Howarth	
	Dr Susan (Sue) Paterson	- Chair
	*Professor Chris Proudman	
	Professor Stuart Reid	
	Professor Susan Rhind	
	Dr Colin Whiting	
	Ms Anna Bradbury	- Student representative
Ms Kate Dakin	- Student representative	
By invitation:	Dr Melissa Donald	- CertAVP Subcommittee Chair
	Mr Danny Chambers	- Adv Practitioner Panel Chair
	Dr Joanne Dyer	- PQSC Chair
	Dr Mandisa Greene	- VetGDP subcommittee Chair
	Professor Nigel Gibbens	- Chair of Accreditation Review Group
In attendance:	Mr Duncan Ash	- Senior Education Officer
	Dr Jude Bradbury	- Examinations Manager
	Dr Linda Prescott-Clements	- Director of Education
	Mrs Britta Crawford	- Senior Education Officer
	Miss Claire Holliday	- Senior Education Officer
	Mr Jordan Nicholls	- Lead for Undergraduate Education
	Ms Jenny Soreskog-Turp	- Lead for Postgraduate Education
	Mr Kieran Thakrar	- Education Officer
	Ms Lizzie Lockett	- CEO
	Dr Kate Richards	- Officer Team Observer
	Mr Darren Tysoe	- Chief Technology Officer

Apologies for absence and welcome

1. Apologies were sent from Chris Proudman

Declarations of interest

2. Dr Greene declared that she was part of the visitor team for Bristol and Dr Connell declared that he had acted as one of the admissions interviewers for new students at Nottingham University.

Minutes

- The minutes of the meeting held on 8 February 2022 were agreed as an accurate record.

Matters arising

- The Committee heard that the Finance and Resources Committee (FRC) had not yet approved the matter of specialist subcommittee honoraria but that this would be considered at a future meeting. All other matters had been dealt with or were part of the papers for this Committee.
- There was a discussion about the conflict-of-interest policy and whether this should be extended and applied to members of Education Committee and Primary Qualification Subcommittee as well. It was agreed that the issue should be put on the agenda for the September meeting.

Action: Add conflict of interest policy to EC September agenda

Education Department update

- The Director of Education, Dr Prescott-Clements, gave an oral update on the work of the Education Department. The Committee heard that the work on EMS which had previously been agreed was being undertaken by Mr Ash and the RCVS Communications Department, updating the guidance for students and practices into a more engaging medium, involving real life stories and examples of “what good looks like”. The final report from the EMS stakeholder meeting is being published imminently and the EMS database has been discussed with the new Chief Technology Officer, Mr Tysoe.

Primary Qualifications Sub-Committee (PQSC)

Report of the sub-committee meetings held on the 14 April

- The report of meeting held on 14 April were received and noted.

Nottingham Visitation

- Before turning to the Nottingham report, it was noted that PQSC had taken a new approach to the consideration of visitation reports. Each report was presented standard by standard, detailing the commendations, recommendations, and suggestions, along with the evidence that supported each of these. The University response to each of the findings from the report, as well as the visitation panel’s comments on this response, were also presented. Following each standard, the committee were asked to consider and discuss each point before moving on to the next standard. It was noted by Education Committee that this led to a greater level of detail in the minutes, demonstrating the thoroughness of PQSC’s discussions.
- The RCVS visitation to the University of Nottingham, School of Veterinary Medicine and Science (SVMS) took place in October 2021. Education Committee were presented with the report of the

visitors' findings and the School's response, along with comments from the visitation panel responding to the School's response.

10. A high-level summary of the commendations, recommendations and suggestions was presented, and Education Committee were directed to the relevant section of the PQSC minutes which detailed the considerations of the sub-committee. It was noted that whilst PQSC agreed on the need for monitoring progress with addressing the minor deficiencies from the report, they had been content that this could be achieved through annual reports rather than a revisit.
11. Following discussion, Education Committee agreed with the recommendation from PQSC that the BVM BVS programme at Nottingham University be granted 'Accreditation for seven years' subject to satisfactory annual monitoring reports.

ACTION: RCVS to communicate accreditation decision to Nottingham SVMS.

Bristol Visitation

12. The RCVS/AVBC visitation to the University of Bristol Veterinary School took place in November 2021, and the report of visitors' findings and the School's response to the report were considered by Education Committee.
13. A high-level summary of the lengthy discussions which took place at PQSC was given, detailing the commendations, recommendations, suggestions and the University comments to the findings. Particular focus was given to the major deficiency identified in standard 4 – animal resources, relating to the standard and quality of teaching at external site, and the amount of deliberation that had been involved when considering whether this should be a major or minor deficiency.
14. Whilst it had been argued by the School that this should be a minor deficiency, both PQSC and the visitation panel were in agreement that because the student experience or learning was being significantly impacted in the small number of cases where unsatisfactory teaching and quality assurance had been identified, this should remain a major deficiency.
15. On this basis, Education Committee agreed with the recommendation from PQSC that the BVSc and AGEF programmes at Bristol University be awarded 'Accreditation for a shorter period' with a focussed revisit to take place within two years. The focus of this visit would be to look at Bristol's progress with addressing the findings of the 2021 visitation report, and in particular the measures put in place regarding the major deficiency. It was also requested that detailed progress be presented in Bristol's annual monitoring report.

ACTION: RCVS to communicate accreditation decision to Bristol Veterinary School.

16. It was asked whether a revisit would be conducted against the new standards which come into effect in 2023. It was explained that since the old standards would not be applicable after 2022, any accreditation event after this point would be conducted in line with the new standards. It was also pointed out that all of the old standards had been mapped to the new standards, and that whilst the focus and wording may look different, it covered the same areas.

17. Some members of the committee expressed unease at this proposal and requested that where a focussed revisit was to take place, that this be conducted against the standards in place at the time of the original visitation. It was agreed that this issue be taken back for consideration outside of the meeting.

ACTION: Consider which version of accreditation standards are used for revisitations.

Appeal Update

18. The committee were presented with an update regarding the accreditation appeal from Massey University in New Zealand. It was noted that RCVS had communicated the outcome of the appeal to the Head of School, following decision by Education Committee, but was yet to receive acknowledgement. Through later correspondence with the Head of School on a separate issue, RCVS learned that the School had received the outcome, however no formal response or acknowledgement has been sent from Massey.

Covid Plans

19. The confidential updates to school's covid plans, which had been reviewed by both RCVS and PQSC, were received and noted, along with the responses to any clarifications that had been sought. It was reported that a further request for clarification had been sent to St. George's University (SGU) over their covid plans, however the deadline for response was after Education Committee so nothing had been received yet.

Covid Temporary Policy Review

Students Visiting Abattoirs

20. During the pandemic, many temporary amendments were made to educational policies and standards, most of which had reverted following the easing of restrictions. The accreditation standard requiring schools to provide students with an in-person abattoir experience had been amended whilst abattoir access had been challenging due to high Covid infection rates, allowing for teaching in this area to be delivered entirely through virtual methods.
21. At its November 2021 meeting, Education Committee had been asked to consider whether this temporary amendment to policy was still necessary, with the country removing pandemic restrictions. Conversations with the Food Standards Agency (FSA) and Food Standards Scotland (FSS) at that time had indicated that they were no longer advising abattoirs to restrict access.
22. Whilst there had been no initial objections to reverting this standard to pre-pandemic requirements, vet school representatives argued that the pandemic was not yet over, and that for some schools, abattoir access remained a challenge. It was therefore agreed that this temporary policy change would remain in place and be reviewed in 2022.
23. Following that meeting, RCVS reached out again to the FSA and FSS, to ask whether more could be done to encourage abattoirs to open their doors to students, as well as consulting with the veterinary schools to enquire what steps they had been taking to get their students these

experiences. From these conversations, it became apparent that it was time to revert this temporary policy change back to the requirements set out in the RCVS accreditation standards.

24. Professor Reid reported that the FSA and FSS do not own the private abattoirs and that access remained challenging, which meant that the policy to allow abattoir experience to be delivered via virtual resources should remain under review, though it was reported that RVC students were starting to get back to in-person visits. It was also reported that Edinburgh students would be returning to abattoirs in June 2022.
25. Education Committee were reminded that the proposal was to revert this policy at the end of 2022, when the new RCVS accreditation standards would come into effect. At that stage, the accreditation standard would require students to gain an in-person experience in either a red or white meat abattoir, instead of red and white meat. It was agreed that this would be more attainable.
26. Education Committee agreed that this temporary policy amendment should revert to normal by the end of the year, however it was also agreed that if challenges remained, vet school representatives could bring their concerns back to Education Committee in November for consideration.

ACTION: Temporary Covid policy on abattoir teaching to revert back at the end of 2022.

EMS Policy

27. Education Committee was asked to consider EMS completion data submitted from schools at the end of April as part of the on-going three-monthly reviews of the temporary EMS Policy put in place to make allowances for restrictions and knock-on effects of placement availability caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. It was noted that a reduction of 3 weeks to the current 3rd years' requirement had been agreed in February 2022, with the reduced requirement now set at 23 weeks.
28. It was noted that only 4 of the 8 schools had returned data, however this could have been a result of the timing of the review in that schools may have either been on, or just returning from the Easter breaks. As a result, it made it difficult to be able to make a judgement and therefore there were no proposals made for further reductions at this time. The committee were asked to consider whether or not to hold the next review at the next meeting in September as would be normal, or to wait slightly longer and hold the next review at the November meeting, on the proviso that allowing more time between the reviews could allow for more accurate data to be returned.
29. There was a comment on the data on the range of weeks EMS completed by students that had been returned, in that some students appeared to have completed very few weeks in the final years compared to others who had already met their reduced requirements. It was reported that this could be explained due to either differing timetables, or students possibly not yet formally recording their completed weeks.

30. Although there was general agreement that the data may have suggested that there were no immediate concerns with completion rates, the student representatives on the committee however did report that they were both still finding it difficult to book placements in, with practices giving priority to students in later years.
31. With this in mind, it was agreed that the next review should take place in September. It was also agreed that schools should be requested to submit any data on placements that were booked in and scheduled to take place, as well as data on completed placements.

Action: RCVS to hold next review in September

32. It was also noted that careful consideration would need to be given to proposals for future amendments to policy due to Covid, in that there could be a sequence of 3 cohorts entering their clinical years, and each having differing levels of required EMS.

ENQA Update

33. Dr Prescott-Clements, on behalf of Mrs Williams, updated the Committee on the accreditation review of RCVS by the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA), taking place next year. The final, printed, Self-Assessment Report (SAR) needed to be submitted in November, and it was reported that this was currently being developed. Additionally, plans had been drawn up for monthly meetings between the Veterinary Nursing and Education Teams to consider and update relevant policies and procedures. It was reported that RCVS Audit and Risk Committee would consider and sign-off the SAR once complete, and that Education Committee would receive further updates at future meetings.

Accreditation Review Working Party (ARWP)

Accreditation Classifications

34. Following revisions made by both the Accreditation Review Working Party (ARWP) and the Primary Qualifications Sub-Committee (PQSC) aimed at improving clarity, proposed amendments to two of the RCVS accreditation classifications were presented to Education Committee for agreement.
35. It was noted that the move to 'Conditional accreditation' and its associated description was in-line with classifications used by other professions, however it was questioned whether schools would understand this classification and what it meant, and it was asked whether the proposal should be sense-checked by the veterinary schools. Other members of the committee felt that the meanings were clear and that they should be used and adjusted over time if necessary.
36. Following discussion, it was agreed to amend the accreditation classifications as presented.
- ACTION: Update accreditation classifications.**
37. Education Committee were also asked to consider the point at which accreditation is applied, as it was currently unclear whether accreditation is granted from the date of the accreditation visit, or the date of the decision from Education Committee. It was argued that accreditation should apply

from the date of decision by Education Committee rather than the accreditation visit, as the length of the reporting process could vary.

38. Following discussion, Education Committee agreed with the recommendation from PQSC that the period of accreditation should start from the date of decision by Education Committee.

ACTION: Update classifications with clarification on accreditation periods.

Accreditation Panel Member Training PID

39. A project initiation document (PID) for the development of panel member training on accreditation events was presented to Education Committee for discussion. The PID had previously been considered by the ARWP and PQSC, and it was reported that the GANNT chart had been updated since that meeting to reflect the fast-moving nature of this project.
40. It was asked whether Heads of Veterinary Schools (HOVS) would be permitted to undergo this training so that they could be clear on how their programmes would be assessed. It was pointed out that anyone that agreed to remain on the list of panel members and help with accreditation events would be welcome to apply.
41. It was also asked whether there was an appraisal system in place and exit strategy for any panel members that may behave inappropriately on a visitation. It was explained that the RCVS had an internal quality assurance role that attended all visitations to ensure that RCVS was following its own processes, and that this included gathering feedback from both visitation panels and those at the vet school who interacted with the panel. However, it was agreed that a formal exit strategy for panel could be useful and it was agreed to explore the feasibility of such a policy.

ACTION: RCVS to consider a formal policy for removing names from the list of accreditation panel members.

Accreditation evidence repository

42. New accreditation standards and a new accreditation methodology are being introduced in 2023. Within these new processes, it had been agreed that data submitted by schools to evidence that they have met the accreditation standards will be collected using a new approach. The RCVS will host a data repository to which schools will be able to upload evidence against each standard at any time, thereby offering schools more flexibility than the current system.
43. The RCVS, after extensive testing, recommended SecureDocs as the software to use for the evidence repository and sought approval from Education Committee. This proposal was shared with the Veterinary Schools Council (VSC) for feedback and comment ahead of consideration by Education Committee. It was noted that VSC had no general concerns with SecureDocs as the host platform but had enquired about the usability of the software.
44. The RCVS had responded to the queries raised by VSC, ensuring that the system would be useable for both schools and panel members. Furthermore, the schools who have accreditation

events earlier on following the introduction of the new standards in 2023 would be granted access to the repository earlier than other Schools, to ensure sufficient time to upload evidence.

45. The committee noted that SecureDocs was already in use for RCVS Council papers and had received positive feedback. Following consideration, Education Committee approved SecureDocs to be the platform of the new evidence repository.

CPD

46. The Committee received and noted a report detailing the analysis of the 2021 audit of CPD records of Veterinary Surgeons. There was a lower response rate and compliance overall this year but evidence of successful use of the pause function for those on parental leave.

Statutory Membership Exam (SME)

Exam Update

47. Education Committee were provided with an update on the SME. Ninety-three candidates sat the written examinations last week, 90 from the RCVS and three for the Veterinary Council of Ireland (VCI).
48. It was commented that this was an increase in numbers from 65 last year and that part of the reason for this was an increase in European graduates. The majority of candidates are still reported to have graduated from India/Pakistan followed by Africa (Nigeria, Egypt) and the middle east (Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan).
49. The Committee were informed that despite all candidates sitting and successfully completing a hardware test prior to the exam, some still encountered technical issues on the exam days which may result in appeals. It was reported that investigations into these issues are underway but no further information was available at present.
50. An update on refugee numbers was given, with 18 currently on the active list and no Ukrainian vets at present. It was noted that FRC had agreed to an increase in funding for refugees for the 2023 exam however, this may need to be increased again.

Veterinary Graduate Development Programme (VetGDP) update

51. The Committee heard an update of the recent work surrounding the VetGDP, including the 1-2-1 meeting sessions with Graduates and Advisers, the work on peer review training and the development work on the e-portfolio platform. The Committee were delighted to hear of the large take up of peer reviewers, which is a good example of how engaged the profession are with the VetGDP.

Advanced Practitioner Status (AP)

52. The Committee heard that two task and finish groups had been set up. The first is looking at what it means to be an AP, and a possible name change to address the confusion with CertAVP, the second is looking at career pathways. Both groups have met once and will meeting again in June. These groups are coming up with ideas to be discussed at a larger stakeholder event towards the end of the year.

Specialist subcommittee: Adding a new Specialist designation

53. An application for Specialist status had been received for listing in a new designation of Veterinary Pain Medicine (Small Animal). All new designations require approval from Education Committee, and therefore the committee was asked to consider approving the designation. It was clarified that the applicant would also be required to submit some further information to the Specialist Sub-Committee (SSC) to fully satisfy them that they met the criteria, therefore any agreement to the new title would be in principle until the application was fully accepted by SSC.
54. The concerns from SSC were around the title possibly being too close to the existing Specialist title of Veterinary Anaesthesia and Analgesia, however there were opinions that although similar there was enough of a difference to be able to have a separate designation.
55. However, there were comments around the wording of the title, and that “Veterinary Pain Management” may be more appropriate as it would capture the holistic nature of pain management, rather than a specific pharmacological aspect of it being based around medicine.
56. There were also comments around the possible further demand for such a title, in that allowing a new designation which would seemingly only be awarded to one individual could set a precedent. Other members also had concerns that such a designation would be creating a specialist designation in too much of a narrow area.
57. Therefore, it was agreed to defer to the decision on approving the designation to SSC, with the recommendation that if it was ultimately approved, it should be for “Veterinary Pain Management (Small Animal)”.

