



Statutory Membership Examination Guidance 2025

Individuals 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 to sit the exam.

Contents

1. Introduction	4
1.1. Legislative framework	4
1.2. RCVS Day One Competences	4
1.3. Format of the Examination	5
1.4. Pathway to RCVS membership	6
1.5. Working as a Veterinary Nurse	8
2. Declaring an intention to sit the RCVS Statutory Membership Examination	9
2.1. Proof of primary veterinary degree	9
2.2. Transcripts	9
2.3. Registration certificate or veterinary licence	9
2.4. Proof of identity	10
2.5. Self-assessment skills list	10
2.6. Candidates with special requirements or requests for reasonable adjustment	10
2.7. English language test exemption	11
2.8. Translations of documents	11
2.9. Recent graduates	11
2.10. Refugees	11
2.11. Submitting an application	12
2.12. Renewal of a declaration of intention to sit	12
3. Preparing yourself for the examination	14
3.1. Courses of study	14
3.2. Studying and access to libraries	14
3.3. Practical and clinical experience – Seeing Practice	15
4. Applying to sit the examination	16
4.1. Examination application form	17
4.2. English language test report	17
4.2.1 English language test validity extension	18
4.3. Evidence of good professional standing	18
4.4 Who may provide evidence of good professional standing?	19
4.5. Number of examination attempts	20
4.6. Examination fees	20
4.7. Withdrawal and refunds	21

4.8. Reapplications following failure or withdrawal	21
5. Admission to the Register	22
5.1. Celebratory ceremony.....	22
6. About the examination	23
6.1. Examination format	23
6.2. Exam results and re-sit options	23
6.3. Examination venues.....	25
6.4. Emergency evacuation procedures.....	26
6.5. Identification	26
6.6. Prohibited items	27
6.7. 'Fit to sit' the examination	27
6.8 Witten examinations.....	27
6.8.1. Clinical domain examinations.....	28
6.8.2. Code of Professional Conduct exam.....	28
6.8.3. Candidate exam conduct (written exams)	29
6.8.4 Sample exam questions	29
6.9. OSCE.....	30
6.9.1. OSCE examiners.....	30
6.9.2. Candidate examination conduct (OSCE).....	30
6.9.3. Health & safety.....	31
6.9.4. Dress code, Personal Protective Equipment & equipment.....	32
6.10. Examination outcomes & appeals	33
6.11. Mitigating circumstances	33
6.12 Confidentiality and test security	34
6.13. Misconduct.....	34
Appendix 1	35
Candidate flowchart	35
Appendix 2	36
Example Clinical MCQ questions	36
Appendix 3	37
Suggested Reading list.....	37

1. Introduction

Only veterinary surgeons and veterinary nurses registered with the RCVS can practise as veterinary surgeons or veterinary nurses 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. The RCVS cannot provide advice regarding applications for VISAs, immigration, refugee or asylum status, please contact the Home Office.

This guidance outlines the process of applying to sit the RCVS 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 7202 0745 or rcvsexam@rcvs.org.uk. 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.

The new Statutory Instrument (SI) came into place on the 1st of January 2025.

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.

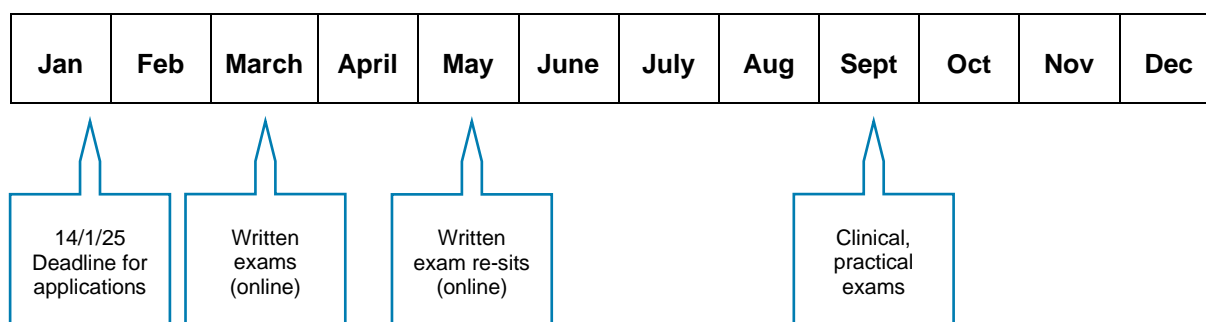
1.3. Format of the Examination

One diet of the Statutory Membership Examination will normally be held each calendar year. An exam 'diet' refers to the period of time in which a particular exam is held, and for which a fee has been paid and the individual accepted as a candidate.

Each examination diet includes the opportunity for re-sits of the individual species domain written exam papers, within a set deadline, when certain conditions are met (refer to section 6.10 for further details).

A candidate must pass all components of the written examination to be eligible to sit the clinical, practical examination. A candidate must then pass all components of the clinical, practical examination in order to be eligible to register as a Member of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons and practise in the UK.

An overview of the schedule for the 2025 exam diet is provided below (timings are approximate).



If a candidate is successful in all the written papers and enters the clinical, practical exam (OSCE), then proceeds to fail one or more components of the OSCE, they may re-enter the exam in the next diet and proceed directly to the OSCE (without needing to sit the written exams again and taking only the OSCE components they failed previously). If they subsequently fail the OSCE for a second time, any future attempts at the statutory membership examination must be started from the beginning, i.e. needing to take both the written and clinical, practical components again.

The new exam rules around re-sits highlighted above apply to candidates entering exam diets from 2025 onwards only. Results from exams taken under previous versions of the rules cannot be carried forward or back.

The Statutory Membership Examination (SME) 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:

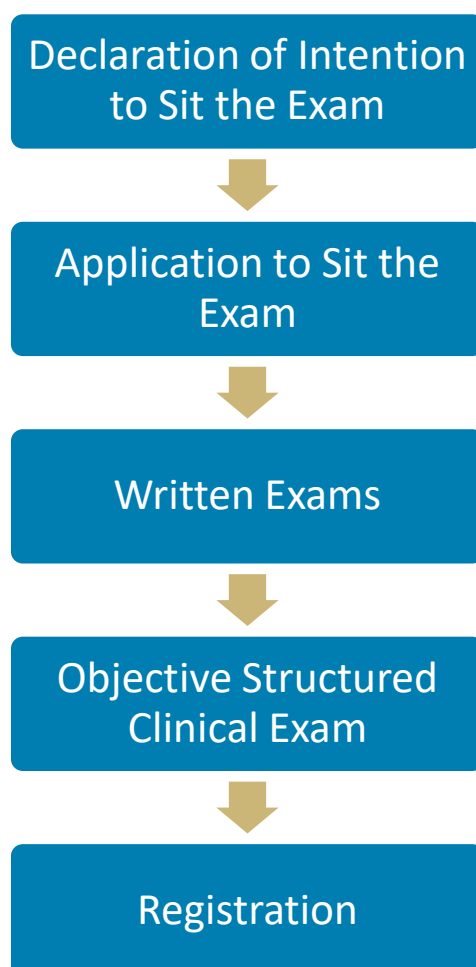
- Written examinations consisting of multiple-choice questions (MCQs) testing the candidate's clinical knowledge across three clinical domains (companion animal, production animal (including veterinary public health) and equine), and their knowledge of the RCVS Code of Professional Conduct.
- A clinical, practical examination comprising an holistic Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE) across three clinical domains (companion animal, production animal (including veterinary public health) and equine).

