

Summary	
Meeting	Education Committee
Date	16 November 2021
Title	Education Committee Minutes of the meeting held on 14 th September 2021
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Decisions required	To note
Attachments	Classified Appendix
Author	Britta Crawford b.crawford@rcvs.org.uk 020 7202 0777

Classifications		
Document	Classification¹	Rationales²
Paper	Unclassified	
Classified appendix		1

Minutes of the meeting held on 14 September 2021

Members:	Dr Niall Connell	
	Ms Linda Ford	- Lay member
	Professor Tim Parkin	
	Mrs Susan Howarth	
	Dr Susan (Sue) Paterson	- Chair
	Professor Chris Proudman	
	Professor Stuart Reid	
	Professor Susan Rhind	
	Dr Colin Whiting	
	Ms Anna Bradbury	- Student representative
Ms Kate Dakin	- Student representative	
By invitation:	Dr Melissa Donald	- CertAVP Sub-Committee Chair
	Mr Danny Chambers	- Adv Practitioner Panel Chair
	Dr Joanne Dyer	- EMS Co-ordinators Liaison Group and PQSC Chair
	*Professor Nigel Gibbens	- Chair of Accreditation Review Group
In attendance:	Mr Duncan Ash	- Senior Education Officer
	Dr Jude Bradbury	- Examinations Manager
	Dr Linda Prescott-Clements	- Director of Education
	Mrs Britta Crawford	Committee Secretary
	Ms Laura Hogg	Senior Education Officer
	Mr Jordan Nicholls	Lead for Undergraduate Education
	Ms Beckie Smith	- Education Assistant
	Ms Jenny Soreskog-Turp	Lead for Postgraduate Education
	Mr Kieran Thakrar	Education Assistant
	Mrs Kirsty Williams	Quality Assurance Manager
		-
Ms Lizzie Lockett	CEO	
Dr Kate Richards	- Officer Team Observer	

*attended for AI9

Apologies for absence and welcome

1. There were no apologies.
2. The meeting was held in a hybrid fashion at Belgravia House and via "Teams" due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic.

3. The Chair thanked the Education Department for their hard work, and for maintaining all the work streams on top of all the extra work created by Covid-19, which was reflected in the volume and depth of papers prepared for the meeting. Her thanks were appreciated.
4. The chair welcomed the new members of the Committee and Jude Bradbury as the new Examinations Manager in the Education Department.

Declarations of interest

5. Niall Connell declared his association with Glasgow and that he has a role in providing students with feedback. Sue Paterson declared that she was now president of the World Association for Veterinary Dermatologists. Chris Proudman declared that he was Head of Surrey veterinary School and also co-investigator for the Fellowship ratification mentioned later in the papers. Kate Richards declared that she was part of the consultant steering group for SRUC and Stuart Reid declared that he is Chair of Vet Schools Council (VSC)

Minutes

6. The minutes of the meeting held on 11 May 2021 were agreed as an accurate record.

Matters arising

7. The Committee heard that the actions from the minutes had been completed or were included in the agenda.

Education Department update

8. The Director of Education, Dr Linda Prescott-Clements, gave an oral update on the work of the Education Department. The Committee heard that the department had made presentations at the pre-conference workshop at the Veterinary Education (VetED) conference; LPC had presented to a VSC stakeholder meeting on EMS and the department had hosted an EMS student which had been proved useful to both parties. The IAWG had met virtually, and full minutes will come to this Committee in November. RCVS shared their new accreditation standards and IAWG members provided feedback and it was agreed that there will be a working group set up at to look at joint visitations. The VetGDP has drawn interest from the College of Family Physicians in Canada who are keen to develop a similar programme.

Primary Qualifications Sub-Committee (PQSC)

Report of the sub-committee held on 16 August 2021

9. The report of the PQSC meeting held on the 16 August 2021 was received and noted by Education Committee. Some items that were noted, which did not form part of the Education Committee agenda, were that the year-3 visitation to CityU in Hong Kong had taken place, and feedback agreed upon to give back to the school ahead of their final visitation in 2023, and that

PQSC had agreed to not include a detailed species list in the requirements for the new accreditation standards. It had been agreed that instead of a prescriptive list, a general statement would be drafted to demonstrate that students would need to be aware of what species were common to the UK, and that visitors would need to be pragmatic about what was covered within a schools' curriculum

Surrey Visitation

10. Chris Proudman left the room for the discussion. The report of the visitation to the University of Surrey, School of Veterinary Medicine in March 2021 and the University response to the visitors' recommendations and suggestions were presented to Education Committee for review, along with a recommendation on accreditation status from PQSC. PQSC had reported that there were concerns relating to the sustainability of the programme with increased student numbers (which had been a concern from the 2019 visitation), as well as staff workload and assessment validity.
11. PQSC agreed to recommend to Education Committee that the BVMSci (Hons) programme at the University of Surrey be granted '*Accreditation for a shorter period*', with a focussed revisit to be undertaken within two years to look at the issues of staffing, resource, and capacity, as well as progress with addressing the suggestions and recommendations from the visitation report. It had also been recommended that the Covid-related 12-18 month follow-up 'in-person' visitation (a requirement from the virtual visitation guidelines) be postponed and combined with this two year focused revisit.
12. Education Committee agreed to the recommendation from PQSC without further comment.
Action: RCVS to write to Surrey with the accreditation status.

Glasgow Visitation

13. The report of the visitation to the University of Glasgow, School of Veterinary Medicine in March 2021 and the University response to the visitors' recommendations and suggestions were presented to Education Committee for review.
14. It was reported that PQSC had noted the commendations and relatively few suggestions/ recommendations within the visitation report, and also that where recommendations had been made, the University response had indicated sensible plans in place to address issues, with specific timeframes/targets identified.
15. Overall, PQSC reported no major concerns about the veterinary programme at Glasgow and agreed to recommend to Education Committee that the BVMS programme at the University of Glasgow be granted "*Accreditation for seven years*" subject to satisfactory annual monitoring reports.
16. This recommendation was agreed to by Education Committee without further comment.
Action: RCVS to write to Glasgow with the accreditation status.

Melbourne Visitation

17. The report of the joint AVBC/RCVS/AVMA/SAVC visitation to the University of Melbourne Veterinary School in May 2021 was presented to Education Committee for review. The Self-Evaluation Report (SER) was also presented for background information.
18. In considering the report, it was reported that PQSC had noted several concerns which did not appear to have been sufficiently addressed by the Dean's comments. Members had felt that the issues relating to the school's governance, the curriculum, communication problems between the senior team and faculty, and financial issues all cast doubts over the sustainability of the programme.
19. It was on this basis that PQSC recommended to Education Committee that the DVM programme at Melbourne University be granted "*Accreditation for a shorter period*" with a full revisit across all standards to occur in 2023. Education Committee agreed to this recommendation without further comment.

Action: RCVS to write to Melbourne with the accreditation status.

EMS

EMS Database

20. A draft specification of the planned EMS database was received. It was noted that this was an initial draft which had taken into account earlier discussions with EMS co-ordinators and other stakeholders (SPVS, BVA, AVS), and the specification set out the desired functions of the database. Education Committee were asked if they had any comments on the draft, and also to approve the next stage of the process which would be to proceed to further stakeholder consultation and further development with the RCVS IT department.
21. It was noted that some vet schools already had their own internal EMS booking databases, and there were slight concerns that for the database to be completely successful, it would need buy in from all vet schools. However, it was reported that throughout the earlier discussions, whilst no official confirmation had been given, there had been indications that all schools would welcome a centralised database.
22. There were also a few concerns around duplications of processes around any internal booking and feedback processes that the schools may have in place with providers separately, but it was hoped that the new database would be able to cater for all schools so this would be avoided. It was also noted that as well as all universities using the database, it would also heavily rely on providers using and trusting the database which was acknowledged, and a lot would need to be done in terms of communications with providers in order to get them on board, taking into account what their motivations would be for signing up to be listed on the database.

23. It was also agreed that RCVS would need to make it clear that any providers listed on the database were not approved or accredited in any way, and that the listings were purely voluntary.
24. It was acknowledged that it would be less straight forward to be able to list some pre-clinical or professional EMS placements, such as farms and non-clinical placement opportunities, and also overseas placements. It was suggested that the database could be initially introduced to the clinical EMS cohort years where the overwhelming majority of placements would be UK practices before rolling out the database to the pre-clinical years, using the momentum of a growing database to attract non-veterinary placement providers to sign up.
25. There was a question around whether it was intended to work in a similar way to “Trip Adviser” with a reviewing or rating system built into the database so that students and providers would be able to leave public feedback following placements, however it was clarified that this had never been the intention. It was noted that some schools do keep feedback about placements and RCVS was happy for schools to keep this being an internal arrangement.
26. It was noted that as part of the specification RCVS could remove providers where problems had been encountered, so there would be a mechanism to address any concerns with placements that were listed, and it was agreed that this would need to follow a robust formal process.
27. With some schools using the Student Experience Log (SEL), it was asked whether or not there were any plans to integrate the new database into this. It was clarified that the new database formed part of a wider IT project which included a revamp of the old SEL and create a new system for students to record their learning and experience, and there would be plans for these two systems to eventually become integrated.
28. Schools would always require there to be some sign off around health and safety and insurance before placements could go ahead, and it was also noted that RCVS intends to include a process around this within the booking system.
29. It was noted that the current timeline for the project was to implement the database in Autumn 2022, however this was dependent on other projects. There was a question around the resources for the project, however it was clarified that as plans were still at a very early stage, further details on this would follow at a later date once more concrete plans could be put into place.
30. A number of suggestions to add to the functionality were noted, and members were thanked for their input.
31. Education Committee approved the proposal to proceed to stakeholder consultation and encouraged involvement with as many employer and practitioner groups as possible, as well as representation from the students and vet schools.

Action: Specification to be updated and shared with stakeholders

EMS Pilot

32. A number of challenges are faced around the implementation of EMS as identified in Graduate Outcomes Consultation and subsequently as result of the pandemic. Ultimately, the vet schools would favour a reduction in the weeks requirement, however the profession still has concerns about the confidence and preparedness of recent graduates when they start work. It is difficult for RCVS to agree to any immediate reductions, as graduates themselves also agreed that EMS offers vital experience, and they feel that the number of weeks are about right. To explore whether a higher quality EMS experience could achieve a similar outcome with fewer weeks of EMS. RCVS had agreed to consider running an outcomes-based EMS pilot, which could reduce the prescribed number of weeks which would lessen the administrative burden for schools, but also focus on getting sufficient and effective experience for students.
33. It was reported that initial ideas had been discussed in the Education Department, with the intention to bring full plan to Education Committee at its next meeting. Members were invited to submit any ideas or suggestions by email.
34. Noting the recent consultation on the new accreditation standards (which once approved would need to be implemented by the vet schools), it was asked whether this would be the right time to also launch a pilot for EMS, given that it could come at a time of large change within the vet schools. This was acknowledged; however, it was clarified that the standards would be implementing more changes to the way that evidence was gathered and considered rather than how the vet schools delivered their programmes, and also EMS was becoming too much of a big issue to keep side-lined.

Statutory Membership Exam

Outcomes from the 2021 diet

35. The outcome from the 2021 diet was discussed and the committee was advised that three refugees had sat the exam this year but unfortunately none passed the written component. The committee recognised that there may be more refugee applications for the 2022 exam. These numbers will be reported to finance when there is more information on the amount of aid required.

Consideration for scores for English Language Test Components

36. The committee were asked to consider the current requirements for English language tests to allow applicants to register with the RCVS as some candidates may have an average score of 7 (for IELTS) but are below 7 in one component. The committee discussed the requirements from other UK regulatory bodies which have different allowances to the RCVS. It was discussed that the RCVS requirements should link to the requirements of the UK vet schools.
37. Education committee members were supportive of allowing one component of the test to have a slightly lower score (IELTS 6.5) as long the overall average was above 7.

ACTION: The committee decided that this should go to Council for further discussion.

Accreditation Standards Consultation

38. The accreditation standards consultation was noted by Education Committee. The consultation deadline was extended, therefore, it closed on Friday 10 September 2021. The statistics showed that there were 107 valid responses, 25 of these were from organisations.
39. Overall, it was noted that the responses had been positive, and analysis is on-going. In terms of feedback on the methodology section it was stated that the RCVS education team were to focus on the development of the following areas:
 - Clarification of annual monitoring reports
 - Clarification of timeframes and the process of a new vet school
 - Further details to be provided about the repository
 - Considerations for joint international visitations.
40. Education Committee agreed to an extraordinary meeting during October to discuss the results of the consultation once the full report is available.