Action: EC defers decision to SSC

Risk Register

58. The risks discussed can be found in the confidential appendix.

Any other business

59. The Committee and Education Team thanked Dr Sue Paterson for her time as Chair of Education Committee and her unstinting support of all matters education.

Date of Next Meeting

13 September 2022

Britta Crawford

May 2022

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Summary	
Meeting	Education Committee
Date	13 September 2022
Title	Primary Qualifications Sub-Committee (PQSC)
Summary	Report of sub-committee meeting held on 23 June 2022
Decisions required	To note
Attachments	Report of the PQSC meeting held on 23 June 2022
Author	Claire Holliday Senior Education Officer c.holliday@rcvs.org.uk +442081484046

Classifications		
Document	Classification¹	Rationales²
Paper	Unclassified	
Annex	Confidential	1,2

¹Classifications explained	
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Primary Qualifications Sub-Committee (PQSC)
Minutes of the meeting held via MS Teams on 23 June 2022

Members:	Professor Jim Anderson	
	Miss Linda Belton	
	Dr Kate Cobb *	
	Dr Jo Dyer	Chair
	Mr Zakarius Franek	
	Miss Ida Knutsen	
	Professor Liz Mossop *	
	Mrs Jo Oultram	
	Mr Martin Peaty *	
	Dr Kate Richards	
	Professor Ken Smith	
	Dr Clare Tapsfield-Wright	
	Professor Kieron Salmon	
	Professor Sheena Warman	

In attendance	Dr Jude Bradbury
	Mr Jordan Nicholls
	Mr Duncan Ash
	Dr Linda Prescott-Clements
	Mr Kieran Thakrar
	Ms Claire Holliday

*absent

Welcome and apologies for absence

1. Apologies were received from Professor Mossop. Dr Tapsfield-Wright reported that she had to leave the meeting at 3:30pm.
2. Dr Tapsfield-Wright and Mrs Oultram were thanked for the time and commitment they have given to PQSC as this was their last meeting.
3. Ms Holliday was introduced as the new RCVS Senior Education Officer and it was announced that she would be taking over as PQSC secretary.
4. Members that held conflicts of interest for particular items on the agenda were asked to leave the meeting whilst discussions were held for those items.

Minutes of the meetings held on 14 April 2022

- It was noted that page 7, paragraph 3 of the previous minutes should read that Professor Salmon had a conflict of interest with the Nottingham agenda, not Bristol.

Action: Amend the previous minutes

Matters arising

- The committee considered the action list from the previous meeting:

Action: RCVS to seek clarification regarding changes to the large animal clinic at Adelaide. It was reported that RCVS had contacted AVBC for clarification and were awaiting a response.

Action: PQSC recommendation to go to Education Committee (Bristol and Nottingham accreditation decisions). The committee heard that Education Committee agreed with the recommendations from PQSC and it was reported that the schools had been notified.

Action: RCVS to contact SGU (regarding covid plans and annual monitoring clarifications).

Action: RCVS to update guidance for standards in Domain 3.

An update on these items formed later agenda items.

Action: PQSC recommends agreed classifications to Education Committee as final. It was noted that Education Committee had agreed with the recommendation from PQSC.

Pretoria visitation

- An update was presented to members advising that the Pretoria visitation report, which had been due to be discussed at this meeting, was not available. The South African Veterinary Council (SAVC) had contacted RCVS to report that there had been a delay in receiving the formal response to the report from the School, and it was noted that this will now become an agenda item for the August PQSC meeting.

Glasgow verification visitation

- As per the guidelines for virtual visitations, The University of Glasgow's School of Veterinary Medicine was required to have a follow up in-person verification visit 12-18 months after their virtual visit, and PQSC were invited to agree on the scope of focus for this three-day visit. It was noted that this would be a joint visit with the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) and the Australasian Veterinary Boards Council (AVBC).
- Some members queried the purpose of the verification visit as the recommendations were already outlined in the visitation report (following the virtual visit) and could possibly be addressed through Annual Monitoring. It was noted that verification visits were intended to allow consideration of any aspects of the virtual visitation that could not be seen remotely, such as physical resources and facilities, as well as following up on any recommendations outlined in the report. It was agreed that some of the recommendations might be able to be covered

through annual monitoring, whereas other areas would still need to be seen in person. Therefore, it was agreed that the aim of the visit would be to gather more evidence to monitor progress with meeting the recommendations from last virtual visit, in addition to the facilities tour that could not be carried out virtually during the previous visit.

10. It was noted that all Schools that had received a virtual visitation had signed a declaration agreeing to an in-person verification visit within 12-18 months. Schools had also agreed that any additional areas of concern noted during the visit would be subject to further inspection during that verification visit.
11. Some members queried if individual criteria should be made available to schools and visitors so they know exactly what is being looked at in Standard 3. However, it was decided that as the whole of standard 3 needed to be covered this would not be helpful in this instance.
12. The committee concluded that the focus of the Glasgow verification visit will be to look at Standard 3 in its entirety plus the following recommendations and minor deficiencies from the virtual visit:

Standard 4 – Animal Resources

Recommendations

- The School must ensure that all relevant animal handling training and assessment is successfully completed prior to students first extra mural placements with the relevant species.

Standard 11 – Outcomes Assessment

Recommendations

- The college must have processes in place whereby students are observed and assessed formatively and summatively, with timely documentation to assure accuracy of the assessment for having attained each of the following competences:
 7. understanding of health promotion, and biosecurity, prevention and control of disease including zoonoses and principles of food safety
- The School must ensure that documentation exists that all students have attained competence in food safety and veterinary public health.

Action: Inform Glasgow Vet School of the RCVS verification visit focus.

Dublin verification visitation

13. As per the guidelines for virtual visitations, University College Dublin School of Veterinary Medicine is required to have a follow up in-person verification visit 12-18 months after their

virtual visit. This will be a joint visit with AVMA and AVBC. PQSC was invited to agree a scope of focus for this three-day visit.

14. It was agreed by members that the focus for this visit would consist of a tour of the facilities to look at Standard 3 as well as looking at the minor deficiencies as outlined in the virtual visit report:

Standard 4- Clinical Resources

Deficiencies (Minor):

Schools must conduct effective assessment to ensure that students have competence in animal handling before commencing extramural and clinical work

Directives:

All students must receive instruction and assessment to ensure competency in safe animal handling prior to beginning pre-clinical EMS.

Standard 6- Students

Deficiencies (Minor):

Information available to prospective students must include relevant requirements for professional licensure.

Directives:

The school must provide relevant requirements for professional registration, easily accessible, on its website and prospectus.

Standard 9- Curriculum

Deficiencies (Minor):

The curriculum must provide:

c. instruction in both the theory and practice of medicine and surgery applicable to a broad range of species. The instruction must include principles and hands-on experiences in physical and laboratory diagnostic methods and interpretation (including diagnostic imaging, diagnostic pathology, and necropsy), disease prevention, biosecurity, therapeutic intervention (including surgery), and patient management and care (including intensive care, emergency medicine and isolation procedures) involving clinical diseases of individual animals and populations. Instruction should emphasize problem solving that results in making and applying medical judgments.

Directives:

To guarantee that educational objectives are met, the school must ensure the quality and consistency of learning experiences in clinical EMS through effective evaluation and management by faculty.

Deficiencies (Minor):

Workplace learning placements must have learning outcomes that contribute to the attainment of graduate attributes with associated assessments. Mechanisms to allow workplace learning providers to critique the workplace learning program are required. Academic staff must be responsible for the overall supervision of all types of workplace learning. The School must have processes for liaison with workplace learning providers and

ensuring that all students secure required placements. Mechanisms must be in place to allow EMS providers to critique the EMS program.

Directives:

The school must ensure the quality and consistency of learning experiences in clinical EMS through effective evaluation and management by faculty to ensure educational objectives are met.

Standard 11 – Outcomes Assessment (AVBC/RCVS Standard 12)

Deficiencies (Minor):

The school must provide evidence that all of its graduates have (or for a new school, will have) achieved the level of competence required of an entry-level veterinarian (AVBC Attributes of Veterinary Graduates and RCVS Day 1 competences) and the program's stated learning outcomes. Direct observation to assess student competence in relevant skills must be used widely.

Directives:

The school must communicate outcomes of review processes to relevant internal and external stakeholders, including the Veterinary Council of Ireland.

Action: Inform Dublin of the scope and focus of the verification visit

City U Hong Kong final visitation update

15. A verbal report was given to PQSC members to inform them there may need to be an additional PQSC meeting in 2023 to consider the outcome of the final accreditation visit to City U in Hong Kong.
16. As the Hong Kong Veterinary Surgeons Board (HKVSB) will not register graduates from that school until it has received RCVS accreditation, there had been discussions with the University regarding expediting the final decision-making process. The two-month formal consultation period is currently set out in the Veterinary Surgeons Act, which is an opportunity for the school to provide a response to the findings within the visitation report, however there would be scope for shortening that period if the university agreed to it. This had already been done during the University of Surrey accreditation, where a two-week consultation period had been negotiated.
17. If City U were to agree to a shortened consultation period, then there would be scope to bring forward their accreditation decision, therefore enabling graduates to start work earlier.

Edinburgh visitation

18. PQSC were asked to ratify the visitor list for the Edinburgh visitation so it could be approved by Education Committee at the next meeting. Members agreed.

SGU further clarifications

19. Please see confidential appendix.

Updates/clarifications to new accreditation standards

20. Following one-to-one meetings with each of the vet schools regarding the new accreditation standards, requests for further clarification or additional guidance had been suggested across some standards. It was noted that the standards themselves were not being changed, and that only the guidance for these standards was being clarified or amended.
21. Some members queried the changes to the guidance for Standard 5.3 regarding appraisals. They felt that the guidance suggested a very time intensive process for off campus educators and needed to be more proportionate to a person's role and status within the University.
22. It was clarified to members that appraisals were there for staff to discuss their training needs and development, not merely for career progression and promotion opportunities. Therefore, appraisals were seen as an important standard for all educators. It was agreed that the wording in the guidance can be amended to reflect this.
23. It was agreed that the guidance would be reviewed again to reflect the purpose of appraisal as well as its proportionality to the staff role for off-campus educators. For off-campus educators the term 'appraisal' should reflect a person's development in their role as an educator and also form part of quality assurance for IMR

Action: Revise guidance for Standard 5.3 to reflect a proportionate approach for off-campus educator appraisals, their purpose in quality assurance, and also the wider development role of appraisal.

24. It was noted that the suggested guidance for 6.4 should read VPH not VPN.

Action: Amend typo from VPN to VPH in the suggested guidance for standard 6.4

25. The EMS policy was discussed regarding formalising the amount of weeks preclinical, animal handling EMS that a student could be exempt from on an exceptional basis. For example, if someone had a lot of prior, relevant experience, such as a veterinary nurse or someone who had lived their whole life on a farm, they may not need as much animal handling experience in a certain species as other students.
26. The current policy states that exemptions can be granted, however, any student that is exempt in one area should use the time to develop skills in another area. It had been proposed by one vet school that it would be unfair to make a student complete extra hours in another area and that this part of the policy should be removed.

27. It was felt by members that insisting students make up their EMS hours in another area was devaluing the skills they already have and that this should not be mandatory in the new EMS policy.
28. It was also agreed that up to a maximum of six weeks exemption would be allowed for students with extenuating circumstances, determined on a case-by-case basis where students could demonstrate extensive prior experience.

Action: Amend the new EMS policy regarding exemptions for students with prior animal handling experience.

Any other business

Statutory Membership Examination

29. Dr Bradbury updated PQSC that there had been some issues with the scheduling of the OSCE component of the Statutory Membership Examination (SME) this year, due to the number of candidates and visa challenges for coming to the UK. It was reported that there were currently four candidates who were eligible to sit the OSCE this year that might miss out due to visa delays, which would result in them having to wait a full year before being able to sit the examination.
30. PQSC were informed of the proposal to alter the timings for the SME exam from 2023 onwards to allow for more time between the written exam and the OSCEs. It would also allow any appeals to be dealt with from the written component prior to the OSCEs, whereas currently these candidates had been allowed to sit the OSCEs without an outcome from the written exam if the appeal could not be heard in time. Since candidates needed six-months' notice for any major changes to the SME, these proposals had already been agreed by the chairs of the SME Board and Education Committee.
31. PQSC agreed to the proposals and changes to the timings of the SME were to be published following the meeting.

Action: Amendments to the timings of the SME to be finalised and published.

International Accreditors Working Group (IAWG)

32. A verbal report was given of the IAWG meeting held on 14th and 15th June 2022. PQSC members were informed that full minutes would be available once they had been received from the secretary.

Date of next meeting

33. The date of the next meeting will be the 10th August 2022 at 11am, in person, in Central London. Committee members were asked to confirm their attendance to Jordan Nicholls.

Summary	
Meeting	Education Committee
Date	13 th September 2022
Title	Conflict of Interest Policy guidance for EC and PQSC
Summary	Committee members are asked to declare any potential Conflicts of Interest before a meeting commences. This paper provides guidelines as to what may constitute a conflict of interest.
Decisions required	To agree and adopt the guidance
Attachments	Conflict of Interest Policy Guidance
Author	Kirsty Williams Education Quality Improvement Manager k.williams@rcvs.org.uk / 0207 965 1105

Classifications		
Document	Classification¹	Rationales²
Paper	Unclassified	

¹Classifications explained

Unclassified	Papers will be published on the internet and recipients may share them and discuss them freely with anyone. This may include papers marked 'Draft'.
Confidential	Temporarily available only to Council Members, non-Council members of the relevant committee, sub-committee, working party or Board and not for dissemination outside that group unless and until the relevant committee or Council has given approval for public discussion, consultation or publication.
Private	The paper includes personal data which should not be disclosed at any time or for any reason, unless the data subject has agreed otherwise. The Chair may, however, indicate after discussion that there are general issues which can be disclosed, for example in reports to committees and Council.

²Classification rationales

Confidential	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. To allow the Committee or Council to come to a view itself, before presenting to and/or consulting with others2. To maintain the confidence of another organisation3. To protect commercially sensitive information4. To maintain public confidence in and/or uphold the reputation of the veterinary professions and/or the RCVS
Private	<ol style="list-style-type: none">5. To protect information which may contain personal data, special category data, and/or criminal offence data, as listed under the General Data Protection Regulation

Guidance for managing potential conflicts of interest for committee members

The RCVS is the guardian of the good standing of the profession and, in order to maintain this position and the powers of self-regulation, it is important that those elected or appointed to undertake activities on behalf of the RCVS behave in a way that commands the respect and trust of the public and the profession. There is both a legal and public relations imperative to look after the reputation of the profession and College by ensuring that business is conducted in accordance with proper procedures. The RCVS is subject to the Freedom of Information Act and is obliged to make information about its activities available to the public.

Conflicts of interest

A conflict of interest is any situation in which personal interests, or loyalties that are owed to another person or body, may (or may appear to) unduly influence or affect a decision. Conflicting interests usually fall into the following categories:

- **Financial interests:** These may apply either directly or indirectly through a partner, spouse, close relative, or to an entity or institution to which you are connected (e.g. your partner being in the management team of a company the RCVS proposes to hire or is paid to provide a service to the RCVS).
- **Non-financial interests:** These cover other kinds of potential gain (e.g. increase in reputation, ability to carry out activities).
- **Loyalties:** These arise from a personal connection or duty to another person or organisation (e.g. to a past employer, past student, family member, friend, close colleague or frequent collaborator)

Examples of loyalties may be, but are not restricted to:

- Having a personal or business interest in the outcome of an agenda item
- Recent collaborative research, teaching or service interests with a key administrator or faculty members of a university under discussion.
- Having graduated from, or been employed full time or part time by the school being evaluated during the last 5 years.
- Having recently applied for employment with a university under discussion.
- Being engaged by a vet school as an external examiner in the last 3 years.
- Having provided consultancy advice for a university under discussion – either voluntarily or for a fee.
- Having published statements or opinion which could be perceived as evidence of bias.
- Having a close family or personal relationship with a key member of a university under discussion.

In a small profession the potential for conflicts of interest is exacerbated. In order to utilise relevant knowledge and experience in decision making it is often necessary to involve those who have personal or professional interests. In making decisions about particular individuals, it may be the case that those involved in the decisions know the individuals involved, directly or indirectly. In order to discharge its responsibilities the College must take a pragmatic approach and take particular care in assessing the risks involved and in mitigating them, wherever possible. This guidance is intended to assist in this by ensuring that all concerned are fully aware of any conflicts of interest and that those interests are declared or managed appropriately and proportionately.

All Council and non-Council members who serve on Council Committees (including the Education Committee) must submit a 'Biographies and Declaration of Interest form' (attached) annually to the committee secretary. Declarations of interest should be continuously kept up to date by reporting any changes when they arise, or at least no later than 28 days of any change in circumstances. (It is not the responsibility of RCVS staff to send reminders). Other sub committees and working parties (including PQSC) need to declare an interest on a case-by-case basis, rather than on a general form. This must be done in advance of the relevant meeting via email to the secretary, or verbally at the meeting under the agenda item "Declarations of Interest".

