

Agenda for the meeting to be held at 10am on 15 September 2026 at Hardwick Street.

1.	Welcome and apologies for absence	
2.	Declarations of interest	
3.	Education Committee minutes a) Minutes of meeting held on 16th May 2026 b) Minutes of extraordinary meeting held on 26th June 2026	Paper Attached Paper Attached
4.	Matters arising a) VSC report b) IMR weeks c) other	Paper Attached Paper Attached Oral Report
5.	Education Department update	Oral Report
6.	Primary Qualifications Subcommittee (PQSC) a) Minutes of the PQSC meeting held on 18 June & 11 August 2026 b) Edinburgh report after formal consultation c) Charles Sturt University (CSU) accreditation decision d) Melbourne veterinary degree and tracking e) SRUC panel ratification f) Harper and Keele panel ratification g) Student employment and Intra-Mural Rotations (IMR)	Paper Attached Paper Attached Paper Attached Oral report Paper Attached Paper Attached Paper Attached
8.	Registration pathway loophole	Paper Attached
9.	Veterinary Clinical Career Pathways (VCCP) a) Phase 1 consultation for Veterinary GP Specialty Curriculum (Workstream 1) b) Update on Workstream 2 - Developing definitions of veterinary clinical roles c) Update on Workstream 3– ‘Developing flexible routes for specialist training’	Paper attached Paper Attached Paper attached
10.	Specialists a) Additions to the specialist pack – DB Verbal update b) Specialist list for ratification	Oral Report Paper Attached
11.	CertAVP/ AP Qualification Subcommittee a) APSC Minutes from the meeting on 11th June and 13th August 2026 b) New Equine CertAVP modules/designation c) CertAVP academic misconduct and reporting log	Paper Attached Paper Attached Paper Attached

	d) Proposal to Extend the Synoptic Examination Results and Candidate Feedback Timeline e) Sheep synoptic complaint/appeal f) Advanced Practitioner update	Paper Attached Paper Attached (repository) Oral report
12.	Statutory Membership Examination (SME) a) Minutes from the SME exam board held on 14th May 17th June and 7th July 2026 b) SME fee increases c) 2027 SME Guidance	Paper Attached Oral report Paper Attached
13.	International Accreditation Agreements a) AVBC agreement update b) AVMA/COE – update on USDE recognition application c) EAEVE Recognition / future collaboration	Paper Attached Oral Report Paper Attached
14.	VN Update	Oral Report
15.	Risk register (EC and SME) Items to add to the Risk Register	Paper Attached
16.	AOB	
17.	Date of next meeting	24 th November 2026 remote

Britta Crawford
 Committee Secretary
 September 2026
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
Battersby I	Council member
Bennett S	Council member
Fleming G	Lay Council member
Gordon P	Council member
Hayden J	External Member, educationalist
Loughrey C	Vet School
Ormandy E	External member, educationalist
Price A	Council member
Parkin TDH #	Council member
Pinhey B	VN Council member
Savage L	Student member
Wong, D	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	Hammond J
Specialist Recognition Subcommittee	Barrett D
VetGDP & CPD Compliance Subcommittee	Greenberg D
VetGDP & CPD Engagement Subcommittee	Gordon P

Education Committee Terms of Reference

From the Scheme of delegation from the RCVS Council to committees 24 June 2026

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.

Summary	
Meeting	Education Committee
Date	15 September 2026
Title	Veterinary Schools Council (VSC) report on the Financial Implications of EMS for Students.
Summary	During a discussion on Extra-Mural Studies (EMS) at the previous meeting of the Education Committee, VSC representatives were asked about a report they commissioned into the financial implications of EMS for vet students. It was agreed that this report would be made available by the VSC and circulated to the Education Committee. This report, published on the VSC website, is presented for information.
Decisions required	To note.
Attachments	VSC report on the financial implications of EMS for students.
Author	Jordan Nicholls Lead for Undergraduate Education j.nicholls@rcvs.org.uk / 020 7202 0704

Classifications		
Document	Classification ¹	Rationales ²
Paper	Unclassified	

¹ Classifications explained	
Unclassified	Papers will be published on the internet and recipients may share them and discuss them freely with anyone. This may include papers marked 'Draft'.
Confidential	Temporarily available only to Council Members, non-Council members of the relevant committee, sub-committee, working party or Board and not for dissemination outside that group unless and until the relevant

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

²Classification rationales

Confidential	1. To allow the Committee or Council to come to a view itself, before presenting to and/or consulting with others 2. To maintain the confidence of another organisation 3. To protect commercially sensitive information 4. To maintain public confidence in and/or uphold the reputation of the veterinary professions and/or the RCVS
Private	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

Veterinary Schools Council

THE FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF EMS FOR STUDENTS

An analysis of the cost to students of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons' extra-mural studies requirements for accredited undergraduate veterinary degrees in the United Kingdom

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report explores the costs associated with the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons' current extra-mural studies (EMS) requirements for students.