Veterinary Graduate Development Programme (VetGDP)

41. The committee heard that the VetGDP was launched at the end of July, enabling graduates, VetGDP Advisers and Practices to sign up and complete their VetGDP declarations. Graduates then discuss and choose the EPAs most relevant to their roles with their VetGDP Adviser and could then begin manually recording activities. The committee was provided with statistic for the number of stakeholders signed up to the programme.
42. The e-portfolio had been launched on the morning of the meeting together with a suite of communications across medias to encourage and explain engagement with the programme. A full report will be brought to the Committee in November.

RCVS Covid-19 Taskforce Update

43. A paper outlining the recent review of the RCVS temporary EMS policy was received, and members noted that the clinical EMS requirement for the cohort year class of 2023 had been reduced to 13 weeks, with the next review to take place in November.
44. It was also confirmed that the new 1st year students (class of 2026) would be expected to complete the normal pre-clinical EMS requirement of 12 weeks, but that this would be kept under consideration as part of the on-going reviews to the temporary requirements.
45. It was noted that the RCVS Covid-19 Taskforce would no longer meet unless in the event of another large-scale national lockdown. Therefore, going forward Education Committee would instead consider any issues relating to temporary policy that were still being affected due to the pandemic, such as the reviews to temporary EMS policy, and requirements around abattoir teaching.

Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Practice (CertAVP)

46. The minutes from the subcommittee meeting were noted.

Remote synoptic Exams

47. The Committee discussed continuing the use of remote synoptic exams and the advantages and disadvantages of using this method. The Committee agreed that the option to take the synoptic examination remotely should remain.

CPD

Update from Compliance Panel

48. Education Committee received and noted the minutes from the meetings on the 26 May and 2 September 2021. Ms Ford briefed the committee about the discussions and recommendations from the Panel.

49. The CPD audits will go ahead this year after being paused in 2020, the plan was to do a targeted sample group to focus on users that are not using 1CPD or not updated their 1CPD record but due to resource issues within the IT team, the audit will be conducted in the same way as previous years with a random sample group of 10%.

50. It was noted that overseas members are less likely to use 1CPD and the Panel discussed the risks and benefits of enforcing the requirement to use 1CPD. The Panel felt that a wider discussion about overseas vets will be useful and will bring back a report to Education Committee for further discussion.

Action: CPD Report regarding overseas vets will be presented to EC in February.

Update from CPD Policy Working Party

51. Education Committee noted the terms of reference for the new CPD Policy and Compliance Subcommittee which will replace the CPD Policy Working Party. It was felt that the membership should be expanded to include external stakeholders, especially in relations to policy discussions. Education Committee had previously discussed the benefits of having external stakeholders as part of the CPD Policy WP and had suggested to explore options for setting up external CPD group to discuss policy and wider CPD issues. The Panel felt that would be useful to have some external stakeholders as co-opted members of the Panel rather than having an additional group/committee. Education Committee agreed that it would be useful to add two educationalists to the group.

Action: Education department to update membership of the committee

RCVS Review of Vet School Covid-19 plans

52. The Committee noted a summary of the review of vet schools Covid-19 plans for the latest quarter and understood that the full plans had been reviewed by PQSC.

Advanced Practitioner Status

List of approved Advanced Practitioners

53. The list of approved Advanced Practitioners was noted.

Advanced Practitioner Review

54. There was some discussion around the key findings from the focus groups and how they reiterated the comments that arose from the evaluation survey which had been previously discussed by Education Committee. It was highlighted that the Veterinary Nursing team were looking to create a similar status for nurses and were following progress with the AP evaluation to avoid having any similar issues i.e. confusion of the name. It was suggested to research how other medical professions address their career pathways and the title names for these. There was some discussion around whether it was beneficial to keep trying to promote the status if employers and AP's themselves see no benefits of the status, however as it does provide large personal benefits, more clarification and promotion of the status itself should help in the status being seen and used more widely and positively.

55. The committee agreed to the next steps around clarifying what it means to be an Advanced Practitioner and the benefits, and also identifying a pathway for those that have been awarded the status. The committee suggested that there should be two task and finish groups created to address these points and a plan would be brought to the next meeting.

Action: Plans for the AP Task and Finish groups to be presented at the meeting in November

Advanced Practitioner Statistics

56. The Committee noted the statistics and were pleased to see that a majority of APs had re-accredited.

Risk Register

57. The committee reviewed the reports and based on the discussions at the meeting thought it would be useful to add a risk around future implications for EMS and to update the controls around VetGDP.

Action: Education Department to update Risk register

Fellowship Subcommittee

58. The Fellowship Sub-Committee had put forward a recommendation to award the Diploma of Fellowship by Thesis to candidate T/771, following the examiners' initial recommendation. Education Committee agreed to recommend the award to Council for final ratification.

Any other business

59. Liverpool requested that their RCVS visitation be brought forward a year to be in line with the EAEVE visitation. The Committee learned that this would create a very large visitation group of perhaps 21 people as EAEVE had a stipulation that no visitors could come from the country in which the University was being assessed. This would mean that the RCVS would be the party forced to compromise and left in a minority. Committee members agreed from past experiences that a large group was difficult to keep cohesive and didn't make sense from a Quality Assurance perspective.
60. The Committee agreed that it would be possible to offer Liverpool a visitation close in date to the EAEVE visit, so that they could utilise the same resources but that a joint visitation would be too problematic.

Date of Next Meeting

16 November 2021

Britta Crawford

September 2021

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Summary	
Meeting	Education Committee
Date	16 November 2021
Title	Education Committee minutes
Summary	Minutes of the extraordinary Education Committee meeting held on 14 October 2021, to consider the results of the consultation on the proposed new RCVS standards and methodology for the accreditation of veterinary degree programmes.
Decisions required	None, to note
Attachments	Minutes of the extraordinary Education Committee meeting held on 14 October 2021
Author	Kieran Thakrar Education Admin Assistant k.thakrar@rcvs.org.uk

Classifications		
Document	Classification¹	Rationales²
Paper	Unclassified	N/A

¹Classifications explained

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

²Classification rationales

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

Education Committee – Extraordinary Meeting

Meeting held on 14 October 2021

Present:

Dr Sue Paterson	Chair
Mr Danny Chambers	
Ms Kate Dakin	Student Representative
Dr Jo Dyer	
Ms Linda Ford	
Dr Niall Connell	
Prof. Nigel Gibbens	
Prof. Chris Proudman	
Prof. Stuart Reid	
Prof. Tim Parkin	
Prof. Susan Rhind	
Ms Susan Howarth	
Ms Anna Bradbury	Student Representative

In attendance:

Ms Lizzie Lockett	CEO, RCVS
Dr Linda Prescott-Clements	Director of Education, RCVS
Mr Jordan Nicholls	
Ms Jenny Soreskog-Turp	
Mr Duncan Ash	
Ms Laura Hogg	
Ms Britta Crawford	
Ms Jude Bradbury	
Ms Kirsty Williams	
Ms Rebecca Smith	
Mr Kieran Thakrar	

Apologies

1. Apologies were given by Kate Richards.

Matters Arising

2. The meeting discussed the consultation report which presented the feedback from the profession on the draft RCVS Accreditation Standards and Accreditation Methodology for veterinary degree programmes, conducted between 19 July and 3 September 2021.

3. The consultation was open to all members of the profession and key stakeholders, and 107 responses were received. Within these responses, feedback from 25 veterinary organisations was provided, including the Association of Veterinary Students (AVS), the British Veterinary Association (BVA), the Veterinary Schools Council (VSC) and a number of employer representatives.
4. The consultation asked for feedback regarding the relevance of the six domains of Standards proposed, the individual Standards within each domain and the new methodology. The report presented the analysis of feedback received according to each Standard, and proposed actions with rationale. All Standards were discussed in turn and actions agreed or alternative suggestions put forward.
5. Standard 1.2 - it was raised that Schools cannot quality assure the environment of EMS, so it was suggested that further clarification be provided in the guidance on expectations.
6. It was suggested that Standard 1.4 was focused on good practice which does not mean a practice was required to be involved in the practice standards scheme for EMS. It was suggested that this was further clarified.
7. It was suggested that on page 18, the term necropsy should be replaced as the term is commonly used for humans rather than animals.

(Secretary's note: Traditionally the term "necropsy" has been used to refer to a post-mortem examination on an animal species, while "autopsy" has been reserved exclusively for human patients, therefore no change was made.)

8. It was debated as to whether abattoir experience should be within red *and* white meat abattoirs, or red *or* white meat. It was decided that the standard should state red *or* white meat for in-person experience, as virtual resources had been developed to support student teaching across all related learning outcomes and the in-person experience was associated with understanding the real environment. The schools were concerned that this standard was reliant on 3rd party organisations, therefore, the term 'must' was difficult to ensure. It was proposed that the term 'must' should be replaced to 'should'. It was also commented that the term 'commercially approved' abattoir needed to be defined.
9. It was agreed that the challenge of changing 'must' to 'should' would result in making this an optional standard which was not the intention of the accreditation standards. After debate, it was decided that the integrity of the standards was important, therefore, and the term 'must' was kept.
10. On page 20, it was noted that 'timely internet access' did not mean at the exact time of the placement, but within a reasonable time period. Further clarification was to be developed.
11. It was noted that a Head of School or Dean 'must' be an MRCVS (not 'should').

12. Regarding standard 3.12 - attrition rates were debated, and it was noted that the RCVS created the VetGDP to lower attrition rates post-graduation. It was decided to not include post-graduation attrition rates in the standards, as it could not be attributed to be a particular school. Other life factors could cause post graduate attrition rates. The data of post-graduate attrition could still be gathered, but this was not in relation to the accreditation standards.
13. It was noted that it was the University who needed a process for any whistleblowing.
14. For Standard 6.3, the term 'should' would be changed to 'must' and that the term 'general practitioners' should be extended to 'general practitioners/veterinary surgeons in general practice'.
15. For Standard 6.4, it was suggested to define 'general practice'. The increase to 70% was accepted.
16. For Standard 6.8, it was debated that PSS accreditation should include the requirement for practices to host EMS placements. It was agreed to hold off on EMS discussions until after the EMS stakeholder event which was to occur in November.

Next Actions

17. The changes that were discussed in this meeting and highlighted in the original paper were agreed. All amendments are to be made and then the final documents are to be presented to Council.

Date of Next Meeting

18. This was an extraordinary meeting; therefore, the next meeting will follow the normal Education Committee schedule which is 16 November 2022.

Summary	
Meeting	Education Committee
Date	16 November 2021
Title	Primary Qualifications Sub-Committee (PQSC)
Summary	Report of the PQSC meeting held on 11 October 2021
Decisions required	None, to note
Attachments	1. Minutes of the PQSC meeting held on 11 October 2021 2. Confidential minutes annex
Author	Jordan Nicholls Lead for Undergraduate Education j.nicholls@rcvs.org.uk

Classifications		
Document	Classification¹	Rationales²
Paper	Unclassified	N/A
Annex	CONFIDENTIAL	1, 2

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²Classification rationales

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Primary Qualifications Sub-Committee (PQSC)
Minutes of the meeting held via MS Teams on 11 October 2021

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

In attendance:	Mr Duncan Ash
	Dr Jude Bradbury
	Professor Ed Hall (for Massey item)
	Mr Jordan Nicholls
	Dr Susan Paterson
	Dr Linda Prescott-Clements
	Mr Kieran Thakrar
	Mrs Kirsty Williams

*absent

Welcome and apologies for absence

1. Apologies for absence were received from Professor Jaarsma, Mr Peaty and Professor Warman.

Declarations of interest

2. There were no new declarations of interest presented.

Minutes of the meeting held on 16 August 2021

3. The minutes from the meeting of PQSC held on 16th August were received and noted. The minutes were accepted as a true record.

Matters Arising

4. One action from the previous meeting was for members of the Education Department to draft a paragraph relating to the teaching of core UK species for overseas schools, for inclusion within the guidance notes relating to that new accreditation standard.
5. PQSC were presented with the following paragraph:

For non-UK programmes, where common UK species may not be present, the syllabus should provide students with the knowledge and understanding of species and conditions common to the UK, and offer hands on experience with these species where possible. Accreditation panels will need to be pragmatic in making a judgement on whether an institutions' curriculum would sufficiently prepare a graduate to work in the UK.
6. Members were content with the statement, and it was agreed to add this to the guidance for the new accreditation standard.

