

**Agenda for the meeting to be held on 23 September at 13.30, 1 Hardwick Street, London EC1R 2RB**

1.	<b>Welcome and apologies for absence</b>	
2.	<b>Declarations of interest</b>	
3.	<b>Education Committee minutes</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Minutes of meeting held on 20 May 2025</li> <li>b) Minutes of the extraordinary meeting 1 July 2025</li> </ul>	Paper attached Paper Attached
4.	<b>Matters arising</b>	
5.	<b>Education Department update</b>	Oral report
6.	<b>ENQA Update – interim report</b>	Paper attached
7.	<b>Primary Qualifications Subcommittee (PQSC)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Minutes of the PQSC meetings held on meeting held on 9 June, 30 June, and 4 August 2025</li> <li>b) Changes to accreditation standard 1.10 Abattoir</li> <li>c) Overseas articulation</li> <li>d) Harper Keele Accreditation Decision</li> <li>e) Dublin Accreditation Decision</li> <li>f) VCI standards consultation</li> </ul>	Paper Attached Paper Attached Paper Attached Paper Attached Paper Attached Paper Attached
8.	<b>AVBC MOU</b>	Paper attached
9.	<b>IAWG Terms of reference</b>	Paper attached
10.	<b>EMS Policy and Guidance – updated insurance wording</b>	Paper Attached
11.	<b>RCVS EMS National Booking Database</b>	Paper attached
12.	<b>Veterinary Clinical Career Pathways (VCCP)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Minutes from VCCP working group meeting 16<sup>th</sup> July 2025</li> <li>b) Draft guidance (W2)</li> </ul>	Paper attached Paper Attached
13.	<b>Specialists</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Dual Listing as an Emeritus Specialist</li> <li>b) List of specialists</li> </ul>	Paper Attached Paper Attached Paper Attached
14.	<b>New immigration rules: implications for residency training</b>	Oral report

15.	<b>Advanced Practitioner</b> a) AP designation in small animal surgery b) Printing of AP certificates	Paper attached Paper attached
16.	<b>AP Qualification Subcommittee</b> a. Update from the AP Qualification Subcommittee	Oral Update
17.	<b>Post nominal request</b>	Paper attached
18.	<b>Statutory Membership Examination (SME)</b> a) SME update (inc. resources for 2026 exam) b) 2026 examination guidance	Oral report Paper attached
19.	<b>AI statement from IRG</b>	Paper attached
20.	<b>Apprenticeships update</b>	Paper attached
21.	<b>Minutes from the CertAVP subcommittee on the 17 June 2025</b>	Paper Attached
22.	<b>Risk register (EC and SME)</b> Items to add to the Risk Register	Paper attached
23.	<b>AOB</b>	
24.	<b>Date of next meeting</b>	25 November – 9.30 start (remote)

Britta Crawford  
 Committee Secretary  
 September 2025  
[b.crawford@rcvs.org.uk](mailto:b.crawford@rcvs.org.uk)  
 020 7202 0777

## **Education Committee (EC) Membership From July 2025**

Secretary: Britta Crawford  
(0207 202 0777, b.crawford@rcvs.org.uk)

Armitage-Chan E	External member, educationalist
Bennett S	Council member
Gordon P	Council member
Hutchinson T	Council member
Jones M	Council member
Law R	Student member
McLaughlan C-L	Lay member
Ormandy E	External member, educationalist
Parkin TDH #	Council member (President)
Pinhey B	VN Council member
Savage L	Student member

#Chair

### **Observers (non-voting)**

Officer: not required as Officer present

### **Chairs of Subcommittees and Working Parties that report to Education Committee:**

Advanced Practitioner Qualification Subcommittee	Bescoby S
Examination Board	McLaughlan C-L
Panel of Assessors for Advanced Practitioner Status	Hutchinson T
Primary Qualifications Subcommittee	Whiting M
Specialist Recognition Subcommittee	Barrett D
VetGDP & CPD Compliance Subcommittee	Paterson S
VetGDP & CPD Engagement Subcommittee	Cook O

## **Education Committee Terms of Reference**

### **From the Scheme of delegation from the RCVS Council to committees 24 June 2024**

The Education Committee shall set the policy for undergraduate and postgraduate education and training of veterinary surgeons and determine the requirements for those seeking registration, for the award of qualifications under the Charter, for continuing professional development, and for recognition as RCVS Advanced Practitioner and RCVS Specialist.

Under normal circumstances Council members will form the majority on non-statutory committees, but on Education Committee (and the Primary Qualifications Subcommittee (PQSC)) a minimum of one third and a maximum of one half of members will be co-opted external members with education expertise, for example, Heads of the Veterinary Schools or other veterinary school staff members. Two students will also sit on the Education Committee (and two on PQSC). In addition, the Chairs of the Education Subcommittees and a member of the Officer Team will sit as non-voting observers.

The Committee shall develop and keep under review education and training requirements for registration, and in particular shall:

- a. Define Day-One Competences and advise on the content of the veterinary undergraduate curriculum;
- b. Oversee the approval process and ongoing monitoring of veterinary degrees and international recognition agreements, considering subcommittee reports on appointment of accreditation panel members, accreditation event reports, follow-up reports and annual monitoring reports from veterinary schools, subcommittee reports on overseas degrees from other accrediting bodies or the College, and subcommittee reports on operation of the statutory membership examination; and,
- c. Make recommendations to Council on any change in approved status concerning registrable degrees, on the regulations governing the statutory membership examination and, on the regulations, governing practice by students.

The Committee shall develop and keep under review policy for continuing professional development, revalidation of Advanced Practitioner and Specialist status, and postgraduate training and qualifications, and in particular shall:

- a. Define Entrustable Professional Activities (EPAs) for, and monitor, the VetGDP;
- b. Set the requirements for and monitor continuing professional development within the profession;
- c. Develop and maintain a framework of College postgraduate awards, receiving reports from subcommittees on the standards for College-awarded certificates and fellowships by thesis, examinations and accreditation of other recognised postgraduate qualifications as part of the framework;

- d. Define the requirements for RCVS Advanced Practitioner and RCVS Specialist status, receiving reports from subcommittees on the maintenance of lists for Advanced Practitioners and Specialists; and,
- e. Recommend to Council amendments to the certificate rules.

The Committee shall recommend fees to the Finance and Resources Committee for all related activities, for example, application and annual fees for Advanced Practitioners and Specialists, together with reviewer remuneration; fees for Statutory Membership exam candidates and remuneration for examiners; remuneration for accreditation panel members and reviewers of Advanced Practitioners and Specialist applications.

## Minutes of Education Committee (EC) meeting on 20 May 2025

### **EC Members:**

*Dr S Bennett	RCVS Council Member
Dr A L Calow	RCVS Council Member & Chair of CertAVP Subcommittee
*Mrs S D Howarth	RCVS Council & VN Council Member
Mr T Hutchinson	RCVS Council Member/Chair of Panel of Assessors for Advanced Practitioner Status
Dr M Jones	RCVS Council Member
Mr R Law	Student Member
Mr L McLinden	Student Member
Dr E Ormandy	External Member & Educationalist
Professor T D H Parkin#	RCVS Council Member & Chair
Professor S W J Reid	External Member & Educationalist
Chairs of Education Subcommittees and Working Parties that report to EC:	
Professor D Barrett	Specialist Recognition Subcommittee
Dr O Cook	VetGDP and CPD Engagement Group
Mrs C-L McLaughlan	SME Board Chair
Dr S Paterson	VetGDP and CPD Compliance subcommittee/Officer Team member as observer
Dr M Whiting	Primary Qualifications Subcommittee (PQSC)

\*Denotes absence, #Denotes Chair of this meeting,

### **In attendance:**

Mrs Britta Crawford	Senior Education Officer
Miss E Firkins	Education Administrator
Ms C Hobson	Examination Manager
Ms L Larkin	Senior Education Officer
Ms C Holliday	Senior Education Officer
Ms L Lockett	CEO
Mr J Nicholls	Lead for Undergraduate Education
Dr L Prescott-Clements	Director of Education
Ms C Paget	Registrar/Director of Legal Services
Ms J Soreskog-Turp	Lead for Postgraduate Education
Ms H Stinchon	Senior Education Officer
Mr Thakrar	Education Officer
Mr S Wiklund	Head of Legal Services/Assistant Registrar
Ms K Williams	Education Quality Improvement Manager

### **Welcome and apologies for absence**

1. The chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. It was noted that Ms Howarth and Dr Bennett had sent their apologies.

### **Declarations of interest**

2. Professor Reid reported that he would be remaining at the RVC and not moving to chair the American Association of Veterinary Medical Colleges (AAVMC).
3. Matt Jones declared that he had been asked to join the apprenticeships Trailblazer Group.

### **Education Committee minutes**

4. The minutes of the meeting held on the 27 February were noted as a true record.

### **Matters Arising**

5. All of the actions from the previous meeting had been completed or were included in the agenda for discussion. Additionally, the Committee heard that the latest iteration of the Australasian Veterinary Boards Council (ABVC) MOU had been returned to them for signing. Although AVBC indicated that they are satisfied with the agreement, they have chosen not to sign it at this time, as they are currently in discussions with their Department of Business and Trade regarding automatic recognition of their programmes in the UK. This matter will be revisited at a later date.
6. The Committee was informed that, according to the European Associate of Establishments for Veterinary Education (EAEVE) Standard Operating Procedures, schools can request an earlier visitation. As a result, the RCVS will now contact schools whose accreditation expires after the RCVS Council's 2029 deadline for ending automatic recognition. These schools will be asked they wish to bring their EAEVE visitations forward, allowing the RCVS to participate in the process and prevent a period where those programme's graduates are not eligible to register with the RCVS.

### **Education Department Update**

7. Dr Prescott-Clements provided an update to the committee on the work of the Education Department. The committee learned that the RCVS post-graduate veterinary education symposium would be held 17-19 November at Ironmongers Hall in central London. As well as involvement from the Vet Nursing team there will be international collaborators including Prof. Kent Hecker (University of Calgary and chief scientific officer for the NAVLE), Prof. Martin Cake from Australia and Prof. Harold Bok from Utrecht. The symposium will have four themes: graduate transition into the workplace; formal postgraduate education; CPD and licensing and revalidation.
8. The Committee heard that the reasonable adjustment guidance is very close to being published.