The most significant costs associated with EMS reported by students are the cost of travelling to and from placements, the cost of accommodation when on placement, and the cost of income foregone due to not being able to undertake paid employment while on placement.

Each placement week costs students, on average, £450. This includes annual costs associated with undertaking EMS, one-off costs associated with each placement, and recurring costs during the placement. Clinical placements are, on average, slightly more expensive than animal husbandry placements.

Students experience estimated EMS-related costs of £2,321 per year in their animal husbandry phase and £4,147 per year in their clinical phase. This equates to an overall EMS-related cost of an estimated £17,000 over the course of their studies.

This report contains a series of case studies relating to individual students. These case studies have been developed in conjunction with the individuals featured. Inclusion of these case studies does not, however, imply the endorsement by these individuals of the findings or conclusions contained in this report.

This report has been prepared by Sockmonkey Consulting Limited for the Veterinary Schools Council. It reports Sockmonkey Consulting Limited's findings and conclusions in respect of a specific engagement. Sockmonkey Consulting Limited does not assume any responsibility and will not accept any liability in respect of this report to any party other than the Veterinary Schools Council.

Key Findings

The cost of EMS to students includes:

- annual or other periodic costs, such as liability insurance, personal protective equipment and the costs associated with owning and operating a car;
- one-off costs associated with each placement, such as application fees, travel to residential placements and specialist clothing or equipment;
- recurring daily / weekly costs associated with each placement, such as commuting to and from the placement, overnight accommodation and other subsistence expenses; and
- the cost of lost income, due to not being able to work in paid employment while undertaking a placement.

Data from the student survey indicates that the magnitude of these costs differs for animal husbandry (AHEMS) and clinical placements, as shown in Table 1 below.

	AHEMS	Clinical	Overall
	£	£	£
Annual costs	46	63	57
One-off costs	44	68	60
Recurring costs	76	141	121
Lost income per placement week	221	207	211
	387	478	450

Table 1: Cost to students per placement week

Sample size (n) = 1,473

Of which AHEMS = 550, clinical = 905, not undertaken any placements yet = 18

Differences due to rounding

This is illustrated visually in Figure 1.

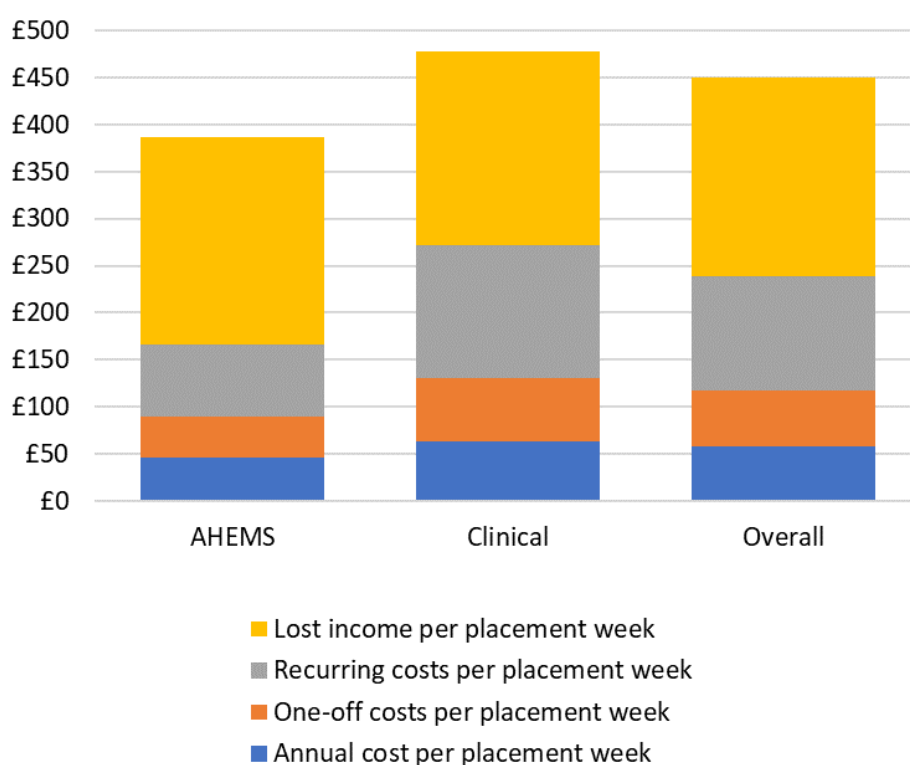


Figure 1: Cost to students per placement week

Sample size (n) = 1,473

There is a considerable degree of variation in the costs experienced by students on individual placements. Table 2 below shows the distribution of values for the different types of cost. All figures are per placement week.