Action: RCVS to update guidance notes for new accreditation standard 1.5

Massey visitation

7. See confidential annex.

Accreditation consultation update

8. An update on progress with the new accreditation standards and methodology was presented to the committee, along with a summary of the consultation results.
9. 107 valid responses had been received, including 19 from organisations, and lots of feedback had been provided. On the whole, everyone responding had been largely supportive of the proposed changes, though there were a lot of suggestions received, many of which were suggestions for how to clarify or strengthen the guidance.
10. Two major themes that came out of the responses were abattoir teaching, and the definition of "majority" when it comes to teaching in the first opinion context, both of which had an equal split on opinion from respondents representing veterinary schools and those representing the profession.
11. With regards to the proposed methodology, again there was overwhelming support, however it was asked that the process for new schools be clarified.
12. Another theme in the responses to the consultation from veterinary school representatives was the request for details on what minimums would be counted as "sufficient". Whilst it was not appropriate to state defined minimum numbers or requirements, as this would be overly prescriptive and could be different depending on the programme context, it was noted that the RCVS would be committed to an open dialogue with schools about what types of evidence could be submitted appropriate for their programme model.

13. It was reported that following Education Committee, the new standards and methodology would be sent to the November Council meeting for ratification, before being published. Schools would then have a minimum of one year prior to the implementation of the new standards and methodology.

Schools Covid plans

14. The quarterly updates received from schools with changes made to their programmes as a result of the pandemic were received and noted. The plans had been considered by the chair of Education Committee and the Director of Education, and where points of clarification were required, these had been sought. It was agreed that the responses to these queries would be circulated to PQSC once collated.

Action: RCVS to circulate Covid plan clarifications

St. George's University (SGU) substantive change

15. Please see confidential annex.

Statutory Membership Examination (SME) Board meeting

16. The minutes from the SME board meeting held on 31 August 2021 were presented for review and noted by PQSC.
17. Please see confidential annex.

SME full diet report - 2021

18. The report outlining the results of the 2021 diet, along with feedback from candidates and examiners on the examination process, was received and noted by PQSC. It was highlighted that 3 of the candidates that passed the written component had been unable to sit the OSCE in 2021 and would be deferring to 2022 due to pandemic-related restrictions.

SME guidance update

19. PQSC were presented with the draft SME Guidance for the 2022 Diet for consideration. Changes reported from the previous version included the addition of a section containing guidance for refugees, and some information regarding religious jewellery/clothing. Further changes had been made to the English Language testing requirements, and also information regarding the online delivery of the written examination components.
20. It was pointed out that on page 10 of the guidance, it still stated that candidates would need to be in the UK to undertake the written exams, which was no longer accurate.

21. The committee were content with the remaining changes and recommended to Education Committee that they be approved as final.

Action: PQSC recommends SME guidance for 2022 diet as final.

English language testing timeline

22. Changes to the validity duration of English language testing for the SME had been proposed by the SME board for candidates working/studying in an English-speaking country and PQSC were requested to agree on a way forward, based on suggestions from the RCVS. Currently, English language test certificates were valid for two years, which meant that even those candidates working or studying in an English-speaking country would need to re-take this test should they wish to enter the SME again.
23. Three proposals were presented to PQSC and, with a majority vote, it was decided to recommend to Education Committee that English language test results to remain open-ended for candidates that could provide evidence to show that they were working or studying in an English-speaking country.

Action: PQSC recommends to Education Committee that English language test results remain valid as long as candidate can demonstrate that they work/study in an English-speaking country.

Any other business

24. There were no further items of business discussed.

Date of next meeting to be held remotely: 14 January 2022 at 10:00 a.m.

Summary	
Meeting	Education Committee
Date	16 November 2021
Title	Day One Competences
Summary	<p>The Veterinary Nursing Day One Competences and the Veterinary Surgery Day One Competences (D1Cs) are generally drafted to be in alignment.</p> <p>The VN D1Cs had recently been reviewed by the Mind Matters team at RCVS, and they had made an update to the competence “<i>Understand the emotional landscape of the veterinary nursing profession</i>”, to “<i>To understand and demonstrate the ability to reflect on the emotional landscape of the veterinary nursing profession.</i>”</p> <p>It has been recommended that the VS D1Cs are also amended to reflect this update.</p> <p>Therefore, it is proposed that the equivalent VS D1C (competence number 9) is updated from, “<i>Demonstrate situational awareness through navigating and responding to the economic and emotional context in which the veterinary surgeon operates.</i>”, to:</p> <p>“<i>Demonstrate situational awareness through navigating, responding and reflecting on the economic and emotional context in which the veterinary surgeon operates.</i>”</p> <p>Education Committee is invited to consider and approve this update.</p>
Decisions required	To approve update
Attachments	None
Author	Duncan Ash Senior Education Officer d.ash@rcvs.org.uk / 020 7202 0703

Classifications		
Document	Classification ¹	Rationales ²

Paper	Unclassified	N/A
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¹Classifications explained

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

²Classification rationales

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

Summary	
Meeting	Education Committee
Date	16 November 2021
Title	Statutory Membership Examination Guidance 2022
Summary	The committee are invited to review the latest updates to the SME Guidance for the 2022 Diet. This includes the addition of a refugee section and some information on religious jewellery/clothing as well as changes to the English language testing and information regarding the online delivery of the written exam components.
Decisions required	Education Committee are asked to approve the 2022 guidance for final publication to candidates.
Attachments	None.
Author	Jude Bradbury Examinations Manager 020 7050 5043 / j.bradbury@rcvs.org.uk

Classifications		
Document	Classification ¹	Rationales ²
Paper	Unclassified	

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Statutory Membership Examination Guidance

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

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1. Introduction

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

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

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

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

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

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

1.1. Legislative framework

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

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

1.2. RCVS Day One Competences

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

1.3. Format of the Examination

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

The Statutory Membership Examination consists of the following components:

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

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

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

1.4. Pathway to RCVS membership

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

Declaration of Intention
to Sit the Exam



Application to Sit the
Exam



Written Exams



Objective Structured
Clinical Exam



Registration

These stages are described below:

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

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

Stage 2 – Application to Sit the Examination

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

Stage 3 – Written Examinations

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

Stage 4 – Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE)

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

Stage 5 – Registration

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

1.5. Working as a Veterinary Nurse

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

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

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

<https://www.rcvs.org.uk/registration/applications-veterinary-surgeons/statutory-membership-exam>. If

you hold a veterinary degree and intend to sit the RCVS Statutory Membership Examination, you must:

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

2.1. Proof of primary veterinary degree

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

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

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

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

2.2. Transcripts

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

2.3. Registration certificate or veterinary licence

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

2.4. Proof of your Identity

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

2.5. Self-assessment skills list

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

2.6. Candidates with special requirements or requests for reasonable adjustment

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

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

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

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

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

2.7. English language test exemption

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

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

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

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

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

2.8. Translations of documents

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

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

2.9. Recent graduates

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

2.10. Refugees

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

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

Once you have submitted the necessary supporting evidence you will be put in touch with the Refugee Council who will then begin providing financial support. Financial support offered by the Refugee Council includes:

- IELTS/OET testing
- SME exam fee
- RCVS Knowledge library access

Any further support being offered from other UK Veterinary Institutions will also be provided by the Examinations Manager.

2.11. Submitting your application

You may submit your declaration all year round. If you intend to enter the next examination, we must receive completed declarations and supporting documents by **31 January** otherwise we cannot

guarantee that we will have sufficient time to carry out the necessary checks before the examination closing date of 14 February. We recommend starting the declaration process around 5 months before the exam.

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

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

[2.12. Renewal of your Declaration of intention to sit](#)

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

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

3. Preparing yourself for the examination

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

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

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

3.1. Courses of study

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

3.2. Studying and access to libraries

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

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

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

3.3. Practical and clinical experience – Seeing Practice

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

19.7 The RCVS has interpreted these as follows:

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

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

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

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

4. Applying to sit the examination

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

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

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

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

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

4.1. Examination application form

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

4.2. English language test report

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

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

<https://www.ielts.org/>

Occupational English Test (OET): Achieving at least a **grade B** in the listening, reading, writing and speaking sub-tests of the **veterinary** version of the Occupational English Test (OET). A grade C+ is allowed in one sub-test provided the grades for the remaining sub-tests are a B or higher: <https://www.occupationalenglishtest.org/test-information/healthcare-professions/veterinary-science/>

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

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

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

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

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

4.2.1 Temporary English language test policy

Due to the backlog of testing stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic a passing IELTS/OET is not required prior to sitting the 2022 exam but will be required prior to registration for candidates successful in passing the examinations.

4.3. Evidence of your good professional standing

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

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

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

Registrations
Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons
Belgravia House
62-64 Horseferry Road

London
SW1P 2AF

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

4.3.1. Who may provide evidence of your good standing?

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

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

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

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

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

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

4.4. One recent passport-style photograph

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

4.5. Number of examination attempts

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

4.6. Examination fees

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

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

Payment by bank transfer is preferred. Details are provided on the examination application form. Please note, all international bank charges are incurred by the person paying the fee, including those levied by our bank, which is approximately £7.00.

4.7. Withdrawal and refunds

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

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

Time of Withdrawal	Eligible Refund
Before the closing date of 14 February	The examination fee of £2,200, not including the non-refundable £300 administration charge
More than 28 days before examination	Half the examination fee: £1,100
28 days or fewer before the examination	No refund
Failure to attend the examination	No refund

Discretionary refunds on medical or compassionate grounds

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

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

4.8. Reapplications following failure or withdrawal

Each time you apply to enter the examination you must

- complete a new application form
- pay the appropriate examination fee

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

5. Admission to the Register

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

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

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

5.1. Admissions ceremony

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

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

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

6. About the examination

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

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

6.1. General information

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

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

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

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

If your application to sit the exam is accepted, you will receive confirmation of the date and time of your written examinations by 28 February.

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

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

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

The examination should not be taken without thorough preparation.

6.2. Venues

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

6.3. Emergency evacuation procedures

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

If during the practical examinations, you are instructed to evacuate the examination area you should follow instructions provided by the examiner or other test centre personnel. You should leave the examination area in an orderly way, without taking anything with you. You must assemble at the

designated area and not leave this area. If you are permitted to return to the examination area, you should do so immediately when you are instructed. Candidates who are absent once the examination has re-started will not be compensated for any time lost.

6.4. Identification

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

6.5. Prohibited items

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

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

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

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

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

6.6. Fit to sit the examination

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

6.7. Written examinations

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

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

6.7.1 Clinical exam

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

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

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

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

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

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

Negative marking will not be applied.

6.7.2. Code of Professional Conduct exam

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

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

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

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

Negative marking will not be applied.

6.7.3. Candidate examination conduct (written examinations)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

6.7.4. Sample questions

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

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

6.8. Objective Structured Clinical Examination

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

6.8.1. Examiners

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

6.8.2. Candidate examination conduct (OSCE)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

6.8.3. Health and safety

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The RCVS recognises there are different religious and cultural beliefs amongst candidates and that candidates may have medical conditions. If you believe these may impact the dress code stated, then please contact the Examination Manager before 31 January.

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

Component	Clothing Requirements
Companion Animal	Clean scrubs and suitable footwear (no open toe shoes)
Production Animal and Veterinary Public Health	Clean overalls or boiler suit and clean wellington boots. Waterproofs may be worn if preferred but are not mandatory. After the exam, candidates must carry out a complete hand and boot wash, remove any waterproofs and change into regular shoes.
Equine	Clean overalls or boiler suit and sturdy boots (preferably steel toe-capped). No waterproofs or wellington boots are allowed

	in the stables. Protective headgear will be provided by the RCVS.
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6.9. Notification of examination results

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

6.10. Examination Outcomes and Re-sit Policy

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

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

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

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

6.11. Examination appeals

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

6.12. Mitigating circumstances

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

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

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

6.13. Confidentiality and test security

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

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

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

6.14. Misconduct

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

Misconduct includes, but is not limited to:

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

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

Example Clinical MCQ questions

The single best answer is highlighted

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

Appendix 2

Suggested Reading list

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

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

Equine

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

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

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

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

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

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

Companion animal

Books covering general medicine and surgery:

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

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

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

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

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

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

Books covering more specific disciplines

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

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

BSAVA produce a series of books and manuals which provide comprehensive coverage of a wide range of small animal disciplines. The following are some examples which you may find useful.