Candidates must pass all the written components 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 an ‘Intention to Sit’ the RCVS Statutory Membership Examination.

Individuals must submit a completed ‘*declaration of intention to sit*’ form and provide proof of their veterinary degree, identity, and a completed self-assessment skills list. If they wish to 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 our requirements are met, they will be added to our active list of individuals preparing for the examination and be given permission to ‘see practice’. The process is covered in [section 2](#) of this guidance.

Veterinary surgeons, and those applying to be registered as veterinary surgeons, must disclose to the RCVS any cautions or convictions, including absolute and conditional discharges and spent convictions, or adverse findings (including by another regulator or professional disciplinary proceedings) which may affect registration, whether in the UK or overseas (except for minor offences

excluded from disclosure by the RCVS). For more information, please see www.rcvs.org.uk/convictions.

Stage 2 – Application to Sit the Examination

If an individual on the 'intention to sit' active list is eligible to sit the examination, they will be sent the examination application form. This form must be returned to us by the provided deadline date, which is 14 January for the 2025 exam (please note this date may change each year), along with the following:

- examination entry fee of £1,400 (separate fees are required for entry into the OSCE exams and/or resit exams, refer to [section 4.6](#))
- proof of the International English Language Test System (IELTS) or Occupational English Test (OET) score
- letter(s) or Certificate(s) confirming their professional good standing.

The exam application process is covered in detail in [section 4](#) of this guidance. If you wish to request a Reasonable Adjustment (RA) to the exam process due to a disability or particular need (see [section 2.6](#)) please complete the RA form and provide suitable evidence before the exam deadline date.

Stage 3 – Written Examinations

The written examinations will normally be held online, using proctored software and a live invigilation process. You must pass all three clinical domain exam papers (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. The dates of the exams may vary each year/examination diet (and may change at short notice). Candidates listed on the intention to sit list will be provided with exam dates prior to the application closing date in January.

Stage 3a: Written examinations

For the 2025 examination diet, the written exam papers are scheduled to take place in March. Results will be issued four weeks after the date of the final exam paper.

Stage 3b: Written examination re-sits

If a candidate fails any component of the written examination, they will be entitled to one re-sit opportunity of those domains, in May, subject to application and payment of the re-sit fee. Results will be issued four weeks after the date of the re-sit examination.

If a candidate does not pass all the components of the written examinations following the re-sit exams, they may not proceed to the OSCE and any future attempts at the Statutory Membership Examination must start from stage one above and encompass the full examination.

Stage 4 – Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE)

The final part of the statutory membership examination is the holistic Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE). This is a clinical, practical examination and will be held in-person at a veterinary school in the UK. As with the clinical written examinations, 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. The dates of the practical exams may vary each year/examination diet, OSCEs are usually held in September.

If a candidate passes the written examinations but then fails one or more components of the OSCE, they are entitled to re-enter the examination the following year and proceed directly to sit the OSCE components which they have failed, without having to re-enter the written examinations. If they fail the OSCE a second time, any further attempt at the statutory membership examination must be a new entry, with the relevant fee, and include both the written exams and OSCE.

Stage 5 – Registration

All examination results will be sent via email 4 weeks after the final part of each section (written examinations or OSCE). Successful candidates will be provided with details on how to register / be admitted for membership. The RCVS usually holds a short ceremony for candidates who have passed the full examination.

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 an individual wishes to 'see practice' at a UK veterinary surgery, information about how to do so can be found in [section 3.3](#).

2. Declaring an 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

an individual holds a veterinary degree and intends to sit the RCVS Statutory Membership Examination, they must:

- a. Declare their intention by completing the '*declaration of intention to sit*' form
- b. Provide proof of their primary veterinary degree or diploma (see section 2.1)
- c. If available, provide university issued transcripts of their studies (see section 2.2)
- d. Provide their registration certificate or veterinary licence if they have one (see section 2.3)
- e. Provide proof of their identity (see section 2.4)
- f. Confirm their belief that they 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. Individuals with a disability or particular need may also wish to complete a reasonable adjustment application, if required (see section 2.6). Please note that this application will not be reviewed until you have requested to enter into the exam.

2.1. Proof of primary veterinary degree

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

A copy (photocopy or electronic scan) of their veterinary degree certificate and transcripts (with translations if the documents are not written in English) must be included with the completed '*declaration of intention to sit*' form. Original veterinary degree certificates should not be sent in the post, as we cannot be held responsible for any loss.

Original copies of veterinary degree certificates should be kept safe and available in case it is needed for future use. If we need to see an original veterinary degree certificate beforehand, we will contact the individual 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 an individual's university has issued transcripts of their studies, these must be sent to the RCVS as part of the declaration of intention to sit the examination. As with the degree certificate, if transcripts are not written in English, then the candidate must provide a professionally translated version alongside a copy of the original.

2.3. Registration certificate or veterinary licence

If an individual is currently, or has at any time in the past, been on a register of persons qualified to practise veterinary surgery in any country or state, details must be provided 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 identity

Individuals are required to provide a copy of their in-date passport photo page. If their name differs from that on their degree or diploma, they must also send a copy of the relevant legal document linking both names e.g., marriage/divorce certificate. If their name differs between documents for another reason, please contact the Examinations Manager at rcvsexam@rcvs.org.uk for further instruction. Please do not send your original passport in the post, 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 [RCVS Day One Competences - Professionals](#). 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, Continuing Professional Development (CPD) or other suitable activity.

2.6. Candidates with special requirements or requests for reasonable adjustment

If a candidate feels that a reasonable adjustment or special provision is needed in the examination because of a disability or other particular need, they 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 in time. If a candidate falls ill or experiences unexpected difficult circumstances prior to, or during, the exams, they should use the mitigating circumstances form [Document library - Professionals \(rcvs.org.uk\)](#).

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

Assessments for special educational needs must have been made after the candidate's sixteenth birthday.

In some exceptional cases, a candidate may be asked to contribute towards any additional costs incurred to introduce a reasonable adjustment, depending on the circumstances.

If a candidate is pregnant, and their due date is after the OSCE, they must inform us as soon as possible as additional health and safety precautions may have to be arranged.

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

If a candidate wishes to apply for the exemption, this must be done prior to entering into the exam **no later than 1 December the year prior to the exam**. If we do not accept the application to be exempt then this will allow the candidate sufficient time to sit one of the English-language tests.

Candidates must arrange for their university to write a letter to the RCVS to formally confirm that their 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 a candidate is unable to provide this evidence, they 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, an English translation must be provided alongside a 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 a candidate has recently completed their studies in full and they know that they have passed their degree, but their certificate has not yet been issued, they should contact the Examinations Manager to discuss the likelihood of them being able to enter the examination. Specific information may be required, such as the date that the certificate will be available.