9. Dr Prescott-Clements had attended the EBVS congress in Belgrade, which had been an excellent meeting and very useful for the VCCP work.
10. Members of the team had been visiting the Vet Schools to give talks about the VetGDP.
11. The Committee understood that there had been a request to Finance and Resources Committee (FRC) for an uplift to the rate for AP reviewers, which had been refused. FRC had decided it would be better to review all similar payments at the same time and it should be re-submitted at a later date. It was asked that this be added to the risk register.

#### **Implementing the new RCVS Strategy' – developing Education Department operating plan**

12. Ms Locket presented the new RCVS strategy plan which was approved by Council in March. Education Committee also received a template, populated with current work within the education department and invited to use this as a starting point for the development of the operating plan.
13. The Committee raised concerns about the Education Department already working at capacity, and asked the College to be mindful of this when developing the plan and to identify priorities.
14. The Committee asked about the reference in the plan regarding limited licensure for people with disabilities and asked whether this could be perceived as discriminatory as only looking at one group. It was decided that it would be best to take out the reference so that it could be considered for all. It was acknowledged that there is a shortage of vets in some specialities, such as pathology, and this may be an opportunity to combat this.
15. The Committee discussed the importance of building relationships with students to support the work of the VetGDP and to engage them as part of the profession from an earlier stage in their studies. This should be done through a variety of communication channels and by involving different members of the College. The Committee also felt that students should be encouraged to visit and make use of Hardwick Street, and to understand that it is a welcoming space with approachable staff. It was noted that, while the RCVS produces a large volume of communications, these do not always appear in the places where students are likely to see them.
16. The Committee questioned, in light of recent political proclamations, whether it sent the wrong message to take out the explicit references to EDI. It was confirmed that EDI is still a college priority but that they were woven firmly through the strategy.
17. The Committee asked what "zero tolerance" looked like on a day-to-day basis. It was explained that the biggest issue came from owners calling the advice line but there was increasing instances from the profession using social media. For members of the public speaking directly to the college they would be warned if their behaviour was not appropriate and if unchanged the College would no longer communicate with them. In the case of Veterinary Surgeons, it had not yet happened, but it could be escalated to a formal complaint against them.

18. Some members of the Committee asked about the proposed legislative changes that would allow charging for visitations, noting that these costs would come from vet school budgets, which are limited. They questioned whether there was an opportunity for broader recognition of how veterinary education is funded and, in light of potential apprenticeship routes to qualification, what financial role practice owners might be expected to play.
19. The Committee asked to add “and best pedagogical practice” to the area regarding ensuring that curricular are informed by stakeholder feedback.
20. The template would be updated from the Committee’s comments and fed back to Senior Team and ultimately Council.

**ACTION: Update template and feedback to Senior Team and Council**

### **Primary Qualifications Subcommittee (PQSC)**

#### **Minutes of the meetings held on 16 April 2025**

21. The chair of PQSC, Dr Whiting, reported on the minutes of the PQSC meeting. The Committee noted that annual monitoring had been considered from UK schools and the few queries raised have been reported back to the school for a response. Most schools showed marked improvement in reporting their diversity data which had been lacking in previous years. The Committee heard that there was a theme emerging around increasing numbers of complaints raised by students or appeals against exams. PQSC have requested further information to look if there is a thematic basis / reason for this across schools or if it is just an incidental finding.

#### **Abattoir accreditation standard proposal**

22. The current RCVS accreditation standard 1.10 reads: Clinical education in veterinary public health training must be complemented by direct exposure in commercially run, approved abattoirs.
23. Through work done on reviewing the RCVS Day One Competences (D1Cs) and researching reasonable adjustments, as well as consideration of the outcomes from the Bristol v Abrahart legal case, it had become apparent that the requirement for all vet students to attend an abattoir in person may be discriminatory. PQSC was asked to consider this standard and recommend to Education Committee whether any amendments were required. Members were in agreement that the standard should remain as it is written for the majority of vet students, however additional guidance should be provided about possible exemptions, and a requirement for schools to evidence how the resulting gaps in experience have been made up.
24. It was understood that, legally, there is a distinction between an assessment method and the competence standard that must be met. The Committee felt that this situation represented an exemption from a specific learning method, rather than from meeting the required competence standard itself (which is around anti-mortem examinations). The accreditation standard references a learning method.

25. The Committee expressed serious concerns about the potential for this issue to extend beyond abattoir experience to other parts of the curriculum. They recognised that the current debate was partly prompted by the Bristol case, in which a student was required to undertake an experience that ultimately led to a tragic outcome. While members of the Committee had varied personal experiences with abattoir placements, the overall view was that the experience had been valuable.
26. Education Committee agreed that the wording of the accompanying guidance to the Standard needed to be reviewed and amended to allow for reasonable adjustments but to guard against unwanted interpretations.

**ACTION: Education Team to work with Acting Registrar to tighten the wording and then bring back to Education Committee for agreement.**

**IAWG rubric update**

27. The Committee heard that a sub-group of representatives from the IAWG, comprising the RCVS, the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) and the Australasian Veterinary Boards Council (AVBC), have been meeting to explore how to better facilitate joint visitations. With the implementation of the new RCVS (2023) and AVBC (2024) standards, there was now a degree of divergence from AVMA standards, where previously standards across all agencies were more aligned.
28. Since documentation used to facilitate the panel on visitations (the “rubric”) has had to adapt to all three agency’s requirements, it has become complicated to use. The IAWG sub-group had been meeting to agree on documentation which attempted to simplify the process of using three different sets of accreditation standards and aimed to provide panel members with a succinct method of ensuring that all standards had been explored during an event.
29. The final draft of this work was presented to Education Committee. Once approved for use, the rubric will need updating each time one organisation makes changes to their accreditation standards. However, if the principle is accepted, this would become an administrative matter going forward.
30. Education Committee agreed with PQSC that the attached rubric be used on visitations where AVBC, AVMA and RCVS are all present. It will be trialled on an initial basis and updated if any areas are not working.

**31. Action: Feedback to IAWG**

**Vet Track – EAEVE Accreditation**

32. Jane Clark from the Food Standards Agency (FSA) presented a paper to the Committee on the potential impact of removing recognition of EAEVE accreditation, specifically concerning “Vet-Track” vets involved in delivering Meat Official Controls. The paper identified several areas of

uncertainty, including reform of the Veterinary Surgeons Act; RCVS engagement with EAEVE, announcements from the EU-UK Summit and the recognition of professional qualifications.

33. Despite the uncertainties, it was explained that the FSA is requesting an agreement in principle of a transition period of for Vet-Track employees with EAEVE accredited degrees while the RCVS reviews their registration approach. This would allow existing Vet-Track employees to complete their pathway and register with the RCVS for a transitional period when their EAEVE accredited degrees are no longer recognised by the RCVS. This will reduce uncertainty for the individuals concerned and contribute to the stability of delivery of Meat Official controls across the food supply chain.
34. Education Committee clarified that European graduates who qualify as a Veterinary Surgeon up to 2029 and join the Vet Track scheme will not need a transition period as they have entered before the joint recognition agreement is removed. European graduates who enter the Vet Track before the 2029 date will be able to complete it. The FSA clarified that they are not asking for them to enter after this point just up to the end of 2029.
35. There were no objections and Education Committee was happy for the FSA to articulate this to those entering the Vet Track scheme. RCVS Council would need to confirm the exact date in 2029 when the recognition agreement would end.

**Action: RCVS Council to confirm the exact end date in 2029 for the recognition agreement.**

### **New Appeals Rules**

36. The Committee received a paper with the new Appeals Rules which had been updated with the minor amendments from Education Committee at their February meeting. The Rules had subsequently been presented to FRC who approved the levying of a charge for appeal and then finally approved by Council. It was clarified for the committee that these Rules only deal with the Statutory Membership Examination. The Committee understood that these rules are now “live” and will apply to any appeals from the current SME.

### **VetGDP and CPD**

#### **Minutes of the VetGDP and CPD Compliance Subcommittee held on 1 April 2025**

37. The Minutes were presented to the Committee highlighting the non-compliance rates despite wide engagement with 1CPD.

### **CPD Compliance**

38. The Committee received a paper setting out the current levels of non-compliance with requirements for CPD by veterinary surgeons and veterinary nurses. They were asked to consider proposals to address non-compliance and agree actions as a strategy to improve compliance.

39. The Committee understood that three key concepts underpin the issue: awareness of CPD requirements, engagement in completing CPD, and the recording of compliance. Data from the RCVS Communications Department indicates that awareness of the requirements is high, and engagement with the 1CPD platform is strong. However, the concern remains that 20% of veterinary surgeons and 16% of veterinary nurses are still not fully complying with the requirement to record and reflect on their CPD hours.

40. The committee understood the challenges associated with enforcement, including the very high threshold required to classify behaviour as serious professional misconduct, and the real need for a change in legislation to act as a deterrent to non-compliance.

41. The Committee discussed the responsibility of the senior veterinary surgeon and raising awareness of their responsibility to ensure that their entire practice is CPD compliant. The Committee agreed the validity of both “on the job” learning and more structured CPD and understood that both could fit into the plan-do-reflect cycle.

42. The Committee discussed referring non-compliant individuals to PIC as a clear message to the profession that the RCVS takes compliance seriously. It was agreed that messaging should focus on the consequences of non-compliance and demonstrate that the College actively pursues those who fail to meet requirements. The Committee also acknowledged that resource limitations within the Professional Conduct Department pose a significant challenge.

43. The Committee discussed, again, going back to the three-year cycle, but heard that compliance had been no better when this was an option and this had not been effective. In fact, many members had often used it as an excuse to defer their engagement with CPD. It was reiterated that the Education department always try to help and provide advice to members in difficult circumstances, but the majority of non-compliant registrants did not contact the department.

44. The Committee agreed that both public relations and individual communication were needed in conjunction with looking at moving towards disciplinary action and the resource implications of this.

**ACTION: To consider resource implications of moving towards disciplinary action**

[Minutes of the VetGDP and CPD Engagement Group held on 22 April 2025](#)

45. The Chair of the VetGDP and CPD engagement group presented the minutes of the meeting for the Committee to note.

46. The Committee asked questions about the Facebook group created to support and encourage CPD. Although not directly owned by the RCVS, the group is administered by several current and former RCVS Council members and has been mentioned in various College meetings

47. The Committee was reassured that the Facebook group clearly states its purpose is solely to provide CPD resources and encouragement, functioning as a “self-help” group. The absence of formal RCVS involvement allows members to ask questions they might feel too intimidated or embarrassed to raise directly with the RCVS, fearing they should already know the answers.

The administrators ensure discussions remain focused on CPD and quickly correct any misleading information. The group's founder acknowledged that, while it carries some risks, it has successfully engaged large numbers of participants and encouraged CPD activity.