Further information can be found on their website: www.bsava.com.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Production animals

General

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

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

Bovine

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

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

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

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

Sheep

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

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

Pigs

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

Poultry

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

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

Veterinary public health

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

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

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

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

General reading list

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Legislation

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Animal husbandry

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

Veterinary Publications and Journals

You are advised to read the following journals and publications:

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

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

Summary of useful websites

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

www.oie.int – World Organisation for Animal Health

Other support which you might be interested in

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

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

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

Summary	
Meeting	Education Committee
Date	16 November 2021
Title	English language testing policy for candidates wishing to take the Statutory Membership Examination (SME).
Summary	<p>Candidates applying to sit the SME whose first language is not English and who graduated from a university where their veterinary degree wasn't taught and assessed in English are required to undertake English language testing.</p> <p>At present, if a candidate can demonstrate that their primary veterinary degree was taught and assessed entirely in English then they can be granted exemption from English language testing.</p> <p>This paper addresses two aspects of the English language testing policy:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Currently, the policy only recognises a primary veterinary degree that was taught in English as evidence of English language skills in a veterinary context. This proposal considers allowing post-graduate veterinary qualifications to also be used as evidence of veterinary English language skills where a candidate's primary veterinary degree was not taught and assessed in English. 2. Currently, the SME guidance for applicants states that English language test certificates are valid for two years. This timeframe may be insufficient for candidates who require longer to prepare or who are unsuccessful and wish to retake the SME. This proposal looks at extending the duration of language test validity for candidates who have achieved the English language test requirements if they continue to work/study in an English-speaking country.
Decisions required	<p>The committee are asked to make decisions on the two proposed changes.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Decide whether post-graduate veterinary qualifications taught and assessed entirely in English can be used to provide evidence of exemption from English language testing for the SME. 2. Extend the validation timeframe for English language pass certificates indefinitely for candidates who can demonstrate they continue to work/study in an English-speaking country.
Attachments	none
Author	Jude Bradbury

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Classifications

Document	Classification ¹	Rationales ²
Paper	Unclassified	

¹Classifications explained

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

²Classification rationales

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

English language testing policy for candidates wishing to take the Statutory Membership Examination (SME)

Background

1. English language testing is a standard requirement to sit the RCVS Statutory Membership Examination, to ensure overseas candidates have the necessary communication skills to work as veterinary surgeons in the UK. Candidates are required to demonstrate their language skills prior to being formally accepted onto the exam.
2. Language testing assesses the candidate's ability in four areas, speaking, listening, reading, and writing. At present any candidate whose veterinary degree was not taught and assessed entirely in English is required to undertake English language testing.
3. The RCVS currently accepts testing through two organisations, International English Language Testing System (IELTS) and Occupational English Test (OET), with the following criteria:

Provider	Average Score	Component Scores
IELTS	7.0 or more	6.5 or more in one component. 7.0 or more in all other components
OET	Grade B or higher	C+ or more in one component. B or more in all other components

4. For RCVS purposes, a test pass certificate demonstrating these requirements is valid for a two-year period from the date of the language assessment. The rationale for this is based on previous research by Bahrck (1984) and Weltens (1988) who demonstrated that second language attrition rate is greatest between 0-3 years of discontinued use.¹
5. More recent research reviewed by Schmid and Mehotcheva (2012) highlighted additional factors and complexities behind language attrition.² However, there is consensus that active engagement with the language is a key component to maintaining it.

Proposal

6. This proposal addresses two aspects of the English language exemption policy for candidates of the SME: allowing the use of a post-graduate veterinary qualification as evidence of English language skills and extension of the validity of current English language test results.

¹ Bahrck, B.P. (1984). *Fifty years of second language attrition: Implications for programmatic research*. The Modern Language Journal, 68(2), 105-118.

Weltens, B. (1988). *The attrition of French as a foreign language*. Dordrecht/Providence: Foris Publications.

² Schmid, M. & Mehotcheva, T. (2012). *Foreign language attrition*. Dutch Journal of Applied Linguistics, 1(1).

English language test exemption for candidates with post-graduate veterinary qualifications taught in English

7. Currently, the SME guidance only grants exemption from English language testing to candidates whose primary veterinary degree was taught and assessed entirely in English, regardless of the experience or expertise of the veterinary surgeon.
8. However, some candidates whose primary veterinary degree was *not* taught and assessed entirely in English go on to achieve a post-graduate veterinary qualification which was taught and assessed entirely in English. We have had requests from such candidates for these post-graduate qualifications to make them eligible for exemption, but the current policy does not allow this.
9. Unlike a primary veterinary qualification which encompasses all the 'Day One Competences' and therefore all components of communication, a post-graduate qualification may focus only on one area of veterinary knowledge. Consequently, the assessment process for post-graduate degrees may be primarily based on written examinations, which would not capture a candidate's ability to 'speak' English, even if the course and assessment of the degree did include skills in listening, writing, and reading English.
10. Furthermore, not all post-graduate courses are necessarily subject to the same levels of external quality assurance as primary veterinary degrees.

Education Committee is asked to decide whether to update the exemption policy by considering the following options:

A. Candidates applying to sit the SME can be exempt from English Language testing if they can demonstrate that either their primary veterinary degree was entirely taught and assessed in English, or if they have a post-graduate veterinary degree which was entirely taught and assessed in English, including all four components of communication (reading, listening, writing and speaking), was subject to external quality assurance and achieved within the last 5 years.

OR

B. Keep the policy as it is, limited to primary veterinary degrees (as evaluating the extent of the four components may be challenging).

Extension of English language testing validation for SME candidates continuing to work / study in the UK.

11. Currently, the SME guidance states that English language test certificates from IELTS and OET remain valid for a period of two years.
12. This timeframe may be insufficient for candidates who require longer to prepare for the exam or who are unsuccessful and wish to retake the SME, resulting in the need for them to pay for and pass their English language test again.

13. In some cases, the candidate may have remained in the UK (or another English language speaking country) while they prepare for the exam, making attrition of communication skills unlikely if they are using them daily.
14. An English-speaking country would be 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>
15. Evidence to demonstrate a candidate is working or studying in an English-speaking country would be:
 - A reference from a tutor or lecturer of a post-graduate course emailed directly to the RCVS Examinations Manager. The reference must cover at least three months full time study or equivalent within the past two years and detail the level and proficiency of English language used.
 - Or a reference from an employer emailed directly to the Examinations manager. The reference must cover at least three months full time work or equivalent within the past two years and detail the level and proficiency of English language used.
16. Other professional bodies in the UK have English language testing conditions which account for this situation.
 - The General Medical Council (GMC) allows candidates to prove they have kept their English skills up to date by submitting a reference from a tutor/lecturer or employer which shows they have carried out at least three months of full-time study or employment in a country where English is the first language in the last two years.
 - The Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) allows candidates to show evidence of twelve months spent working primarily in English within the last two years in addition to a form of English language testing undertaken in another country.
 - The (GDC) allows candidates to submit evidence that they have recent experience (within the last two years) of practicing in English by the submission of original references from employers stating as such.
17. PQSC considered this proposal and made a recommendation to Education Committee that the English language test certificates remained valid indefinitely for candidates who can provide evidence they have continued to work or study in an English-speaking country

Decision required:

Education Committee are asked to decide whether to extend the duration of language test validity for candidates who have achieved the English language test requirements and can provide evidence they are continuing to work/study in an English-speaking country.

Summary	
Meeting	Education Committee
Date	16 November 2021
Title	Veterinary Graduate Development Programme (VetGDP) update
Summary	VetGDP was launched in the summer of 2021 to support graduates in their first role as veterinary surgeons. This paper provides an update on the work of the VetGDP.
Decisions required	None, to note
Attachments	None
Author	Britta Crawford Senior Education Officer b.crawford@rcvs.org.uk

Classifications		
Document	Classification¹	Rationales²
Paper	Unclassified	N/A

Background

1. VetGDP was launched in July 2021 to support graduates in their first role as veterinary surgeons by providing hands on support in form of a VetGDP Adviser in the workplace.
2. As part of the programme, graduates record their progress and confidence in their portfolio across a number of EPAs that are relevant to their role. The VetGDP e-portfolio launched on 14 September 2021. All recent graduates and VetGDP advisers who had begun or completed the VetGDP training were sent an email detailing how to access the system with further links to step-by-step guides for the graduate, VetGDP Adviser and the senior veterinary surgeon within the workplace.

VetGDP Advisers

3. VetGDP Advisers must have been on the practising register for at least three years and have started the RCVS VetGDP on-line training. The training comprises 6 modules of e-learning and must be completed by the end of 2021. Before gaining access to the e-portfolio the VetGDP Adviser must ensure that they have an up-to-date relationship with their practice in their RCVS My Account and have made a formal declaration to support their graduate.
4. Veterinary Surgeons acting as VetGDP Advisers who do not complete the training by the end of December will not be able to take on a further new graduate. A suite of tailored communications is in process to engage these veterinary surgeons with completing the course.

Table 1: Veterinary Surgeons who have engaged with VetGDP e-training as at 3 November 2021

VS who have started the VetGDP training	1678
VS who have completed all six modules of the VetGDP training	789
VS who have made VetGDP Adviser declaration	1247
VS who have completed the VetGDP training <i>and</i> made declaration	684

VetGDP Workplaces (Appointed Senior Veterinary Surgeon)

5. From January 2022, all workplaces employing a new graduate must be an RCVS Approved Graduate Development Practice/Workplace. To do this they must have a VetGDP Adviser who has completed the training and pledge their support and resources to the programme. To do this the Appointed Senior Veterinary Surgeon must make a declaration to this effect in the practice/workplace RCVS My Account. As at 3 November 2021 585 workplaces had made this declaration and there are a further 704 practices who have an eligible VetGDP Adviser who have not yet made the practice VetGDP declaration.
6. Extra communications are in process to remind practices that they do have a dedicated practice 'My account' and instructions on how to access it.

Graduates

7. Upon registration, graduates are directed to their My Account to make a statement regarding their VetGDP. The numbers of graduates choosing each option are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Graduate statement choices.

I have started/will be starting a professional veterinary role with a clinical element, within the UK.	The majority of candidates will choose this statement. Once they have done so they are sent an email to give them access to the e-portfolio.	986
I am continuing my studies	This is for those graduates who, for example, are remaining in academia to study towards a PhD. Those who chose to locum during this period will need to sign up for the VetGDP.	4
My role has little or no clinical element	Clicking on this option takes the graduate to another screen and asks them to give their new job title, place of work and briefly describe your role. The request is taken to this subcommittee and confirmation of exemption or a request for further information will be sent to the graduate by email.	6
I am not yet starting a professional veterinary role	This option is for graduates who have decided to take a break before starting work or are not yet taking on a full veterinary role.	-
I am going to work overseas	It is not possible to participate in the VetGDP whilst working overseas as we cannot guarantee to provide a VetGDP Adviser.	18
Overseas 1 year experience	Those joining from overseas are given information about the VetGDP when registering. They are advised that should participate in the VetGDP if they have less than one year's experience in a role similar to that which they will be undertaking when starting work in the UK.	14

8. The statistics on graduate's signing up for VetGDP are shown in Table 3.

Table 3 : VetGDP Sign up process – graduate statistics

	Required to make statement	VetGDP statements made	Sign up VetGDP	Outstanding
All	1463	1030	985	433
UK grad	1047	868	849	179
EU grad	344	148	128	196
Rest of world	72	14	8	58

9. Graduates who choose a statement delaying their VetGDP receive an automatic message letting them know that it is their responsibility to update their statement if and when their situation changes. They are also sent 6 monthly reminders. Tailored communications are in process to engage all with the sign-up process, with a particular focus on new overseas members.

Potential mismatch of graduates and VetGDP Advisers

10. 92 graduates have completed their statement to say that they are starting a professional veterinary role but haven't set up a relationship on the RCVS database with a specific practice. 250 graduates have set up a relationship with a practice, but the practice does not have a VetGDP Adviser who has made their declaration and/or the practice has not made their declaration.
11. Again, we are contacting all parties with web links and advice as to how to make their declarations. Those identified as working at practice without a VetGDP Adviser will be contacted as part of the referral process.

Communications

12. As mentioned above, tailored communications are going out to all parties to give advice and encouragement to engage fully with the programme. We have been running lunch time drop-in sessions for VetGDP Advisers and Graduates to ask questions and get information and we are adding an evening session in early December. Social media is being used to remind and engage and 1-2-1 sessions are available at the London vet Show for any that need further assistance. The previous workshops, guidance and examples are available on the RCVS website.

Quality Assurance

13. Quality Assurance questions will go out to the VetGDP Adviser and graduates every three or four months. These are made up of 5 or 6 short questions which will only take a couple of minutes to answer. These should let us know whether graduates and VetGDP Advisers are receiving the support and resources that they need.