2.10. Refugees

Veterinary surgeons seeking humanitarian protection in the UK can seek financial aid provided by the RCVS to sit the Statutory Membership Exam. Evidence of their in-date humanitarian protection status should be submitted during the 'declaration of intention to sit' stage, 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 documents required for 'intention to sit'. 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 the necessary supporting evidence has been submitted, the Examinations Manager will request financial support. Financial support offered includes:

- IELTS/OET Exam fee

- Statutory Membership Exam fee

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

- British Cattle Veterinary Association
- British Equine Veterinary Association
- British Small Animal Veterinary Association
- British Veterinary Association
- Pig Veterinary Society
- RCVS Knowledge
- Society of Practising Veterinary Surgeons
- Sheep Veterinary Society
- Veterinary Management Group
- VetCT

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 an application

An individual may submit an 'intention to sit' declaration all year round. If the intention is to enter the next examination diet, we must receive completed declarations and supporting documents by **31 December** the previous calendar year otherwise we cannot guarantee that we will have sufficient time to carry out the necessary checks before the examination closing date of 14 January. We recommend starting the declaration process around five months before the exam.

Individuals should aim to **send all the documents together**. Once all the evidence has been submitted a declaration will be reviewed to establish if the individual meets our requirements. A written response will normally be received from us outlining the outcome within three weeks of receiving a completed submission. Please note that if the submission is incomplete or if we must ask for additional documentation, then it may take longer to process the submission. If an individual is eligible to apply to sit the examination, they will be issued with a letter confirming that they may "see practice" in the UK (see section 3.3). They will also be added to our active list of individuals preparing for the examination.

The evidence provided will be kept on file as long as the individual confirms that they are intending to sit the examination. If we believe that an individual is no longer intending to sit the examination (i.e., five years after their last communication) their documents will be archived, and they will be required to submit a fresh declaration and supply their documents again.

2.12. Renewal of a declaration of intention to sit

Accepted declarations of intention to sit expire on 30 September each year. Once their declaration expires, an individual will be removed from our active list and will no longer be eligible to see practice in the UK. If an initial declaration of intention to sit had been submitted but the individual did not enter the examination yet wishes to do so in the next diet, they should submit a renewal of intention to sit form two weeks before the letter expires. This also applies to candidates who failed the examination but wish to re-enter in the next diet.

Individuals will not be eligible to see practice unless they have an in-date confirmation letter of intention to sit from the RCVS. If an individual wishes to continue to see practice in the UK after the 31 September, they must ensure they submit a renewal of intention to sit in good time to rcvsexam@rcvs.org.uk. Please allow up to four weeks for a renewal of intention to sit to be processed and for a new letter to be generated.

3. Preparing for the examination

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

- A suggested reading list in appendix 2 of this document
- An online exam preparation course, which includes a filmed example of a typical OSCE task <https://academy.rcvs.org.uk/>
- Guidance to assist candidates who have entered into the exam to determine whether their hardware is compatible with the software used for online written exams
- There will be an opportunity for candidates who have entered into the exam to familiarise themselves with navigating through an example exam using the software. **Any issues must be raised with the Examinations Manager as soon as possible.**
- Access to a formative written assessment **for candidates who submit a completed exam application and are accepted as a candidate will be provided nearer the time of the exam.** This contains 110 MCQs in the same format and to the same standard as those that will feature in the written examinations. These questions will not be assessed within the final exams but allow an opportunity for candidates to review the style and standard of exam questions while learning how to navigate and use the online exam application. Candidates have three attempts at the formative written assessment.
- A familiarisation session for candidates who pass the written component and proceed to the OSCE. This will feature a wide range of models and equipment typically used in UK veterinary practices. This is an optional session and will not contain any information about the content of the upcoming OSCE exam. 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 the OSCE takes an holistic approach aiming to reflect scenarios typically seen in UK general practice (see section 6). It is therefore recommended that candidates familiarise themselves with the RCVS Day One Competences documents available on our website here: [RCVS Day One Competences - Professionals](#).

3.1. Courses of study

The RCVS does not offer or endorse any course of this type and it is up to candidates to decide whether it would be useful to attend a course, or not. Please direct any enquiries to the provider of the course. Please do not contact the OSCE venue to ask questions about the practical exams.

3.2. Studying and access to libraries

Once an individual has met the examination entry requirements and been accepted as a candidate to sit the next examination, they will be able to obtain membership of the RCVS Knowledge Library.

Examination candidates are offered a special library membership category which allows them to access resources. There is a fee of £25 for 6 months' membership. Please contact the RCVS Knowledge Library by email at library@rcvsknowledge.org or telephone +44 20 7202 0752 in advance to arrange an appointment and to let us know the material you would like to use <https://library.rcvstrust.org.uk/>. Membership forms are available from the library on request.

Candidates may also 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 candidates gain valuable practical and clinical experience in preparation for the examination. This is referred to as “seeing practice”. Candidates may see practice under the Veterinary Surgeons (Practice by Students) (Amendment) Regulations 1993 [Seeing practice - Professionals \(rcvs.org.uk\)](https://www.rcvs.org.uk). The regulations described below allow candidates 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 examination are set in the context of how consultations and procedures are carried out in the UK. By seeing practice, candidates will experience how vets in the UK work and carry out consultations, which may be different to how they were trained. Candidates may also gain exposure to different species, treatments and diseases that are not common in other regions of the world which will improve their knowledge in preparation for the exam. Additionally, if English is not the candidate's native language it can help improve their communication skills in all formats, which will aid in preparation for the IELTS/OET as well as the exam.

Candidates may not see practice without a valid, in-date letter from the RCVS confirming that they 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 candidate for this examination does and, therefore, has discretion to decide what procedures they may carry out. The Regulations set out 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 paragraph 19.6 enables a registered vet, at his or her discretion, to supervise a candidate 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 a candidate is seeing practice under these Regulations, they must notify the RCVS of their 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 however they should check that any practice they attend has appropriate insurance cover. Employers/host practices must have Public Liability, Employer's Liability and Professional Indemnity insurance or finances in place to protect the practice, exam candidate and any staff who will be supervising the candidate should a problem occur. This insurance will be valid provided the candidate and staff are not acting outside the legislation described above.

The RCVS cannot help candidates find a veterinary practice or recommend any establishments and so they must make their own arrangements. The RCVS 'Find a Vet' database allows candidates to search for veterinary practices by geographical location and is available on the RCVS website at [Home - Find A Vet \(rcvs.org.uk\)](https://www.rcvs.org.uk/home/find-a-vet/)

It is for each candidate to decide where and how much time they need to spend "seeing practice" based on their assessment of their abilities and knowledge of UK veterinary practice. We strongly recommend candidates 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 can request an application form once their declaration/renewal is accepted by the RCVS.