Depending on the nature of the interest, a committee member may be asked to step out of the meeting (either physically in the case of an in-person meeting or will asked to join a waiting room in the case of a virtual meeting). In this way, any potential conflicts of interest are managed during the meeting.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Name of Committee member: _____

Please complete either section A, or section B as appropriate:

A

I confirm that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, I have no current conflict of interest that would, or could be perceived to affect my duties as a committee member

Signature: _____

Date: _____

B

I wish to declare the following interests:

- Financial interests

- Non-financial interests

- Loyalties

Signature: _____

Date: _____

To be returned to the committee secretary and updated annually. Any changes in circumstances to be reported to the committee secretary within 28 days of the change.

Summary	
Meeting	Education Committee
Date	13 September 2022
Title	Covid temporary policy review: EMS Requirements
Summary	<p>As part of the on-going three-monthly reviews of the temporary EMS requirements, resulting from the effects of lockdown measures during the pandemic, Education Committee is asked to consider EMS completion data submitted from schools in August.</p> <p>At its last meeting in May, Education Committee agreed that no further adjustments to the temporary policy were required.</p> <p>Education Committee is invited to consider the latest set of data and decide if any further changes to the temporary policy should be made at this time.</p> <p>Education Committee is also asked to agree which requirement applies to the April cohort of students at Nottingham vet school.</p>
Decisions required	<p>a) To confirm the pre-clinical EMS requirement for the class of 2027.</p> <p>b) To agree on any further changes to temporary EMS policy.</p> <p>c) To agree which requirements apply to the April cohorts at Nottingham.</p>
Attachments	<p>Annex A - Summary of data returned on EMS completion rates as at August 2022</p> <p>Annex B - Summary of data returned on EMS completion rates as at May 2022</p>
Author	<p>Duncan Ash</p> <p>Senior Education Officer</p> <p>d.ash@rcvs.org.uk</p>

Classifications		
Document	Classification¹	Rationales²
Paper	Unclassified	n/a

Review of temporary EMS policy

Background

1. A number of temporary amendments to Extra-Mural Studies (EMS) policy and support measures have been put in place to address the difficulties faced by students in achieving their full EMS requirement of 12 weeks Pre-clinical Animal Husbandry EMS (AHEMS) and 26 weeks Clinical EMS, directly as a result of lockdown measures during the Covid-19 pandemic.
2. All remaining Covid restrictions were removed in July 2021, however RCVS committed to continue carrying out periodic reviews of this policy, until it became apparent that EMS completion was no longer being affected by knock on issues of the pandemic. At the February meeting of Education Committee, it was agreed that a reduction of 3 weeks should be applied to the clinical EMS requirement for the class of 2024, and therefore their current requirement for this cohort is 23 weeks. At the following review at the Education Committee in May, there were no further reductions agreed, as completion rates provided by schools demonstrated that students were on track to complete their requirements. Vet school and student representatives requested that these reviews continue to take place and be considered at a later Education Committee meeting.
3. For the latest review, RCVS had again requested data from the EMS Coordinators at each of the vet schools, detailing the average number of weeks completed per year (mean, median and range), against the number of weeks that would normally have been completed by August in a typical year without pandemic restrictions in place.
4. A summary of the completion data collected can be seen at **Annex A**. At the time of writing, no data had been supplied from Bristol. For comparison, the data collected in May can be seen at **Annex B**.
5. Since the last review, the class of 2022 will now have graduated.
6. For the class of 2025 (in-coming 3rd years), it would be expected that all students would have either met the reduced AHEMS requirement of 6 weeks or would meet it before starting clinical EMS. There have been no reports from schools to suggest there have been any problems for students meeting these requirements.
7. For reference, the current requirement for all year groups at the time of the review in August is shown below:

Student Cohort		AHEMS requirement (usually 12 weeks)	Clinical EMS requirement (Usually 26 weeks)
Year of programme starting in September 2021	Year of Graduation		
Year 1 (in-coming Year 2)	2026	12 weeks	26 weeks

Year 2 (in-coming Year 3)	2025	6 weeks with online top-up around personal learning objectives	26 weeks
Year 3 (in-coming Year 4)	2024	6 weeks with online top-up around personal learning objectives	23 weeks
Year 4 (in-coming Year 5)	2023	6 weeks with online top-up around personal learning objectives	13 weeks with online top-up around personal learning objectives
Year 5 (Graduated)	2022	12 weeks	13 weeks with online top-up around personal learning objectives

Booking placements

8. Education Committee had also requested, if available, data on placements that were scheduled to go ahead, as there were some continuing reports that a handful of students were finding it difficult to book placements, as providers were tending to favour students in the later years. However, it was difficult for all schools to be able to gather this accurately, and therefore limited data has been returned, as seen below:

Mean average weeks of currently booked future placements, per student:

School	Class of 2027	Class of 2026	Class of 2025	Class of 2024	Class of 2023
Edinburgh			0.93	4.57	2.26
Liverpool		3.9	4.5	5.6	7
RVC		2.2	1.7	2.7	3.1
Surrey		2.06	2.22	4.48	2.45

9. With not all schools able to return data, it is difficult to analyse at this stage as it is hard to identify any clear correlations either way, with two schools currently having more weeks booked in for class of 2023, and the other two having more for class of 2024. Education Committee are therefore invited to consider whether schools should continue to be asked to provide this should further reviews take place.

Completion data

Pre-clinical EMS

Class of 2025

10. As detailed above, the class of 2025 would be expected to have completed their reduced requirement of 6 weeks EMS (with additional online top-up), or would at least meet this prior to commencing their clinical EMS. With the data showing the lowest averages of 6 weeks completed, and no further concerns reported by the schools there is currently no justification for the AHEMS requirements for the class of 2025 to be further reviewed.

Class of 2026

11. The averages of completed weeks for the class of 2026 are only slightly less than those for the class of 2025, and with a further year to complete this requirement, at this time there are no urgent indications that reductions to their requirement should be made at this time.
12. It should be noted that the current requirement for the class of 2026 is still at the “normal” level of 12 weeks. Therefore, completion data will be monitored as they progress through year 2, however based on completions levels so far, it would suggest that placement availability for pre-clinical / AHEMS is returning to pre-pandemic levels.

Class of 2027

13. Education Committee is invited to confirm the pre-clinical EMS requirement at the standard amount of 12 weeks for the in-coming 1st years.

Clinical EMS

Class of 2025

14. The class of 2025 will be commencing their clinical years from September 2025 and would therefore have not yet started on their clinical EMS or have commenced prior to the summer holiday period. The current clinical EMS requirement is set at the standard amount of 26 weeks.

Class of 2024

15. The clinical EMS requirement for class of 2024 is currently 23 weeks. A reduction of 3 weeks from the usual requirement of 26 weeks was agreed by Education Committee in February 2022.
16. The completion data varies between schools, but some averages are low which would cause more concern than others. Looking at data from schools that had been supplied in both May and August, there has at least been an increase in completion rates over the summer, albeit steady. However, the rates are still all generally lower than what would normally be expected to have been completed by August.
17. With two more academic years remaining, there is still time for completion rates to increase. However, with completion increase being low since May, the lowest averages would be needing to go up from 2 weeks to 23 weeks (although this is Nottingham's April cohort who will graduate

later in the year in December 2024), and from 4 weeks to 23 weeks. Therefore, Education Committee may consider that a further reduction is necessary.

Class of 2023

18. The clinical EMS requirement for class of 2023 is currently 13 weeks.
19. The data returned indicates that most have met this requirement already, or are very close to meeting it, therefore suggesting no further reviews and reductions are necessary for this cohort.

Options for review

A) A further reduction of 3 weeks clinical EMS for class of 2024, to 20 weeks

Recognising that completion rates are still low at some schools for this cohort, a further reduction of 3 weeks could be allowed, bringing the requirement down to 20 weeks, with students having two academic years remaining to meet this requirement. Placements are being completed; however, completion rates have been slow since the last review in May, and therefore a reduction could help to ease students' concerns.

If Education Committee agrees to this option, they are also invited to consider when the next review should take place as outlined in options B and C.

B) No further reductions at this time, with the next review to take place in February 2023

The next review to take place at Education Committee in February, paying close attention to any further increased completion rates for the class of 2024. It is unlikely that many further placements would be taking place between now and the next Education Committee in November, and therefore not likely that the data will change meaningfully in that time. Recognising this, and with no current immediate concerns, a later review at the Education Committee in February 2023 in five months' time would be able to take into consideration any further placement completion over the winter holiday period.

C) No further reductions at this time, with no further review planned unless necessary

A final option could be to revert to the standard EMS policy for all future cohorts as standard and to stop reviewing completion data on a routine basis, now that restrictions have not been in place for over a year. The RCVS would still be in a position to respond quickly with policy changes, should any further restrictions arise, or if significant challenges are presented. However, with the reversal of most other pandemic related amendments to policy, and with the majority of students now more or less on track to complete their requirements, the regular review of EMS requirements can come to an end.

20. Education Committee is invited to consider the options and agree a way forward.

Nottingham April cohort

21. RCVS has been contacted by Nottingham requesting clarification over which requirement their April cohort students have to meet. These students begin their programme in April, and graduate in December. Education committee is invited to consider whether the April cohort should meet the requirement of the previous September cohort, or that of the next September cohort.

Annex A

Summary of data collected on EMS completion rates – August 2022

The median of completed weeks

	Graduating Year				
	2026	2025	2024	2023	2022
Cambridge	5	8	6	13	
Edinburgh	5	6.5	5	9	
Glasgow	6	n/a	10	14	
Liverpool	2	7.6	12	12	
Nottingham (September)	6	7	11	12	
Nottingham (April)	n/a	6	2	n/a	
RVC	3	6	4	11	
Surrey	5	11	8	13	

The mean of completed weeks

	Graduating Year				
	2026	2025	2024	2023	2022
Cambridge	5	8	6	13	
Edinburgh	5.2	6.7	5.1	9.19	
Glasgow	5	n/a	10	10	
Liverpool	1.3	6.5	10.3	10.2	
Nottingham (September)	6	7	11	12	
Nottingham (April)	n/a	6	2	n/a	
RVC	3.5	6	3.8	6	
Surrey	5.07	10.38	7.77	12.64	

The range of completed weeks

	Graduating Year				
	2026	2025	2024	2023	2022
Cambridge	0-8	1-14.5	2-12	2-24	
Edinburgh	0-12	0-13	2-22.25	2-20	
Glasgow	0-12	n/a	0-26	6-26	
Liverpool	0-10	0.6-13	1-16.6	2-14	
Nottingham					
RVC	1-10	1-12	1-8	1-12	
Surrey	1-12	1-16	1-16	2-16	

At the time of writing, no data has been supplied from Bristol.

Annex B

Summary of data collected on EMS completion rates – May 2022

The median of completed weeks

	Graduating Year				
	2026	2025	2024	2023	2022
Bristol					
Cambridge	4	6	4	12	16
Edinburgh	1	6	1	7	12.2
Glasgow	2	11	4	12	17
Liverpool					
Nottingham (September)	2	3.5	2	7	Completed
Nottingham (April)	0	6	3	n/a	n/a
RVC					
Surrey					

The mean of completed weeks

	Graduating Year				
	2026	2025	2024	2023	2022
Bristol					
Cambridge	4	6.24	4.24	11.02	16.47
Edinburgh	1	6	1.5	7.5	13.1
Glasgow	2	10.2	5.05	12.6	17.5
Liverpool					
Nottingham (September)	2	3	3	7	Completed
Nottingham (April)	0	3	3	n/a	n/a
RVC					
Surrey					

The range of completed weeks

	Graduating Year				
	2026	2025	2024	2023	2022
Bristol					
Cambridge	0-8	0-14	0-12	0-19	Not available
Edinburgh	0-4	3-14	0-9	1-23.5	3-37.5
Glasgow	0-4	0-12	0-19.6	2-26	4-26
Liverpool					
Nottingham					
RVC					
Surrey					

The Nottingham April cohort for class of 2026 have just begun their programme, so would not have expected to have completed any EMS at this stage. The numbers differ between their September and April cohorts for class of 2025 as the April cohort has just completed their “long” holiday period.

As at 26/4/22, no data supplied from Bristol, Liverpool, RVC and Surrey.

Summary	
Meeting	Education Committee
Date	13 September 2022
Title	Update from the CPD Policy and Compliance subcommittee
Summary	Minutes from the meeting of the CPD Policy and Compliance subcommittee on the 8 th June 2022.
Decisions required	None
Attachments	None
Author	Jenny Soreskog-Turp Lead for Postgraduate Education j.soreskog-turp@rcvs.org.uk / 020 7202 0701

Classifications		
Document	Classification¹	Rationales²
Paper	Unclassified	

¹Classifications explained

Unclassified	Papers will be published on the internet and recipients may share them and discuss them freely with anyone. This may include papers marked 'Draft'.
Confidential	Temporarily available only to Council Members, non-Council members of the relevant committee, sub-committee, working party or Board and not for dissemination outside that group unless and until the relevant committee or Council has given approval for public discussion, consultation or publication.
Private	The paper includes personal data which should not be disclosed at any time or for any reason, unless the data subject has agreed otherwise. The Chair may, however, indicate after discussion that there are general issues which can be disclosed, for example in reports to committees and Council.

²Classification rationales

Confidential	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To allow the Committee or Council to come to a view itself, before presenting to and/or consulting with others 2. To maintain the confidence of another organisation 3. To protect commercially sensitive information 4. To maintain public confidence in and/or uphold the reputation of the veterinary professions and/or the RCVS
Private	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. To protect information which may contain personal data, special category data, and/or criminal offence data, as listed under the General Data Protection Regulation

CPD Policy and Compliance sub-committee Notes of the meeting held on 8 June 2022

Present:	Linda Ford Alison Carr Susan Paterson Claire Roberts Alison Reid Claire Bloor	Chair
In attendance:	Jenny Soreskog-Turp Joanne Stetzel Julie Dugmore	Lead for Postgraduate Education Head of Marketing and Digital Communications Director of Veterinary Nursing

Welcome and Apologies

1. The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, Elizabeth Cox and Neil Smith had sent her apologies.

Minutes of the meeting on the 26 January 2022

2. The minutes of the meeting held on 26 January 2022 were received and approved as a true and accurate record.

Matters arising

3. There were no matters arising that were not covered within the main agenda.

1CPD/Communication Update

4. Ms Stetzel gave an update on the CPD communication plan. The focus is still to support members, either to engage with the outcomes-based CPD requirement or using 1CPD, and also how to reach members that are still not using 1CPD.
5. There has been an increase in 1CPD users amongst all groups, but overseas practising veterinary surgeons are still using it much less than UK practising and registered veterinary nurses. The committee thought it would be useful to understand how many overseas veterinary nurses are currently on the Register so that the number of non 1CPD users can be compared across professions.

Action: Bring data on overseas RVNs to next meeting

6. We will continue to support members with CPD webinars and also offer one to veterinary surgeons who have completed VetGDP so they will have a good understanding of what counts as CPD and recording of CPD as they start their career.
7. The committee asked if there was a cut-off date for recording your CPD for each calendar year and at the moment there isn't, but it could be considered now that 1CPD is mandatory. The committee felt that it needed careful consideration especially if someone was attending CPD at the end of the year or if they were doing a qualification stretching over two years so to not make it too bureaucratic. The committee felt it would be useful to see some examples of how it would work in 1CPD.

Action: Demonstrate options in 1CPD for next meeting

8. It was also suggested that it would be useful to have some targeted comms for employers about how they can support employees CPD including reflection and how that can be incorporated into appraisals and personal development plans.
9. The committee felt that it would be useful if the reports included percentage of veterinary surgeons and nurses that were recording reflection rather than the number of reflections recorded in total.

Action: Education Department to update the report and include percentage of VS/VNs using reflections.

VS CPD Audit Update

10. The committee received an update about the results from the VS CPD audits. Non-1CPD users and 1CPD users that were non-compliant were targeted as part of the sample group and that is probably the reason why response rate and compliance were lower in last year's audit compared to previous years.
11. The committee discussed how to engage with the groups that do not respond to any communication from the RCVS and suggested that develop a comms campaign about the privilege and responsibility of being a self-regulated profession and make comparisons to other professions.

Action: Comms to explore formats for campaigns that discusses responsibilities of a self-regulated profession.

1CPD Exemptions

12. The Committee received and noted the paper about exemptions to 1CPD.
13. 377 applications for exemption to 1CPD have been received but 37 were from non-practising members who do not need to meet the CPD requirement (including using 1CPD). The reason for exemption were:

- (a) Overseas Practitioners (185)
- (b) HP - Working Abroad (11)
- (c) Record CPD using another system (12)
- (d) Not in Clinical Practice (26)
- (e) Do not wish to use a computer system (44)
- (f) Will start/ or doing VetGDP/PDP (27)
- (g) Other (35)

14. The committee felt that they were unable to agree an outcome for the overseas practitioners until there had been a discussion between Education Committee and Registration Committee about CPD requirement for overseas users.