Decisions required:

14. Education Committee is asked to note the VetGDP update.

Summary	
Meeting	Education Committee
Date	16 November 2021
Title	VetGDP Subcommittee minutes held on 30 September 2021
Summary	Minutes of the Veterinary Graduate Development Programme (VetGDP) subcommittee meeting
Decisions required	None, to note
Attachments	None
Author	Britta Crawford Senior Education Officer b.crawford@rcvs.org.uk

Classifications		
Document	Classification¹	Rationales²
Paper	Unclassified	N/A

Veterinary Graduate Development Programme Subcommittee**Minutes of the meeting held on 30 September 2021****Members:**

Mandisa Greene	-	Chair
Sue Paterson		
Rob Williams		
Chloe Roberts		
Teresa Cordovil		
Mary de las Casas		
Rachel Bowron		
Claire White		
Tim Walker		
Robert Wiensen		
Hannah Hodgkiss-Geere		
Linda Prescott-Clements	-	Director of Education
Britta Crawford	-	Senior Education Officer
Kirsty Williams	-	Quality Improvement Manager
Joanne Stetzel	-	Communication marketing Manager
Richard Burley	-	CTO

Apologies for absence and welcome

1. The Chair welcomed the members of the new subcommittee and introductions were made. There were no apologies for absence.

Declarations of interest

2. There were no declarations of interest made.

Introduction

3. Linda Prescott-Clements, gave an overview of the origins of the programme and the work to date.

Role of the subcommittee – terms of reference

4. The subcommittee were presented with the terms of reference and understood that the purpose of the subcommittee is to use their experience and expertise to assist the RCVS and Education team in supporting new graduates, and the veterinary team around them, in their transition from vet school to the workplace.

5. The minutes of the subcommittee will be presented at Education Committee by the Chair. Any decisions outside the remit of the subcommittee would be made by Education Committee with consideration of any recommendations from the sub-committee.
6. The subcommittee felt that the stipulation of a “new vet” had not been met and that a graduate from this year’s cohort would offer a valuable insight to the group.

ACTION: BC to investigate graduate member

Sign up and declaration figures

7. The subcommittee were presented with engagement figures for the VetGDP and e-portfolio, as at the day of the meeting:

Graduates

- 802 statements made
- Of which 15 were going to study overseas, 4 continuing studies and 3 taking a non-clinical role. The remainder were starting or about to start a veterinary role.

Advisers

- 1665 had started their training
- 588 completed the course
- 929 had made their declaration

Practice

- 303 had made their declaration

e-portfolio (live for two weeks)

- 221 had completed the graduate survey
- 132 had completed the adviser survey
- 72 had logged an activity
- 62 had logged reflections
- 11 had logged a progress review

8. The subcommittee agreed that that the numbers of vets interested in becoming a VetGDP Adviser was very positive and understood that there was still some work to be done in making the practices understand that they also needed to declare their support for the programme and how to do so.
9. The subcommittee questioned whether there was a match between signed up adviser and graduates and were assured that data would be reviewed to ensure that all those that needed to take part were contacted.

ACTION: Look at sign up data to ensure all enrolled

VetGDP exemptions for committee review

10. The subcommittee were presented with three requests to be exempt from the VetGDP, two from those starting work as an Official Veterinarian and one from a TB tester. The subcommittee agreed that the intention of the VetGDP is to be sufficiently flexible to cover most graduate jobs and felt that many of the standard EPAs could be applied to these roles and that their veterinary degrees were being used as intended. Therefore, the applications for exemptions were denied.
11. The subcommittee discussed the process of exemptions and agreed that it needed to be fair, free from bias, robust, reasoned, and consistent over time. They agreed that knowledge of particular employers or industries should not creep in and felt that the onus should be moved to the graduate to justify why they should be exempt, following a discussion with their employer. The information should then be brought to the subcommittee with a recommendation as to whether the exemption should be allowed.

ACTION: Amend exemption process

12. The subcommittee also raised the issue of PhD students taking on locum work and agreed that further guidance as to whether they should participate in the VetGDP at this point.

ACTION: Amend guidance

Additional/Changes to EPAs

13. The subcommittee received three requests for additional and or amended EPAs. The EPA bank was discussed and the nature of each EPA being at a deliberately high level, meaning that they could be applied in a broad and varied context as possible. The subcommittee agreed that duplication of EPAs or the creation of subsets for species or other success criteria would cause confusion.
14. The subcommittee looked at EPA 7 and requests to make it clearer and more relevant for Farm Animal Vets. After discussion it was agreed to amend the wording to add "local and regional anaesthetic techniques" and to give it the title of anaesthesia, sedation and local techniques and include further guidelines/examples for specific areas.

ACTION EPA 7 to be updated, Rob White and Robert Weinsen to assist with wording

15. The subcommittee considered EPA 14 and whether it sufficiently addressed veterinary import and export tasks. The subcommittee agreed that it should be broadened to cover EAC and export work.

ACTION: EPA 14 to be updated, Claire White to assist with wording

16. The subcommittee debated whether euthanasia should have a separate EPA, with some believing that euthanasia came under treatment and that individual treatments had deliberately been avoided to avoid the programme become a tick box exercise. Others felt that it was an activity in its own right with a specific skill set. It was agreed that euthanasia would remain within existing EPAs but that additional guidance would be added to highlight its importance.

ACTION: Adapt EPA guidance to highlight importance of euthanasia.

Peer Review Process

17. The subcommittee members received a broad draft of the process for peer review. There was some concern over the numbers willing to volunteer as Advisers were already very busy and it was agreed that the recruitment process needed to begin soon in order to be ready for the first graduates wishing to sign off. The subcommittee understood that the panel would work in a similar way to the Advanced Practitioner Panel and that Finance and Resource Committee had already signed off funds. The subcommittee agreed the need for consistency across the panel, with clear criteria for sign off and understood that training would be given.
18. The subcommittee agreed the direction of travel for the peer review process and looked forward to receiving further wording on criteria.

ACTION: Draft peer review process and criteria for sign off

Update on the e-portfolio

19. Richard Burley, CTO, joined the meeting to update the group on the work surrounding the e-portfolio and further work on the e-portfolio in the coming months including:
 - Sign off/review functions
 - Reporting analytics and tools
 - Progress review planning/reminders
 - Quality Assurance surveys
 - Alerts and notifications

Communications Update

20. Joanne Stetzel, marketing Communications Manager gave an overview of the communications strategy for the next few months. The aim of the comms plan is to look at how to best support graduates and advisers and keep them engaged and not allow any anxieties about the programme to grow without answers. This was to include:
 - Further communications for graduates, Advisers, and practices on how to access the e-portfolio
 - Workshops for Advisers and graduates
 - Instagram engagement for graduates to ask questions and gauge the need for further support
 - Tailored reminders for Advisers to complete training and communications resources for practices to identify themselves as RCVS approved Graduate Development Practices.
 - Updating resources for current 5th year students, work with vet schools, in readiness for graduation.
 - Communications for graduates who have not signed up/made a statement.

Support for VetGDP Advisers

21. The subcommittee agreed that there was a need for support for VetGDP Advisers, to ask peers for help and ideas with specific issues and to share best practice. The platform for this assistance was discussed, acknowledging the balance needed for some form of host so that discussions remained productive whilst understanding that the presence of the regulator may discourage participation. It was agreed that any sessions would not be recorded and would have “Chatham house rules”.
22. It was agreed that it would be useful to have regular “drop-in sessions” for Advisers only, to come and have questions answered quickly or to stay and discuss with other participants. It was agreed that it would be useful to start these sessions with a particular question to be begin proceedings.
23. It was felt that separate sessions for the graduates would also be useful.

ACTION: Set up drop-in sessions for VetGDP Advisers and graduates

VetGDP Training Evaluation

24. Kirsty Williams, Quality Improvement Manager, presented some interim findings from the evaluation of the VetGDP Adviser e-training. The subcommittee acknowledged the results and looked forward to reviewing them early next year when a greater proportion of Advisers had finished the training.

Quality Assurance Questions

25. The subcommittee received the proposed quality assurance questions for graduates and Advisers and agreed that they should be sent out at regular 3-month intervals, regardless of when they started using the e-portfolio. The subcommittee requested that questions be added regarding any barriers to use the e-portfolio. The subcommittee also agreed that it would be useful to have a survey when the graduates had submitted their work for sign off to compliment the initial survey to review the impact of VetGDP and their progress.

Any Other Business

26. The subcommittee were given an anonymised email from a graduate detailing the difficulty she was having getting support from her employer, who were apparently willing only to pay lip service to the VetGDP. The subcommittee were, sadly, not surprised by the email and doubted it would be an isolated incident but were pleased to be discussing it as a group.
27. The subcommittee agreed that there should be a formal process drafted by the Education department for next meeting, detailing the steps that could be taken to assist graduates and advisers and the scope for disciplinary interventions for violating the Code of conduct.
28. The Education department has reached out to the graduate to arrange a time to discuss her situation.

ACTION: Draft disciplinary process

Date of Next Meeting

29. **Dates to be circulated.**

Britta Crawford

October 2021

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Summary	
Meeting	Education Committee
Date	16 November 2021
Title	EMS – Review of Temporary Policy
Summary	<p>As part of the on-going three-monthly reviews of the temporary EMS requirement, Education Committee is asked to consider EMS completion data submitted from schools in November.</p> <p>A previous reduction was agreed by RCVS Covid-19 Taskforce in July 2021, to reduce the clinical EMS for the class of 2023 to 13 weeks.</p> <p>At its last meeting, Education Committee noted that the on-going reviews would be considered by this committee going forward, as the Taskforce had been disbanded.</p> <p>It was also confirmed that the incoming 1st years (class of 2026) would begin the year with the normal pre-clinical EMS requirement of 12 weeks.</p> <p>Education Committee is invited to consider the latest set of data and decide if any further changes to the temporary policy should be made at this time.</p>
Decisions required	To agree on any changes to temporary EMS policy
Attachments	<p>Annex A – Summary of data completed on EMS completion rates as at November 2021</p> <p>Annex B - Summary of data completed on EMS completion rates as at July 2021</p>
Author	<p>Duncan Ash</p> <p>Senior Education Officer</p> <p>d.ash@rcvs.org.uk</p>

Classifications		
Document	Classification¹	Rationales²
Paper	Unclassified	

Review of EMS policy

Background

1. Since the start of the pandemic, a number of temporary amendments to Extra-Mural Studies (EMS) policy and support measures have been put in place to address the difficulties faced by students in achieving their full EMS requirement of 12 weeks Pre-clinical Animal Husbandry EMS (AHEMS) and 26 weeks Clinical EMS.
2. The RCVS Covid-19 Taskforce had previously been carrying out reviews of the temporary EMS Policy on a three-monthly basis, basing the reviews on data collected from each of the schools around EMS completion rates, with the latest review taking place in July. Following the review, the decision was taken to further reduce the clinical EMS requirement for the class of 2023 by 4 weeks, to a total minimum of **13 weeks** clinical EMS. This was based on the slow completion rate throughout the cohort's progress in the 3rd year of the degree course (4th year for Cambridge students), and also moves the cohort year in line with the current requirements in place for the class of 2021 and 2022.
3. At the September meeting of Education Committee, it was noted that the RCVS Covid-19 Taskforce had been disbanded, and further on-going reviews would be carried out by Education Committee going forward.
4. It was also agreed that the in-coming 1st years (class of 2026) would start the year with the normal EMS requirements in place (12 weeks pre-clinical and 26 weeks clinical)
5. For reference, the current requirement for all year groups is shown in Table 1:

Table 1: EMS requirements in place as of 14 September 2021:

Student Cohort		AHEMS requirement (usually 12 weeks)	Clinical EMS requirement (Usually 26 weeks)
Year of programme starting in September 2021	Year of Graduation		
Year 1	2026	12 weeks	26 weeks
Year 2	2025	6 weeks with online top-up around personal learning objectives	26 weeks
Year 3	2024	6 weeks with online top-up around personal learning objectives	26 weeks

Year 4	2023	6 weeks with online top-up around personal learning objectives	13 weeks with online top-up around personal learning objectives
Year 5	2022	12 weeks	13 weeks with online top-up around personal learning objectives

6. As with the review in July, RCVS had requested data from the EMS Coordinators at each of the vet schools, detailing the average number of weeks completed per year (mean, median and range), against the number of weeks that would normally have been completed by November in a typical year. A summary of the data collected can be seen at **Annex A**. (As at 4/11, no data has been returned by Liverpool or Nottingham.) Also, for comparison, the data collected in July 2021 can be seen at **Annex B**.

Options for review

Pre-clinical EMS

7. The in-coming first years (class of 2026) have generally not had an opportunity to begin their EMS, therefore the data which shows no / low completion should not be a concern at this stage. But it would be recommended to continue to monitor completion rates as the academic year progresses into next summer.
8. The completion rates of pre-clinical EMS for the second years (class of 2025) have gone up over the summer according to the data returned, which suggests that they are very much on track to be able to meet the reduced requirement of 6 weeks pre-clinical EMS.
9. No further reductions to pre-clinical EMS requirements are recommended at this stage.