	Minimum	Lower quartile	Median	Upper quartile	Maximum
	£	£	£	£	£
Annual costs	0	0	25	75	606
One-off costs	0	0	12	50	3,200
Recurring costs	0	0	50	110	2,020
Lost income	0	0	150	320	1,840

Table 2: Summary of distribution of values for costs per placement week

Sample size (n) = 1,473

Students on clinical placements spend more, on average, on one-off travel to placements and on payments to placement providers¹. They spend more on recurring daily / weekly costs, especially

¹ The charging of fees by placement providers is comparatively rare and relates in the main to overseas placements. Fees reported in the student survey range from £35 to over £3,000 for a one- or two-week placement, with an average of just over £1,000. Such fees typically include accommodation.

commuting to and from placements and accommodation during placements. And they are more likely to incur running costs in respect of a car or other motor vehicle.

The variation in the average recurring daily / weekly costs associated with placements for each phase of study are shown in Figure 2.

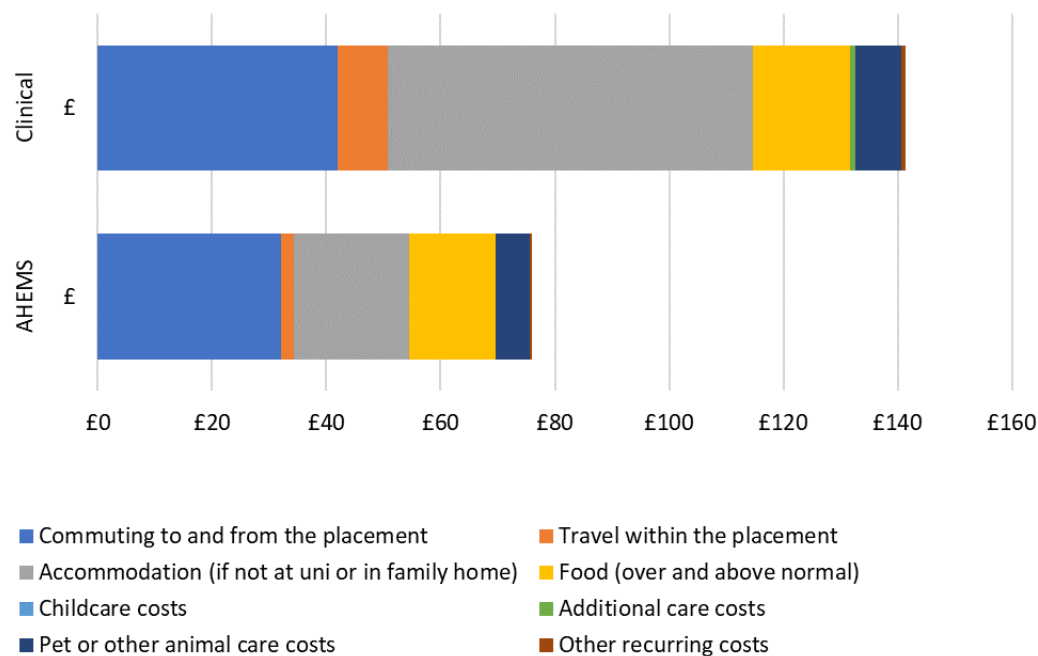


Figure 2: Average recurring daily / weekly costs associated with placements
Sample size (n) = 1,473

On average, students experience EMS-related costs of £2,321 per year in their animal husbandry phase and £4,147 per year in their clinical phase.

This equates to an overall EMS-related cost of an estimated £17,082 over the course of their studies.

1 Introduction

1.1 The extra-mural studies requirements

Veterinary students on courses accredited by the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS) are required to undertake periods of extra-mural studies (EMS) to develop their practical skills and to gain experience of working in a veterinary environment.

The current EMS requirement is for 12 weeks of placements in the animal husbandry / pre-clinical phase (years 1 and 2) and 26 weeks in the clinical phase (years 3 to 5/6). These requirements were reduced temporarily in response to the COVID-19 pandemic but have now been reinstated in full.

As part of a broader suite of changes to its EMS policy, the RCVS is proposing to reduce the placement requirements for the animal husbandry and clinical phases to 10 and 20 weeks, respectively, from 2024.

EMS placements are generally organised by the students themselves, with assistance from their veterinary school, and take place outside teaching time. Students are normally responsible for meeting any costs associated with such placements. This has led to concerns that placements may not be accessible to or affordable for students from all socio-economic backgrounds.

The ongoing growth in veterinary student numbers, together with an increase in the number of veterinary schools, has also increased demand for placements. This has placed pressure on veterinary schools and on placement providers alike. It has also led to concerns about the quality and consistency of placements available to students.

1.2 A note on data quality

All figures quoted in this report have been calculated on the basis of data provided by the veterinary schools and / or data submitted via the student and placement provider surveys.