48. Despite this, the Committee remained concerned about the unclear ownership of the group and agreed that some formal consideration of this issue was necessary.

**ACTION: To consider the risk implications of the Facebook group**

#### CPD Buddies

49. The Committee received a paper proposing a pilot of a new CPD buddy scheme that can offer peer support in achieving the CPD requirement, which had been supported at the Engagement group. The Scheme would offer to pair members with a buddy to provide accountability, motivation and ensure regular check-in to keep members on track and stay committed to their CPD activities. It was suggested that the new CPD buddy scheme is introduced and piloted over the next 12 months. The scheme would be facilitated by the RCVS; however, participants will be individually responsible for maintaining contact with their buddy and maximising the benefit of the relationship. The committee were saddened that it was necessary but supported a pilot of the scheme.

50. The Committee agreed broadly to the scheme but asked if resources had been considered. It was agreed to take further discussions off-line to look at the practicalities of resourcing the scheme against the potential benefits.

**ACTION: To discuss resources and the feasibility for the potential scheme.**

#### Veterinary Clinical Career Pathways (VCCP)

##### Minutes of the VCCP Working Group meeting

51. Education Committee was presented with the minutes from the Working Group meeting, to note.

#### New immigration rules: implications for residency training

52. The Committee understood that the College had received queries regarding skilled worker visas and how workers can qualify when earning below the usual salary threshold. Since April, new rules require applicants to be under 26 years old and working towards full registration or chartered status to qualify for the skilled worker visa. Previously, working towards the CertAVP or a diploma would have qualified candidates. However, since the RCVS no longer offers its own diplomas, questions arose about whether these qualifications could still be used for visa eligibility. Information from the inquiry suggested that the Home Office was unwilling to provide clear guidance on what training currently qualifies.

53. It was suggested that the College issue public guidance, which could then serve as a basis for the Home Office to make decisions. There was also a question about whether the RCVS should

have a role in shaping government decisions regarding immigration requirements and minimum salary thresholds.

54. The Committee clarified that the College does recognise European Diplomas as a pathway to specialisation in the UK. Members pursuing specialisation work towards a recognised qualification in a UK-regulated profession, so the qualification itself does not have to be UK-based. The guidance document for specialist recognition states that European and American diplomas (though not exhaustively listed) are accepted routes to specialisation. These diplomas are recognised because there is no equivalent UK qualification since the College withdrew its own diplomas. The Committee was satisfied that published guidance is available for both the public and the Home Office to reference.

**ACTION: Simon Wiklund and David Barrett to discuss guidance documents**

### **Advanced Practitioner (AP)**

#### **Criteria for AP Status**

55. Education Committee previously discussed the annual requirement for an Advanced Practitioner to complete 100 cases as the primary clinician, as well as 10 hours external focused CPD, to accompany their re-application for Advanced Practitioner status.

56. AP applicants must demonstrate that they had primary responsibility for an average of 100 relevant cases per year and completed externally focused CPD annually. This requirement must be met each year, unlike the general CPD requirement, which is assessed over the full 5-year accreditation period.

57. Education Committee was asked whether the criteria should be reviewed or if the focus should simply be on communicating the importance of annual engagement. The Committee discussed the issue and agreed that relying on numbers alone was not ideal but also noted that assessing competence for AP status would require significant resources. It was agreed that the subcommittee would review the criteria again, exploring flexibility to accommodate different work and personal circumstances.

**ACTION: AP panel to discuss criteria and bring back to Education Committee**

#### **Approval of new subcommittee**

58. At the last meeting, Education Committee approved a new 'panel' to consider non-RCVS certificates for eligibility for AP status, in a similar manner to how a panel of reviewers consider AP applications. However, given the comprehensive nature of this task, the potential costs involved, and the expertise required, a more robust approach would be for a subcommittee comprising members with relevant expertise to carry out this function.

59. As the CertAVP subcommittee already considers modules and QA as part of their remit, rather than establish a separate subcommittee it is proposed to establish one committee that reviews all of the work. This would have a number of benefits, including transparency and parity of QA of

both RCVS and non-RCVS qualifications by the same group, reviews being carried out by multiple individuals with appropriate expertise, reduced duplication and reduced costs.

60. The paper also proposed moving the consideration of the QA of synoptic examinations – currently considered by the CertAVP s/c – to the ToR for the Statutory Membership Exam Board, renaming this the ‘Examinations Board’. The Committee asked for clarification around how much extra work this would mean for the Board as it was already a busy agenda. The Committee was reassured that it would be limited as a review of an annual report.
61. The Committee approved the proposal for the new subcommittee structure and the terms of reference but requested that they be amended to specify that an educationalist must be present for meetings to be quorate. They also asked for consideration of representation from qualification and assessment providers within the membership.

**ACTION: Ensure ToR specifies that an educationalist must be present for meetings to be quorate.**

### CertAVP

#### Minutes from the meeting

62. Education Committee received and noted the minutes from the CertAVP subcommittee meeting.

### Synoptic QA Reports

63. The Committee understood that in 2024, a new synoptic exam policy was introduced along with detailed guidelines for both candidates and examiners. The purpose was to standardise the procedures employed across different host institutions for all designations and exams. Part of the new policy was for a sample of the exams to be observed by the RCVS either in person or remotely for QA purposes. This commenced in September 2024 and observations have taken place both remotely and in person at all diets that have been held.
64. The Committee received a paper summarising the findings of the observations and the actions that have been taken as a result.

### Post nominal discussion

65. The Committee heard that an action had arisen from the Officers meeting with the Veterinary Specialists Association, who were concerned around the proliferation of post nominals and would like more regulation from the RCVS. They have suggested that using a generalised term in the RCVS register to capture all specialisations in an area under one name, for example just “Surgery” rather than any further distinction.
66. The Committee felt that they could not see any justification for that at this moment but were happy to have a further discussion with the VSA to understand the rationale for their request.

**ACTION: RCVS to set up a meeting with the VSA to better understand their request.**

### **Statutory Membership Examination (SME)**

#### **SME Update**

67. The Committee heard that the SME had taken place at the beginning of March; 270 candidates entered the exam and 83 passed. A total of 130 candidates (130 RCVS and 1 VCI) entered the re-sit examination scheduled for this week, with results expected at the end of June.
68. Due to the high number of candidates, it is likely that three blocks of OSCEs will be conducted at the end of August and beginning of September. Final numbers will only be confirmed after processing the current exam results. Currently, 85 candidates are expected, and Harper Adams has confirmed they can accommodate up to 150 candidates, and a provisional plan for implementation is in place.
69. The Committee also heard that candidate well-being changes have been made in how the results are provided, meaning that an email goes out a few days before letting the candidates know the date which the results will be sent out to that it reduces the element of surprise. The results include letters signposting support and both of the SME team members have had mental health first aid training. It was reported that the reaction to the result this year had been much calmer. Ms Hobson and Miss Firkin were thanked for their hard work which ensured the smooth running of the exams and the results.
70. The Committee was asked for approval for the Education Team to start working on a tender exercise for an additional OSCE provider for future years as candidate numbers were still increasing. This was agreed.

**ACTION: Education Team to start working on a tender exercise for a further OSCE provider**

### **Specialists**

71. Education Committee received and ratified the list of non-European specialists to add for period between Feb – May 2025.

### **Fellowship**

72. The Committee heard that there were two applicants that had been through the assessment phase for the old thesis route. One of them had unfortunately failed their re-sit exam and a viva examination was being prepared by the RCVS for the other candidate.

### **Apprenticeship Update**

73. The Committee was informed that a trailblazer group has now been formed, comprising of a range of practicing vets, the RCVS, and an educational provider. Two meetings have been held, and a proposal has been drafted for submission to the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IfATE). The draft was adjusted following feedback and scrutiny by an

IfATE representative. The final version was provided to the Committee for information they were asked if they had any feedback for the trailblazer group

74. The Committee heard that a curriculum/delivery model is being drafted by Harper and Keele vet school, who will be the education partner for the apprenticeship. Currently, funding is unknown, as although it has been stated by the Government that there is no funding for level 7 apprenticeship degrees, there have been exceptions to this rule. Funding appears to be considered on a case-by-case basis, but with an uncertain future at this point.
75. It was clarified that the proposal had been entered for opinion and had put out some potential modules of delivery but there had been no commitment by Harper and Keele vet school.
76. The Committee raised concerns about the potential impact this may have on graduate training schemes and empowering apprentice candidates at the expense of more traditional students. It was clarified that the VetGDP would remain and was non-negotiable. The discussion surrounded the allocation of funds from corporate training schemes to encompass apprenticeship training; it was noted that this had not been mandated and was just an option for discussion along with other avenue of where funding may come from. It was agreed that there were still many unanswered questions.

#### **Risk Register**

77. There was a request to update the risk register to reflect that not all of the universities are willing to commit fully to using the new EMS database causing confusion to students and providers who signed up on the basis of everything being in one place.

**ACTION Education to speak to VSC about increasing the engagement with the EMS database**

#### **AOB**

78. The Committee wished to acknowledge the fabulous contribution of the students on the Committee who were clearly dedicated to reading and understanding the large amount of material sent out for every meeting.
79. A committee member wished to flag that a couple of items were not available on Board Effects when the bulk of the pack was distributed and asked to consider a future policy on reading time. This was done with the acknowledgement of the huge workload of the education department.