Action: Bring back 1CPD exemption for overseas users to next meeting

15. Many members who had applied for an exemption due to recording in other systems were also members of the Royal College of Pathologist and recording CPD using their system. The committee felt that it would be useful to understand the level of details required by the Royal College of Pathologists before making a decision about exemption to 1CPD.

Action: Education Department to contact Royal College of Pathologists to discuss CPD requirements.

16. The committee felt that applications from the other group of members should not be approved as they did not feel that their application demonstrated that they could not use 1CPD due to a legitimate reason such as disability or being were digitally excluded in some way.
17. The committee suggested that we write to members of these groups informing them that the committee has not granted them an exemption, but they can provide the committee with further details of legitimate reason not to use the system. Anyone not using 1CPD will need to submit records for audit on an annual basis.

Action: Education Department to contact members who applied for 1CPD exemptions

Any other business

18. There was no other business to discuss.

Next Meeting

19. The next meeting is scheduled for the 27th October 2022.

Jenny Soreskog-Turp

June 2022

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Summary	
Meeting	Education Committee
Date	13 September 2022
Title	Statutory Membership Examination Guidance 2023
Summary	<p>Updates to the SME guidance are presented with tracked changes for consideration. In addition to general updates there are some key changes to note:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adjustment of examination dates and deadlines • Additional offers of free membership for refugee candidates (p12-13) • Advice on insurance for candidates seeing practice in the UK (p16). When this paragraph was reviewed by PQSC they requested changes, including the addition of a sentence relating to responsibility for checking insurance to align with the requirements for EMS. The SME Board are unhappy with this addition and wish for it to be removed as they feel it places additional barriers to seeing practice. • Inclusion of a hyperlink to the published RCVS Guidance on Religious Clothing and Beliefs (p30) • An additional example of misconduct (p32)
Decisions required	<p>Education Committee is asked to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Decide whether or not to include the sentence "<i>It is the responsibility of the candidate to check that any practice they attend has appropriate insurance cover,</i>" within the section relating to insurance (p16). 2. Approve the 2023 SME Guidance and release it for publication.
Attachments	
Author	<p>Jude Bradbury Examinations Manager j.bradbury@rcvs.org.uk / 020 7050 5043</p>

Classifications		
Document	Classification ¹	Rationales ²
Paper	Unclassified	

¹ Classifications explained	
Unclassified	Papers will be published on the internet and recipients may share them and discuss them freely with anyone. This may include papers marked 'Draft'.
Confidential	Temporarily available only to Council Members, non-Council members of the relevant committee, sub-committee, working party or Board and not for dissemination outside that group unless and until the relevant committee or Council has given approval for public discussion, consultation or publication.
Private	The paper includes personal data which should not be disclosed at any time or for any reason, unless the data subject has agreed otherwise. The Chair may, however, indicate after discussion that there are general issues which can be disclosed, for example in reports to committees and Council.

² Classification rationales	
Confidential	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To allow the Committee or Council to come to a view itself, before presenting to and/or consulting with others 2. To maintain the confidence of another organisation 3. To protect commercially sensitive information 4. To maintain public confidence in and/or uphold the reputation of the veterinary professions and/or the RCVS
Private	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. To protect information which may contain personal data, special category data, and/or criminal offence data, as listed under the General Data Protection Regulation



Statutory Membership Examination Guidance 202~~3~~²

You are advised to read this guidance carefully and to refer to it as necessary at the different stages of the exam process. It describes the exam application process, the format and content of the exam and gives some advice about preparing yourself to sit the exam.

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1. Introduction

Only veterinary surgeons and veterinary nurses registered with the RCVS can practise veterinary medicine in the United Kingdom. The entitlement to be registered as a member of the RCVS is determined by the [Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966](#).

If you would like to register to practise in the UK as a veterinary surgeon but your veterinary degree is not recognised by the RCVS, you must pass the RCVS Statutory Membership Examination.

Membership of the RCVS is not a substitute for a work permit or for meeting UK immigration regulations.

This guidance outlines the process of applying to sit the Statutory Membership Examination. It describes the exam application process, the format and content of the examination and gives some advice about preparing yourself to sit the examination.

You are advised to read this guidance carefully and to refer to it as necessary at the different stages of the exam process

If after reading the guidance, you have questions or require further information, please contact the Examinations Manager on 020 7050 5043 or rcvsexam@rcvs.org.uk. Please note that office hours are 9.15am - 5pm. We aim to respond to emails within three working days of their receipt.

1.1. Legislative framework

The Statutory Membership Examination is held under the provisions of Section 6 of the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966, and in accordance with the Regulations made under sub-section (4) of that section. The examination is designed for veterinarians who qualified overseas and who wish to obtain the right to practise in the UK. The examination tests whether a candidate has the knowledge and skills for practising veterinary surgery in the UK. The standard of knowledge and skill required to be shown by candidates to satisfy the examiners in the statutory examination shall be not less than the standard required to qualify as a veterinary surgeon under section 3(1) of the Act.

Success in the examination leads to the right to register and to practise in the UK (subject to visa requirements). Although the UK has now left the European Union (EU) much of the EU legislation still applies in the UK. This means that veterinary surgeons who work in the UK must be aware of both UK and relevant EU legislation as it relates to their veterinary activities in the UK. Candidates should also be aware of any changes in legislation between the devolved regions within the UK.

1.2. RCVS Day One Competences

The Statutory Membership Examination is set to the standards outlined in the RCVS Day One Competences. These are the minimum essential competences that the RCVS expects all veterinary students to have met when they graduate. Further information on the Day One Competences can be found in section 6.1.

1.3. Format of the Examination

The Statutory Membership Examination will normally be held once a year. It will cover the underpinning knowledge and understanding, and practical and professional competences required to practise as a veterinary surgeon in the United Kingdom. This includes coverage of veterinary public health, medicine, surgery, and the husbandry associated with companion animals, production animals and horses.

The Statutory Membership Examination consists of the following components:

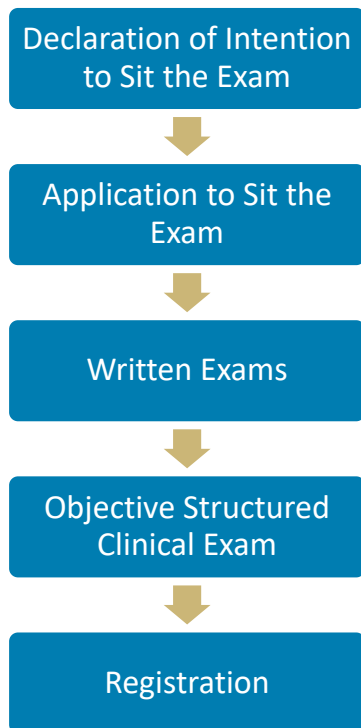
- Written examinations consisting of Multiple-Choice Questions (MCQs) testing the candidate's clinical knowledge across three clinical domains (companion animal, production animal (including veterinary public health) and equine), and their knowledge of the RCVS Code of Professional Conduct.
- An Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE) across three clinical domains (companion animal, production animal (including veterinary public health) and equine).

Candidates must pass the written component before being allowed to proceed to the OSCE.

Further information about the content and format of the examination can be found in sections 6.7 and 6.8.

[1.4. Pathway to RCVS membership](#)

There are five stages that potential registrants must complete before they can practise veterinary medicine in the United Kingdom:



These stages are described below:

Stage 1 – Declaration of your Intention to Sit the RCVS Statutory Membership Examination.

Submit a declaration of intention to sit form and provide proof of your veterinary degree, identity, and a completed self-assessment skills list. If you wish to request a reasonable adjustment due to a disability or particular need (see section 2.6) or apply for an exemption for the English-language test (see section 2.7) then this is the stage at which to do so. This information will be checked by the Examinations Manager and if you meet our requirements, your name will be added to our active list of individuals preparing for the examination and you will be given permission to 'see practice'. The process is covered in section 2 of this guidance.

Stage 2 – Application to Sit the Examination

If you are eligible to sit the examination, you will be sent the examination application form. This form must be returned to us by **14 Jan/February** in the year in which you wish to sit the examination, along with the entry cost of £2,500 and proof of your International English Language Test System (IELTS) or Occupational English Test (OET) score and letter(s) or Certificate(s) confirming your good standing. The exam application process is covered in section 4 of this guidance.

Stage 3 – Written Examinations

The written examinations will be held in **March/April/May** online using proctored software. You must pass all three domains of the clinical paper (companion animal, production animal (including veterinary public health) and equine) as well as the Code of Professional Conduct paper before you can proceed to the OSCE. See section 6.7 for more information.

Stage 4 – Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE)

The final part of the examination is the Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE). This is a practical examination and will be held in **July** at a veterinary school in the UK. As with the clinical written examination, you must pass all three domains (companion animal, production animal (including veterinary public health) and equine) to pass the OSCE. See section 6.8 for further information.

Stage 5 – Registration

Examination results will be sent via email 4 weeks after the final part of each section (written examinations or OSCE). Successful candidates will be invited to attend the RCVS offices in person or remotely online to register and be admitted to membership. The RCVS holds a short ceremony for candidates who have passed the examination. This normally takes place in late August or early September a few weeks after the results have been issued.

1.5. Working as a Veterinary Nurse

All veterinary nurses in the UK must be registered with the RCVS. Veterinary surgeons who do not also hold an appropriate veterinary nursing qualification may not apply for registration as a veterinary nurse. This is because the required competences and skills (and their education and training) have significant differences from those of veterinary surgeons. If you wish to 'see practice' at a UK veterinary surgery, information about how to do so can be found in section 3.3.

2. Declaring your intention to sit the RCVS Statutory Membership Examination

The declaration of intention to sit form can be found on the RCVS website here:

<https://www.rcvs.org.uk/registration/applications-veterinary-surgeons/statutory-membership-exam>. If you hold a veterinary degree and intend to sit the RCVS Statutory Membership Examination, you must:

- a. Declare your intention by completing the 'declaration of intention to sit' form
- b. Provide proof of your primary veterinary degree or diploma (see section 2.1)
- c. If available, provide university issued transcripts of your studies (see section 2.2)
- d. Provide your registration certificate or veterinary licence if you have one (see section 2.3)
- e. Provide proof of your identity (see section 2.4)
- f. Confirm your belief that you have the relevant knowledge and skills by completing the self-assessment skills list (see section 2.5)
- g. Apply for exemption from IELTS/OET, if applicable. **Exemptions must be submitted no later than 1 December of the year preceding the exam** (see section 2.5)
- h. Complete a reasonable adjustment application, if required (see section 2.6).

2.1. Proof of primary veterinary degree

The examination regulations require you to provide proof of your primary veterinary qualification (normally a copy of the certificate or diploma that you received upon graduation from your university).

You must send us a copy (photocopy or electronic scan) of your veterinary degree certificate and transcripts (with translations if the documents are not written in English) when you send us your declaration of intention to sit form. Please **do not** send your original veterinary degree certificate, as we cannot be held responsible for any loss if you ignore this instruction.

Please keep your original certificate safe and ensure that it is available for you to bring to your registration appointment after you pass the examination. If we need to see your original veterinary degree certificate beforehand, we will contact you to make an appointment.

The RCVS normally accepts applications from veterinary surgeons who hold a degree or diploma awarded after at least 5 years of full-time study from institutions listed on the World List of Universities or the AVMA-Listed Veterinary Colleges of the World. Where this is not the case the RCVS may require further information to allow us to establish that the national government in the country which awarded the qualification allows you to practise veterinary medicine in that country.

2.2. Transcripts

If your university issued transcripts of your studies, you must send these to the RCVS as part of your declaration of intention to sit the examination. As with your degree, if your transcripts are not in English then you must provide a professionally translated version alongside a copy of the original.

2.3. Registration certificate or veterinary licence

If you are currently, or have at any time, been on a register of persons qualified to practise veterinary surgery in any country or state you must provide details including the registration certificate or licence if this has been issued. This must also be professionally translated into English with a copy of the original also provided.

2.4. Proof of your Identity

You are required to provide a copy of your passport photo page. If your name differs from that on your degree or diploma you must also send a copy of the relevant legal document linking both names e.g., marriage/divorce certificate. If your name differs between documents for another reason, please contact the Examinations Manager for further instruction at rcvsexam@rcvs.org.uk. Please **do not** send your original passport, as we cannot be held responsible for any loss if you ignore this instruction.

2.5. Self-assessment skills list

Applicants must complete a self-assessment of their skills and knowledge to demonstrate that they have previously acquired knowledge and experience of the clinical activities featured in the RCVS Day One Competences document. Candidates must meet a minimum required standard in the companion animal, production animal (including veterinary public health) and equine domains to pass the examination. The self-assessment skills list form provides the opportunity for applicants to reflect on the skills they have and make an informed decision about their likelihood of passing the examination. If there are a few areas on the list which need to be covered the applicant should complete an action plan identifying how they will address these areas prior to the examination. This may include undertaking additional training, seeing practice, CPD or other suitable activity.

2.6. Candidates with special requirements or requests for reasonable adjustment

If you need reasonable adjustment or special provision to be made for you in the examination because of a disability or other particular need, you should submit a completed [reasonable adjustment form](#), available on the RCVS website, **as early as possible** in the examination application process. We must be notified no later than the examination entry closing date, otherwise it may not be possible to make the necessary arrangements for you in time.

The RCVS will discuss what arrangements can be made, with you, the Chair of the Statutory Membership Examination Board, and medical advisers as appropriate. Applications made for medical reasons must be accompanied by a current medical letter or certificate (translated into English).

Assessments for special educational needs must have been made after your sixteenth birthday.

In some exceptional cases, you may be asked to contribute towards any additional costs incurred depending on the circumstances.

If you are pregnant, and your due date is after the OSCE, please inform us as soon as possible as additional health and safety precautions may have to be arranged for you.

2.7. English language test exemption

All RCVS registrants must be able to communicate effectively in English at an appropriate level. This can be demonstrated by passing either the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) or the Occupational English Test (OET) at the minimum required standard. Further information about these assessments can be found in section 4.2.

If you can demonstrate that your veterinary degree was taught and assessed entirely in English, then you may apply for an exemption from the language test as part of your declaration of intention to sit the RCVS Statutory Membership Examination.

If you wish to apply for the exemption, then this must be done **no later than 1 December the year prior to the exam**. If we do not accept your exemption, then this will allow you enough time to sit one of the English-language tests.

You must arrange for your university to write a letter to the RCVS to formally confirm that your whole veterinary degree was obtained at an English-speaking University where the whole course was taught and assessed solely in the medium of English. This letter must be written in English and be sent directly from the University to the RCVS at rcvsexam@rcvs.org.uk.

We will consider each application on its individual merit. If you are unable to provide this evidence, you will need to take the IELTS or OET test.

2.8. Translations of documents

If any documents submitted as part of the declaration of intention to sit or examination application are not written in English, you must provide an English translation alongside the photocopy of the original document.

All translations must be made by a professional translator and certified by the translator or a university or regulatory body.

2.9. Recent graduates

If you have recently completed your studies and know that you have passed your degree, but your certificate has not yet been issued you are advised to contact the Examinations Manager on 020 7050 5043 to discuss the likelihood of you being able to enter the examination. You should be prepared to provide specific information such as the date that your certificate will be available.

2.10. Refugees

Veterinary surgeons seeking asylum in the UK can seek financial aid provided by the RCVS (administered by the Refugee Council) to sit the Statutory Membership Exam. Evidence of your refugee status should be submitted during the 'declaration of intention to sit' phase, along with the other documentation and supporting evidence listed above.

The RCVS recognises that due to their situation, refugee veterinary surgeons may be unable to provide this evidence. The Education Department, in conjunction with the SME Board, may be required to exercise their judgment to determine whether a refugee candidate can declare their intention to sit on a case-by-case basis.

Once you have submitted the necessary supporting evidence the Examinations Manager will contact the Refugee Council to request financial support. Financial support offered includes:

- IELTS/OET testing
- SME exam fee

Additionally, the RCVS has arranged the opportunity for refugees and asylum seekers to receive free membership from the below organisations:

- British Cattle Veterinary Association
- British Equine Veterinary Association
- British Small Animal Veterinary Association
- British Veterinary Association
- RCVS Knowledge

- [Society of Practising Veterinary Surgeons](#)
- [Sheep Veterinary Society](#)
- Veterinary Management Group

The Examinations Manager will provide refugees and asylum seekers with a consent form to share necessary details with the above organisations to gain free membership on an annual basis. The organisations retain the right to remove the opportunity of free membership, but the RCVS commends their generosity.

2.11. Submitting your application

You may submit your declaration all year round. If you intend to enter the next examination, we must receive completed declarations and supporting documents by **31 December**~~January~~ otherwise we cannot guarantee that we will have sufficient time to carry out the necessary checks before the examination closing date of 14 ~~Jan~~February. We recommend starting the declaration process around 5 months before the exam.