Clinical EMS

10. The data returned for the fourth and fifth years (classes of 2023 and 2022) indicate that they should be on track to complete the reduced requirement of 13 weeks clinical EMS. Certainly, the data shows that many of the fifth years would have already met this requirement.
11. Therefore, no further reductions to clinical EMS to classes 2022 and 2023 are recommended at this stage.
12. Similar to the in-coming first years, the new third years (class of 2024) do not have a reduced requirement in place for clinical EMS, and are currently expected to meet the normal requirement of 26 weeks. Again, as the year has only just begun, it may seem that there would be little to be concerned with based on the current low completion rates.

13. However, a slight cause for concern could be that some third year students have recorded no clinical EMS, whereas others seemingly have been able to complete some weeks over the summer. This could be down to individual schools' timetabling and curricula, but RCVS is also continuing to receive anecdotal reports that placements are still hard to come by due to knock on effects of the pandemic, with providers seeming to favour those in the later years of study. Therefore, although early on, there is a possibility that some students in certain schools may be slightly more behind as they continue through their clinical years of study.
14. Education Committee is invited to consider the following three options and agree a way forward:

A: No further amendments to be made at this time with a further review at the February meeting of Education Committee

With no overall concerns, no further reductions should be taken at this time, with the next review to take place in three months as normal. A review of data at that time will be able to take into account the Christmas period, where the first and third years would usually be expected to have begun and / or continued with their pre-clinical and clinical EMS respectively. It would also allow for further evidence to show if placement availability is increasing, as the data has potentially shown somewhat over the summer.

B: No further amendments to be made at this time with a further review at the May meeting of Education Committee

As above, but allowing for a longer period of time before further review, taking in both the Christmas and Easter periods. As restrictions are currently not in place, and the only potential areas of concern being for those first years who would usually be due to complete their pre-clinical EMS by 2023 before they move into their clinical years, and those third years who would need to complete their EMS requirement before graduation in 2024, the situation is less urgent than it was for some of the cohort groups during periods of lockdown. Therefore, the likelihood may be that reviews every three months may no longer be required.

C: A reduction of 3 weeks clinical EMS for Year 3 (class of 2024)

A very cautious approach would be to allow for a 3 week reduction to the class of 2024 to make-up for the initial gap in completion rates, based on the returned data.

However as mentioned above, the third years will have until 2024 to complete the requirement. Whilst a reduction at this stage may seem premature, it would at least offer potential relief to some students who may already feel behind.

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

Summary of data collected on EMS completion rates – November 2021

The median of completed weeks

	Graduating Year				
	2026	2025	2024	2023	2022
Bristol	0	4	0	6	10
Cambridge	4	4	0	8	13
Edinburgh	0	5	0	7	14
Glasgow	0	9	3	10	15
Liverpool					
Nottingham					
RVC	2	4	3	5	12
Surrey	0	6	2	7	14

The mean of completed weeks

	Graduating Year				
	2026	2025	2024	2023	2022
Bristol	0.05	3.31	0.12	5.57	10.27
Cambridge	3.61	5.1	0	7.6	13.64
Edinburgh	0	5	1	7.2	14.3
Glasgow	0	8	4	11	15
Liverpool					
Nottingham					
RVC	2.9	4	4	4	11.7
Surrey	0	5.92	3.13	7.59	13.39

The range of completed weeks

	Graduating Year				
	2026	2025	2024	2023	2022
Cambridge	1-5	1-14	0	2-13	2-25
Edinburgh	0	0-12	0-9	0-21.5	1-31.5
Glasgow	0	0-12	0-18	0-26	1-26
Liverpool					
Nottingham					
RVC	1-6	1-10	2-7	1-10	2-21
Surrey	0	1-12	0.5-6	1-18	3-22

*As of 9/11, no data has been returned by Liverpool or Nottingham.

Summary of data collected on EMS completion rates – July 2021

The median of completed weeks

	Graduating Year				
	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021
Bristol	0	2	0	4.2	13.6
Cambridge	3.5	8	1.5	7.5	13
Edinburgh	0	4	0	7	13
Glasgow	0	7	2	10.3	22
Liverpool	0	5	1	6	15
RVC	2	4	0	4	15
Surrey	1	4	2	9	19

The mean of completed weeks

	Graduating Year				
	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021
Bristol	0	2.9	0.1	5.1	13.7
Cambridge	3	7	0.9	5.7	14.6
Edinburgh	0	4	0.5	8.2	13.7
Glasgow	1	7.4	4	11.7	21
Liverpool	0	4.3	1.5	6.1	14.5
RVC	3	4.1	0	4.5	15
Surrey	1.4	5	2.9	9.1	18.4

The range of completed weeks

	Graduating Year				
	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021
Bristol	0	12	6	16	17
Cambridge	0-10	2-13	0-2	0-21	2-23
Edinburgh	0	0-12	0-6	0-26	5-26
Glasgow	0-6	0-12	0-26	0-26	7-26
Liverpool	0	0-10	0-10	0-16	0-22
RVC	1-9	1-11	0	0-12	5-23
Surrey	2	4	5	18	24

No data supplied from Glasgow as at 7/1/21.

Data was supplied from Nottingham, however not in the specific format:

- Grad 2021: aside from 1 or 2 students, they are on track to complete EMS requirements
- Grad 2022: since Nov, approx. 50% of students have completed 1 or 2 weeks of additional EMS. The other 50% have added none.

- Grad 2023: since Nov, approx. 30% of students have completed a further 1 or 2 weeks of EMS. The other 70% have added none.
- Grad 2024: since Nov, approx. 10% of students have completed a further 1 week of EMS. The other 90% have added none.
- Grad 2025: since Nov, approx. 10% of students have completed a further 1 week of EMS. The other 90% have added none.

Summary	
Meeting	Education Committee
Date	16 November 2021
Title	Review of temporary amendments to education policy made during the Covid-19 pandemic
Summary	<p>The RCVS Covid-19 Taskforce was established in March 2020 to make key decisions on temporary policy changes due to the Covid-19 pandemic.</p> <p>RCVS Council had agreed that as the UK was coming out of lockdown, Covid-19 related business would now be handed back to parent committees to monitor changes and oversee if any policies need further amendment.</p> <p>This paper summaries all of the remaining temporary Education policy changes made between March 2020 and May 2021 and recommendations for further reviews in the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Temporary EMS policy - Virtual abattoir resources - Temporary amendment of accreditation standards - Temporary extension of accreditation periods - Schools quarterly update on Covid plans - RCVS requirements for online / remote assessments of veterinary students - Statutory Membership Examination English language policy for potential candidates
Decisions required	<p>Education Committee is asked to note the status of different policies which have been temporarily amended, and agree whether:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. The temporary EMS policy reverts to pre-pandemic requirements for the current first years and new student cohorts going forward, but that EMS completion will continue to be monitored until it is clear that the pandemic is no longer affecting placement availability. b. The requirement for in-person abattoir experience be reinstated. c. The temporary amendment of accreditation standards, allowing practices undergoing (but not yet completed) PSS accreditation to be used for student teaching, come to an end now that PSS assessments have recommenced. d. The temporary extension of accreditation periods be removed now that in-person visitations have resumed.

	<p>e. whether quarterly updates from the schools on their covid plans are still required now that all pandemic restrictions have been lifted.</p> <p>f. The policy for online / remote assessments remains in place.</p> <p>g. The Statutory Membership Exam policy should revert to requiring proof of English language competence prior to sitting the examination.</p>
Attachments	None
Author	<p>Jordan Nicholls</p> <p>Lead for Undergraduate Education</p> <p>j.nicholls@rcvs.org.uk / 020 7202 0704</p>

Classifications

Document	Classification ¹	Rationales ²
Paper	Unclassified	N/A

¹Classifications explained

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

²Classification rationales

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

Background

1. The RCVS Covid-19 Task force was established in March 2020 to make key decisions on temporary policy changes due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Many Education polices have been temporarily amended since the pandemic began and this paper gives an overview of amendments still in place. Education Committee is invited to consider and agree where policies may no longer be appropriate/required.

Temporary EMS Policy

2. Due to practices closing and / or not being able to take on students during the pandemic, the Covid-19 taskforce had regularly reviewed the EMS policy in terms of the number of weeks required. The taskforce had approved reductions the required weeks for each year group at a number of stages during the pandemic, and the policy continues to be kept under review every 3 months. The current policy, is as follows:

Student Cohort		AHEMS requirement (usually 12 weeks)	Clinical EMS requirement (Usually 26 weeks)
Year of programme starting in September 2021	Year of Graduation		
Year 1	2026	12 weeks	26 weeks
Year 2	2025	6 weeks with online top-up around personal learning objectives	26 weeks
Year 3	2024	6 weeks with online top-up around personal learning objectives	26 weeks
Year 4	2023	12 weeks	13 weeks with online top-up around personal learning objectives
Year 5	2022	12 weeks	13 weeks with online top-up around personal learning objectives

3. In July 2020, Taskforce approved a proposal for RCVS to collate a number of animal handling EMS resources into an online library on the RCVS website for students to use to make up for the shortfall of pre-clinical placements.

4. The requirements are being reviewed every three months, with decisions being informed by EMS placement completion data supplied by the schools.
5. A summary of the changes approved so far can be seen below:

Date	Summary of changes to EMS Policy
16 March 2020	Class of 2020: clinical EMS requirement reduced to 18 weeks.
3 April 2020	Class of 2021: clinical EMS requirement reduced to 13 weeks.
11 June 2020	Class of 2023 & Class of 2024: pre-clinical EMS requirement reduced to 6 weeks, and proposal for RCVS to develop online resources to supplement lack of pre-clinical placements approved.
10 July 2020	Class of 2022: clinical EMS requirement reduced to 18 weeks.
30 November 2020	Class of 2022: clinical EMS requirement reduced to 13 weeks. Class of 2023: clinical EMS requirement reduced to 17 weeks.
January 2021	Further review carried out with no further changes approved, with next review to take place in 3 months.
May 2021	Further review carried out with no further changes approved, with next review to take place in 3 months.
July 2021	Class of 2023: clinical EMS requirement reduced to 13 weeks. Class of 2025: AHEMS requirement reduced to 6 weeks.
September 2021	Class of 2026: Reverted to standard requirement of 38 weeks EMS, with next review to take place in November 2021.

Education Committee is asked to decide whether the temporary EMS policy reverts to pre-pandemic requirements for future cohorts, but that EMS completion will continue to be monitored until it is clear that the pandemic is no longer affecting placement availability, or whether the three-month reviews can now be discontinued.

For clarification, all currently agreed reductions will remain in place.

Virtual Abattoir resources

6. At its meeting on 25 June, the RCVS Covid-19 Taskforce approved a proposal put forward to accept the use of virtual reality abattoir resources as teaching for students in this area, while there are risks of transmission of Covid-19 associated with abattoirs and obtaining access for students is a challenge for schools.

7. Taskforce agreed that this should be subject to review of the resource(s) by Education Committee. The RCVS Education Committee chair, Dr Susan Paterson, along with committee members Dr Cheryl Scudamore and Professor Ken Smith (plus an RCVS staff member), reviewed the virtual abattoir software/online resources produced by three veterinary schools, to assess whether they were sufficient to temporarily fulfil the abattoir requirements of the RCVS Standards and to ensure that the VPH elements of the Day One Competences could be met.
8. Demonstrations of three solutions were observed: one produced by the University of Edinburgh (UoE), one produced by the University of Glasgow (UoG), and one produced by the University of Bristol (UoB). At the time of review, the UoE software was complete and already in use as a supplementary experience to the traditional abattoir visit, and research had been completed to look at its effectiveness as a teaching tool. The UoG model was still in development, however this was in the latter stages and completion was contracted to be finished by September 2020. The UoB model was complete for red meat and due to be trialled with students in the week following demonstration to the panel.
9. In conclusion, members were satisfied that whilst lockdown restrictions in place prevented students from accessing abattoirs in person, the use of the three models were sufficient to meet the requirements of the RCVS standards on abattoir teaching, subject to the following conditions:
 - a. Each model meets the learning outcomes in different ways, however all models should complement the experience with “mock” live ante mortem inspections using available farm animals, and post mortem inspection of condemned specimens if those are available from abattoirs (or, as a last resort, through the use of images).
 - b. For the Edinburgh system, teaching should be supplemented by video footage from a real abattoir.
 - c. For the Glasgow model, multiple choice questions should be designed as a teaching tool, with the correct answers highlighted/explained before proceeding.
 - d. Assessments used following the virtual experience should be comparable, where possible, to those used following a traditional abattoir visit.

Education Committee is asked to consider whether this policy should revert to pre-pandemic requirements, now that in-person abattoir experiences are again possible.