#### **Date of the next meeting**

80. The Date of the next meeting is 23<sup>rd</sup> September at 1.30 at Hardwick street.

Britta Crawford  
June 2025

## Summary

Meeting	Education Committee
Date	23 September 2025
Title	AP designation in small animal surgery
Summary	<p>The recent approval of a new RCVS subcommittee to oversee qualifications eligible for Advanced Practitioner (AP) status has prompted questions about the consistency of AP designations, particularly in small animal surgery.</p> <p>Historically, the CertAVP in surgery was broadened to include both orthopaedics and soft tissue surgery, reflecting the varied caseloads seen in general practice. This led to the creation of a more inclusive “Small Animal Surgery” designation, replacing the previous orthopaedics-only option.</p> <p>However, the current designation structure is inconsistent. While both “Small Animal Surgery” and “Small Animal Orthopaedics” are recognised, there is no designation for “Small Animal Soft Tissue Surgery.” This contrasts with equine surgery, where both orthopaedic and soft tissue AP designations exist. Additionally, some approved qualifications—such as soft tissue-only postgraduate certificates—map onto the broader “Small Animal Surgery” AP title, potentially overstating the graduate's area of expertise.</p> <p>To address these issues, Education Committee is invited to consider three options: introduce a new AP designation in Small Animal Soft Tissue Surgery; remove the AP in Small Animal Orthopaedics and retain only the broader Small Animal Surgery designation; or maintain the current structure. Each option carries implications for consistency, fairness, and accurate reflection of clinical expertise.</p>
Decisions required	Education Committee to agree the AP designations for small animal surgery
Attachments	None
Author	Laura Largan Senior Education Officer <a href="mailto:l.largan@rcvs.org.uk">l.largan@rcvs.org.uk</a> / 020 7212 0779

## Classifications

Document	Classification <sup>1</sup>	Rationales <sup>2</sup>
Paper	Unclassified	NA

### **<sup>1</sup>Classifications explained**

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### **<sup>2</sup>Classification rationales**

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Private	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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</li> </ol>

## **Background**

1. The decision by Education Committee to set up a new committee to review all qualifications eligible for Advanced Practitioner (AP) status has led to questions from some providers in relation to AP designations, especially in small animal surgery.
2. Historically, for the RCVS CertAVP postgraduate certificate in surgery it was considered important to broaden the scope to reflect the typical caseload encountered in general practice, since these qualifications were primarily intended for general practitioners. As a result, a more inclusive certificate in 'small animal surgery' which included both orthopaedic and soft tissue surgery replaced the previous orthopaedics-only option.
3. This has resulted in a situation where we recognise: AP in Small Animal Orthopaedics, AP in Small Animal Surgery but not AP in Small Animal Soft Tissue Surgery.

## **Issues of Consistency**

1. The present structure of AP designations in small animal surgery appears inconsistent, particularly when compared with equine designations. For equine surgery, both orthopaedics and soft tissue designations exist, which raises the question of why the same distinction is not offered in small animals.
2. A review of whether to introduce an AP in Small Animal Soft Tissue Surgery, or alternatively to remove the AP in Orthopaedics, may help to resolve this inconsistency and ensure that designations more accurately reflect the training and expertise of candidates. It could also be argued that recognition should cover both orthopaedics and soft tissue surgery, reflecting the balance of cases managed in practice.
3. Some approved qualifications, such as the University of Central Lancashire's *Postgraduate Certificate in Small Animal Soft Tissue Surgery*, map onto the "Small Animal Surgery" designation, even though graduates may not have equivalent orthopaedic training. This creates a potential mismatch between designation title and actual clinical expertise.

## **Options for Consideration**

4. Education Committee is asked to discuss and consider the following options for AP designations in small animal surgery.
  - a) Introduce an AP in Small Animal Soft Tissue Surgery as this would create consistency with equine designations and better reflect the expertise of those completing soft tissue-only qualifications. AP designation in small animal surgery could only be used by those who have a postgraduate qualification including both soft tissue and orthopaedic.
  - b) Remove the AP in Small Animal Orthopaedics and only have a small animal surgery designation - this would simplify designations at certificate level and align with the original intention of the CertAVP certificate in surgery which was to ensure training

across both orthopaedics and soft tissue but would cause issues with previously approved APs in orthopaedics but would cause issues with previously approved qualification for AP status – such as “*Postgraduate Certificate in Small Animal Soft Tissue Surgery*”

- c) Maintain the status quo, however, these risks continued inconsistency between subject areas and may not accurately represent the scope of training.

## Summary

Meeting	Education Committee
Date	23 September 2025
Title	Printing of AP certificates
Summary	<p>Since 2020, members who achieve advanced practitioner status are able to download a digital certificate through RCVS 'My Account'. The decision to discontinue issuing physical copies of certificates was initially made during the COVID-19 period due to limited access to the office. This approach was subsequently maintained in support of our environmental sustainability goals.</p> <p>Several APs have contacted the RCVS expressing concerns that given the low current awareness of AP status, and the fact it is an ongoing certification of current achievement, an official certificate would be more appropriate for demonstrating their status to clients, rather than a downloadable version. They felt strongly that the College should recognise their continued work through a formal, printed certificate on quality paper, particularly given the annual fee being paid.</p>
Decisions required	Education Committee is asked to consider if we should return to offer a printed certificate to those gaining and renewing AP status.
Attachments	None
Author	<p>Laura Largan Senior Education Officer <a href="mailto:l.largan@rcvs.org.uk">l.largan@rcvs.org.uk</a> / 020 7212 0779</p>

## Classifications

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## Summary

Meeting	Education Committee
Date	23 September 2025
Title	2026 SME Guidance
Summary	<p>The SME guidance is updated annually, and any changes are required to be reviewed and approved by Education Committee. All proposed changes are shown in <b>red text</b> for ease of review.</p> <p>The changes include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Updated 2026 dates</li> <li>- Information requested from candidates who are pregnant at the time of practical exams</li> <li>- Changes to MCQ numbers for the equine written exam to bring in line with a similar size of the other domain exams based on psychometric analysis of the exam (approved by the exam board)</li> <li>- Exam conditions and candidate behaviour expectations</li> </ul>
Decisions required	Approval of the 2026 SME Guidance
Attachments	None
Author	<p>Claire Hobson</p> <p><a href="mailto:c.hobson@rcvs.org.uk">c.hobson@rcvs.org.uk</a></p>

## Classifications

Document	Classification <sup>1</sup>	Rationales <sup>2</sup>
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## Statutory Membership Examination Guidance 2026

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

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## 1. Introduction

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

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

Membership of the RCVS is not a substitute for a work permit or for meeting UK immigration regulations. The RCVS cannot provide advice regarding applications for VISAs, immigration, refugee or asylum status, please contact the Home Office.

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

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

If after reading the guidance, you have questions or require further information, please contact the Examinations **team** on 020 7202 0745 / 020 7227 3506 or [rcvsexam@rcvs.org.uk](mailto:rcvsexam@rcvs.org.uk). We aim to respond to emails within three working days of their receipt.

### 1.1. Legislative framework

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

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

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

### 1.2. RCVS Day One Competences

The Statutory Membership Examination is set to the standards outlined in the RCVS Day One Competences. These are the minimum essential competences that the RCVS expects all veterinary students to have met when they graduate. Further information on the Day One Competences can be found - <https://www.rcvs.org.uk/news-and-views/publications/rcvs-day-one-competences-feb-2022/>

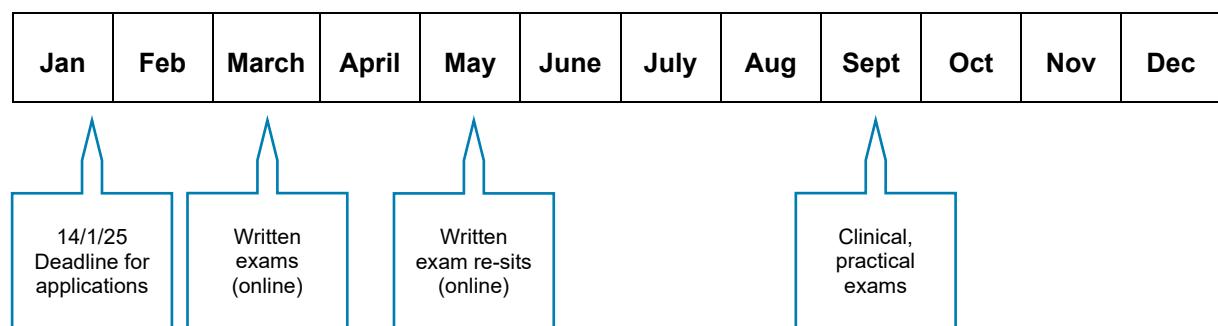
### 1.3. Format of the Examination

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

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

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

An overview of the schedule for the 2026 exam diet is provided below (timings are approximate; **if required due to high levels of candidate numbers, additional dates maybe released for the clinical, practical exam**).



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

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

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

The Statutory Membership Examination consists of the following components:

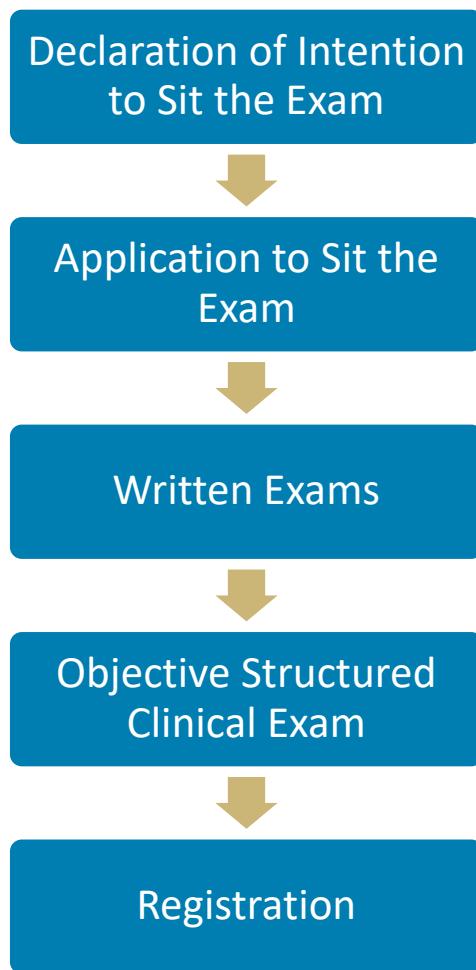
- Written examinations consisting of multiple-choice questions (MCQs) testing the candidate's clinical knowledge across three clinical domains (companion animal, production animal (including veterinary public health) and equine), and their knowledge of the RCVS Code of Professional Conduct.
- A clinical,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

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

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

#### 1.4. Pathway to RCVS membership

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



These stages are described below:

##### **Stage 1 – Declaration of an ‘Intention to Sit’ the RCVS Statutory Membership Examination.**

Individuals must submit a completed ‘*declaration of intention to sit*’ form and provide proof of their veterinary degree, identity, and a completed self-assessment skills list. If they wish to apply for an exemption for the English-language test (see section 2.7) then this is the stage at which to do so. This information will be checked by the Examinations Manager and if our requirements are met, they will be added to our active list of individuals preparing for the examination and be given permission to ‘see practice’. The process is covered in section 2 of this guidance.

Veterinary surgeons, and those applying to be registered as veterinary surgeons, must disclose to the RCVS any cautions or convictions, including absolute and conditional discharges and spent

convictions, or adverse findings (including by another regulator or professional disciplinary proceedings) which may affect registration, whether in the UK or overseas (except for minor offences excluded from disclosure by the RCVS). For more information, please see [www.rcvs.org.uk/convictions](http://www.rcvs.org.uk/convictions).