When a candidate submits an application, they must provide the following:

- a. A completed examination application form (see [section 4.1](#))
- b. An English language test report confirming they have achieved the minimum standard (see [section 4.2](#)) or confirmation of their exemption
- c. Evidence (certificate/letter) of their good professional standing (see [section 4.3](#))
- d. A completed reasonable adjustment application, if required (see [section 2.6](#))

If the above is approved, candidates will then be required to:

- e. Pay the examination fee for the written component plus the administration fee (see [section 4.6](#))

Individuals will be accepted as an examination candidate only after we have received and approved all the required items and payment that make up a complete application. Upon completion of all entry requirements, candidates will receive written confirmation from the RCVS that they 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 initial entry to the examination will be provided to all candidates who have registered their intent to sit in advance. The closing date may change but is usually **5pm GMT on 14th January** each year. It is the candidate's responsibility to complete and submit their application in full by the closing date. All applications must be submitted via email to rcvsexam@rcvs.org.uk. Late applications will not be accepted.

4.2. English language test report

Unless a candidate has been granted an exemption, they must provide proof that they meet the minimum required standards in the English language. This can be demonstrated via either of the following assessments (different testing systems cannot be excepted):

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 and the overall average is at least 7.0: <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 a candidate has achieved the required standard in one of these assessments, they must arrange for the results to be provided to us. This will be a **Test Report Form** if the IELTS was taken, or a **Statement of Results** if the OET was taken. Test results can be sent to us by post or a good quality scanned copy can be provided by email (we cannot accept photocopies). Alternatively, candidate's can arrange for their test centre to send the results directly to us.

Test scores must be in date on all days the candidate intends to sit all examinations i.e., from March through to September / October. Test results are valid for **two years** from the date the test was taken. We do not accept scores from any English tests other than IELTS or OET.

If a pass is achieved in some sub-tests of the OET, or components of the IELTS, but the candidate has fallen below the required standard in others, then they may re-sit those failed sub-tests. Please note that all of the sub-tests/components must be in date for the duration of the examination period.

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

Please contact the test centre for up-to-date result time frames. We strongly advise candidates aim to take the test as far in advance of submitting their application as possible.

4.2.1 English language test validity extension

A passing IELTS/OET certificate / result 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 validity to be extended by providing a relevant 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>.

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

- Candidate's name
- The veterinary surgeon's name and registration number
- The address of the veterinary practice
- The dates and amount of time the candidate has 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 good professional standing

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

- The candidate is of good standing, i.e., that there is no charge of, or ongoing investigation of, crime or unprofessional conduct outstanding against them.
- The candidate is of good character in general terms.
- the information provided by the candidate relates to their 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 January). We do not accept letters dated or received outside this time (15 January - 30 September).

Candidates must provide the RCVS with up-to-date evidence of their good standing each time they apply to sit our examination. Letter(s) must be directly emailed to rcvsexam@rcvs.org.uk

4.4 Who may provide evidence of good standing?

We require a letter or certificate from the veterinary licensing authority of the country in which the candidate is currently registered or was 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 the candidate's registration is not current or they have not practised within the last 3 months. If a letter provided on the candidate's behalf does not meet RCVS requirements, we will inform them as soon as possible and the RCVS Registration department will discuss provision of additional suitable documentation with them.

If the candidate has graduated within the last year and has not previously been registered, they should obtain a letter or certificate of good professional standing from the Dean or Principal of the university or college at which they obtained/will obtain their primary veterinary qualification.

The RCVS will not normally accept evidence that is presented by the candidate. However, if their 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 the candidate, so that they can get it translated. They 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. Candidates should therefore request the document at the earliest opportunity.

It is the candidate's responsibility to ensure that the RCVS receives their 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 they will not be able to enter the examination.

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

Veterinary surgeons, and those applying to be registered as veterinary surgeons, must disclose to the RCVS any cautions or convictions, including absolute and conditional discharges and spent convictions, or adverse findings (including by another regulator or professional disciplinary proceedings) which may affect registration, whether in the UK or overseas (except for minor offences

excluded from disclosure by the RCVS). For more information, please see

www.rcvs.org.uk/convictions

4.5. Number of examination attempts

Individual candidate examination outcomes (pass and fails) are reported to the RCVS Education Committee. Candidates may attempt the written examination as many times as they wish. If a candidate has failed the clinical, practical examination (OSCE) on three or more occasions, the Education Committee may withdraw that candidate's right to sit the statutory examination. For each attempt, candidates will be required to pay the required examination fee (refer to section 4.6). The RCVS Education Committee may 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 written examination.

4.6. Examination fees

The examination fees are reviewed on an annual basis.

The examination fees for each component of the 2025 exam must be paid for in full and within the deadlines set below.

Exam component and information	Fee	Deadline date
Initial exam entry fee <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Includes one attempt at the full written exams, held in March 2025	Examination fee of £1,100 plus a £300 administration charge (Total £1400)	14 January 2025
Re-sit written examinations (clinical domains) <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Only available for candidates if they have taken and failed any clinical domain written exam paper held in March 2025	Examination fee of £450 plus a £50 administration charge (total £500) per clinical exam domain re-sit	25 April 2025
Re-sit written examination (Code of Professional Conduct exam) <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Only available for candidates if they have taken and failed the Code of Professional Conduct Exam held in March 2025	One free re-sit attempt	25 April 2025
OSCE Exam <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Only available for candidates to book once they have passed <u>all</u> components of the written exams.	Examination fee of £1,100	15 July 2025
Entry to sit individual OSCE exam domains in 2026 for candidates who failed the OSCE in 2025 <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Available for candidates if they have taken and failed any component of the OSCE during the September 2025 diet	Examination fee of £450 plus a £50 administration charge (Total £500) per OSCE exam domain required. If taking entire OSCE, examination fee of £1100 plus a £300 admin charge (£1400)	14 January 2026

Payment is made via the RCVS MyAccount portal. Details are provided once all other aspects of the exam application are complete. 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 a candidate wishes to withdraw from the examination, they must notify the RCVS in writing by email to rcvsexam@rcvs.org.uk. 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 a candidate is eligible for is dependent on when they choose to withdraw:

Time of Withdrawal	Eligible Refund
Before the relevant exam closing dates, i.e.: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• March exam entry closing date - 14 January• Re-sit May exam entry closing date – 25 April• OSCE exam entry closing date – 15 July	The full examination fee, not including the non-refundable administration charge
More than 28 days before the examination	Half the examination fee, not including the non-refundable administration charge
28 days or fewer before the examination	No refund
Failure to attend the examination	No refund

Discretionary refunds on medical or compassionate grounds

If a candidate needs to withdraw from the examination for medical or compassionate reasons, they may be eligible for a discretionary refund of some or the whole examination fee. A request in writing must be submitted with documentary evidence to support the medical or compassionate grounds cited, no later than 28 days after the part of the examination that was missed. Such candidates may have to wait several months for a decision because the RCVS committees that 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 a candidate applies to enter the examination within a new examination diet they must:

- complete a new application form
- pay the appropriate examination fee
- arrange for the RCVS to receive up-to-date evidence of their good professional standing
- meet any other entry requirements.

Candidates will have to sit another academic IELTS or OET test if their 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 such individuals 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 their 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.

Candidates must have their passport or identity card with them and their original veterinary degree certificate or diploma when they register. Registration fees must be paid before they attend to register. Full details will be sent with the candidate's examination results.