We have sought to ensure the quality of the data used in this report through the design of the collection methodologies and through robust cleansing, validation and analysis of the data collected. However, the use of self-reported data inevitably has its limitations in terms of reliability. Nevertheless, the high response rate for the student survey (almost 20% of students) allows us to discuss the costs with a high degree of confidence.

All figures in this report are mean averages, unless stated otherwise. Due to the statistical nature of our analysis, as well as the issues discussed above, these figures should also be regarded as indicative estimates, rather than as precise determinations.

1.3 Acknowledgement

We would like to take this opportunity to thank all those individuals and organisations that have contributed so generously to this project.

2 The financial implications of EMS for students

2.1 The cost of EMS to students

The most significant costs associated with EMS reported by students are:

- the cost of travelling to and from a placement, whether this is one-off travel to a placement where the student is staying away from home and / or a daily commute when the student is living at home or staying with family members;
- the cost of accommodation when students are not able to stay in their university accommodation, with friends or family members, or where free accommodation is not provided as part of the placement; and
- the cost of income foregone by students not being able to undertake paid employment during periods when they are on placement.

"I live in a rural area and the closest placements when I am at home are a one-hour drive away. If my parents hadn't been able to help with fuel costs, which came to about £100 a week, I would not have been able to undertake these placements."

Fourth year student

The extent to which students incur these costs, together with the magnitude of these costs when they are incurred, varies considerable from student to student and from placement to placement.

"Paying for fuel nearly broke me. Then when my car got a flat tyre it was a nightmare – and an extra cost. My car wasn't built for the farm life, but I want to be a farm vet."

Final year student

In the student survey, we asked students about the costs they had incurred for the most recent placement that they had completed.

As can be seen in Figure 3 below, a third of AHEMS students and a quarter of clinical students reported incurring one-off travel costs to and from their placement. And over half of AHEMS students and over two thirds of clinical students reported incurring daily commuting costs.

A comparatively small proportion of students reported incurring accommodation costs on their most recent placement.

This may be because they stayed in their university accommodation or with family or friends. It may also be because they received free accommodation as part of their placement.

"I have had to cancel a placement part way through due to the cost of petrol as I was driving 100 to 200 miles per day and could not afford to do another three weeks."

Final year student

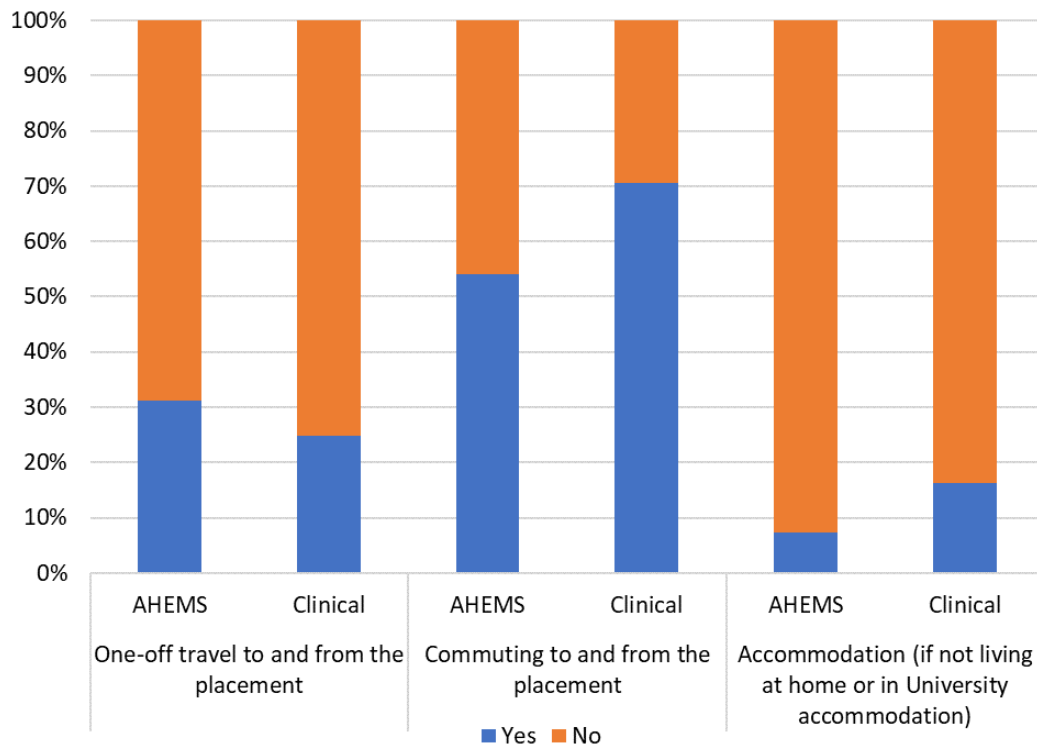


Figure 3: Proportion of students reporting that they incurred travel and accommodation costs on their most recent placement