You should aim to send all the documents together. Once all the evidence has been submitted your declaration will be reviewed to establish if you meet our requirements. You will normally receive a written response from us outlining the outcome of your declaration within two weeks of receiving a completed submission. Please note that if we must ask for additional documentation from you then it may take longer to process your submission. If you are eligible to apply to sit the examination, you will be sent an examination application form and a letter confirming that you may “see practice” (see section 3.3). You will also be added to our active list of individuals preparing for the examination.

The evidence you provide will be kept on file as long as you confirm that you are intending to sit the examination. If we believe that you are no longer intending to sit the examination (i.e., five years after last communication) your documents will be destroyed, and you will be required to submit a fresh declaration.

2.12. Renewal of your Declaration of intention to sit

Accepted declarations of intention to sit expire on 31 September each year. Once your declaration expires, you will be removed from our active list and will no longer be eligible to see practice. If you submitted an initial declaration of intention to sit and did not enter the examination but wish to do so in the next diet, please submit a renewal of intention to sit form between 14 ~~August~~February and 31 September. This also applies to candidates who failed the examination but wish to re-enter in the next diet.

You will not be eligible to see practice unless you have an in-date confirmation of intention to sit letter from the RCVS. If you wish to continue seeing practice after the 31 September, please ensure you submit your renewal of intention to sit in good time to rcvsexam@rcvs.org.uk. Please allow up to two weeks for your renewal of intention to sit to be processed and for a new letter to be generated for you.

3. Preparing yourself for the examination

You are responsible for preparing yourself to sit the examination. We provide information about the examination to assist candidates in their preparation as well as the following support:

- Access to an online formative written assessment for candidates who submit a completed application. This contains 110 MCQs in the same format and to the same standard as those that will feature in the written examinations. The formative examination is run using the same software used for the exam, giving you the opportunity to practice using the software and become accustomed to its format and features.
- A suggested reading list in appendix 2 of this document
- A familiarisation session for candidates who pass the written component and proceed to the OSCE. This will feature models and equipment commonly used in UK veterinary OSCEs. This is an optional session and will not contain any information about the content of the OSCE stations. This will normally be held on the day before the OSCE.

The examination is set to the standard of the RCVS Day One Competences and takes a holistic approach aiming to mimic scenarios seen in UK first-opinion practice (see section 6). It is therefore recommended that candidates familiarise themselves with the RCVS Day One Competences documents available on our website here: <https://www.rcvs.org.uk/document-library/day-one-competences/>.

3.1. Courses of study

There are currently no courses specifically designed to prepare candidates for the examination. If we receive details of a course aimed at preparing candidates for the examination, we will pass on this information to candidates. The RCVS does not offer or endorse any course of this type and it would be up to you to decide whether it would be useful to you to attend a course, or not. Please direct any enquiries to the provider of the course you are interested in.

3.2. Studying and access to libraries

Once you have met the examination entry requirements and have been accepted as a candidate to sit the next examination you will be able to obtain membership of the RCVS Knowledge Library.

Examination candidates are offered a special library membership category which allows them to borrow books. There is a fee of £25 for 6 months' membership and an additional fee for sending books in the post. The Knowledge Library is open by appointment only. Please contact the RCVS Knowledge Library by email at library@rcvsknowledge.org or telephone 020 7202 0752 in advance to arrange an appointment and to let us know the material you would like to use. Membership forms are available from the library on request.

You may be eligible to apply for a reader's pass to the British Library's science collections. For information about the British Library's admission arrangements please contact them directly or visit their website.

3.3. Practical and clinical experience – Seeing Practice

As well as studying, spending time at UK veterinary practices will help you to gain practical and clinical experience in preparation for the examination. This is referred to as "seeing practice". You may see practice under the Veterinary Surgeons (Practice by Students) (Amendment) Regulations 1993. The

regulations described below allow you to attend veterinary practices in the UK for the purpose of seeing practice.

Seeing practice in all domains (companion animal, equine, production animal and public health) is strongly encouraged. All aspects of the SME are formatted around how consultations are carried out in the UK. By seeing practice, you will experience how vets in the UK work and carry out consultations, which may be different to how you were trained. You may also gain exposure to species and diseases that are not common in other regions of the world which will improve your knowledge. Additionally, if English is not your native language it can help improve your communication skills in all formats, which will aid in preparation for the IELTS/OET as well as the exam.

You may not see practice without a valid, in-date letter from the RCVS confirming that you have submitted a completed declaration of intention to sit.

These Regulations permit overseas veterinarians to gain clinical experience in UK veterinary procedures by attendance at a UK veterinary practice for the purpose of entering for the examination. The supervising veterinary surgeon is responsible for what a veterinary student or a candidate for this examination does and, therefore, has discretion to decide what procedures you may carry out. The Regulations set down different degrees of supervision for different procedures.

The Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966 provides, subject to certain exceptions, that only registered members of the RCVS may practise veterinary surgery and the RCVS Code of Professional Conduct for Veterinary Surgeons states that 'Veterinary surgeons must ensure that tasks are delegated only to those who have the appropriate competence and registration'.

Exceptions to this rule are described in the Code's supporting guidance under the heading, 'Treatment of animals by unqualified persons'. The exception at 19.6 enables a registered vet, at his or her discretion, to supervise your seeing practice in the same way that he or she would supervise a veterinary student as part of their clinical training, and the levels of supervision that apply are described in paragraph 19.7. Both paragraphs are set out below:

19.6 "The Veterinary Surgeons (Practice by Students) (Amendment) Regulations 1993 identify two categories of student, full time undergraduate students in the clinical part of their course and overseas veterinary surgeons whose declared intention is to sit the MRCVS examination within a reasonable time. The Regulations provide that students may examine animals, carry out diagnostic tests under the direction of a registered veterinary surgeon, administer treatment under the supervision of a registered veterinary surgeon and perform surgical operations under the direct and continuous supervision of a registered veterinary surgeon.

19.7 The RCVS has interpreted these as follows:

- (a) 'direction' means that the veterinary surgeon instructs the student as to the tests to be administered but is not necessarily present
- (b) 'supervision' means that the veterinary surgeon is present on the premises and able to respond to a request for assistance if needed
- (c) 'direct and continuous supervision' means that the veterinary surgeon is present and giving the student his/her undivided personal attention"

If you see practice under these Regulations, you must notify the RCVS of your arrangements using a “seeing practice” form and provide updates as appropriate. This form is available on the RCVS website at <https://www.rcvs.org.uk/registration/applications-veterinary-surgeons/statutory-membership-exam/>.

Candidates do not need to gain insurance from providers such as the Veterinary Defence Society to see practice in the UK. Employers/host practices must have Public Liability, Employer’s Liability and Professional Indemnity insurance or finances in place to protect the practice, SME candidate and any staff who will be supervising the candidate should a problem occur. It is the responsibility of the candidate to check that any practice they attend has appropriate insurance cover. This insurance will be valid provided the candidate and staff are not acting outside the legislation described above.

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The RCVS cannot help you find a veterinary practice or recommend any establishments and so you must make your own arrangements. The RCVS Find a Vet database allows you to search for veterinary practices by geographical location and is available on the RCVS website at <https://findavet.rcvs.org.uk/find-a-vet-surgeon/>

It is for you to decide how much time you need to spend “seeing practice” based on your assessment of your abilities and knowledge of UK veterinary practice. You may need to arrange to spend time at several different veterinary practices and/or one or more of the animal charities to gain practical experience with horses, production and companion animals and veterinary public health.

4. Applying to sit the examination

Application forms will be sent out to all of those on the active list prior to the opening of the application window (normally 1 October). Anyone who submits a declaration/renewal of intention to sit during the application window will be sent an application form once their declaration/renewal is accepted by the RCVS.

When you submit the application, you must provide the following:

- a. A completed examination application form (see section 4.1)
- b. An English language test report confirming you have achieved the minimum standard (see section 4.2) or confirmation of your exemption
- c. Evidence (certificate/letter) of your good professional standing (see section 4.3)
- d. ~~One recent passport-style photograph (see section 4.4)~~
- e. Examination fee (see section 4.5)

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You will be accepted as an examination candidate only after we have received all the items that make up a complete application. Upon completion of all entry requirements, you will receive written confirmation from the RCVS that you have been accepted as a candidate to sit the next examination.

In addition to meeting the RCVS examination entry requirements, you may also need to obtain entry clearance from the British Embassy or High Commission in the country you are living in, or a national of, to enter the UK to take the examination. The RCVS is unable to offer advice regarding your visa status or work permit status. For such advice, please contact the Home Office.

4.1. Examination application form

The closing date for entry for the examination is **14 JanFebruary** each year. It is your responsibility to complete and submit your application by the closing date. ~~All We recommend sending your applications must be submitted form~~ via email to rcvsexam@rcvs.org.uk. ~~If you send your application by post, you should obtain proof of posting. Applications will be accepted if they reach the RCVS after 14 February provided you can provide proof of posting dated on or before 13 February (UK first class post only).~~

4.2. English language test report

If you did not apply for an exemption, then you must provide proof that you meet the minimum required standards in the English language. This can be demonstrated via either of the following assessments:

International English Language Testing System (IELTS): Achieving an average score of at least **7.0** across the listening, reading, writing, and speaking components of the **academic** version of the International English Language Testing System (IELTS). A score of 6.5 is allowed in one component provided the remaining components are 7.0 or more:
<https://www.ielts.org/>

Occupational English Test (OET): Achieving at least a **grade B** in the listening, reading, writing and speaking sub-tests of the **veterinary** version of the Occupational English Test (OET). A grade C+ is allowed in one sub-test provided the grades for the remaining sub-tests

are a B or higher: <https://www.occupationalenglishtest.org/test-information/healthcare-professions/veterinary-science/>

Once you have achieved the required standard in one of these assessments you must arrange for the results to be provided to us. This will be a **Test Report Form** if you took the IELTS or a **Statement of Results** if you took the OET. You can send your test results to us by post or provide a good quality scanned copy by email (we cannot accept photocopies). Alternatively, you can arrange for your test centre to send them directly to us.

Test scores must be in date on all days you intend to sit all examinations i.e., April to July. They are valid for **two years** from the date of your test. We do not accept scores from any English tests other than IELTS or OET.

If you pass some sub-tests of the OET but fall below the required standard in others, then you may re-sit those failed sub-tests. Please note that all of the sub-tests must be in date for the duration of the examination period. IELTS do not allow candidate to re-sit individual components, therefore if you fall below the required standard in any component of the IELTS test you will need to retake it in its entirety.

We will confirm that we have received the test report once we have verified your scores through the IELTS/OET verification service. For OET users, please ensure that you add the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons to the list of verifier institutions permitted to access your results.

IELTS test results are normally available to collect from the test centre 13 days after taking the test, whilst the OET results are normally available 17 days after the test. We strongly advise you aim to take your test as far in advance of submitting your application as possible.

4.2.1 English language test validity extension

A passing IELTS/OET is valid for two years. Individuals who have achieved a passing score and have continued to live and/or work in an English-speaking country can request their test results to be extended by providing a reference from a qualified and registered veterinary surgeon in an English-speaking country. In the UK this person should be a member of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (MRCVS).

An English-speaking country is defined by the following list: <https://www.gmc-uk.org/registration-and-licensing/join-the-register/before-you-apply/evidence-of-your-knowledge-of-english/using-other-types-of-evidence>.

Your reference should be emailed by the veterinary surgeon writing on your behalf, directly to rcvsexam@rcvs.org.uk and include the following:

- Your name
- The veterinary surgeon's name and registration number
- The address of the veterinary practice
- The dates and amount of time you have spent working with or observing them in practice
- Their assessment of your English skills in writing, reading, listening, and speaking

A reference which is approved by the Examinations Manager will be valid for one year from the date of receipt.

4.3. Evidence of your good professional standing

Before an examination entry is accepted, the RCVS must be satisfied that:

- you are of good standing, i.e., that there is no charge of, or ongoing investigation of, crime or unprofessional conduct outstanding against you.
- you are of good character in general terms.
- the information provided relates to your most recent period of veterinary employment and registration or student activity.
- the evidence provided is current and up to date. We accept letters dated within the examination entry period (1 October – 14 ~~Jan~~February). We do not accept letters dated or received outside this time (15 ~~Jan~~February - 30 September).

You must provide the RCVS with up-to-date evidence of your good standing each time you apply to sit our examination. Letter(s) ~~must~~can be directly emailed to rcvsexam@rcvs.org.uk or ~~posted directly to the RCVS registration department by the author of the letter to:~~

~~Registrations~~

~~Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons~~

~~Belgravia House~~

~~62-64 Horseferry Road~~

~~London~~

~~SW1P 2AF~~

~~Any other documentation can be emailed or posted to the same addresses.~~

4.3.1. Who may provide evidence of your good standing?

We require a letter or certificate from the veterinary licensing authority of the country in which you are currently registered or were last registered. This must be accompanied by a notarised English translation where necessary. It should be noted that in some cases, the RCVS may require additional evidence of good character, especially if your registration is not current or you have not practised within the last 3 months. If a letter provided on your behalf does not meet RCVS requirements, we will inform you as soon as possible and the RCVS Registration department will discuss provision of additional suitable documentation with you.

If you ~~have graduated within the last year are a recent graduate~~ and have not previously been registered, you should obtain a letter or certificate of good professional standing from the Dean or Principal of the university or college at which you obtained/will obtain your primary veterinary qualification.

The RCVS will not normally accept evidence which is presented by the candidate. However, if your veterinary licensing authority or university cannot provide a letter or certificate written in English, a copy of the letter or certificate may be sent to you, so that you can get it translated. You must then send the original notarised translation to the RCVS. The original copy must still be sent directly from the originator.

It is our experience that some organisations take several months to provide the evidence of good professional standing. You should therefore request the document at the earliest opportunity.

It is your responsibility to ensure that the RCVS receives your letter or certificate of good professional standing. The RCVS is not responsible for chasing up these letters. If the evidence is not provided by the examination entry closing date, then it is possible that you will not be able to enter the examination.

If you cannot provide a letter as described above, you will have to arrange for the RCVS to receive evidence of your good standing from other sources. Please send an email to rcvsexam@rcvs.org.uk outlining your query. If necessary, you will be sent a form to complete which will allow the registration team to consider your circumstances and advise you how to meet our requirement.

4.4. ~~One recent passport-style photograph~~

~~You must provide a recent passport-style photograph with your full name on the back which was taken within the 12 months prior to your application.~~

4.45. Number of examination attempts

Candidates may attempt the examination as many times as they wish. For each attempt, you will be required to pay the full examination fee. The RCVS Education Committee may, if it sees fit, withdraw the right to sit the examination from a candidate. If the committee decides to use their power to do this, that decision will override their rule allowing unlimited attempts at the whole examination.

4.56. Examination fees

The cost of the examination is £2,500. This is made up of the examination fee of £2,200 and a non-refundable administration charge of £300. The examination fees are reviewed on an annual basis.

Each fee allows one attempt at the examination. If you are not successful and decide to sit the examination again a separate application form must be completed, and another fee and administration charge paid.

Payment ~~is made via the RCVS MyAccount portal~~ ~~by bank transfer is preferred~~. Details are provided ~~once all other aspects of the exam application are complete~~ ~~on the examination application form~~.

Please note, all international bank charges are incurred by the person paying the fee, including those levied by our bank, which is approximately £7.00.

4.7. Withdrawal and refunds

If you wish to withdraw from the examination, you must notify the RCVS in writing ~~by email to rcvsexam@rcvs.org.uk~~ ~~if notification is sent by email, a letter, signed by the candidate who has withdrawn, must follow by post~~. Any refund of an examination fee will be made payable to the person who paid the fee. The administration fee will not be refunded.

The size of the refund you will be eligible for is dependent on when you choose to withdraw:

Time of Withdrawal	Eligible Refund
Before the closing date of 14 Jan February	The examination fee of £2,200, not including the non-refundable £300 administration charge
More than 28 days before examination	Half the examination fee: £1,100

28 days or fewer before the examination	No refund
Failure to attend the examination	No refund

Discretionary refunds on medical or compassionate grounds

If you must withdraw from the examination for medical or compassionate reasons, you may be eligible for a discretionary refund of some or the whole examination fee.

You must submit your request in writing with documentary evidence to support the medical or compassionate grounds cited no later than 28 days after the part of the examination that you missed. You may have to wait several months for a decision because the RCVS committees which have discretion to grant refunds meet at fixed times during the year and it may not be possible to reach a decision outside the meetings.

4.8. Reapplications following failure or withdrawal

Each time you apply to enter the examination you must:

- complete a new application form
- pay the appropriate examination fee
- arrange for the RCVS to receive up-to-date evidence of your good professional standing
- meet any other entry requirements. You will have to sit another academic IELTS or OET test if your previous report is out of date (more than two years old)

5. Admission to the Register

Candidates who pass the whole of the Statutory Membership Examination are eligible for admission to the Register of the RCVS. It is a legal requirement under the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966 that you register and are admitted to membership of the RCVS before engaging in any type of veterinary work in the UK or using the letters MRCVS after your name.