## **Stage 2 – Application to Sit the Examination**

If an individual on the 'intention to sit' active list is eligible to sit the examination, they will be sent the examination application form. This form must be returned to us by the provided deadline date, which is 14 January for the 2026 exam (please note this date may change each year), along with the following:

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

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

## **Stage 3 – Written Examinations**

The written examinations will normally be held online, using proctored software and a live invigilation process. You must pass all three clinical domain exam papers (companion animal, production animal (including veterinary public health) and equine) as well as the Code of Professional Conduct paper before you can proceed to the OSCE. See [section 6.7](#) for more information. The dates of the exams may vary each year/examination diet (and may change at short notice). Candidates listed on the intention to sit list will be provided with exam dates prior to the application closing date in January.

### *Stage 3a: Written examinations*

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

### *Stage 3b: Written examination re-sits*

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

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

#### **Stage 4 – Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE)**

The final part of the statutory membership examination is the holistic Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE). This is a clinical, practical examination and will be held in-person at a veterinary school in the UK. As with the clinical written examinations, you must pass all three domains (companion animal, production animal (including veterinary public health) and equine) to pass the OSCE. See section 6.8 for further information. The dates of the practical exams may vary each year/examination diet, OSCEs are usually held in September.

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

#### **Stage 5 – Registration**

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

#### **1.5. Working as a Veterinary Nurse**

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

## 2. Declaring an intention to sit the RCVS Statutory Membership Examination

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

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

an individual holds a veterinary degree and intends to sit the RCVS Statutory Membership

Examination, they must:

- a. Declare their intention by completing the '*declaration of intention to sit*' form
- b. Provide proof of their primary veterinary degree or diploma (see section 2.1)
- c. If available, provide university issued transcripts of their studies (see section 2.2)
- d. Provide their registration certificate or veterinary licence if they have one (see section 2.3)
- e. Provide proof of their identity (see section 2.4)
- f. Confirm their belief that they have the relevant knowledge and skills by completing the self-assessment skills list (see section 2.5)
- g. Apply for exemption from IELTS/OET, if applicable. **Exemptions must be submitted no later than 1 December of the year preceding the exam** (see section 2.5)
- h. Individuals with a disability or particular need may also wish to complete a reasonable adjustment application, if required (see section 2.6). Please note that this application will not be reviewed until you have requested to enter into the exam.

### 2.1. Proof of primary veterinary degree

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

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

**Original copies of veterinary degree certificates should be kept safe and available in case it is needed for future use.** If we need to see an original veterinary degree certificate beforehand, we will contact the individual to make an appointment.

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

### 2.2. Transcripts

If an individual's university has issued transcripts of their studies, these must be sent to the RCVS as part of the declaration of intention to sit the examination. As with the degree certificate, if transcripts are not written in English, then the candidate must provide a professionally translated version alongside a copy of the original.

### 2.3. Registration certificate or veterinary licence

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

certificate or licence if this has been issued. This must also be professionally translated into English with a copy of the original also provided.

#### **2.4. Proof of identity**

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

#### **2.5. Self-assessment skills list**

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

#### **2.6. Candidates with special requirements or requests for reasonable adjustment**

If a candidate feels that a reasonable adjustment or special provision is needed in the examination because of a disability or other particular need, they should submit a completed [reasonable adjustment form](#), available on the RCVS website, **as early as possible** in the examination application process. We must be notified no later than the examination entry closing date, otherwise it **will** not be possible to make the necessary arrangements in time. If a candidate falls ill or experiences unexpected difficult circumstances prior to, or during, the exams, they should use the mitigating circumstances form [Document library - Professionals \(rcvs.org.uk\)](#).

The RCVS will **agree** what arrangements can be made, with the candidate, the Chair and members of the **Examination Board**, and medical advisers as appropriate. Applications must be accompanied by a current, official medical letter or certificate **or educational assessment/report** and other relevant documentation as outlined in the policy (translated into English) **and this should state the recommendations of accommodations that are suggested to be implemented**.

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

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

If a candidate is pregnant, **and they will be pregnant when taking the OSCE, they may be advised to defer their exam or provide a fit to sit letter from a healthcare professional due to health and safety considerations**

## 2.7. English language test exemption

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

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

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

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

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

## 2.8. Translations of documents

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

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

## 2.9. Recent graduates

If a candidate has recently completed their studies in full and they know that they have passed their degree, but their certificate has not yet been issued, they should contact the Examinations Manager to discuss the likelihood of them being able to enter the examination. Specific information may be required, such as the date that the certificate will be available.

## 2.10. Refugees

Veterinary surgeons seeking humanitarian protection in the UK can seek financial aid provided by the RCVS to sit the Statutory Membership Exam. Evidence of their in-date humanitarian protection status should be submitted during the 'declaration of intention to sit' stage, along with the other documentation and supporting evidence listed above.

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

Once the necessary supporting evidence has been submitted, the Examinations Manager will request financial support. Financial support offered **may** include:

- IELTS/OET Exam fee

- Statutory Membership Exam fee

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

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

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

## 2.11. Submitting an application

An individual may submit an 'intention to sit' declaration all year round.

If the intention is to enter the next examination diet, we must receive completed declarations and supporting documents by **1 December** the previous calendar year otherwise we cannot guarantee that we will have sufficient time to carry out the necessary checks before the examination closing date of 14 January. We recommend starting the declaration process around five months before the exam.

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

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

## 2.12. Renewal of a declaration of intention to sit

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

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

### 3. Preparing for the examination

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

- A suggested reading list in appendix 3 of this document
- An online exam preparation course, which includes a filmed example of a typical OSCE task <https://academy.rcvs.org.uk/>
- Guidance to assist candidates who have entered into the exam to determine whether their hardware is compatible with the software used for online written exams
- There will be an opportunity for candidates who have entered into the exam to familiarise themselves with navigating through an example exam using the software. **Any issues must be raised with the Examinations team as soon as possible.**
- Access to a formative written assessment **for candidates who submit a completed exam application and are accepted as a candidate will be provided nearer the time of the exam.** This contains 110 MCQs in the same format and to the same standard as those that will feature in the written examinations. These questions will not be assessed within the final exams but allow an opportunity for candidates to review the style and standard of exam questions while learning how to navigate and use the online exam application. Candidates have three attempts at the formative written assessment.
- A familiarisation session for candidates who pass the written component and proceed to the OSCE. This will feature a wide range of models and equipment typically used in UK veterinary practices. This session will not contain any information about the content of the upcoming OSCE exam. This will normally be held on the day before **or the morning of** the OSCE.

The examination is set to the standard of the RCVS Day One Competences and the OSCE takes a holistic approach aiming to reflect scenarios typically seen in UK general practice (see section 6). It is therefore recommended that candidates familiarise themselves with the RCVS Day One Competences documents available on our website here: [RCVS Day One Competences - Professionals](#).

#### 3.1. Courses of study

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

#### 3.2. Studying and access to libraries

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

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

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

### 3.3. Practical and clinical experience – Seeing Practice

As well as studying, spending time at UK veterinary practices will help candidates gain valuable practical and clinical experience in preparation for the examination. This is referred to as “seeing practice”. Candidates may see practice under the Veterinary Surgeons (Practice by Students) (Amendment) Regulations 1993 [Seeing practice - Professionals \(rcvs.org.uk\)](http://www.rcvs.org.uk). The regulations described below allow candidates to attend veterinary practices in the UK for the purpose of seeing practice.

Seeing practice in **all domains** (companion animal, equine, production animal and veterinary public health) is **strongly encouraged**. All aspects of the examination are set in the context of how consultations and procedures are carried out in the UK. By seeing practice, candidates will experience how vets in the UK work and carry out consultations, which may be different to how they were trained. Candidates may also gain exposure to different species, treatments and diseases that are not common in other regions of the world which will improve their knowledge in preparation for the exam. Additionally, if English is not the candidate’s native language it can help improve their communication skills in all formats, which will aid in preparation for the IELTS/OET as well as the exam.

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

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

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

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

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

19.7 *The RCVS has interpreted these as follows:*

(a) *'direction' means that the veterinary surgeon instructs the student as to the tests to be administered but is not necessarily present*

- (b) '*supervision*' means that the veterinary surgeon is present on the premises and able to respond to a request for assistance if needed
- (c) '*direct and continuous supervision*' means that the veterinary surgeon is present and giving the student his/her undivided personal attention"

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

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

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

It is for each candidate to decide where and how much time they need to spend "seeing practice" based on their assessment of their abilities and knowledge of UK veterinary practice. We strongly recommend candidates arrange to spend time at several different veterinary practices and/or one or more of the animal charities to gain practical experience with horses, production and companion animals and veterinary public health.

## 4. Applying to sit the examination

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### 4.1. Examination application form

The closing date for initial entry to the examination will be provided to all candidates who have registered their intent to sit in advance. The **payment** closing date may change but is usually **12 noon GMT on 14th January** each year. It is the candidate's responsibility to complete and submit their application in full **before** the closing date. All applications must be submitted via email to [rcvsexam@rcvs.org.uk](mailto:rcvsexam@rcvs.org.uk). **Late applications or payments will not be accepted.**

### 4.2. English language test report

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

#### 4.2.1 English language test validity extension

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

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

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

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

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

#### 4.3. Evidence of good professional standing

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

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

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

#### **4.4 Who may provide evidence of good standing?**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

#### 4.5. Number of examination attempts

Individual candidate examination outcomes (pass and fails) are reported to the RCVS Education Committee. Candidates may attempt the written examination as many times as they wish. If a candidate has failed the clinical, practical examination (OSCE) on three or more occasions, the Education Committee may withdraw that candidate's right to sit the statutory examination. For each attempt, candidates will be required to pay the required examination fee (refer to section 4.6). The RCVS Education Committee may withdraw the right to sit the examination from a candidate. If the committee decides to use their power to do this, that decision will override their rule allowing unlimited attempts at the written examination.

#### 4.6. Examination fees

The examination fees are reviewed on an annual basis.