Sample size (n) = 1,473

Of which AHEMS = 550, clinical = 905, not undertaken any placements yet = 18

Where students did incur these costs, the average costs for students' most recent placements were as follows:

"I've had to cut placements short because I couldn't afford the daily train fares."
Final year student

	One-off travel	Commuting (per week)	Accommodation (per week)
	£	£	£
AHEMS	137	59	285
Clinical	320	60	394

Table 3: Average costs when incurred by students for their most recent placements

Sample size (n) = 1,473

Of which AHEMS = 550, clinical = 905, not undertaken any placements yet = 18

Students who pay for accommodation during their placement report that they typically rent a room via Airbnb or similar. These are usually cheaper than the equivalent hotel accommodation.

We also asked students whether their most recent placement had prevented them from undertaking paid employment that they would otherwise have taken on if they had not been on that placement.

As can be seen in Figure 4 below, over two thirds of students were prevented by their placement from undertaking paid employment that they would otherwise have taken on.

Just under a third reported that they would not have undertaken paid employment anyway. And a small proportion of students managed to combine their placement with paid work.

"I have had to cancel four weeks of EMS this year because EMS costs made me reach my overdraft limit and I had no choice but to get three jobs to pay my rent."

Fourth year student

"On several occasions I have arranged for EMS locally so that I can still work at my part time job. This meant that I would work approximately 40 hours on EMS and a further 20 hours at my job."

First year student

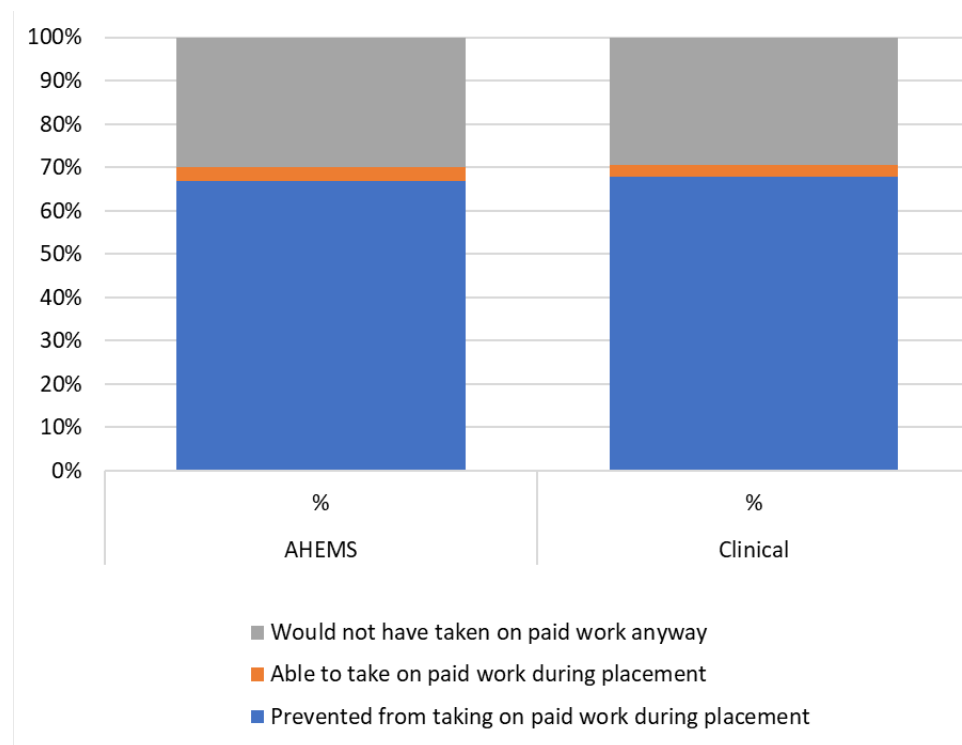


Figure 4: Impact of placements on students' ability to undertake paid employment

Sample size (n) = 1,175

Of which AHEMS = 436, clinical = 739

For those students who were prevented by their placement from undertaking paid employment, the average amount of income lost was over £300 per week. As Table 4 shows, AHEMS students lost more income per week than clinical students, on average, though there is no obvious reason for this.

"We lose out on so much money due to not being able to work over the summer."

Third year student

	AHEMS	Clinical	Overall
	£	£	£
Lost income	330	305	314

Table 4: Average income lost by students unable to undertake paid employment during their placement

Sample size (n) = 783

Of which AHEMS = 288, clinical = 495

However, these average figures hide a significant degree of variation in lost earning from student to student. While some students report relatively low lost earnings, others report that they have lost a significant amount of income that would have made a material difference to their financial position. This variation in lost income is shown visually in Figure 5 below.