5.1. Celebratory ceremony

The RCVS may hold a short ceremony for candidates who have passed the examination. Candidates do not need to attend this celebratory event to register with the RCVS. Details of how to register / become a member of the RCVS will be provided with the OSCE results letter.

RCVS 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 a member does not pay their annual retention fee their name will be removed from the Register, and they 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. Exam format

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 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 the 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 relevant examination fee and had their application accepted may attend the examination. Confirmation letters will be sent to those who are accepted as a candidate to sit the exam.

Candidates who pass all of the written exam components will receive confirmation they can progress to the first available OSCE dates at the same time as their written results. The OSCE exam entry fee must then be paid. The location and approximate date(s) on which their OSCE takes place will also be provided at this time. Depending on candidate numbers, candidates may take the OSCEs on different days/weeks.

Candidates **must achieve a pass in all three clinical domains of the written examination as well as the Code of Professional Conduct exam before they can proceed to the OSCE**. All components (written examinations and OSCEs) of the exam must be sat within an 18-month period.

6.2. Exam results and re-sit options (see also appendix 1)

From 2025 onwards, if a candidate fails any of the clinical domain written exam papers held in March, they may choose to re-sit these papers during May the same year, subject to the appropriate examination fee for re-sits being paid. Only one re-sit attempt of each domain is permitted and this must be within the same exam diet. Candidates cannot defer to re-sit a paper in the following diet.

If a candidate passes their re-sit exam(s) in May, and have passed all the written examinations overall, they are entitled to proceed to the OSCE in September, subject to the OSCE exam fee being paid. Due to late entry onto the OSCE exam, this may result in a later OSCE exam date being allocated.

If the candidate fails any of their re-sit written exams, they cannot proceed to the OSCE. If they choose to re-enter the Statutory Membership Examination at a future date, they must submit a new application to take the entire examination as a new candidate.

If a candidate fails the Code of Professional Conduct (COPC) written exam paper in March, they are permitted to re-sit the COPC exam in May 2025 at no additional charge (one re-sit allowed only).

If a candidate passes all the written exams and takes the OSCE, but then fails to pass all domains within the OSCE (Companion Animal, Equine or Production Animal/Veterinary Public Health), they may proceed directly to the OSCE being held in the following diet (without sitting the written exams again) and reattempt the domains they had previously failed, subject to payment of the appropriate examination fee. Such candidates may not defer beyond the next diet, and if they fail the OSCE domains on this second time, any future attempts of the statutory membership exam must be via a new application and include the full examination (written papers and OSCE).

Please also refer to section 6.10 examination Outcomes and re-sit policy for further details

No elements of the examination should be taken without thorough preparation and exposure to seeing practice within the UK, ideally across all clinical domains of practice.

Please also see Appendix 1.

6.3. Examination venues

The written examinations will be administered online, usually over a period of one to three weeks. Normally, each of the clinical domain exams last for approximately 2 hours and the RCVS Code of Professional Conduct exam lasts for 2 hours and 15 minutes. However, candidates should note that times may vary and the duration and schedule for each exam will be confirmed when the exam dates are released. Candidates will be able to take the examination from a secure, appropriate location of their choosing in their own country of residence. Live proctoring and invigilation will be used throughout the exams. Any suspicious behaviour shown during the exam, or an unsuitable environment may prevent candidate's from completing their exam. If a candidate does not set up the examination software application correctly, they may not be able to take their exam. Candidates must inform the RCVS Examinations Manager of the country and time zone in which they will be sitting the exam.

The examinations will be invigilated remotely by a member of the software team by utilising your computer webcam and microphone to observe and take a recording of you during the examination session. The software will lock down the computer for the duration of the examination session: candidate's 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 [Information for Exam Candidates | TestReach](#)

Details of the live invigilation process will be provided to candidates prior to taking the exam.

It is the candidate's responsibility to ensure that they have the necessary hardware to run the examination software and that it is in full working order (including suitable equipment, good internet, a webcam and microphone) is in full working order. There will be no opportunity to

appeal any components of the examination due to hardware failure. Appeals will only be considered for a verifiable fault with the examination software which was outside the candidate's control. **Touch screen devices (laptops/computers/tablets/iPads) cannot be used, as they are incompatible with the software. Under no circumstances must a device with a Touch screen function be used, even if you do not use the touch screen option and use a mouse or keyboard for example.)**

Devices with Microsoft teams or other messaging software must be uninstalled before commencing an exam.

There will be an opportunity for candidates to determine whether their hardware is potentially compatible prior to the exam. If any issues are encountered during this process candidates must raise this with the Examinations Manager as soon as possible.

The software utilises advanced artificial intelligence and in-person live proctoring to detect potentially suspicious behaviour in the video record, such as eye movements suggesting that a candidate is reading a study aid, use of a mobile phone that could take a screenshot or noises in the room which could suggest a candidate is being fed answers. Any suspicious behaviour suggestive of cheating or incorrectly set up exam app settings may result in the exam being paused or stopped while an investigation is completed by an exam security invigilation member of the software team. This will also 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 6.13).

Candidates must conduct themselves during this examination no differently than if it were being held in-person in a regular, invigilated test centre. Candidates must find an environment similar to that of an invigilated test centre or exam room in which to take their exam.

Candidates who pass the written components will proceed to the OSCE. This will take place at a UK veterinary school in Autumn. Candidates are responsible for making their own travel and accommodation arrangements to the OSCE venue.

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 exam software company or the vet school directly (unless instructed to do so by us) as they will not be able to offer assistance.

6.4. Emergency evacuation procedures

If a candidate is required to evacuate the building where they are completing their remote online written examination, they must do so immediately and in accordance with the instructions set out by the building's regulator. They must notify the invigilator and examinations manager about their need to evacuate **as soon as it is safe to do so.**

If, during the practical examinations, a candidate is instructed to evacuate the examination area they must follow instructions provided by the examiner or other test centre personnel. Candidates should leave the examination area in an orderly way, without taking anything with them, or talking to other candidates. They must assemble at the designated area and not leave this area. If they are permitted to return to the examination area, they should do so immediately when instructed. Candidates who are absent once the examination has re-started will not be compensated for any time lost.

6.5. Identification

At the start of each exam day, each candidate will be asked to show their ID (an in-date passport). Candidates may also be asked to present this again to the live invigilators during the written exams.

6.6. 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 the examination will be taken. This includes mobile phones, tablets, hand-held computers, pagers, voice-controlled devices (such as an Alexa for example) and smartwatches. If a device is seen, the exam may be stopped, or the candidate may be asked to show it to the screen and be observed turning this off and placing this in view of the invigilator.
- 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. A thorough exam security check will take place. Items of clothing with buttons, broaches and pockets will be asked to be presented to the invigilator for exam security checking. Pockets may be asked to be emptied. Items such as jewellery and glasses may also be requested to be shown to the invigilator.
- Stationary, paper, desk clocks and calculators are not needed as they are present within the exam software, and not allowed to be with the candidate at the time of the exam.

A room scan will be completed prior to each written exam. Candidate's will be asked to show the invigilator the walls of the entire room along with the ceiling and floor.