Some successful candidates will also have to meet UK Home Office immigration criteria to work in the UK and may require a work permit. These requirements are separate from the requirement to be registered with the RCVS. Further information on work permits can be found on the Home Office website. Any queries must be directed to the Home Office.

You must have your passport or identity card with you and your original veterinary degree certificate or diploma when you register. Registration fees must be paid before you attend to register. Full details will be sent with your examination results.

5.1. Admissions ceremony

The RCVS holds a short ceremony for candidates who have passed the examination. This takes place in late August or early September a few weeks after the examination results are issued.

If you cannot attend this ceremony, you can register at one of the RCVS' regular routine registration sessions or remotely online. Dates are available from the RCVS Registration department. Please note appointments are provided on a first come first served basis. If you need to attend a registration appointment because you have been offered a veterinary position in the UK, and there are no available dates listed ahead of your start date, please submit a copy of the job offer letter you received from your new employer (ensuring it includes your start date) with your Registration Form. Please note this will usually be dependent on the cancellation of an existing appointment, so we are not able to guarantee you an earlier appointment, but we will do our very best.

Registration fees and retention fees are reviewed annually and are increased from 1 April. Please look at the RCVS website for details of current fees <http://www.rcvs.org.uk/about-us/fees/>. If you do not pay your annual retention fee, your name will be removed from the Register, and you will not be able to practise as a veterinary surgeon in the UK.

6. About the examination

This section of the guidance provides information about the scope, standard, format and content of the written examinations and the Objective Structured Clinical Exam (OSCE).

The examination is conducted in English and all communication with candidates, before, during and after the examination will be conducted in English.

6.1. General information

The RCVS Day One Competences are the minimum essential competences that the RCVS expects all veterinary students to have met when they graduate, to ensure that they are safe to practise on day one, in whichever area of the profession they start to work. Veterinarians who qualified overseas are also expected to meet these minimum standards and therefore the examination is designed to provide candidates the opportunity to demonstrate that they meet or exceed this minimum standard. You are advised to read the RCVS Day One Competences document carefully and refer to it throughout your exam preparation. The document can be downloaded from the RCVS website.

The clinical written papers and the OSCE are split into three domains: companion animal, production animal (including veterinary public health) and equine. Candidates **must** meet a minimum required standard in each of the three domains and **will not be able to compensate across them**. If a candidate falls below the standard in one domain, then they will not pass the examination regardless of how well they performed in the other domains. This applies to both the written and OSCE components of the examination.

The examination will cover the underpinning knowledge and understanding, clinical reasoning, and practical and professional competences required to practise as a veterinary surgeon in the UK including coverage of veterinary public health, medicine, surgery, and the husbandry associated with companion animals, production animals and horses.

Only veterinary surgeons who have submitted an examination application form and supporting documents, paid the examination fee and had their application accepted may attend the examination.

If your application to sit the exam is accepted, you will receive confirmation of the date and time of your written examinations by ~~1428~~ February.

Candidates who pass the written component will receive the location and date(s) on which their OSCE takes place along with their written examination results.

Candidates **must achieve a pass in all three domains of the clinical paper as well as the Code of Professional Conduct paper before they can proceed to the OSCE**. All components (written examinations and OSCEs) of the exam must typically be sat in the same year.

Re-sits of failed individual clinical domains (Companion Animal, Equine, Production Animal) are not permitted in the same diet. However, if a candidate has passed all three clinical domains but failed the Code of Professional Conduct paper, they are allowed to re-sit the COPC prior to the practical examination.

The examination should not be taken without thorough preparation.

6.2. Venues

The written examination will be administered online usually over five days. You will be able to take the examination from a secure, appropriate location of your choosing in your own country of residence. You must inform the RCVS Examinations Manager no later than eight weeks prior to the date of the first written examination the country and time zone in which you will be sitting.

The examination will be invigilated remotely through the software by utilising your webcam and microphone to capture a video record of you during the examination session. The software will lock down your computer for the duration of the examination session: you will not be able to navigate away and access the internet or other files/programs stored on your machine. The hardware requirements can be found at <https://examssoft.force.com/emcommunity/s/article/Exemplify-Minimum-System-Requirements>.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you have the necessary hardware to run the examination software and it (including the webcam and microphone) is in full working order. There will be no opportunity to re-sit or appeal any components of the examination due to hardware failure. Re-sits will only be considered for a verifiable fault with the examination software which was outside of your control.

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The RCVS will run a mock test of the formative assessment which will allow you to determine whether your hardware is compatible, and to familiarise yourself with navigating through an exam using the software. Any issues must be raised with the Examinations Manager as soon as possible.

The software utilises advanced artificial intelligence to detect potentially suspicious behaviour in the video record, such as eye movements suggesting that a candidate is reading a study aid or noises in the room which could suggest a candidate is being fed answers. Any suspicious behaviour suggestive of cheating will be referred to the Examination Board and the Registrar, who will review all reports of the alleged misconduct and consider if there is sufficient evidence for the allegation to be pursued (see section 6.14 of the 2020 Statutory Membership Examination Guidance published on our website for further information on the examination misconduct policy).

You must conduct yourself during this examination no differently than if it were being held in a regular, invigilated test centre.

Candidates who pass the written components will proceed to the OSCE. This will take place at a UK veterinary school in July.

Candidates are responsible for making their own travel and accommodation arrangements.

It should be noted that the examination is designed and delivered by the RCVS and therefore all correspondence should be directed to us. Candidates must not contact the test centre or the vet school directly as they will not be able to offer assistance.

6.3. Emergency evacuation procedures

If you are required to evacuate the building where you are completing your remote online written examination, then do so immediately and according to the instructions set out by the building's regulator. You must notify the examinations manager about your need to evacuate as soon as it is safe to do so.

If during the practical examinations, you are instructed to evacuate the examination area you should follow instructions provided by the examiner or other test centre personnel. You should leave the

examination area in an orderly way, without taking anything with you. You must assemble at the designated area and not leave this area. If you are permitted to return to the examination area, you should do so immediately when you are instructed. Candidates who are absent once the examination has re-started will not be compensated for any time lost.

6.4. Identification

You will be invited to set up an account in advance with the examination software which will include verification of a baseline photograph to determine your identity. ~~You will be asked to submit a scan of your photo identification. You must present this identification again when you log in to sit the examination on the exam date.~~

6.5. Prohibited items

For the written examination, the following items must not be present in the room whilst the examination is in session:

- Any educational, test preparation or study materials
- Electronic devices other than the computer on which you will be taking the examination. These include mobile phones, hand-held computers, pagers, and smartwatches
- Bracelets or jewellery which bang or scratch on the table should be removed to prevent any unnecessary noise which could trigger the invigilation software. Exceptions to this can be found in section 6.8.4.
- Stationary, paper and calculators. These are included within the exam software.

You are not permitted to take any of the following items into the OSCE.

- Any educational, test preparation or study materials
- Personal items, including mobile phones, hand-held computers, pagers, smartwatches, or other electronic devices (clocks will be provided where required)
- Bags, purses, wallets
- Coats and outdoor wear not required for the examination
- Bracelets or jewellery which bang or scratch on the table must be removed to prevent disturbance to other candidates. Exceptions to this can be found in section 6.8.4.
- Pencil cases or stationery (these will be provided for you).

Secure space will be provided at the venue for you to store your personal belongings.

6.6. Fit to sit the examination

By presenting yourself at the examination centre (which in the case of the written examination shall be interpreted as logging onto the software), you are indicating that you are fit to sit the examination. If you become unwell at any point during the examination, you should inform one of the test administrators or examiners immediately. This can be done during the written examination by calling the Examinations Manager on the contact number provided.

6.7. Written examinations

The written examination consists of three clinical domains (companion animal, production animal (including veterinary public health) and equine) as well as an examination testing your knowledge of the RCVS Code of Professional Conduct. You must pass all these components to be eligible to proceed to the OSCE. The written examination will take place remotely across five days.

The use of ear plugs to decrease noise is allowed. These must be presented to the online proctoring software to ensure they are not a means of communication (e.g., Bluetooth enabled).

6.7.1 Clinical exam

This examination consists of 350 clinically relevant Multiple-Choice Questions (MCQ) that test both knowledge and clinical reasoning. These will cover three domains:

- Companion animals – approximately 50% of total questions
- Production animals (including veterinary public health) – approximately 30% of total questions
- Equine – approximately 20% of total questions

The questions typically consist of a clinical vignette (a clinical scenario which you might come across in your day-to-day practice), with five answer options. Candidates are required to select the **single best answer**. With this type of question, several of the options are potentially correct but one is a better match to the question than the others by a clear margin.

You must meet a minimum required standard in each of the three domains. There will be **no compensation across domains** i.e., if you fall below the required standard in one domain, then you will fail the examination regardless of how well you did in either of the other domains.

Ensure that you allow yourself enough time to log into the software before the examination is due to start. The formative assessment mock test will have given you an idea of how much time you will require.

The examination sessions have been spread out to compensate for the wide range of time zones in which the cohort of candidates will be sitting. You will have a total of 8 hours over four days for the clinical written examinations. Each day will involve a 2-hour examination with no opportunity for toilet breaks. Your start time for each day will depend upon which country you are taking the examination from. You will be notified individually with your start time by the examination manager.

Negative marking will not be applied.

6.7.2. Code of Professional Conduct exam

This is an open book MCQ examination designed to test your knowledge of the RCVS Code of Professional Conduct and its application to veterinary scenarios. It will also test knowledge of key organisations and standards relevant to a veterinary surgeon practising in the UK. As with the clinical examination, please ensure that you leave yourself enough time to log in before the exam begins.

~~You may~~To allow you to access a searchable PDF copy of the Code of Professional Conduct or the RCVS website to assist you with, this examination ~~will not utilise the invigilation feature of the examination software~~. Please note, ~~however, that~~ you are still expected to complete this paper under examination conditions and that any allegations of misconduct, such as communication between candidates, will be referred to the Examination Board and the Registrar in line with section 6.14 of the guidance.

The length of this examination session is 2 hours 15 minutes with no opportunity for toilet breaks.

We strongly recommend that you familiarise yourself with the RCVS Code of Professional Conduct and Supporting Guidance when preparing for the exam. If you pass all three clinical domain written examinations but fail the Code of Professional Conduct exam you will be permitted a re-sit opportunity prior to the practical OSCE examinations.

Negative marking will not be applied.

6.7.3. Candidate examination conduct (written examinations)

When logging into the software to take the examination, you will need your username and password ~~as well as the photo identification you submitted when setting up your account.~~

You will be expected to behave as if you were sitting the exam in a physical examination centre. Mobile phones, pagers and electronic devices must be turned off and stored away from your desk. Revision notes, textbooks, articles, journals, and study aids must not be present in the room whilst the examination is in session.

It will not be possible to take toilet breaks whilst the examination is in session (two hours for each clinical written exam, two hours fifteen minutes for the Code of Professional Conduct exam). Please ensure that you are comfortable and prepared before the examination session begins.

No other person is permitted to be in the room with you whilst the examination is in session.

You must not leave the room for any reason other than an emergency whilst the examination is in session.

Communication of any kind with anyone else during the examination is strictly forbidden

You will have the option to finish the examination early if you desire. Once you have finished the examination and submitted your answers the invigilation conditions will be lifted (if appropriate) until the start of the next day's session. You will not be permitted to re-visit your answers once you have completed and submitted your examination.

If you experience any problems with the computer during the examination, contact the examination manager immediately using the provided contact details.

6.7.4. Sample questions

We have provided a small sample of clinical MCQ questions in Appendix 1 so that you can see what format of questions will be included in the examination.

There will be a mock test of the formative assessment scheduled with 110 MCQ questions to aid your exam preparation (100 clinical MCQs and 10 relating to the RCVS Code of Professional Conduct) and give you the chance to take it under the same invigilated conditions that will be in place during the written examination. These questions reflect the breadth and scope of the questions that you can expect to see in the paper and will provide you with an opportunity to experience the style of questions contained within the actual examination. Feedback will be provided for all questions to aid your learning via the online software. It will also be an opportunity to test whether your hardware, including your microphone and webcam, is sufficient to run the examination and that you are comfortable navigating the software. If you have any concerns after taking this mock test, you should contact the Examinations Manager as soon as possible at rcvsexams@rcvs.org.uk

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6.8. Objective Structured Clinical Examination

The clinical, practical examination will be in the form of an Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE). The RCVS has decided to use OSCEs as this is in line with current best practice in veterinary medical assessment. OSCEs are a fair, valid, and reliable assessment method; all candidates will be

assessed on identical practical tasks, asked the same questions, and be scored with a standardised methodology.

The OSCE is a multi-station circuit of practical scenarios which candidates have 20 minutes to complete. Each station within the OSCE assesses a range of skills all of which enable candidates to demonstrate RCVS Day One Competences. The stations are designed with a holistic approach to emulate typical consultations seen in UK general practice, for example the ability to take a history, examine an animal then decide on the next step to be taken and communicate that back to the client.

Stations that assess communication skills may include an actor playing the role of the client or other relevant party. Other stations may involve clinical models/simulators, and some may involve the use of cadavers. Some stations may have a live animal and a model and/or cadaver in separate areas. In all cases, you will be expected to perform tasks as if you were treating a live animal and behave as you would when working in a practice in the UK. These skills will be assessed across companion animal, production animal (including veterinary public health) and equine domains. Candidates must meet a minimum required standard in each of these three domains to pass the examination. There will be **no compensation across domains** i.e., if you fall below the required standard in one domain, then you will fail the examination regardless of how well you did in either of the other domains.

The scenarios which feature in these OSCE stations are based on common and/or important clinical scenario you might encounter in veterinary practice. They will be at the level of the RCVS Day One Competences. These may differ from other countries and therefore you should ensure that you are familiar with the methodology you are required to follow.

Examiners will mark you against a standardised scoring rubric. This will describe to the examiners the performance knowledge skills, behaviours) they need to see you demonstrate before you can achieve the allocated marks. All candidates will be marked against the same scoring rubric.

Each station rubric will assess some or all of the following constructs:

- Animal handling and management
- History taking
- Examination skills
- Diagnosis (clinical judgements)
- Technical skills
- Treatment planning (clinical decision making)
- Communication skills
- Professionalism (including safety)
- Organisation (including time management)

The examiners record their marks independently. During the examination no examiner knows the marks you have scored at any other station. They will not provide you with any feedback on your performance whilst the exam is in session.

Please note that the format of this OSCE differs to those that feature in final-year examinations at UK veterinary schools. Whilst they both assess the same standard (Day One Competence), the statutory membership examination OSCE aims, as far as possible, to mimic scenarios that candidates would come across in their day-to-day practice.

6.8.1. Examiners

The examiners are appointed by the RCVS. There will be two examiners per OSCE station who will observe you during the examination. The examiners will be experienced veterinary surgeons who have received training to ensure that the assessment is valid and reliable.

6.8.2. Candidate examination conduct (OSCE)

The OSCE will normally take place over two days, however this may be liable to change depending on the number of candidates who enter the examination. ~~The dates of the exam. Your schedule will be provided to you,~~ along with your written examination results letter, no later than four weeks after the date of the written examination.

When you arrive at the examination centre you will be shown to a waiting room and your identity will be checked. You will be given a badge that displays your candidate number. This badge must be visible for the duration of the OSCE so that the examiners can identify you. You will also receive a briefing about the examination process.

Your personal belongings must be placed in the locker or secure area indicated by the test centre staff. Mobile phones, pagers and electronic devices must be turned off before being placed in the secure storage area. Neither the test centre nor the RCVS will be held responsible for lost, stolen or misplaced items. You will not be permitted to take any equipment into the examination (except for the items detailed in section 6.8.4). Everything else you require will be provided.

Friends, relatives, or children are not allowed to wait in the test centre.

The OSCE consists of thirteen stations in separate circuits, such as a clinical skills lab, equine centre, or production animal centre. Examination administrators will ensure that you are at the correct circuit and have plenty of time to change into the correct clothing before the exam start time.

At the allocated start time, you will be taken to the examination area where you will be shown to your first OSCE station. You will be given 5 minutes to read the instructions outside the station. This will include a brief background related to the clinical scenario and instructions for completing the task(s). These instructions contain all the information required for you to complete the station so ensure you take the time to read them very carefully. Once the 5-minute reading time has elapsed, you will enter the station and begin the task(s). A copy of the station instructions will be available inside for your reference.

You will have 20 minutes to complete each station. **You are responsible for managing your own time in the station.** Each station will include a mechanism by which you can monitor your time for the duration of the scenario. Note that some stations may contain more than one practical task; therefore, you are advised to plan your time carefully. If you are unable to carry out a particular task, you may bypass it and forgo its marks to focus on other tasks within the station. Once the station's time has elapsed, you will move on to the next station. Other than as directed in the candidate instructions, you should refrain from initiating conversation with the examiner or any other personnel present during a station.