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

Exam component and information	Fee	Deadline date
<b>Initial exam entry fee</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Includes one attempt at the full written exams, held in March 2025</li></ul>	Examination fee of £1,100 plus a £300 administration charge (Total £1400)	14 January 2026
<b>Re-sit written examinations (clinical domains)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Only available for candidates if they have taken and failed any clinical domain written exam paper held in March 2025</li></ul>	Examination fee of £450 plus a £50 administration charge (total £500) per clinical exam domain re-sit	20 April 2026
<b>Re-sit written examination (Code of Professional Conduct exam)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Only available for candidates if they have taken and failed the Code of Professional Conduct Exam held in March 2025</li></ul>	One free re-sit attempt	20 April 2026
<b>OSCE Exam</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Only available for candidates to book once they have passed <u>all</u> components of the written exams.</li></ul>	Examination fee of £1,100	15 July 2026
<b>Entry to sit individual OSCE exam domains in 2026 for candidates who failed the OSCE in 2025</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Available for candidates if they have taken and failed any component of the OSCE during the September 2025 diet</li></ul>	Examination fee of £450 plus a £50 administration charge (Total £500) per OSCE exam domain required. If taking entire OSCE, examination fee of £1100 plus a £300 admin charge (£1400)	14 January 2027

Payment is made via the RCVS MyAccount portal. Details are provided once all other aspects of the exam application are complete. Please note, all international bank charges are incurred by the person paying the fee, including those levied by our bank, which is approximately £7.00.

#### 4.7. Withdrawal and refunds

If a candidate wishes to withdraw from the examination, they must notify the RCVS in writing by email to [rcvsexam@rcvs.org.uk](mailto:rcvsexam@rcvs.org.uk). Any refund of an examination fee will be made payable to the person who paid the fee. The administration fee will not be refunded.

The size of the refund a candidate is eligible for is dependent on when they choose to withdraw:

Time of Withdrawal	Eligible Refund
Before the relevant exam closing dates, i.e.: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• March exam entry closing date - 14 January</li><li>• Re-sit May exam entry closing date – 20 April</li><li>• OSCE exam entry closing date – 15 July</li></ul>	The full examination fee, not including the non-refundable administration charge
More than 28 days before the examination	Half the examination fee, not including the non-refundable administration charge
28 days or fewer before the examination	No refund
Failure to attend the examination	No refund

#### Discretionary refunds on medical or compassionate grounds

If a candidate needs to withdraw from the examination for medical or compassionate reasons, they may be eligible for a discretionary refund of some or the whole examination fee. A request in writing must be submitted with documentary evidence to support the medical or compassionate grounds cited, no later than 28 days after the part of the examination that was missed. Such candidates may have to wait several months for a decision because the RCVS committees that have discretion to grant refunds meet at fixed times during the year and it may not be possible to reach a decision outside the meetings.

#### 4.8. Reapplications following failure or withdrawal

Each time a candidate applies to enter the examination within a new examination diet they must:

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

Candidates will have to sit another academic IELTS or OET test if their previous report is out of date (more than two years old).

## 5. Admission to the Register

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

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

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

### 5.1. Celebratory ceremony

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

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

## 6. About the examination

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

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

### 6.1. Exam format

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

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

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

Only veterinary surgeons who have submitted an examination application form and supporting documents, paid the relevant examination fee and had their application accepted may attend the examination. Confirmation letters will be sent to those who are accepted as a candidate to sit the exam.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Please also see Appendix 1.**

### **6.3. Examination venues**

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

The examinations will be invigilated remotely by a member of the software team by utilising your computer webcam and microphone to observe and take a recording of you during the examination session. The software will lock down the computer for the duration of the examination session: candidate's will not be able to navigate away and access the internet or other files/programs stored on your machine. The hardware requirements can be found at [Information for Exam Candidates](#) | [TestReach](#)

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

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

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

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

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

The software utilises advanced artificial intelligence and in-person live proctoring to detect potentially suspicious behaviour in the video record, such as eye movements suggesting that a candidate is reading a study aid, use of a mobile phone that could take a screenshot or noises in the room which could suggest a candidate is being fed answers. Any suspicious behaviour suggestive of cheating or incorrectly set up exam app settings may result in the exam being paused or stopped while an investigation is completed by an exam security invigilation member of the software team. This will also be referred to the Examination Board and the Registrar, who will review all reports of the alleged misconduct and consider if there is sufficient evidence for the allegation to be pursued (see section 6.13).

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

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

It should be noted that the examination is designed and delivered by the RCVS and therefore all correspondence should be directed to us. Candidates must not contact the exam software company or the vet school directly (unless instructed to do so by us) as they will not be able to offer assistance.

#### **6.4. Emergency evacuation procedures**

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

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

## 6.5. Identification

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

## 6.6. Prohibited items

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

- Any educational, test preparation or study materials
- Electronic devices other than the computer on which the examination will be taken. This includes mobile phones, tablets, hand-held computers, pagers, voice-controlled devices (such as an Alexa for example) and smartwatches. If a device is seen, the exam may be stopped, or the candidate may be asked to show it to the screen and be observed turning this off and placing this in view of the invigilator.
- Bracelets or jewellery which bang or scratch on the table should be removed to prevent any unnecessary noise which could trigger the invigilation software. Exceptions to this can be found in section 6.8.4. A thorough exam security check will take place. Items of clothing with buttons, broaches and pockets will be asked to be presented to the invigilator for exam security checking. Pockets may be asked to be emptied. Items such as jewellery and glasses may also be requested to be shown to the invigilator.
- Stationary, paper, desk clocks and calculators are not needed as they are present within the exam software and not allowed to be with the candidate at the time of the exam.

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

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

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

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

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

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

- Any educational, test preparation or study materials
- Personal items, including mobile phones, hand-held computers, pagers, smartwatches, or other electronic devices (clocks will be provided where required)
- Bags, purses, wallets

- Coats and outdoor wear not required for the examination
- Bracelets or jewellery which bang or scratch on the table must be removed to prevent disturbance to other candidates. Exceptions to this can be found in section 6.8.4.
- Pencil cases or stationery (these will be provided for you).

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

### 6.7. 'Fit to sit' the examination

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

### 6.8. Written examinations

The online written examination consists of **367** multiple-choice questions within three, clinical domains (companion animal, production animal (including veterinary public health) and equine) as well as an open-book examination testing candidate's knowledge of the RCVS Code of Professional Conduct (60 multiple-choice questions). Candidates must pass all these components to be eligible to proceed to the OSCE. The written examination will take place remotely, online, within a period of one to three weeks. The clinical domain exams usually last for approximately 2 hours and the RCVS Code of Professional Conduct exam usually lasts for 2 hours and 15 minutes.

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

#### 6.8.1 Clinical domain examinations

This examination consists of **367** clinically relevant Multiple-Choice Questions (MCQ) that test both knowledge and clinical reasoning. These will cover three domains:

- Companion animals –**175** questions
- Production animals (including veterinary public health) –**105** questions
- Equine – **87** questions

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

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

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

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

Negative marking will not be applied.

#### 6.8.2. Code of Professional Conduct exam

The Code of Professional Conduct MCQ examination is an open-book exam, designed to test candidates' knowledge of – and ability to find information within - the RCVS Code of Professional Conduct, and its application to veterinary scenarios. It will also test knowledge of key organisations and standards relevant to a veterinary surgeon practising in the UK. As with the clinical examination, candidates should ensure that they leave sufficient time to log in before the exam begins.

During this exam, candidates may access a searchable copy of the RCVS Code of Professional Conduct [Code of Professional Conduct for Veterinary Surgeons - Professionals \(rcvs.org.uk\)](https://www.rcvs.org.uk/-/media/assets/standards-and-guidance/standards-and-guidance/codes-of-practice/codes-of-practice-for-veterinary-surgeons.ashx) to assist them. The document is uploaded into the exam software application so that it is easily accessible during the exam. Candidates are still expected to complete this paper under examination conditions and any allegations of misconduct, such as communication between candidates, will be referred to the Examination Board and the Registrar in line with section 6.14 of the guidance.

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

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

Negative marking will not be applied.

#### 6.8.3. Candidate examination conduct (written examinations)

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

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

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

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

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

Communication of any kind with anyone else during the examination is strictly forbidden and if this takes place an exam security invigilator will be asked to intervene.

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

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

#### 6.8.4. Sample exam questions

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

There will be an opportunity for each candidate to access (three times) a formative assessment scheduled with 110 MCQ questions to aid your exam preparation (100 clinical MCQs and 10 relating to the RCVS Code of Professional Conduct). These questions reflect the breadth and scope of the questions that candidates can expect to see in the paper and will provide an opportunity for candidates to experience the style of questions contained within the actual examination. If candidates have any concerns after taking this test, they should contact the Examinations Manager as soon as possible at [rcvsexam@rcvs.org.uk](mailto:rcvsexam@rcvs.org.uk)

#### 6.9. Objective Structured Clinical Examination

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

The OSCE is a multi-station circuit of clinical / professional scenarios that candidates have 15 or 20 minutes to complete. Each station within the OSCE assesses a range of skills, all of which enable candidates to demonstrate RCVS Day One Competences. The stations are designed with a holistic approach to emulate typical consultations seen in UK general practice, for example, the ability to take a history, examine an animal then decide on the next step to be taken and communicate that back to the client. A video recording of a typical holistic OSCE station used in the exam is available here: [RCVS Academy](#) and further information about the course can be found here ['Working in the UK' online courses for veterinary professionals educated outside of the UK - Professionals \(rcvs.org.uk\)](#)

Stations that assess communication skills may include an actor playing the role of the client or other relevant party. Other stations may involve clinical models/simulators, and some may involve the use of cadavers. Some stations may have a live animal and a model and/or cadaver in separate areas. **Some stations may be outside, e.g. in a barn, field or stable; candidates should note that the usual noises**

and aromas found within these areas cannot be avoided. In all cases, candidates will be expected to perform tasks as if they were treating a live animal and should behave as they would when working in a practice in the UK. These skills will be assessed across companion animal, production animal (including veterinary public health) and equine domains. Candidates must meet the minimum required standard in each of these three domains to pass the examination. There will be **no compensation across domains** i.e., if a candidate falls below the required standard in one domain, then they will fail the examination regardless of how well they did in either of the other domains.

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

Examiners will mark each candidate against a standardised scoring rubric. This will describe to the examiners the performance (knowledge, skills, behaviours) candidates need to demonstrate in order for them to achieve the allocated marks. All candidates will be marked against the same scoring rubric.

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

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

The examiners will record their marks independently. During the examination no examiner knows the marks an individual candidate has scored at any other station (unless they have also assessed that candidate at that station). Feedback on candidates' performance will not be provided.

#### 6.9.1. OSCE Examiners

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

#### 6.9.2. Candidate examination conduct (OSCE)

The OSCE exam period can typically take between 5 and 7 days to complete. However, this may be liable to change depending on the number of candidates who enter the examination. **Additional dates at different times of the year may be added if required due to high candidate numbers.**

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

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

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

The OSCE consists of stations in separate **species domain** circuits, **located in areas** such as a clinical skills lab, equine centre, farm or production animal centre. Examination administrators will ensure that each candidate is at the correct circuit and has plenty of time to change into the correct clothing before the exam start time.