Candidates should complete their exam sat at a table or desk (not sat on a sofa for example). They will be asked to complete a 360-degree scan of the desk/table and chair they are using when taking the exam. Where possible, walls within the room should be free from posters, pictures, shelves etc. If these cannot be removed, candidates may be asked to present these areas to the invigilator.

The exam must be taken in a room with a door that closes, so the candidate is not disturbed. If needed, a 'do not disturb' sign should be put on the door to prevent interruptions.

All types of spectacles / glasses and ear plugs will be required to be presented to the invigilator for exam security checking. Mobile phones, pagers and electronic devices must be turned off and moved to a different room.

Revision notes, textbooks, articles, journals, and study aids must not be present in the room whilst the examination is in session

Candidates are not permitted to take any of the following items into the OSCE station:

- 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).

A secure space will be provided at the OSCE venue for candidates to store their personal belongings.

6.7. 'Fit to sit' the examination

If a candidate presents at the examination centre (which in the case of the written examination shall be interpreted as logging onto the software), they are indicating that they are fit to sit the examination. If a candidate becomes unwell at any point during the examination, they should inform one of the test administrators or examiners immediately. If they are not fit to sit the exam for any reason, a mitigating circumstances form needs to be completed and submitted to the examinations manager. [Document library - Professionals \(rcvs.org.uk\)](#) Medical evidence may be requested.

6.8. Written examinations

The online written examination consists of 350 multiple-choice questions within three, clinical domains (companion animal, production animal (including veterinary public health) and equine) as well as an open-book examination testing candidate's knowledge of the RCVS Code of Professional Conduct (60 multiple-choice questions). Candidates must pass all these components to be eligible to proceed to the OSCE. The written examination will take place remotely, online, within a period of one to three weeks. The clinical domain exams usually last for approximately 2 hours and the RCVS Code of Professional Conduct exam usually lasts for 2 hours and 15 minutes.

The use of foam ear plugs to decrease noise is allowed. These must be presented to the live invigilator at the start of the exam, these will then be checked to ensure they are not a means of communication (e.g., Bluetooth enabled).

6.8.1 Clinical domain examinations

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.

Candidate's must meet the minimum required standard in each of the three domains. There will be **no compensation across domains** i.e., if a candidate falls below the required standard in one clinical domain, then they will fail the examination regardless of how well they did in either of the other clinical domain examinations.

It is the candidate's responsibility to ensure they allow sufficient time to log into the examination software before the examination is due to start. The formative assessment mock test provides candidates with an idea of how much time is required for this.

All candidates will take the exam at the same time. Times will be presented using the UK time zone. During the exam candidates cannot get up and leave their desk.

Negative marking will not be applied.

6.8.2. Code of Professional Conduct exam

The Code of Professional Conduct MCQ examination is an open-book exam, designed to test candidates' knowledge of – and ability to find information within - 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, candidates should ensure that they leave sufficient time to log in before the exam begins.

During this exam, candidates may access a searchable copy of the RCVS Code of Professional Conduct [Code of Professional Conduct for Veterinary Surgeons - Professionals \(rcvs.org.uk\)](https://rcvs.org.uk) to assist them. The document is uploaded into the exam software application so that it is easily accessible during the exam. Candidates are still expected to complete this paper under examination conditions and 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 usually 2 hours 15 minutes with no opportunity for toilet breaks.

Candidates are strongly recommend to familiarise themselves with the RCVS Code of Professional Conduct and supporting guidance when preparing for this exam.

Negative marking will not be applied.

6.8.3. Candidate examination conduct (written examinations)

When logging into the software to take the examination, candidates will need their username, password and identification. Mobile phones, pagers, smart watch and electronic devices must be turned off and stored away from the exam room. Revision notes, textbooks, articles, journals, and study aids must not be present in the room whilst the examination is in session.

The exams will be live proctored by a member of the exam software invigilation team. They will ask each candidate to show them (via your laptop/computer camera) a full scan of the room, chair and desk/table. Candidates should ensure the exam is taken in a room that they are comfortable showing the invigilator. Exams cannot be completed if the room scan is not done to the satisfaction of the invigilator. Items such as glasses or any electronic devices seen within the area, will be asked to be shown to the invigilator. The invigilators are trained to detect suspicious items and detect untoward behaviour that many be considered as an exam security threat. Items of clothing with pockets, buttons and broaches, as well as jewellery, will also be inspected, long sleeves will be asked to be rolled up. Candidates should consider carefully what to wear each day for the exam, as this checking process can take time to complete.

It will not be possible to take toilet or rest breaks whilst the examination is in session, therefore candidates should ensure they are comfortable and prepared before the examination session begins.

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

Candidates 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 and if this takes place an exam security invigilator will be asked to intervene.

Candidates will have the option to finish the examination early if they desire. Once the exam is finished and answers submitted, the invigilation conditions will be lifted (if appropriate) until the start of the next exam session. Candidates will not be permitted to re-visit their answers once their examination has been completed and submitted.

If candidates experience any problems with the computer or exam content during the examination, they should **alert the live invigilators who will provide support**, and after the exam contact the examination manager immediately. Candidates may be asked to complete a mitigating circumstances form.

6.8.4. Sample exam questions

We have provided a small sample of clinical MCQ questions in Appendix 1 showing the format of questions that will be included in the examination.

There will be an opportunity for each candidate to access (three times) a 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). These questions reflect the breadth and scope of the questions that candidates can expect to see in the paper and will provide an opportunity for candidates to experience the style of questions contained within the actual examination. If candidates have any concerns after taking this test, they should contact the Examinations Manager as soon as possible at rcvsexam@rcvs.org.uk

6.9. Objective Structured Clinical Examination

The clinical practical examination will be in the form of an holistic Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE). OSCEs are a fair, valid, and reliable assessment method; all candidates will be assessed on identical clinical scenarios and practical tasks, asked the same questions, and be scored using a standardised approach.

The OSCE is a multi-station circuit of clinical / professional scenarios that candidates have 15 or 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. A video recording of a typical holistic OSCE station used in the exam is available here: [RCVS Academy](#) and further information about the course can be found here ['Working in the UK' online courses for veterinary professionals educated outside of the UK - Professionals \(rcvs.org.uk\)](#)

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, candidates will be expected to perform tasks as if they were treating a live animal and should

behave as they 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 the minimum required standard in each of these three domains to pass the examination. There will be **no compensation across domains** i.e., if a candidate falls below the required standard in one domain, then they will fail the examination regardless of how well they did in either of the other domains.

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

Examiners will mark each candidate against a standardised scoring rubric. This will describe to the examiners the performance (knowledge, skills, behaviours) candidates need to demonstrate in order for them to 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 will record their marks independently. During the examination no examiner knows the marks an individual candidate has scored at any other station (unless they have also assessed that candidate at that station). Feedback on candidates' performance will not be provided.

6.9.1. OSCE Examiners

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

6.9.2. Candidate examination conduct (OSCE)

The OSCE exam period can typically take between 5 and 7 days to complete. However, this may be liable to change depending on the number of candidates who enter the examination.