Temporary amendment of accreditation standards

10. Due to restrictions put in place as a result of the pandemic, Practice Standards Scheme (PSS) assessments had been placed on hold. This had the potential to impact on student learning where RCVS standard 3.7 requires PSS accreditation for all practices where core clinical teaching takes place.
11. A proposal that a temporary amendment to this standard be made whilst PSS assessments are unable to proceed was put to the Covid-Taskforce in June 2020. It was agreed that practices should be permitted to take students on clinical rotations as long as the university had completed

their due-diligence inspections prior to the pandemic restrictions. PSS assessors would also be required to review the practice application and documentation to ensure that it is fit for purpose.

12. It was agreed that the PSS accreditation process should be completed within six months of the student taking up their placement, assuming that PSS assessments have recommenced at that point.

Education Committee is asked to agree that this policy is removed now that PSS assessments have recommenced.

Temporary extension of accreditation periods

13. When lockdown measures were introduced in March 2020, all accreditation visits were postponed and accreditation periods for those schools due a visitation extended by 12 months, to facilitate rescheduling. At the time in November 2020, with threats of a second wave of infection, and localised flare-ups both nationally and internationally, there was also no guarantee that “traditional” accreditation visits would be possible within the following 12 months.
14. Since it was not feasible to keep extending accreditation periods, another solution was required. Therefore, Taskforce approved a proposal for RCVS visitations due to take place in 2021 to be carried out virtually. All virtual visitations will be followed up with a focused in-person visit within 18 months.
15. Virtual visitations to the University of Glasgow; the University of Surrey; and CityU have since taken place in 2021.

Education Committee is invited to agree on ending temporary extensions of accreditation periods now that virtual visitations are possible if required, and now that in-person accreditation visits have recommenced.

RCVS requirements for online / remote assessments of veterinary and veterinary nurse students

16. Due to the changes brought about as a result of the pandemic, Vet Schools and some providers of further and higher education for veterinary nurses had indicated that they have adjusted their assessments so that they can be sat remotely / online by students.
17. RCVS had provided initial feedback to schools regarding the invigilation of remote assessments, following the review of their alternative programme covid plans. The UK Office for Students (OfS) had also published guidance for universities in the delivery of online assessments, which references the need for them to consider any additional regulatory requirements set by professional bodies where relevant.

18. In order to ensure the reliability and integrity of assessments, a policy was drafted and approved by Taskforce, for vet schools and providers for VN education, describing the requirements they need to meet to ensure the reliability and integrity, and that student achievement remained in line with RCVS standards.
19. Given the changes that had already been implemented as a result of the pandemic across many institutions, it is likely that remote and online assessments may persist beyond the special measures that were experienced when they were initially introduced in summer 2020. Therefore, this policy may also be applicable in the longer term.

Education Committee is asked to agree that this policy remain in place for wherever remote/online assessments are used.

Vet Schools quarterly update on Covid plans

20. The constraints put in place due to the pandemic, including restrictions on travel and lockdown measures, resulted in significant disruption across the Higher Education Sector. As universities were unable to allow students on site, alternative plans were necessary to ensure continued delivery of courses.
21. In order for RCVS to meet its statutory obligations, it was essential that these temporary changes to the delivery of vet programmes be considered, so that the College could be assured of the standards and outcomes in terms of graduates having demonstrated that they meet the Day One Competences (D1C). Therefore, schools have been asked to submit their alternative plans for teaching and assessment to RCVS for consideration, and to update these every three months.
22. Most restrictions from the pandemic have now been lifted, and face-to-face teaching has resumed, with schools reporting a hybrid approach to future teaching delivery.

Education Committee is asked to agree whether the three-monthly updates from schools is to continue, or whether these changes can just be reported in the RCVS annual monitoring reports.

Statutory Membership Examination (SME)

23. The initial lockdown made it impossible to run the written component of the SME in a physical exam centre. An alternative was found which allowed us to run the examination online remotely and securely. This mode of delivery was subsequently made a permanent feature of the SME by Education Committee in February.
24. IELTS and OET availability was limited for long periods of 2020. Candidates for the 2021 diet were offered the opportunity to enter the exam without taking the IELTS or OET. Candidates who

go on to pass the 2021 exam were required to provide valid IELTS/OET test results no later than one year after receiving their exam results.

25. The situation in 2021 is very different to 2020, with the accessibility to tests improving.

Education Committee are asked to agree whether this policy should revert to the pre-pandemic policy of requiring English language competence to be demonstrated prior to sitting the SME

Summary	
Meeting	Education Committee
Date	16 November 2021
Title	Review of subcommittees and working parties which report to Education Committee.
Summary	<p>This paper provides the terms of reference (ToR) for the following sub-committees that report to Education Committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - PQSC - CertAVP Sub-committee - Specialist sub-committee - VetGDP sub-committee - CPD sub-committee <p>It does not include any short-term committees or task and finish groups.</p>
Decisions required	<p>To review all TOR and agree on any necessary amendments.</p> <p>For the PQSC ToR, EC is asked to agree to removing reference to the EMS Coordinators Liaison Group.</p> <p>For the CertAVP ToR, EC is asked to agree to the updating of language to reflect current RCVS committee structures.</p>
Attachments	<p>Annex A – PQSC ToR</p> <p>Annex B – CertAVP subcommittee ToR</p> <p>Annex C – Specialist Sub-Committee ToR</p> <p>Annex D – VetGDP subcommittee ToR</p> <p>Annex E – CPD Policy and Compliance sub-committee ToR</p>
Author	<p>Jenny Soreskog-Turp</p> <p>Lead for Postgraduate Education</p> <p>j.soreskog-turp@rcvs.org.uk / 020 7202 0701</p>

Classifications		
Document	Classification¹	Rationales²
Paper	Unclassified	N/A

¹Classifications explained

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

Primary Qualifications Sub-Committee Terms of Reference

- a. to consider reports of visitors (including follow-up reports) to veterinary schools and make recommendations to Education Committee on recognition of undergraduate veterinary degrees so that Council can submit formal advice to the Privy Council
- b. to consider annual monitor reports from the veterinary schools
- c. to consider and make recommendations to Education Committee on the appointment of RCVS visitors and observers
- d. to keep RCVS visitation/accreditation criteria under review and in line with any relevant international standards and to consider annual statistical returns
- e. to oversee the work of the Statutory Examination Board and ensure that the standards for entry onto the register by this route are consistent with recognised degrees
- f. Consider reports from meetings of the EMS Coordinators Liaison Group and make recommendations to Education Committee regarding EMS policy and activities

ACTION: Education Committee is asked to approve the removal of point (f) now that the EMS Coordinators Liaison Group has moved to the Veterinary Schools Council (VSC) and no longer reports to PQSC.

CertAVP Sub-Committee Terms of Reference

(as approved by the Education Policy and Specialisation Committee on 13 October 2006)

The sub-committee is responsible for the coordination and oversight of arrangements for the modular Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Practice. It will:

- manage a framework to develop outlines for new modules where required and ensure existing modules are kept up to date and fit for purpose
- consider submissions for accreditation from universities for assessing modules; make recommendations to EPS Committee in any cases where accreditation cannot be agreed by the sub-committee
- oversee arrangements for synoptic assessment, making recommendations to EPS Committee on appointment of RCVS examiners
- receive and consider periodic quality assurance reports from accredited universities and make recommendations to EPS Committee on any cases that cause concern
- oversee the Byelaws for implementation of the qualification and make recommendations to EPS Committee for keeping the Byelaws up to date
- liaise where appropriate with other relevant veterinary associations, societies & divisions to ensure appropriate input of expertise to the accreditation, assessment and review process, and to consult on development of new modules.

The sub-committee may co-opt individuals for their particular expertise for a defined period or defined task.

The sub-committee may meet up to 3 times per year, and will report to the EPS Committee. It may need to meet more frequently at times to consider applications for accreditation, although some of the business may be conducted by teleconference/email if agreed appropriate by the sub-committee members.

ACTION: Education Committee is asked to approve the updating of language to reflect current RCVS committee structures.

Specialist Sub-Committee Terms of Reference

1. The Specialist Sub-Committee will report to Education Committee.
2. The Sub-Committee will recommend the decision on the outcome of all applications for Specialist Status to Education Committee. The decisions will be based on the requirements and criteria set by Education Committee. The Sub-Committee may recommend changes of the requirements, criteria and process, to be approved by Education Committee.

Membership

3. Membership of the Sub-Committee will comprise of a mix of practitioners and academics, covering the breadth of Specialist subject areas.
4. Members will not normally be required to be Specialists themselves.
5. The length of service would normally be 3 years, however this is not prescriptive and longer terms can be allowed for continuity or consistency of the Sub-Committee membership.
6. The Sub-Committee will nominate new members as appropriate, to be approved by Education Committee.

Meetings

7. The Sub-Committee will usually meet annually in January, although other meetings can be arranged on an ad hoc basis as and when required.

VetGDP Sub-Committee Terms of Reference

The VetGDP subcommittee is responsible for the coordination and oversight or arrangements for the Veterinary Graduate Development Programme (VetGDP). It will:

- oversee and update the VetGDP policy and guidance documents where necessary
- receive and consider periodic quality assurance reports and to advise action where appropriate
- decide on exemptions from the VetGDP
- manage the RCVS Entrustable Professional Activity (EPA) bank, agreeing on additions and ensuring the minimum of overlap
- oversee the sign-off procedure including oversight of the VetGDP Adviser panel
- oversee updates of the VetGDP Adviser training and guidance
- deal with ad-hoc queries that may impact policy.

The subcommittee may meet up to 3 times per year and will report to the Education Committee. The subcommittee will meet remotely, unless there is a specific requirement to meet in person and some of the business may be conducted by email if agreed appropriate by the subcommittee members.

CPD Policy and Compliance sub-committee Terms of Reference

Terms of Reference and meeting frequency

1. The Panel is responsible for monitoring and reviewing the RCVS CPD Policy and making recommendations for changes to Education Committee and VN Council.
2. The Panel is responsible for the RCVS CPD non-compliance policy and procedures, overall engagement with CPD and 1CPD and to make decisions on whether or not to refer individual cases of non-compliance or non-response to the Professional Conduct Department. The group will:
 - a. Develop and keep under review the RCVS CPD non-compliance policy and procedures
 - b. Oversee any applications from veterinary surgeons or veterinary nurses to pause CPD.
 - c. Monitor and agree actions for CPD non-compliance cases
 - d. Decide when cases of CPD non-compliance should be referred to the Professional Conduct Department.
 - e. Monitor and review ways to improve engagement with CPD and the RCVS recording portal 1CPD.
3. The Group will report to Education Committee and Veterinary Nursing Council.
4. The Group will meet at least three times a year. Meeting will be held virtually except for any exceptional circumstances when face to face meetings will be more beneficial.

Membership

5. The group will consist of two veterinary nurses and one lay member nominated by the Veterinary Nurses Council and two veterinary surgeons and one lay member nominated by Education Committee. The panel has six members in total with a quorum of 50% and at least one veterinary surgeon and one veterinary nurse must attend each meeting.
6. Membership of the group as of the 27 August 2021:
 - Linda Ford (Chair)
 - Sue Paterson
 - Neil Smith
 - Alison Carr
 - Elizabeth Cox
 - Claire Roberts

Summary	
Meeting	Education Committee
Date	16 November 2021
Title	Professional Development Phase - statistics
Summary	This paper provides an update on the sign-up and completion data for the Professional Development Phase (PDP). It is divided into two sections: one for UK graduates and one for overseas graduates. The paper includes tables showing sign-up rates, completion rates, UK PDP information form responses, responses to the annual cohort chase, overseas PDP information form responses, and overall overseas graduate sign-up.
Decisions required	To note
Attachments	None
Author	Laura Hogg Senior Education Officer L.hogg@rcvs.org.uk / 020 7202 0736

Classifications		
Document	Classification¹	Rationales²
Paper	Unclassified	

¹Classifications explained

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Professional Development Phase update

UK Graduates

- The latest sign-up rates for the PDP are shown in the tables below.

Table 1 - Sign-up of PDP

Table 1 shows the number of participants by annual graduate cohort, who have signed up for PDP as of 2 November 2021.

Cohort	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
UK Graduates	807	792	815	909	911	867	885	987	1075
UK Graduates PDP sign ups	730 (90%)	723 (91%)	735 (90%)	812 (89%)	793 (87%)	787 (91%)	805 (91%)	892 (90%)	960 (89%)

Breakdown of sign-ups per cohort year

- Table 2 shows the number of UK graduates signing up for PDP for each cohort year broken down into three-month periods.