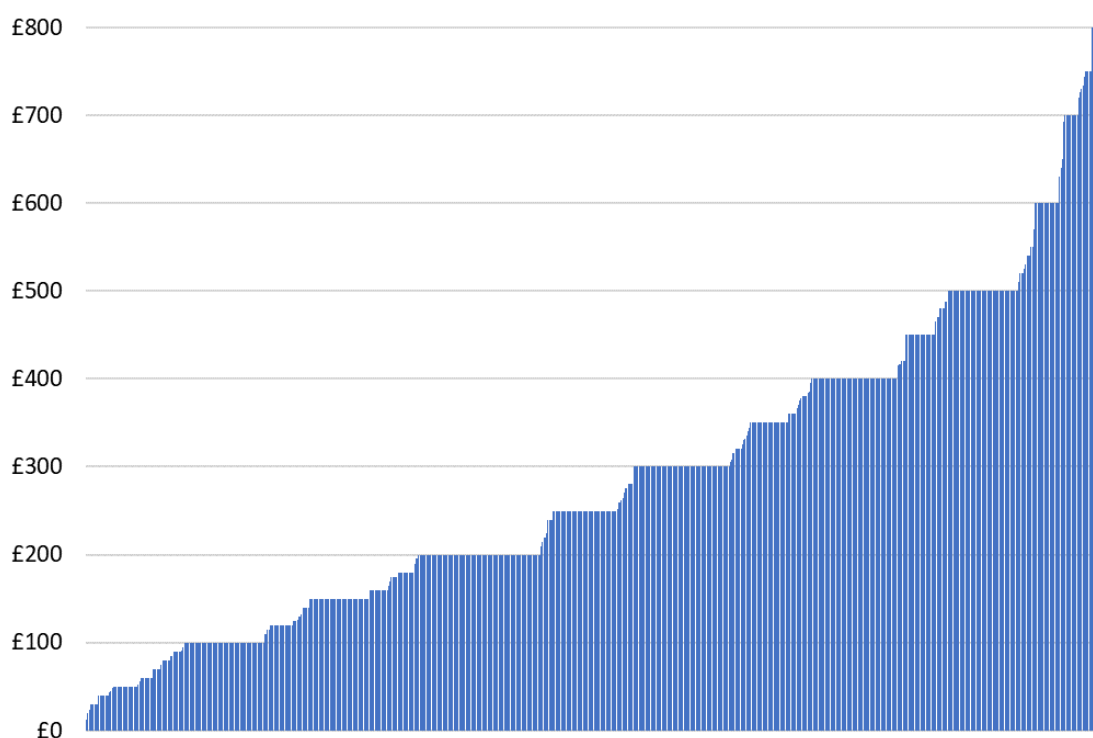


Figure 5: Income lost per week by students unable to undertake paid employment during their placement

Sample size (n) = 783

A small number of datapoints reporting lost income in excess of £800 per week have been excluded for clarity of presentation

In addition to the costs discussed above, students report other significant – and often unexpected – costs that they have incurred in respect of their placements. These include, for example, the cost of specialist personal protective equipment for specific placements and the additional cost of insuring their car for business use when they are required to drive from location to location as part of their placement.

2.2 The impact of cost on placement choice

The cost associated with EMS placements has a significant impact on students’ placement choices.

As Figure 6 shows, over 90% of students agree or agree strongly that the cost associated with placements influences the placements that they choose. And 80% of students agree or agree strongly that the cost involved has stopped them from choosing a placement that they would otherwise have liked to undertake.

“It sucks that my personal situation combined with my financial situation cause the majority of placements to be out of reach for me.”
Third year student