You are advised to check carefully that you have completed all the tasks before leaving the station as once you leave you will not be permitted to re-enter. When you finish each station, you may leave and sit on the chair indicated by the invigilator and wait until the audio announcement tells you to move to the next station. You are not permitted to communicate with other candidates while waiting.

Scheduled breaks will be provided as appropriate. If you need to use the toilet during the OSCE an invigilator will escort you. You will not be given additional time to complete the examination if you do take an unscheduled break. When you have completed all stations in the circuit, you will be taken back to the waiting area.

6.8.3. Health and safety

Working with animals carries with it an element of risk which you are consenting to by entering this examination. In the process of running the examination, the RCVS and the venue will take appropriate steps to mitigate any such risks as far as possible. Neither the RCVS nor the venue may be held responsible for any injuries sustained by a candidate as a result of his/her negligence either through their actions during the examination or their failure to wear adequate protective gear (see section 6.8.4).

As the examination involves the use of live animals, the examiner may stop you at any time during the examination if it appears that your level of competence is such as to jeopardise the safety and/or welfare of the animal or examination personnel.

6.8.4. Dress code, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and equipment

Candidates are required to follow the dress code outlined in this section. Clothing and footwear are not provided by the RCVS or the examination centre, therefore candidates are required to bring their own. It is important that these have been thoroughly cleaned to prevent cross contamination.

You will be expected to bring the following equipment with you:

- Stethoscope
- Fob watch or wristwatch with a second hand for use in clinical examinations of animals (smart watches are prohibited)

For Health & Safety purposes, jewellery including piercings should be removed and hair should be tied back out of the face.

The RCVS recognises there are different religious and cultural beliefs amongst candidates and that candidates may have medical conditions. The RCVS guidance on Religious Clothing and Beliefs can be found [here](#). If you believe these may impact the dress code stated, then please contact the Examination Manager before 31 ~~December~~ January.

Clothing requirements for each section of the OSCE are as follows:

Component	Clothing Requirements
Companion Animal	Clean scrubs <u>or a lab coat</u> and suitable footwear (no open toe shoes)

Production Animal and Veterinary Public Health	Clean overalls or boiler suit and clean wellington boots. Waterproofs may be worn if preferred but are not mandatory. After the exam, candidates must carry out a complete hand and boot wash, remove any waterproofs and change into regular shoes.
Equine	Clean overalls or boiler suit and sturdy boots (preferably steel toe-capped). No waterproofs or wellington boots are allowed in the stables. Protective headgear will be provided by the RCVS.

6.9. Notification of examination results

Examination results will be sent via email no longer than 4 weeks after the final part of the section (written exams or OSCE). Please note that no results are given by telephone.

6.10. Examination Outcomes and Re-sit Policy

The pass mark for each examination you will have to achieve to pass is determined using a recognised standard setting methodology. This evidence-based approach considers the relative difficulty of each of the questions in the exam to determine a fair pass mark in line with the standard expected. Candidates will be notified whether they have achieved the pass mark or not – pass marks will not be published, and feedback will not be available.

If you fail the clinical written examination, you will not be permitted to proceed to the OSCE. If you pass all three domains in the clinical written examination but fail the Code of Professional Conduct examination, you will be invited to re-sit the Code of Professional Conduct exam. If you pass this re-sit exam, you will be eligible to proceed to the OSCE. ~~Please see the website for the re-sit date.~~

If you pass the written examinations and the OSCE you will be invited to apply to register.

Please note that you are not able to carry marks over from previous sittings.

6.11. Examination appeals

The RCVS has an examination appeals procedure carried out in accordance with Examination Appeals Rules made by the Council. An appeal may be made only in respect of the conduct of the examination and not against the academic judgment of the examiners. Appeals must be made using an appeal form obtainable from the RCVS and submitted to rcvsexam@rcvs.org.uk within 28 days of the date of the letter advising you of the examination result.

6.12. Mitigating circumstances

If you feel there are serious mitigating circumstances (such as a sudden onset of illness) affecting your performance at the examination, you must report these to rcvsexam@rcvs.org.uk at the earliest opportunity. If you become ill during the exam session you must notify the examination manager immediately.

If you cannot attend the examination because of serious illness or another overwhelming problem, you should notify us that you will not be attending as soon as possible. After the examination you will be required to complete a mitigating circumstances form providing the circumstances and evidence.

A mitigating circumstances form will be available from the RCVS on request. Completed forms along with supporting information must be supplied within six days of the examination (written or OSCE). Each application will be considered on an individual basis.

6.13. Confidentiality and test security

The results of the examination must be an accurate reflection of the candidate's knowledge and skills as a veterinary surgeon. Any cheating or misconduct before, during or after the examination may raise doubts about your fitness to practise.

All examination material remains the property of the RCVS and you are not permitted to reproduce or attempt to reproduce examination materials through memorisation or other means. You must not share information about the questions or cases used in the examination. You must not provide information relating to the examination content that may give unfair advantage to individuals who may be taking the examination, including, without limitation, posting information regarding the examination content on the internet, on social media or providing it to anyone involved in the preparation of candidates.

If you become aware of or witness any attempt to compromise the examination, please report it to the RCVS.

6.14. Misconduct

If you engage in unacceptable or improper behaviour before, during or after the examination to attain success then your results will be annulled, and you may be barred from entry to future examinations.

Misconduct includes, but is not limited to:

- Failure to comply with reasonable instruction of an examination official.
- Verbal or physical abuse of any person or animal such that an examiner or member of the examination team is made to feel intimidated or unsafe
- Disruptive behaviour during the examination or during break times.
- Copying or attempting to copy the work of another candidate.
- Disclosing content from an examination to a third party.
- Removing examination materials from the examination that you have not previously been authorised to remove. This includes removing materials by using recording devices and taking photographs.
- Bringing items into the examination other than those you have been permitted to use.
- Communication either verbally or via signals with other candidates whilst under examination conditions.
- Impersonation of a candidate or allowing yourself to be impersonated.
- Bribery, or attempted bribery of any personnel involved in the design, development, delivery of the examination.

Commented [JB2]: Check against antibullying policy

Allegations of misconduct will be referred to the Examination Board and the Registrar, who will review all reports of the alleged misconduct and consider if there is sufficient evidence for the allegation to be pursued. Candidates accused of misconduct will have the opportunity to provide a defence. We may withhold candidate results while we investigate an allegation of misconduct.

EC Sept 22 AI 17

Appendix 1

Example Clinical MCQ questions

The single best answer is highlighted

1. You are called to see an 8 year old horse with anorexia, signs of depression and weight loss. Your clinical examination reveals no obvious abnormalities with the exception of poor body condition and icterus of the sclera. In light of the history and clinical findings, what are the most relevant plants or trees to look for in the horse's grazing environment?
 - Alfalfa
 - Foxglove
 - Oak trees
 - Ragwort
 - Yew
2. You are at a routine fertility visit at a dairy farm and are presented with a cow listed as 'oestrus not observed'. On trans-rectal ultrasound the cow has a large thick walled ovarian cyst. The cow's blood progesterone is raised (5ng/ml). What would be the most appropriate treatment?
 - Insert an intravaginal progesterone device for 10-12 days
 - Manual rupture of the cystic structure
 - Single injection of pregnant mare serum gonadotrophin (PMSG)
 - Single injection of gonadotrophin releasing hormone (GnRH)
 - Single injection of prostaglandin
3. You detect a grade V/VI pansystolic left apical murmur in a 10 year old Toy Poodle. The heart rate is 140 beats per minute. The owner reports that the dog has recently started coughing at night. What is the most appropriate method of investigation to determine whether treatment for congestive heart failure is required?
 - 2D echocardiography
 - Auscultation
 - Chest radiography
 - Electrocardiography
 - Serum pro-BNP assay

Appendix 2

Suggested Reading list

The reading list is divided into the three clinical domains: companion animal, production animal (including veterinary public health) and equine. This is followed by a general list containing texts which are relevant to more than one species. Websites that give information about current UK legislation of relevance to veterinary surgeons are listed, as well as some recommended veterinary journals and publications. You should read widely and be familiar with current issues and UK-specific problems. The reading list should act as a guide to the depth of knowledge required and should not be considered as a complete summary of the required knowledge.

You are also recommended to review the Day One Competences published by the RCVS (link below). This sets out the minimum essential competences (comprising knowledge, skills, and attitudes) required to register with the RCVS.

Equine

Auer, J.A. and Stick, J.A. (eds) (2018) *Equine Surgery* 5th ed Philadelphia: Saunders

Reed, S.M. et al (2017) *Equine Internal Medicine*. 4th ed. Philadelphia: Elsevier. ISBN 9780323443296

Munroe, G.A. and Weese, J.S. (2011) *Equine Clinical Medicine, Surgery and Reproduction* London: CRC Press

Knottenbelt, D.C. and Pascoe, R.R. (2013) *The Colour Atlas of Diseases and Disorders of the Horse*. London: Wolfe. ISBN 9780723436607.

Mair, T. et al (eds) (2012) *Equine Medicine, Surgery and Reproduction*. 2nd ed London: CRC Press

Baxter, G.M. (ed) (2011) *Adams and Stashaks Lameness in Horses*. 6th ed Oxford: Wiley Blackwell

Companion animal

Books covering general medicine and surgery:

Nelson, R. and Couto, C.G. (eds) (2013) *Small Animal Internal Medicine*. 5th ed. St Louis: Elsevier. ISBN9780323086820

Fossum, T.W. (ed) (2018) *Small Animal Surgery*. 5th ed. St Louis: Mosby

Schaer, M. and Gaschen, F.P. (2016) *Clinical Medicine of the Dog and Cat*. 3rd ed. London: CRC Press

Johnson, A. and Tobias, K.M. (eds) (2018) *Veterinary Surgery: Small Animal*. Philadelphia: Saunders

Hill, P.B. et al (2011) *100 Top Consultations in Small Animal General Practice*. Oxford: Wiley Blackwell

Maddison, J. et al (2015) *Clinical Reasoning in Small Animal Practice*. Oxford: Wiley Blackwell

Books covering more specific disciplines

DeCamp, C.E. et al (eds) (2015) Brinker, Piermattei and Flo's Handbook of small animal orthopaedics and fracture repair. 5th ed. Philadelphia: Saunders

Miller, W.H. et al (2013) Muller and Kirk's small animal dermatology. 7th ed. Missouri: Elsevier Mosby

BSAVA produce a series of books and manuals which provide comprehensive coverage of a wide range of small animal disciplines. The following are some examples which you may find useful. Further information can be found on their website: www.bsava.com.

Hutchinson, T. and Robinson, K. (2015) Manual of Canine Practice: a Foundation Manual. BSAVA Quedgeley: Gloucester

Harvey, A. and Tasker, S. (2013) Manual of Feline Practice: a Foundation Manual. BSAVA Quedgeley: Gloucester

Holloway, A. and McConnell, J.F. (2013) Manual of Canine and Feline Radiography and Radiology: a Foundation Manual. BSAVA Quedgeley: Gloucester

Bains, S.J. et al (eds) (2012) Manual of Canine and Feline Surgical Principles: a Foundation Manual BSAVA Quedgeley: Gloucester

Duke-Novakovski, T., de Vries, M. and Seymour, C. (2016) Manual of Canine and Feline Anaesthesia and Analgesia. 3rd ed. BSAVA Quedgeley: Gloucester

King, L.G. and Boag, A. (2018) Manual of Canine and Feline Emergency and Critical Care. BSAVA Quedgeley: Gloucester

Gould, D. and McLellan, G.J. (2014) Manual of Canine and Feline Ophthalmology. 3rd ed. BSAVA Quedgeley: Gloucester

Harcourt-Brown, F. and Chitty, J. (2013) Manual of Rabbit Surgery, Dentistry and Imaging. BSAVA Quedgeley: Gloucester

Meredith, A. and Lord, B. (2014) Manual of Rabbit Medicine. BSAVA Quedgeley: Gloucester

Meredith, A. and Johnson Delaney, C. (2010) Manual of Exotic Pets. 5th ed. Quedgeley: Gloucester

Production animals

General

Constable, P.D. (2016) Veterinary medicine: a textbook of the diseases of cattle, horses, sheep, pigs and goats.

NADIS Animal Health Skills (subscription required): <https://clinicallylibrary.nadis.org.uk/>

Bovine

Ball, P.J. H. and Peters, A.R. (2004) Reproduction in cattle. 3rd ed. Oxford: Wiley

Cockcroft, P. (ed) (2015) Bovine Medicine. 3rd ed. Oxford: Wiley

Weaver, A.D. et al (eds) (2018) Bovine Surgery and Lameness. 3rd ed. Oxford: Wiley

Blowey, R.W. and Weaver, A.D. (2011) A Colour Atlas of Diseases and Disorders of Cattle. 3rd ed. St Louis: Mosby

Sheep

Scott, P.R. (2015) Sheep Medicine. 2nd ed. London: CRC Press

Winter, A.C. and Clarkson, M.J. (2012) A Handbook for the Sheep Clinician. 7th ed. Wallingford: CABI

Pigs

Taylor, D.J. (2013) Pig Diseases. 9th ed London: 5M Publishing

Poultry

Greenacre, C.B. and Morishita, T.Y. (eds) (2015) Backyard Poultry Medicine and Surgery A Guide for Veterinary Practitioners. Oxford: Wiley Blackwell

Sainsbury, D. (2000) Poultry Health and Managements. 4th ed. Oxford: Blackwell

Veterinary public health

Brown, M. (2000) HACCP in the Meat Industry. Boca Raton: CRC Press

Buncic, S. (2006) Integrated Food Safety and Veterinary Public Health. Wallingford: CABI

Colville, J. and Berryhill, D. L. (2007) Handbook of Zoonoses St Louis: Mosby

Collins, D.S. and Huey, R.J. (2015) Gracey's Meat Hygiene. 11th ed. London: Saunders

General reading list

This list contains texts which are relevant to more than one species.

Clarke, K.W., Trim, C.M. and Hall, L.W. (2013) Veterinary anaesthesia. 11th ed. London: Saunders

Cockcroft, P.D. (2003) Handbook of Evidence Based Veterinary Medicine. Oxford: Wiley

Constable, P.D. et al (2016) Veterinary Medicine. 11th ed. London: Saunders

Coombes, N. and Silva-Fletcher, A. (2018) Veterinary Clinical Skills Manual. Wallingford: CABI

McDonald, P. et al (2011) Animal Nutrition. 7th ed. Harlow: Pearson

Gray, C. and Moffet, J (2010) Handbook of Veterinary Communication Skills Oxford: Blackwell

Latimer, K.S. and Robert, D.J. (2011) Duncan and Prasse's Veterinary Laboratory Medicine: Clinical Pathology. 5th ed. Oxford: Wiley

Noakes, D.E., Parkinson, T.J. and England, G.C.W. (2018) Veterinary Reproduction and Obstetrics. 10th ed. London: Saunders

Taylor, R.L. et al (2015) Veterinary Parasitology. 4th ed. Oxford: Wiley

Zachary, J.F. (ed) (2017) Pathologic Basis of Veterinary Disease St Louis: Mosby

Legislation

You should familiarise yourself with UK legislation that may be relevant to veterinary practice in the UK, including the following areas:

- Animal health
- Animal welfare and the health and safety of humans
- Food including milk
- Medicines and residues
- Pet passports
- Slaughterhouses, meat hygiene and meat inspection
- Transport and marketing of animals
- The Veterinary Surgeons Act 1996, available on the RCVS website at <https://www.rcvs.org.uk/document-library/veterinary-surgeons-act-1966/>

You should always check that any legislation you refer to is the current legislation. You can check by referring to www.legislation.gov.uk which contains up to date information.

The Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) is the UK government department responsible for policy and regulation on the environment, food, and rural affairs. The website contains information covering food, farming, wildlife, and pets. Website: www.defra.gov.uk

The Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) is an executive agency of the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs, and works on behalf of the Scottish Government and Welsh Government. Its role is to safeguard animal and plant health. Website: www.apha.gov.uk

The Food Standards Agency – website: www.food.gov.uk

Information about medicines legislation, control of drug usage, good practice and the cascade can be found in the publications section of the Veterinary Medicines Directorate's website – www.vmd.defra.gov.uk

Animal husbandry

You need to be familiar with the animal husbandry of all species commonly kept as pets in the UK and farmed in British agricultural systems. Books are not listed here. You should seek assistance from a librarian if you have difficulty finding appropriate books. For production animals the following publications are recommended: Livestock Farming, Dairy Farmer, Pig Farming, The Sheep Farmer, What's New in Farming and Farmers Weekly.