Table 2 - Breakdown of sign-ups per cohort year

Cohort Year	0-3 Months	Sign up rate as a %	4-6 Months	Sign up rate as a %	7-9 Months	Sign up rate as a %	10-12 Months	Sign up rate as a %	Total %
2012	294	40%	228	31%	145	20%	63	9%	90%
2013	327	41%	225	28%	121	15%	50	6%	91%
2014	399	49%	191	24%	100	12%	45	5.5%	90%
2015	495	54%	191	21%	96	11%	30	3%	89%
2016	528	58%	171	19%	68	7%	26	3%	87%
2017	462	52%	233	27%	69	8%	23	2.5%	91%
2018	527	59%	191	22%	67	7%	20	2%	91%
2019	584	59%	214	21%	72	7%	22	2%	90%
2020	518	48%	270	25%	110	10%	62	6%	89%

PDP Completions

3. Table 3 shows the number of participants (by annual graduate cohort) who have completed their PDP as of 2 November 2021.

Table 3 - Completion rates

Cohort Year	Total Activated	Total Completed	Percentage Completed
2012	730	676	93%
2013	723	670	93%
2014	735	680	93%
2015	812	738	91%
2016	793	743	94%
2017	787	720	91%
2018	805	688	85%
2019	892	496	56%
2020	960	124	

Since 2012 the average time taken for a UK graduate to complete the PDP is 21 months.

Postgraduate Deans

4. The Postgraduate Deans meet twice a year. This year they met virtually in March and November. In the March meeting the Deans discussed the process of chasing up graduates who take longer than three years to complete their PDP.
5. Table 4 shows the number of graduates each Dean is supporting as of 2 November 2021.

Table 4 – Number of graduates per Postgraduate Dean

PGD	Activation Year										Total
	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	
J Wells	1	-	1	2	1	2	10	56	165	86	324
N Paull	-	3	3	6	4	9	20	154	130	42	371
G Hubbard	1	2	-	4	3	15	18	111	342	52	548
M Thomson	-	1	13	2	13	10	37	129	1	-	206
S McIntyre	-	-	-	-	2	10	54	17	148	55	286
M de Las Casas	-	-	-	1	1	5	12	126	185	63	393

UK Graduate PDP Form

6. The UK graduate PDP form was introduced in 2016 and is sent out via email to all UK graduates after they have been admitted to the register.
7. Table 5 shows the responses to the PDP form as of 2 November 2021. Some graduates initially choose the 'taking a break' statement and then sign up later in the year.

Table 5 – UK Graduate form responses

Statement	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
I will not be working in clinical practice so I do not need to complete PDP. If this changes I will contact the RCVS.	5	2	3	4	4
I will be working overseas so I may not be able to undertake the PDP, if this changes, I will contact the RCVS.	94	47	57	57	78
I will be taking a break before starting work so I am unable to start the PDP, if this changes, I will contact the RCVS	94	56	41	44	50
I will be working in a clinical role and therefore will be undertaking the PDP	632	579	400	375	430

Annual cohort chase

8. This summer anyone from the 2018 cohort who signed up for PDP but had not yet completed it, were contacted. Three emails were sent out from the Senior Education Officer, the Director of Education and the Registrar. Those who did not respond to any of the emails were included in the CPD audit. Table 6 shows the response rate to each email.

In total there were 458 graduates that had not yet completed their PDP.

Table 6 – Response to 2018 cohort chase

Email	Number of graduates
Senior Education Officer email	232
Director of Education email	173
Registrar email	107

73 graduates were removed from the cohort chase after they'd communicated with their postgraduate dean or been removed from the register.

44 graduates have been put into the CPD audit.

Since the first email was sent out 281 of the graduates have completed PDP.

Overseas graduates

Overseas graduate PDP form

9. Overseas graduates need to fill in a PDP declaration form as part of their registration here at the RCVS.

Table 7 shows the responses to the form per registration year since it was introduced in 2015.

Table 7 – Overseas graduate responses per registration year

Statement	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
I have more than three years' clinical experience so I do not need to complete PDP	228	331	316	357	425	219
I will be working overseas so I may not be able to undertake the PDP, if this changes, I will contact the RCVS.	0	8	4	1	0	6
I have read the RCVS Year One Competences list and declare, to the best of my knowledge and belief, that I have achieved these and do not need to complete PDP	94	175	175	218	193	122
I have read the RCVS Year One Competences list and declare, to the best of my knowledge and belief, that I have not yet achieved these and so I need to complete PDP	5	68	118	152	109	93
I have not worked in clinical practice so I need to complete PDP	4	6	34	31	35	77
I graduated within the last 12 months and I understand I need to complete the PDP	11	42	311	445	495	295
I will not be working in clinical practice so I do not need to complete PDP. If this changes I will contact the RCVS	92	94	156	169	96	32

Some graduates voluntarily contact the RCVS to report that their circumstances have changed.

10. Activation rates as of 2 November 2021: Table 8 shows the number of overseas vets who have signed up for PDP per calendar year.

Table 8 – Overseas graduate sign-up

Year	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Total Registered	724	810	857	1184	1152	1163	1415	1363	874	422
Total signed up for PDP	159 (22%)	206 (25%)	251 (29%)	353 (30%)	415 (36%)	445 (38%)	576 (41%)	498 (37%)	259 (30%)	20 (5%)

11. Education Committee is invited to note this update.

Summary	
Meeting	Education Committee
Date	16 November 2021
Title	List of approved Advanced Practitioners
Summary	A list of re-approved Advanced Practitioners and a list of newly approved Advanced Practitioners, approved by the panel in October 2021
Decisions required	To note
Attachments	None
Author	Laura Hogg Senior Education Officer L.hogg@rcvs.org.uk / 020 7202 0736

Classifications		
Document	Classification¹	Rationales²
Paper	Unclassified	

¹Classifications explained

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List of re-approved Advanced Practitioners:

Designation	Name
Equine Practice	Luke Edwards
Pig Medicine	Duncan Berkshire
Small Animal Medicine	Patrycja Kuczynska
	Rachel Howell
	Michelle Mortimer
	Rachael Headon
	Sarah Band
	Aimee Nudds
Small Animal Surgery	Ryan Davis
	Chloe Hawkins
	Jeremy French
	Nicholas Goldfinch
	Kevin Camilleri
	Andrew Byrne
	Gareth Field
Zoological Medicine	Jemma Hildrew
	Charlotte Day
	Jonathan Hadley

List of new approved Advanced Practitioners:

Designation	Name	Qualification
Emergency and Critical Care	Charlotte Whitecross	Harper Adams PgC
	Sara Jackson	CertAVP(ECC)
	Stephanie Timmons	BSAVA PGC
	Michal Chrustek	CertAVP(ECC)
	Sara Fiallos Castillo	BSAVA PGC
	Rosie Hunter	CertAVP(ECC)
	Georgina Marshall	CertAVP(ECC)
	Martina Lagatierra-Wellington	BSAVA PGC
Small Animal Dermatology	Shing Chan	Postgraduate Certificate
	Eleanor Hughes	Harper Adams PgC
Small Animal Medicine	David Mackenzie	CertAVP(SAM)
	Mark Laloo	BSAVA PGC
	Kirsty Catterall	BSAVA PGC
	Michelle Rana	CertAVP(SAM)
	Rachel Power	Harper Adams PgC
	Christine Howells	BSAVA PGC
Small Animal Surgery	Katherine Hall	BSAVA PGC
	Joel Mirante Alves	BSAVA PGC
	Edward Corfield	CertAVP(GSAS)
	Heather Eastham	BSAVA PGC
	Jane Feneley	Harper Adams PgC
	Joseph Widdows	CertAVP(GSAS)
	Valentina Morano	Harper Adams PgC
	Dagmara Madra-Gawin	Postgraduate Certificate
	Emma Chandley	BSAVA PGC
	Melanie Crosnier	CertAVP(GSAS)
Veterinary Cardiology	William Slee	CertAVP(VC)
	Tiago Corte-Real da Silva Bispo	CertAVP(VC)
	Joao Lopes Escala	CertAVP(VC)
Veterinary Diagnostic Imaging	Michelle Zoja	Harper Adams PgC
Veterinary Ophthalmology	Catriona Beckles	BSAVA PGC
	Barbara Thielman	BSAVA PGC
Zoological Medicine	Joanna Mihr	CertAVP(ZM)

Summary	
Meeting	Education Committee
Date	16 November 2021
Title	Advanced Practitioner Status Evaluation - Task and Finish groups
Summary	The paper sets out the composition and proposed terms of reference for the AP task and finish groups.
Decisions required	The Committee is invited to agree the terms of reference and the composition of the task and finish group.
Attachments	Annex A: Terms of Reference for the AP task and finish group.
Author	Laura Hogg Senior Education Officer l.hogg@rcvs.org.uk 020 7202 0736

Classifications		
Document	Classification¹	Rationales²
Paper	Unclassified	
Annex A	Unclassified	
¹Classifications explained		
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Background

1. Education Committee has agreed to establish two task and finish groups to continue with the evaluation of the AP status, which will report to Education Committee. One group will clarify what it means to be an Advanced Practitioner and the other group will look at career pathways/next steps.
2. It is suggested that we start reviewing what it means to be an AP and once the work of this group has been completed, the work in relation to career pathways and next steps can start.
3. The proposed terms of reference for the first group can be found in in Annex A for consideration and approval.

Composition

4. The task and finish group will be made up largely of those who are/have been listed as an Advanced Practitioner. We would also suggest approaching members of the Advanced Practitioner panel to and those that took part in the focus groups to serve as members of the task and finish groups.
5. We envisage that the membership of the task and finish groups will be between 6 and 10 veterinary surgeons.
6. Members should have a good understanding of what it means to be an Advanced Practitioner and be made up from:
 - AP panel of assessors
 - AP's that took part in the focus groups
 - AP's that chose not to re-apply for the status
 - VN representative
7. The group would meet remotely (unless there was a specific requirement to meet in person). The first meeting will be at the beginning of 2022.

Decisions required:

8. The Committee is invited to agree the terms of reference and the composition of the task and finish groups.

Annex A

Terms of Reference for the AP Task and Finish Group

The Task and Finish group will clarify what it means to be an Advanced Practitioner and will review:

- The name "Advanced Practitioner"
- Differences between certificate holders and Advanced Practitioners
- Benefits to having the status
- How to promote it to the profession and the public.

The group will meet remotely, unless there is a specific requirement to meet in person and some of the business may be conducted by email if agreed appropriate by the group members. It will report to Education Committee.

Members should have a good understanding of what it means to be an Advanced Practitioner and be made up from:

- AP panel of assessors
- AP's that took part in the focus groups
- AP's that chose not to re-apply for the status
- VN representative

Summary	
Meeting	Education Committee
Date	16 November 2021
Title	Fellowship Sub-Committee
Summary	The minutes of the Fellowship Sub-Committee held on 8 September 2021
Decisions required	None, to note
Attachments	None
Author	Duncan Ash Senior Education Officer d.ash@rcvs.org.uk / 020 7202 0703

Classifications		
Document	Classification¹	Rationales²
Paper	Unclassified	n/a

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Private	The paper includes personal data which should not be disclosed at any time or for any reason, unless the data subject has agreed otherwise. The Chair may, however, indicate after discussion that there are general issues which can be disclosed, for example in reports to committees and Council.

²Classification rationales

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

Fellowship Sub-Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 8 September 2021

Members: Professor G C W England - Chairman

Mr A G Greenwood

Dr A G Matthews

Mr P W Scott *

Mr J M Williams *

Mr D Ash - Secretary

*absent

Apologies for absence

1. Apologies were received from Mr Williams and Mr Scott.

Declarations of interest

2. There were no new declarations.

Minutes of the 2020 meeting

3. The minutes of the meeting were accepted as a correct record.

Submissions of Theses

4. The sub-committee noted that candidate T/768 had submitted their thesis in July 2020 and had been awarded with the Diploma of Fellowship in December 2020.
5. It was also noted that candidate T/711 had submitted their thesis in May 2021, and the examiners' recommendation to award the Diploma of Fellowship would be put to Council in November 2021.

6. Candidate T/777 had also submitted their thesis in September 2021. The nominated examiners had been contacted, and the thesis would be sent out for marking once they had confirmed their ability to act.

Candidate Annual Updates

7. The committee reviewed submission reports, and it was agreed that individual feedback and recommendations would be circulated to the candidates.
8. The committee noted that there had been a significant drop off rate of candidates between 2020 and 2021, with many candidates not meeting their submission deadlines. It was felt that this was mainly down to lack of progress and the nature of the Fellowship by Thesis not being an academic programme and having to be driven by the individual.

Date of next meeting – Wednesday 7 September 2022