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

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

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

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

### 6.9.3. Health and safety

Working with animals carries with it an element of risk that candidates are consenting to by entering this examination. In the process of running the examination, the RCVS and the venue will take appropriate steps to mitigate any such risks as far as possible. Neither the RCVS nor the venue may be held responsible for any injuries sustained by a candidate as a result of his/her negligence either

through their actions during the examination or their failure to wear adequate protective gear (see section 6.8.4).

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

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

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

Candidates are expected to bring the following equipment with you:

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

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

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

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

Component	Clothing Requirements
Companion Animal	Clean scrubs or a lab coat and suitable footwear (no open toe shoes). Do not wear scrubs with your name embroidered on.
Production Animal and Veterinary Public Health	Clean overalls or boiler suit and clean wellington boots. Waterproofs may be worn if preferred but are not mandatory. After the exam, candidates must carry out a complete hand and boot wash, remove any waterproofs and change into regular shoes.
Equine	Clean overalls or boiler suit and sturdy boots. No waterproofs or wellington boots are allowed in the stables. Protective headgear will be provided by the RCVS.

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

## 6.10 Examination Outcomes & Appeals

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

The RCVS has an examination appeals policy carried out in accordance with Examination Appeals Procedure agreed by the Council. An appeal may be made only in respect of the conduct of the examination and not against the academic judgment of the examiners. Appeals must be made using an appeal form obtained from the RCVS and submitted to [rcvsexam@rcvs.org.uk](mailto:rcvsexam@rcvs.org.uk) within 28 days of the date of the letter advising you of the examination result.

A candidate cannot progress to the OSCE without first passing all of the written examinations. Candidates accepted onto the 2025 exam onwards, who fail one or more of the written exams taken in March 2026, have an opportunity to re-sit these papers in May 2026, subject to payment of the appropriate fee (see section 6.2).

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

## 6.11. Mitigating circumstances

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

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

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

## 6.12. Confidentiality and exam security

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

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

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

They must not provide information relating to the examination content that may give unfair advantage to individuals who may be taking the examination, including, without limitation, posting information regarding the examination content on the internet, on social media or providing it to anyone involved in the preparation of candidates.

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

## 6.13. Misconduct

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

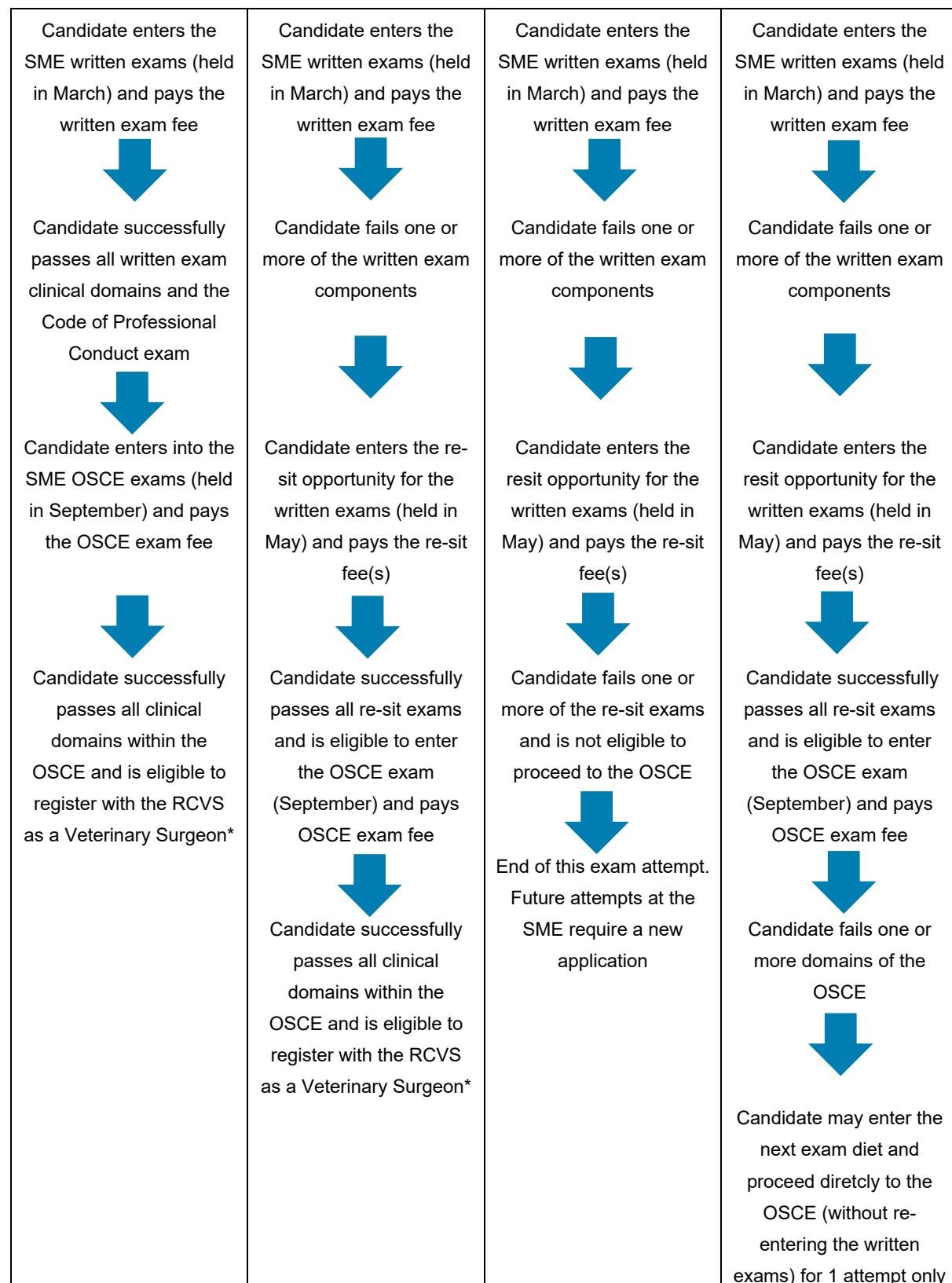
Misconduct includes, but is not limited to:

- Failure to comply with reasonable instructions given by an examination official.
- **Failure to comply with any aspect of the exam conditions.**
- Refusal to complete scans of the room or comply with the requests of the invigilator during exam security checks.
- Verbal or physical abuse of any person or animal such that an examiner or member of the examination team is made to feel intimidated or unsafe.
- Disruptive behaviour (**not following exam conditions**) during the examination, **within holding room areas, moving between stations** or during break times.
- Copying or attempting to copy the work of another candidate.
- Disclosing content from an examination to **another candidate or a third party**, either in person (**verbal or written communication, signalling, sharing of notes or resources**) or via **phone, email or social media**.
- Removing examination materials from the examination that they have not previously been authorised to remove. This includes removing materials by using recording devices and taking photographs.
- Bringing items into the examination other than those which candidates have been permitted to use.
- Communication either verbally or via signals with other candidates whilst under examination conditions (**in an exam station, moving to an exam station or in a holding room**).
- Impersonation of a candidate or allowing yourself to be impersonated.
- Bribery, or attempted bribery, of any personnel involved in the design, development, delivery of the examination.
- Being part of in-person or virtual groups, who share information that may breach exams and not reporting this.

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

## Appendix 1

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



## Appendix 2

### Example Clinical MCQ questions

The single best answer is highlighted

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

## Appendix 3

### Suggested reading list (updated Dec 2024)

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

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

#### **Equine**

Auer, J.A. and Stick, J.A. (eds) (2018) Equine Surgery 5<sup>th</sup> ed Philadelphia: Saunders

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

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

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

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

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

#### **Companion animal**

##### **Books covering general medicine and surgery:**

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

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

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

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

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

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

### Books covering more specific disciplines

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

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

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

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

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

England, G. C. W. and von Heimendahl, A. (eds) (2010) Manual of Canine and Feline Reproduction and Neonatology. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. BSAVA Quedgeley: Gloucester

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Villiers, E. and Ristić, J. (eds) (2016) Manual of Canine and Feline Clinical Pathology. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. BSAVA Quedgeley: Gloucester

## Production animals

### General

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

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

### Bovine

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

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

Cockcroft, P. (ed) (2015) Bovine Medicine. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Oxford: Wiley

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

### Sheep

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

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

### Pigs

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

### Poultry

Greenacre, C.B. and Morishita, T.Y. (eds) (2021) Backyard Poultry Medicine and Surgery A Guide for Veterinary Practitioners. 2nd ed. Oxford: Wiley Blackwell

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

## Veterinary public health

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

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

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

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

## General reading list

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE) resources**

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **Legislation**

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

- Animal health
- Animal welfare and the health and safety of humans
- Food including milk
- Medicines and residues
- Pet passports
- Slaughterhouses, meat hygiene and meat inspection
- Transport and marketing of animals
- RCVS Code of Professional Conduct at <https://www.rcvs.org.uk/setting-standards/advice-and-guidance/code-of-professional-conduct-for-veterinary-surgeons/>
- The Veterinary Surgeons Act 1996, available on the RCVS website at: [Government legislation - Professionals](#)

You should always check that any legislation you refer to is the current legislation. You can check by referring to [www.legislation.gov.uk](http://www.legislation.gov.uk) which contains up to date information.

The Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) is the UK government department responsible for policy and regulation on the environment, food, and rural affairs. The website contains information covering food, farming, wildlife, and pets. Website: [Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs - GOV.UK](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-environment-food-and-rural-affairs)

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

The Food Standards Agency – website: [Homepage | Food Standards Agency](http://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](http://www.vmd.defra.gov.uk)

### **Animal husbandry**

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

### **Veterinary publications and journals**

You are advised to read the following journals and publications:

- The Veterinary Record
- In Practice
- Journal of Small Animal Practice
- Equine Veterinary Education
- UK Vet
- Publications from the British Equine Veterinary Association – [www.beva.org.uk](http://www.beva.org.uk)
- Publications from the British Small Animal Veterinary Association – [www.bsava.com](http://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](http://www.rcvs.org.uk/vetcode)

RCVS Day One Competences – available on the RCVS website at [RCVS Day One Competences – Professionals at RCVS Day One Competences - Professionals](http://www.rcvs.org.uk/government/organisations/rcvs-day-one-competences-professionals)

[www.beva.org.uk](http://www.beva.org.uk) – British Equine Veterinary Association (BEVA)

[www.bsava.com](http://www.bsava.com) – British Small Animal Veterinary Association (BSAVA)

[www.bva.co.uk](http://www.bva.co.uk) – British Veterinary Association (BVA)

[www.bcva.org.uk](http://www.bcva.org.uk) – British Veterinary Cattle Association (BCVA)

[www.cattleparasites.org.uk](http://www.cattleparasites.org.uk) – Control of Worms Sustainably (COWS)

[www.defra.gov.uk](http://www.defra.gov.uk) – Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA)

[www.apha.gov.uk](http://www.apha.gov.uk) - The Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA)

[www.food.gov.uk](http://www.food.gov.uk) – Food Standards Agency (FSA)

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

[www.legislation.gov.uk](http://www.legislation.gov.uk) – managed by the National Archives, publishes all UK legislation on behalf of His Majesty's government

[www.rcvs.org.uk](http://www.rcvs.org.uk) – Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS)

[www.scops.org.uk](http://www.scops.org.uk) – Sustainable Control of Parasites (SCOP)

[www.vmd.defra.gov.uk](http://www.vmd.defra.gov.uk) – Veterinary Medicines Directorate (VMD)

[www.oie.int](http://www.oie.int) – World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH)

[Vets | RSPCA - Science - rspca.org.uk](http://Vets%20|RSPCA%20-Science%20-rspca.org.uk) - Vet guidance and resources

#### **Other support which you might be interested in**

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

## Summary

Meeting	Education Committee
Date	23 September 2025
Title	Minutes from the CertAVP subcommittee on the 17 June 2025
Summary	Minutes from the meeting of the CertAVP subcommittee on the 17 <sup>th</sup> June 2025
Decisions required	None
Attachments	None
Author	Laura Largan Senior Education Officer <a href="mailto:l.largan@rcvs.org.uk">l.largan@rcvs.org.uk</a> / 020 7212 0779

## Classifications

Document	Classification <sup>1</sup>	Rationales <sup>2</sup>
Paper	Unclassified	NA

## **<sup>1</sup>Classifications explained**

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

## **<sup>2</sup>Classification rationales**

Confidential	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. To allow the Committee or Council to come to a view itself, before presenting to and/or consulting with others</li><li>2. To maintain the confidence of another organisation</li><li>3. To protect commercially sensitive information</li><li>4. To maintain public confidence in and/or uphold the reputation of the veterinary professions and/or the RCVS</li></ol>
Private	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>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</li></ol>

**Minutes of the CertAVP Sub-Committee meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> June 2025**

<b>Present:</b>	Sam Bescoby Abbie Calow - Chair Liz Chan Ros Carslake Amanda Davies Rachael Gregson Matt Jones Zara Kennedy Stephanie Richardson
<b>In Attendance</b>	Linda Prescott-Clements Jenny Soreskog-Turp Rebecca Geddes – Only attended module reviews

The meeting was held remotely by Microsoft Teams.

**Apologies for Absence**

1. The chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted that there were no apologies.

**Declarations of interest**

2. There were no new declarations of interest.

**Minutes**

3. The minutes of the meeting held on 4<sup>th</sup> March 2025 were held as a true record.

**Matters arising**

4. All matters had been actioned or were on the agenda for discussion.

**Update on future business for subcommittee meetings**

5. The subcommittee noted that the RCVS has recently undertaken a review of the processes for the approval and ongoing quality assurance of both the RCVS CertAVP and non-RCVS qualifications approved for Advanced Practitioner (AP) status. As the criteria for both are the same, it was recognised that there is a risk of duplication if separate committees were to oversee the review of these qualifications. To address this, the Education Committee agreed that responsibility for the quality assurance of all qualifications should rest with a single committee. Consequently, a new subcommittee will be established to undertake this role. This body will replace the existing CertAVP Subcommittee and will be known as the AP Qualifications Subcommittee.

6. The aim of this new committee will be to ensure that all external qualifications are being held to the same standards thereby guaranteeing consistent quality for qualifications used towards Advanced Practitioner status.
7. Membership for this subcommittee is yet to be agreed by the incoming RCVS President. It was agreed, however, that two places will be reserved for CertAVP providers. These positions may be filled on a rotational basis, with nominations put forward by the current subcommittee.
8. Concerns were raised regarding the handling of extension requests and third resits for synoptic examinations, and how these matters would be managed under the new subcommittee structure. The subcommittee was reassured that cases regarding extensions would continue to be reviewed by the new committee and requests for third sits by the Exam Board, with input from CertAVP providers.
9. The subcommittee discussed how best to share information from the meetings and it was agreed the meeting minutes would be shared amongst the CertAVP providers, and they would be asked if there is any business that needs to be fed into the meetings.

**Action: Share meeting minutes with CertAVP providers**

10. In addition to the subcommittee meetings, the RCVS will also organise an annual in-person CertAVP provider meeting.

#### **CertAVP Extension requests**

11. The subcommittee received and noted the 10-year extension requests from two candidates:

Candidate A had been unable to complete the necessary modules due to cancellations, but the last module would start in February. The subcommittee agreed that they were happy to grant this candidate a 6-month extension to complete the final module.

Candidate B had requested a one term extension to complete the final module, and it was agreed that this candidate can have a 6-month extension.

12. During discussion, concern was raised regarding the 10-year cut-off point, particularly in relation to how module content evolves over time and whether candidates' knowledge can still be considered current and relevant. It was suggested that this would be tested when sitting the synoptic examination. The subcommittee requested data on the average timeframe for candidates to complete a CertAVP and recommended that the RCVS review the 10-year completion limit.

**ACTION – Secretary to feedback to both candidates to grant them a 6-month extension**

**ACTION – Secretary to pull data on how long it takes people to complete CertAVP**

**ACTION The new AP Qualification subcommittee to review 10-year deadline**

#### **Review of the A module**

13. It was highlighted to the subcommittee that RCVS had started to look the current A module, noting that it had been some time since it was formally reviewed. Members agreed that it

would be beneficial to review the aims and learning outcomes of the module to ensure it remains current. As the Professional Skills module is mandatory for all qualifications leading to Advanced Practitioner status, it is essential that the CertAVP A module is reviewed regularly to maintain its relevance, accuracy, and alignment with best practice and industry standards. Regular review safeguards the quality and credibility of the qualification, supports continuous improvement, and ensures that learners acquire the most up-to-date and applicable knowledge in their field.

**ACTION – Providers to help share module content to update the overall learning outcomes.**

**Reviewed Modules – C-SAM.8, C-SAM.9, C-SAM.10**

14. The subcommittee reviewed updates to modules **C-SAM.8, C-SAM.9, and C-SAM.10**, which had been updated by the RVC and already reviewed by Liverpool and Nottingham, both of which confirmed their approval of the changes.
  - **C-SAM.8:** Minor updates to topics. Metabolic disorders were removed due to lack of clarity, as the endocrine section sufficiently covers the relevant content.
  - **C-SAM.9:** Learning outcomes increased to reflect the breadth of the module. Diagnostic aids for urogenital disorders were added, including endoscopy, CT, and contrast studies. Point-of-care ultrasound was also included as an essential tool increasingly used in practice.
  - **C-SAM.10:** Greater emphasis on developing knowledge and understanding of disorders, with increased depth in infectious disease management.

**ACTION – Modules to be updated on the RCVS website**

**Reviewed Modules – Equine behaviour**

15. The subcommittee was asked to review the documents for the final time. The number of required case logs has been reduced from 50 per module to 10 -15. No further comments regarding the modules were raised.

**ACTION – Modules to be updated on the RCVS website**

**Updates to Synoptic Guidelines**

16. The subcommittee was presented with updated guidelines for the synoptic exams to note that the mitigating circumstances section has been updated due to providers following slightly different policies. Therefore, there will be no changes to the marking, it will be classed as a null sit if it is approved.
17. The subcommittee discussed that there is a potential for misinterpretation in the policy and guidance for candidate documents about the third attempt in the guidance notes for examiners (point 55) which could be included in the other two documents for clarification.  
*'Candidates who fail the synoptic examination will be given one opportunity to retake the assessment. After two attempts candidates may be asked to undertake further formal training and/or advised to retake modules at the examiner's discretion. A third attempt at the synoptic examination (prior to retaking modules) may be allowed at the discretion of the RCVS CertAVP Subcommittee.'*
18. The Subcommittee discussed the reasoning behind only being allowed to sit one synoptic exam per year. It was decided that this needs to be looked into further and remove if this is no

longer necessary, but previous meeting minutes need to be reviewed to understand the reason why this was put in place.

**ACTION – Updates to be made to documents prior to redistribution to providers**

**ACTION – Review previous meeting minutes to identify why there is currently only one sit per year**

#### **Synoptic Exam – Third Attempt**

19. The subcommittee was presented with a request from a candidate seeking a third resit of the synoptic examination. In considering the request, the subcommittee reviewed examiner feedback. It was noted that the candidate had not provided a clear performance plan demonstrating learning from previous attempts. Concerns were raised that the candidate had struggled across all aspects of the examination and had not demonstrated significant reflection or a structured plan for improvement.
20. The subcommittee discussed a framework to help candidates in these situations, but concerns were raised over being too prescriptive and candidates not reflecting on the reasons for previous failed attempts.
21. The subcommittee agreed that an email should be sent to the candidate to decline the third resit with the wording, '*Your application has been reviewed by the CertAVP subcommittee and based on the letter that we have received on the exam feedback unfortunately you have been unsuccessful in the ability to sit again.*'

**ACTION – Secretary to email candidate with outcome**

22. The subcommittee decided that any 3<sup>rd</sup> sits should now go via the Exam board.

#### **Synoptic Examiner Reports – RCVS and Liverpool.**

23. The examiner reports were noted.

#### **Quality Assurance Report (QAR) from Liverpool and RVC**

24. The QARs from Liverpool and the RVC were noted.
25. It was noted that there was really good feedback for Liverpool which has been showing positive momentum over the last 3 years

#### **Synoptic Exams – Edinburgh**

26. The subcommittee was informed that Edinburgh will no longer be able to hold synoptic examinations.

#### **AOB**

27. The subcommittee was informed that RCVS are in the process of setting up an international postgraduate education symposium which will be held on the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> November 2025. If anyone is interested in attending or presenting, please contact Dr Prescott-Clements.
28. The chair wanted to thank the committee members for all their hard work and comments over the last couple of years.

29. The chair also wanted to extend thanks to the education team for all their hard work and input

Laura Largan  
June 2025  
l.largan@rcvs.org.uk