Veterinary Publications and Journals

You are advised to read the following journals and publications:

- The Veterinary Record
- In Practice
- Journal of Small Animal Practice
- Equine Veterinary Education
- UK Vet

- Publications from the British Equine Veterinary Association – www.beva.org.uk
- Publications from the British Small Animal Veterinary Association – www.bsava.com

Summary of useful websites

RCVS Knowledge Library - <https://knowledge.rcvs.org.uk/library-and-information-services/>

RCVS Code of Professional Conduct for Veterinary Surgeons – available on the RCVS website at www.rcvs.org.uk/vetcode

RCVS Day One Competencies – available on the RCVS website at <https://www.rcvs.org.uk/document-library/day-one-competences/>

www.beva.org.uk – British Equine Veterinary Association (BEVA)

www.bsava.com – British Small Animal Veterinary Association (BSAVA)

www.bva.co.uk – British Veterinary Association (BVA)

www.defra.gov.uk – Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA)

www.apha.gov.uk - The Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA)

www.food.gov.uk – Food Standards Agency (FSA)

www.legislation.gov.uk – managed by the National Archives, publishes all UK legislation on behalf of Her Majesty's government

www.rcvs.org.uk – Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS)

www.vmd.defra.gov.uk – Veterinary Medicines Directorate (VMD)

www.oie.int – World Organisation for Animal Health

Other support which you might be interested in

The RCVS periodically runs an event aimed at veterinary surgeons and veterinary nurses educated outside the UK. The 'Introduction to the UK veterinary profession – a key CPD course for overseas vets and VNs' provides overseas vets and vet nurses with the necessary information and support needed to practise in the UK. Further details can be found online:

www.rcvs.org.uk/news-and-views/events/introduction-to-the-uk-veterinary-profession--a-key-cpd/

VetAbroad is a company with many years of experience helping non-UK vets understand what the UK veterinary profession, employers and society require of them. This makes for an easier transition into UK practice life and enables individuals to develop successful professional careers. Managing Director Luis Sainz-Pardo can be contacted by email at luis@vetabroad.com. Please mention that you heard about VetAbroad from the RCVS so he can explain the services that can most benefit you. More information is available at www.vetabroad.com.

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Summary	
Meeting	Education Committee
Date	13 September 2022
Title	Professional Development Phase (PDP) Engagement
Summary	This paper gives an overview of the current PDP users and makes suggestions for how to deal with users that have been in the system for a long time and have not engaged with the programme at all.
Decisions required	<p>The Education Committee is asked to agree that we close the PDP accounts for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Anyone who graduated 2018 or earlier b. Anyone from the 2019 and 2020 cohort that still have not engaged with the programme at all. c. Anyone from the 2019 cohort who have not logged in for two years (following a final reminder) <p>Education Committee is also asked to consider if</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. users' whose PDP account have been closed should be able to enrol in an RCVS certificate by submitting their CPD records. b. we should enforce the three-year cut off point for graduates from the 2019 and 2020 cohorts.
Attachments	None
Author	Jenny Soreskog-Turp Lead for Postgraduate Education j.soreskog-turp@rcvs.org.uk / 020 7202 0701

Classifications		
Document	Classification¹	Rationales²

Paper	Unclassified	
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¹Classifications explained

Unclassified	Papers will be published on the internet and recipients may share them and discuss them freely with anyone. This may include papers marked 'Draft'.
Confidential	Temporarily available only to Council Members, non-Council members of the relevant committee, sub-committee, working party or Board and not for dissemination outside that group unless and until the relevant committee or Council has given approval for public discussion, consultation or publication.
Private	The paper includes personal data which should not be disclosed at any time or for any reason, unless the data subject has agreed otherwise. The Chair may, however, indicate after discussion that there are general issues which can be disclosed, for example in reports to committees and Council.

²Classification rationales

Confidential	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To allow the Committee or Council to come to a view itself, before presenting to and/or consulting with others 2. To maintain the confidence of another organisation 3. To protect commercially sensitive information 4. To maintain public confidence in and/or uphold the reputation of the veterinary professions and/or the RCVS
Private	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. To protect information which may contain personal data, special category data, and/or criminal offence data, as listed under the General Data Protection Regulation

Background

1. The Professional Development Phase (PDP) was introduced in 2007 to support new graduates in clinical practice. The RCVS employs four Postgraduate Deans to support the graduates remotely by email.
2. As part of the Graduate Outcomes consultation, the PDP was reviewed and it was agreed that it should be replaced with a completely new programme to support graduates in their first role. Consequently, the Veterinary Graduate Development Programme (VetGDP) was developed and launched in June 2021.
3. Education Committee agreed that any graduates who were already enrolled in PDP would continue within that programme, and that the RCVS would continue to support graduates enrolled in PDP until June 2024.
4. The PDP aims to help graduates develop their Day One Competences into the RCVS PDP Competences with the support from the PDP Deans. The RCVS team and the PDP Deans spend a lot of time and resources chasing PDP users who are not engaged in the process. As the VetGDP is now fully established, resources are also required to support this new programme.
5. In July 2015 a time requirement of three years was introduced for completion of the PDP and the RCVS expects graduates in clinical practice to complete within this time-frame. The three-year time period begins when the graduate enters their first clinical position. This requirement has never been enforced.

PDP Users

6. There are 771 active PDP users on the system, and this tables show number of users per cohort

Cohort	No
1998- 2012	15
2013	5
2014	12
2015	26
2016	18
2017	37
2018	68
2019	175
2020	408
2021	7
	771

7. There are 181 users that graduated in 2018 or earlier and it suggested that these users' accounts are closed.

8. There are 39 PDP users from the 2019 or 2020 cohorts that have not engaged with PDP at all despite several reminders from the PDP Dean, RCVS staff and the Registrar. It suggested that we close these accounts so that resources can be focused on supporting graduates who are engaged in the process.
9. There are 41 PDP users from the 2019 cohort who have not logged any new entries since 2019, it is suggested that these users receive a final reminder and a deadline of one month to contact RCVS or their PDP Dean or their account will be closed.
10. It is acknowledged that graduates who enrolled in PDP during the pandemic may take longer to complete it, so the Education Committee is asked to consider if we should enforce the three-year cut off time for 2019 and 2020 graduates or allow them any additional time to complete the programme.

Consequences for not completing PDP

11. Completing PDP is one of the pre-requisites to enrol in an RCVS postgraduate certificate but graduates who were unable to enrol in PDP because they were not going into clinical practice or overseas users who had more than 12 months experience are able to start a certificate by submitting CPD records for the last three years. Education Committee is asked to consider if we should allow that for any users that will have their PDP account closed.

Decisions Required

12. The Education Committee is asked to agree that we close the PDP accounts for:
 - a. Anyone who graduated 2018 or earlier
 - b. Anyone from the 2019 and 2020 cohort that still have not engaged with the programme at all.
 - c. Anyone from the 2019 cohort who have not logged in for two years (following a final reminder)
13. Education Committee is asked to consider if
 - a. users' whose PDP account have been closed should be able to enrol in RCVS certificate by submitting their CPD records.
 - b. we should enforce the three-year cut off point for graduates from the 2019 and 2020 cohorts.

Summary	
Meeting	Education Committee
Date	13 September 2022
Title	Update from the Advanced Practitioner (AP) Task and Finish Groups
Summary	This paper summarises the work of the two Task and Finish groups that were set up to review what it means to be and Advanced Practitioner and the career pathways.
Decisions required	Education Committee is asked to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Agree the recommendations from the Task and Finish groups b. Consider who should be invited to the AP stake holder event on the 21 October 2022.
Attachments	None
Author	Jenny Soreskog-Turp Lead for Postgraduate Education j.soreskog-turp@rcvs.org.uk / 020 7202 0701

Classifications		
Document	Classification¹	Rationales²
Paper	Unclassified	

¹Classifications explained

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Confidential	Temporarily available only to Council Members, non-Council members of the relevant committee, sub-committee, working party or Board and not for dissemination outside that group unless and until the relevant committee or Council has given approval for public discussion, consultation or publication.
Private	The paper includes personal data which should not be disclosed at any time or for any reason, unless the data subject has agreed otherwise. The Chair may, however, indicate after discussion that there are general issues which can be disclosed, for example in reports to committees and Council.

²Classification rationales

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Private	<ol style="list-style-type: none">5. To protect information which may contain personal data, special category data, and/or criminal offence data, as listed under the General Data Protection Regulation

Background

1. In 2021 a review of the Advanced Practitioner (AP) status was carried out. The aim of the project was to evaluate Advanced Practitioner status to ensure the purpose of the status is clear and is providing benefits to both veterinary members and the public and identify any areas in which improvements can be made. The objectives of the evaluation were:
 - To review members and clients perceptions of Advanced Practitioner status
 - To explore member's motivations for seeking AP status (or not)
 - To explore preferences and reasons for AP's route to AP status (CertAVP or other)
 - Explore what benefits/drawbacks being on the list of Advanced Practitioner's brings to those veterinary surgeons.
2. Three surveys were issued, to AP's (n=1140, response rate 50%), members with a CertAVP (n=3015, response rate 15%) and a control group of non-AP / CertAVP members (n=999, response rate 14%).
3. The results indicated the following:
 - There is much confusion amongst members (including those with AP status or CertAVP) around the status, what it is for, eligibility, the difference between CertAVP and AP Status, and how the status fits within career pathways.
 - The main motivation for aiming for AP status was to improve knowledge and skills in their area of interest, and gain recognition of this.
 - The benefits of achieving the status were numerous, including increasing their standard of practice and self-esteem. However, the positive benefits were not felt by all who had achieved it.
 - The public / clients did not understand the difference between an AP and other vets.
4. Consequently, following discussions by Education Committee, two areas of further work were identified:
 - a. To clarify what it means to be an Advanced Practitioner, including the differences between certificate holders and Advanced Practitioners, the difference between CertAVP and AP status, the benefits to having the status and how to promote it to the profession and the public.
 - b. To identify a pathway/next step for practitioners once they've achieved the status, so the sense of progression and professional growth doesn't abruptly stop which can reduce motivation.
5. In November 2021, Education Committee agreed to set up two task and finish groups; one to look at what it means to be an AP and the other to look at career pathways.
6. Both groups were tasked with putting forward suggestions to be discussed at a wider RCVS stakeholder event on the 21 October 2022 in order to agree an action plan to take forward.
7. This paper summarises the discussions and suggestions from each group.

What it means to be an Advanced Practitioner

8. The first Task and Finish group was asked to consider what it means to be an Advanced Practitioner and the purpose of the group was to review:
 - a. the name “Advanced Practitioner”,
 - b. differences between certificate holders and Advanced Practitioners,
 - c. benefits to having the status
 - d. how to promote it to the profession and the public.

9. The group agreed that the defining characteristics of an Advanced Practitioner should encompass knowledge, skills, and behaviours. AP Status indicates that the individual is actively practising and keeping up to date in their area of designation. APs are therefore able to handle cases more efficiently due to their experience and up to date knowledge. APs could act as mentors to other vets, and help their practice move forward in terms of skills.

10. There were many discussions about the name “Advanced Practitioner” as it needed to be descriptive but also something that the general public would understand, so perhaps mirroring some titles from human medicine and the NHS career structure could be considered. The group agreed to put forward three suggestions: Leading Clinical Practitioner, Consultant, and keeping the Advanced Practitioner title.

11. One of the main areas of confusion is the difference between CertAVP and AP. The group discussed the idea of granting AP Status to every member who achieve a designated CertAVP, and then asking them to reaccredit in five years’ time (currently, everyone with any relevant certificate needs to submit an application to become an AP). It was suggested that that would help to promote AP Status because more people would try to maintain their AP Status and it may help to promote a better understanding of AP Status across the profession.

12. There was some concern regarding the level of experience that a newly qualified CertAVP holder might have, given that APs are required to show five years of experience in their field of designation, whereas designated CertAVP holders are required to have been in practice for at least three years. Therefore, it was suggested that designated CertAVP holders could be required to wait two years before applying for AP Status, and that applicants could provide a portfolio style case log to clearly demonstrate the quality of their work in clinical practice, rather than focussing on the number of CPD hours they completed.

13. There were several suggestions for promoting AP Status including:
 - a. Introducing AP Status as a career pathway at vet school and during VetGDP would be beneficial.
 - b. Utilize RCVS Academy as a way of disseminating information about AP Status.
 - c. Promote AP Status to the public alongside a more general campaign to inform the public more about the veterinary profession.
 - d. Tying AP Status in with awards within the Practice Standards Scheme.
 - e. Creating a digital badge.
 - f. Making improvements to Find a Vet.

Career Pathways

14. The second Task and Finish group was tasked with reviewing career pathways for the veterinary profession and in particular APs.
15. It was suggested to introduce General Practitioner career pathways that build on experience gained through VetGDP and allows veterinary surgeons to continue to learn at work through a programme of recording of EPAs and work placed based assessments.
16. There were discussions about having a leadership function for general practitioners within the college to introduce a network of GPs that can share knowledge and research in first opinion practice and produce relevant CPD to continue to learn and develop within the practice.
17. It was suggested that we should develop a specialist status for GPs.
18. In developing a pathway from General Practice to GP specialism we should review routes to becoming Specialist, and the skillset for being a GP, and then to cross reference this data to see where they match up so that the role of a GP Specialist can be more clearly defined.
19. It was discussed that a pathway from general practice to a speciality which may be but not necessarily be via an AP qualification
20. The group also discussed a modular route to specialism, which is part of the European Board of Veterinary Specialisation (EBVS) strategy. The group suggested a career ladder with more clearly defined milestones and roles, from a recent grad to certificate holder, with AP as the middle tier, and Specialist being the top level of expertise.

Next Step

21. Education Committee is asked to discuss the recommendations from the Task and Finish groups and make any additional suggestions for discussion at the Stake holder event.
22. The AP stakeholder event is taking place on the 21 October at the Royal College of Surgeons and Education Committee is also asked to consider who should be invited to the event.

Summary	
Meeting	Education Committee
Date	13 September 2022
Title	Advanced Practitioners in Telemedicine
Summary	This paper gives an overview of the current issues surrounding Advanced Practitioners working in telemedicine.
Decisions required	Education Committee is asked to decide how many telemedicine cases are acceptable as part of an application for AP Status
Attachments	None
Author	Rebecca Smith Senior Education Officer r.smith@rcvs.org.uk / 020 7856 1035

Classifications		
Document	Classification¹	Rationales²
Paper	Unclassified	
¹Classifications explained		
Unclassified	Papers will be published on the internet and recipients may share them and discuss them freely with anyone. This may include papers marked 'Draft'.	
Confidential	Temporarily available only to Council Members, non-Council members of the relevant committee, sub-committee, working party or Board and not for dissemination outside that group unless and until the relevant committee or Council has given approval for public discussion, consultation or publication.	
Private	The paper includes personal data which should not be disclosed at any time or for any reason, unless the data subject has agreed otherwise. The Chair may, however, indicate after discussion that there are general issues which can be disclosed, for example in reports to committees and Council.	

Introduction

1. 'Advanced Practitioner' (AP) status is an official recognition of a veterinary surgeon's particular knowledge and skills in a designated field of veterinary practice. Those on the list hold a postgraduate qualification in their designated area of interest, in addition to their initial veterinary degree, and have also demonstrated that they are keeping up to date with their knowledge and competence in their chosen area.
2. Over a five-year period applicants for AP Status (and those renewing their status) are required to have completed 250 total hours of CPD, with 125 of those being in their designated subject area. Since 2018, APs have been required to complete 10 hours per year of "external" CPD. They must also provide a statement describing the ways in which they have been involved in clinical governance and provide at least one reference from a veterinary surgeon who has worked with them over the previous five years.

Case work requirements for APs

3. Since 2018, Advanced Practitioners have been required to see an average of 100 cases per year in their designation area to demonstrate that they are actively working in the relevant field of clinical practice. Given the rise in the number of vets practising telemedicine during the Covid-19 pandemic, there have been questions raised by APs about whether telemedicine cases could count towards this requirement, or if all 100 cases must be seen in person. (This does not mean that APs could not be involved in telemedicine for a proportion of their work, rather, that the cases counted towards their application must be in person)
4. If a physical examination or in-person treatment became necessary during a telemedicine case, another veterinary surgeon may be required to undertake that work. This raises a question about whether an AP is "actively working in clinical practice" if they are not the vet who is undertaking several aspects of a patient's treatment.
5. While some designations may be well suited to telemedicine, others are not. For example, it would be very difficult to be "actively practising" in some designation areas such as Small Animal Surgery without the vet being able to see and treat the patient in person.
6. Regardless of how much of a consultation could be completed over the phone or online, there may always be a chance that in-person treatment could be required. Furthermore, it stands to reason that most APs in general practice are likely to have typically completed or supervised a range of necessary diagnostic tasks such as taking x-rays or biopsies themselves, rather than referring a patient to another clinic for these procedures. Therefore, allowing APs to include a significant number of telemedicine cases in their case numbers could fundamentally change the nature of an AP's work.
7. In the interest of fairness and consistency, the amendment to the policy around casework requirements should be applied equally across designations.

Next Steps

8. Education Committee is asked to discuss the following:

- Should APs be permitted to include telemedicine cases as part of their case number requirement on their application?
- Should APs spend a minimum percentage of their time in face-to-face practice?