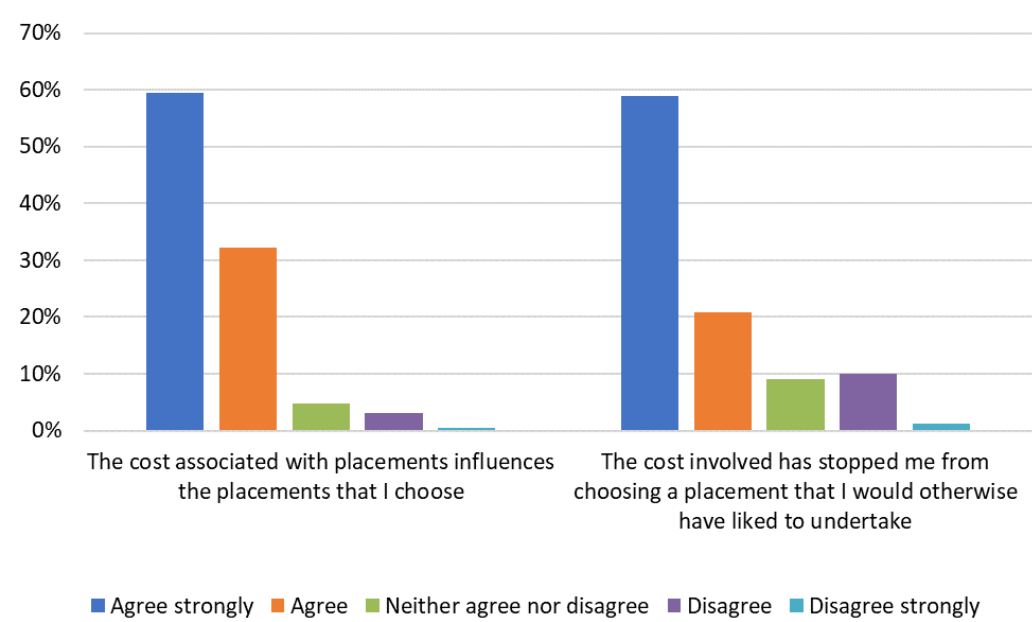


Figure 6: Impact of cost on students’ placement choices
Sample size (n) = 1,134

Most students seek to minimise the costs associated with placements wherever possible. In the most extreme cases, this can include simply not taking on the placement at all.

Many students report that they are only able to undertake placements that are within daily commutable distance, whether by car or by public transport, of their university accommodation or their family home. This is because the cost of accommodation or of one-off travel to and from the placement is prohibitive.

This limits the nature and type of placements that such students can take on. For many students, certain types of farm placement are simply not available in their local area. And others do not have access to specialist clinical placements, such as equine veterinary practices.

“We are unable to provide accommodation for EMS students and for this reason students won’t take up placements with us.”
Referral practice

“I have not been able to find a farm clinical placement as there are none available near where I live and I could not find any with accommodation.”
Third year student

"Animal husbandry placements are very difficult for adult students. Those of us that are single parents with no friends or family cannot feasibly leave town for weeks to do this."

First year student

This situation is especially challenging for overseas students, who do not usually have family in the United Kingdom, and so are restricted to placements within easy reach of their university accommodation. Furthermore, the fact that so many other students are looking for local placements, too, makes access to them highly competitive.

A similar challenge is faced by mature students and those with family responsibilities, for whom leaving home for a one- or two-week placement is simply not feasible.

When students do take on placements away from their university accommodation or family home, finding affordable accommodation can be a significant challenge. Some students are fortunate to be offered free accommodation by their placement provider, but others must pay for bed-and-breakfast or hotel accommodation. And anecdotal evidence indicates that some even resort to camping.

"It has got to the point where I will accept EMS for things that I have absolutely no interest in just because they are close enough that I won't have to pay for an Airbnb, transportation and food."

Third year student

For many students, the challenges associated with finding and securing affordable EMS placements mean that, rather than selecting high-quality placements that will allow them to achieve their learning goals and to explore different career paths, they focus simply on finding enough affordable placements to complete the required number of weeks.

2.3 The impact of car ownership on placement choice

"I am worried about my ability to get EMS done and to get mixed and large animal EMS experience without a car. I did one pre-clinical large-animal placement and had to ride a bike 19.78 kilometres from a friends house to the placement. I can't do that again. (My knees couldn't handle it)."

Fourth year student

One of the biggest factors impacting on students' ability to access placements is whether or not they own – or have access to – a car. Many placements, such as farms and rural veterinary practices, are not accessible by public transport. And so a car is the only way to get to them.

Overall, 70% of students reported that they required access to a car to undertake their most recent placement. This figure is broadly consistent across AHEMS and clinical placements, as shown in Figure 7 below.

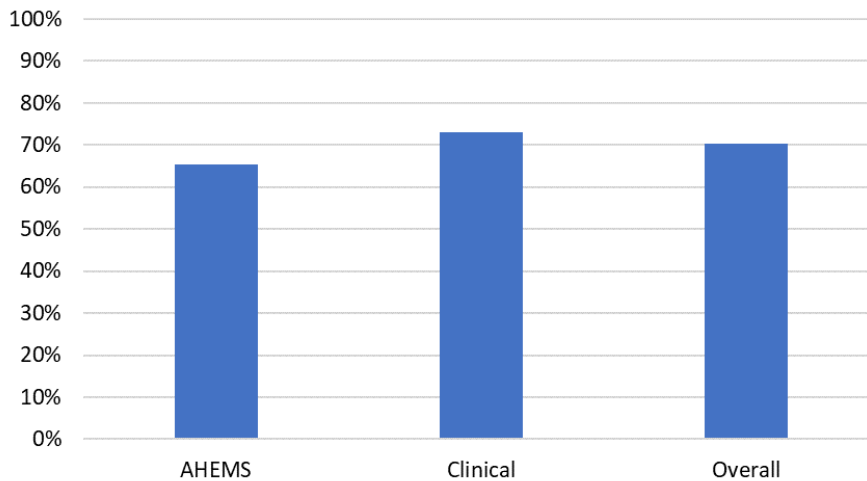


Figure 7: Proportion of students requiring access to a car for their most recent placement
Sample size (n) = 1,175

Ambulatory veterinary practices may require students to start and end their days at varying locations (such as at a vet's house), which requires a degree of flexibility that is only feasible when students have a car. Or, in some cases, parents or other relatives who can drop them off and pick them up each day.