Upon arrival at the examination centre, candidates will be shown to a waiting room and their identity will be checked. All candidates will be given a badge that displays their candidate number, and this must be visible for the duration of the OSCE so that the examiners can identify them. Please do not wear a uniform with your name embroidered on to this. Candidates will also receive a briefing about the examination process.

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. Candidates will not be permitted to take any equipment into the examination (except for the items detailed in section 6.8.4).

Friends, relatives, or children are not allowed to wait in the test centre, nor can they contact candidates during the exam.

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 each candidate is at the correct circuit and has plenty of time to change into the correct clothing before the exam start time.

At the allocated start time, candidates will be taken to the examination area where they will be shown to their first OSCE station. At each station, candidates have three minutes to read the station instructions outside the station (reading time may vary, based on candidates with reasonable adjustments). 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 completion of the station so candidates should ensure they take time to read them very carefully. Once the reading time has elapsed, each candidate will enter their station and begin the task(s). A copy of the station instructions will be available inside for reference.

Candidates will have an allocated amount of time to complete each station (normally either 15 or 20 minutes). The time allowed will be stated on the OSCE instructions. **Candidates are responsible for managing their own time in the station.** Each station will include a mechanism by which the candidate can monitor their time for the duration of the scenario, usually a hand-held timer. Some stations may contain more than one practical task. If a candidate is unable to carry out a particular task, they may wish to bypass it and forgo its marks to focus on other tasks within the station. Once the station's time has elapsed, the invigilators will provide instructions to move on to the next station or return to the holding room. Other than as directed in the candidate instructions, candidates should refrain from initiating conversation with the examiners, other candidates or any other personnel present during a station.

Candidates are advised to check carefully that they have completed all the tasks before leaving the station as once they have left, they are not permitted to re-enter. When a candidate has finished each station, they may leave and sit on the chair indicated by the invigilator and wait for further instructions. Candidates are not permitted to communicate with other candidates while waiting.

Scheduled breaks will be provided as appropriate. If candidates need to use the toilet during the OSCE, they should ask the invigilators during the waiting time in the holding rooms. Candidates will not be given additional time to complete the examination if they do take an unscheduled break. When all stations in the circuit have been completed, candidates will be taken back to the waiting area.

6.9.3. Health and safety

Working with animals carries with it an element of risk that candidates 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 a candidate at any time during the examination if it appears that their level of competence is such as to jeopardise the safety and/or welfare of the animal or examination personnel.

6.9.4. 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.

Candidates are 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 a candidate believes these may impact the dress code stated, then please contact the Examination Manager before 31 December.

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

Component	Clothing Requirements
Companion Animal	Clean scrubs or a lab coat and suitable footwear (no open toe shoes). Do not wear scrubs with your name embroidered on.
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. No waterproofs or wellington boots are allowed in the stables. Protective headgear will be provided by the RCVS.

Candidates should not wear and/or cover up areas of scrubs/overalls/boilers suits that have their name embroidered on to the clothes. Name badges should be removed.

6.10 Examination Outcomes & Appeals

The pass mark for each examination 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.

The RCVS has an examination appeals policy carried out in accordance with Examination Appeals Procedure agreed 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 obtained 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.

A candidate cannot progress to the OSCE without first passing all of the written examinations. Candidates accepted onto the 2025 exam onwards, who fail one or more of the written exams taken in March 2025, have an opportunity to re-sit these papers in May 2025, subject to payment of the appropriate fee (see section 6.2).

On occasions where a candidate appeals the results of their exam, **it cannot be guaranteed that the appeals panel hearing will take place, and an outcome reached, in advance of the OSCE in September.** If an appeal is upheld, it is unlikely that the result will be overturned; the usual outcome is that the candidate is offered the opportunity to take the exam again at the next available sitting (at no charge), which may be the following year.

6.11. Mitigating circumstances

If a candidate feels there are serious mitigating circumstances (such as a sudden onset of illness) affecting their performance at the examination, they must report these to rcvsexam@rcvs.org.uk at the earliest opportunity. If they become ill during the exam session the live invigilators and examination manager must be notified immediately.

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

A mitigating circumstances form will be available from the RCVS upon 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.

6.12. Confidentiality and exam 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 a candidate's fitness to practise.

All examination material remains the property of the RCVS and candidates are not permitted to reproduce, or attempt to reproduce, examination materials through memorisation or other means.

Candidates must not share information about the questions or cases used in the examination.

They 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 any candidate becomes aware of, or witness, any attempt to compromise the examination, they must report it to the RCVS.

6.13. Misconduct

If any candidate engages in unacceptable or improper behaviour before, during or after the examination to attain success then their results will be annulled, and they may be barred from entry to future examinations.

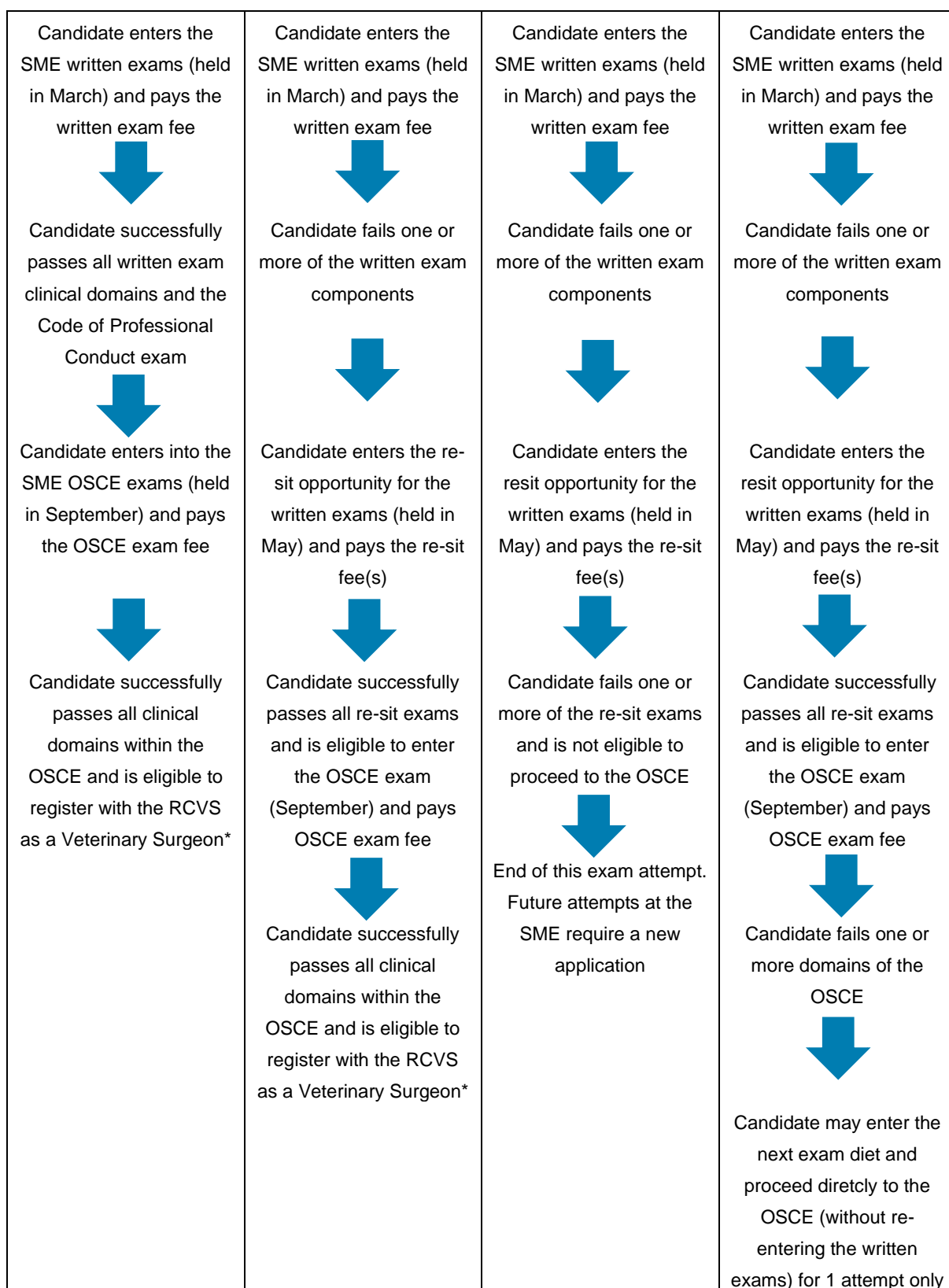
Misconduct includes, but is not limited to:

- Failure to comply with reasonable instructions given by an examination official.
- Refusal to complete scans of the room or comply with the requests of the invigilator during exam security checks.
- 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, either in person or via email or social media.
- Removing examination materials from the examination that they 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 which candidates 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.
- Being part of in-person or virtual groups, who share information that may breach exams and not reporting this.

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.

Appendix 1

The flowchart below provides some examples of various routes that a candidate might encounter on their journey through the exam to registration. This includes examples how the exam could be completed via the resit policy.



Appendix 2

Example Clinical MCQ questions

The single best answer is highlighted

1. You are called to see an eight-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 ten-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 3

Suggested reading list (updated Dec 2024)

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 that 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 Day One Competences - Professionals](#). 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

Baxter, G.M. (ed) (2020) Adams and Stashaks Lameness in Horses. 7th ed Oxford: Wiley Blackwell

Knottenbelt, D.C. and Pascoe, R.R. (2014) The Colour Atlas of Diseases and Disorders of the Horse. 2nd ed. London: Wolfe.

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

Munroe, G.A. (ed) (2019) Equine Clinical Medicine, Surgery and Reproduction. 2nd ed. London: CRC Press

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

Companion animal

Books covering general medicine and surgery:

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

Gardiner, A. and Quain, A. (2025) The Veterinary General Practice Casebook. Companion Animal Clinics. London: Taylor and Francis

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

Maddison, J. et al (2022) Clinical Reasoning in Veterinary Practice. 2nd ed. Oxford: Wiley Blackwell

Nelson, R. and Couto, C.G. (eds) (2019) Small Animal Internal Medicine. 6th ed. St Louis: Elsevier.

Schaer, M., Gaschen, F.P. and Walton, S. (2022) Clinical Medicine of the Dog and Cat. 4th ed. London: CRC Press

Books covering more specific disciplines

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

Arthurs, G. et al (eds) (2018) Manual of Canine and Feline Musculoskeletal Disorders. A Practical Guide to Lameness and Joint Disease. 2nd ed. BSAVA Quedgeley: Gloucester

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

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

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

England, G. C. W. and von Heimendahl, A. (eds) (2010) Manual of Canine and Feline Reproduction and Neonatology. 2nd ed. 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

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

Schwarz, T. and Scrivani, P. (eds) (2015) Manual of Canine and Feline Thoracic Imaging. 2nd ed. BSAVA Quedgeley: Gloucester
Hutchinson, T. and Robinson, K. (2015) Manual of Canine Practice: a Foundation Manual. BSAVA Quedgeley: Gloucester

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

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

Platt, S. R. and Olby, N. J. (eds) (2012) Manual of Canine and Feline Neurology. 4th ed. BSAVA Quedgeley: Gloucester

Villiers, E. and Ristić, J. (eds) (2016) Manual of Canine and Feline Clinical Pathology. 3rd ed. BSAVA 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

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

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

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) (2021) Backyard Poultry Medicine and Surgery A Guide for Veterinary Practitioners. 2nd ed. Oxford: Wiley Blackwell

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

Veterinary public health

Mortimore, S. E and Wallace, C. A. (2015) HACCP: A Food Industry Briefing. 2nd ed. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell

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 that 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

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

McDonald, P. et al (2022) Animal Nutrition. 8th ed. Harlow: Pearson

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

Otranto, D. and Wall, R. (2024) Veterinary Parasitology. 5th ed. Oxford: Wiley

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

Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE) resources

This list contains resources that may provide additional support in preparation for the practical exam:

Bexfield, N. and Riggs, R. (eds) (2024) BSAVA Guide to Procedures in Small Animal Practice. BSAVA Quedgeley: Gloucester

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

Bristol Vet School Clinical Skills Booklets: <https://www.bristol.ac.uk/vet-school/research/comparative-clinical/veterinary-education/clinical-skills-booklets/>

[RCVS Day One Competences – Professionals at RCVS Day One Competences - Professionals](#)

Ryane E. Englar. (2021) The Veterinary Workbook of Small Animal Clinical Cases (Veterinary Skills). 5M Books Ltd

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
- RCVS Code of Professional Conduct at <https://www.rcvs.org.uk/setting-standards/advice-and-guidance/code-of-professional-conduct-for-veterinary-surgeons/>
- The Veterinary Surgeons Act 1996, available on the RCVS website at: [Government legislation - Professionals](#)

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: [Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs - GOV.UK](http://www.defra.gov.uk)

The Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) is an executive agency of the Defra and works on behalf of the Scottish Government and Welsh Government. Its role is to safeguard animal and plant health. Website: [Animal and Plant Health Agency - GOV.UK](http://www.apha.gov.uk)

The Food Standards Agency – website: [Homepage | Food Standards Agency](http://www.foodstandards.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, Farming UK 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 Competences – available on the RCVS website at [RCVS Day One Competences – Professionals at RCVS Day One Competences - Professionals](http://www.rcvs.org.uk/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.bcva.org.uk – British Veterinary Cattle Association (BCVA)

www.cattleparasites.org.uk – Control of Worms Sustainably (COWS)

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.food.gov.uk/business-guidance/chapter-1-introduction - Food Standards Agency Manual For Official Controls (FSA)

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

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

www.scops.org.uk – Sustainable Control of Parasites (SCOP)

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

www.oie.int – World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH)

[Vets | RSPCA - Science - rspca.org.uk](#) - Vet guidance and resources

Other support which you might be interested in

The **'Working in the UK – Veterinary Surgeons'** provides overseas vets with the necessary information and support needed to practise in the UK and prepare for the SME. Further details can be found online: <https://academy.rcvs.org.uk/>