Furthermore, some large-animal veterinary practices require students to follow the vets around in a separate car, rather than allowing them to share the vet's car. This started initially in the COVID-19 pandemic, but has in many cases continued.

Students undertaking such placements must, then, have access to a car of their own. Indeed, there is evidence that some practices will only accept placement students who have access to a car for the duration of the placement.

Not having access to a car places a clear restriction on the placements available to students, not just in terms of the number of placements, but also in terms of the nature of such placements. This forces a considerable number of students to buy a car and to incur the associated purchase and running costs. As can be seen in Figure 8, a quarter of AHEMS students and a third of clinical students report that they own a car that they would not need if it were not for EMS placements.

"It is incredibly difficult to be a vet student without a car."
Third year student

"On one day I drove 280 miles."
Fourth year student

"Being unable to afford a vehicle means many places don't take me on."
Second year student

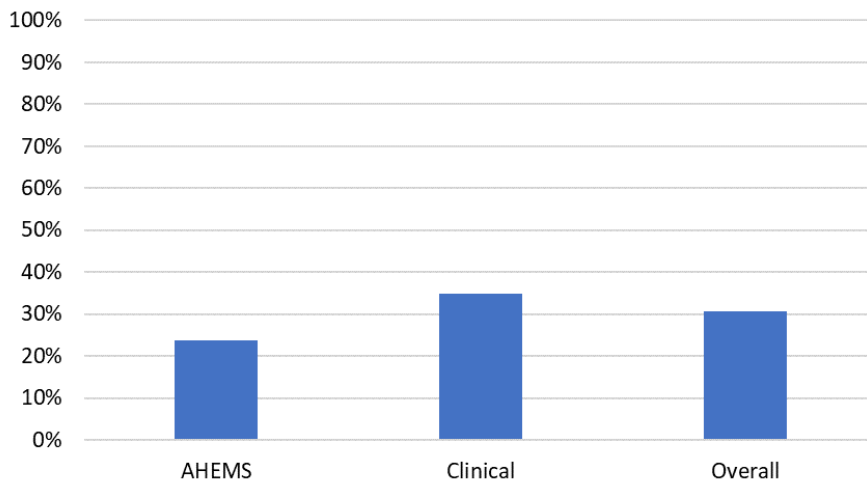


Figure 8: Proportion of students owning a car that they would not need if they did not use it for EMS placements

Sample size (n) = 1,134

Students owning a car primarily for the purpose of EMS placements report average running costs per year of £585. Furthermore, several students report significant repair costs associated with damage incurred while driving across fields and down farm tracks during their placements.

2.4 The impact of cost on students' finances and wellbeing

The need to find, secure and pay for EMS placements places considerable demand on students' finances and on their wellbeing.

Many students rely on undertaking paid employment during the vacation periods to fund, in whole or in part, their living expenses while they undertake their degree.

"I cannot concentrate on EMS because I am constantly worrying about money and how I could be earning during this time. I am afraid the cost of living crisis means I will have to drop out of the course."

Third year student

Undertaking EMS placements during these vacation periods, as has been discussed above, makes it difficult for them to take on such work, especially if they are staying away from home for the duration of their placement.

Students also report that they can find it difficult to find paid part-time employment *at all*, even outside the periods when they will be on placement, because employers do not wish to take on someone who will only be available some of the time. And even when students do manage to secure part-time employment, this is often on a zero-hours contract with no guarantee of work.

"It's not so much the cost associated with lost income on the specific weeks in which I am doing EMS, but the fact that taking 12 weeks off in my holidays prevents me from getting most jobs other students would take in these times as nobody wants to hire someone who will be taking that much time off. It prevents me from getting a job at all."

Some students report that they have taken out overdrafts or loans to cover the cost of their EMS placements. Others have borrowed money from family or friends.

"I ended up having to rely on loans, overdrafts and money from family and friends. I found EMS to be a financial burden that I still have not recovered from."

Final year student

The financial pressures of EMS place considerable strain on students. Furthermore, the need to find sufficient placements, the lack of 'downtime' during the vacation periods and the fear that they are missing out on valuable experiences by being restricted to placements near to their home are for many students sources of considerable anxiety.

The costs associated with EMS are also a barrier to equality and inclusion.

As Figure 9 shows, the proportion of students who agree or agree strongly that the cost involved has stopped them from choosing a placement that they would otherwise have liked to undertake is noticeably higher among students who were at some point during their school years eligible for free school meals² (as a proxy for low family income) than those who were not.

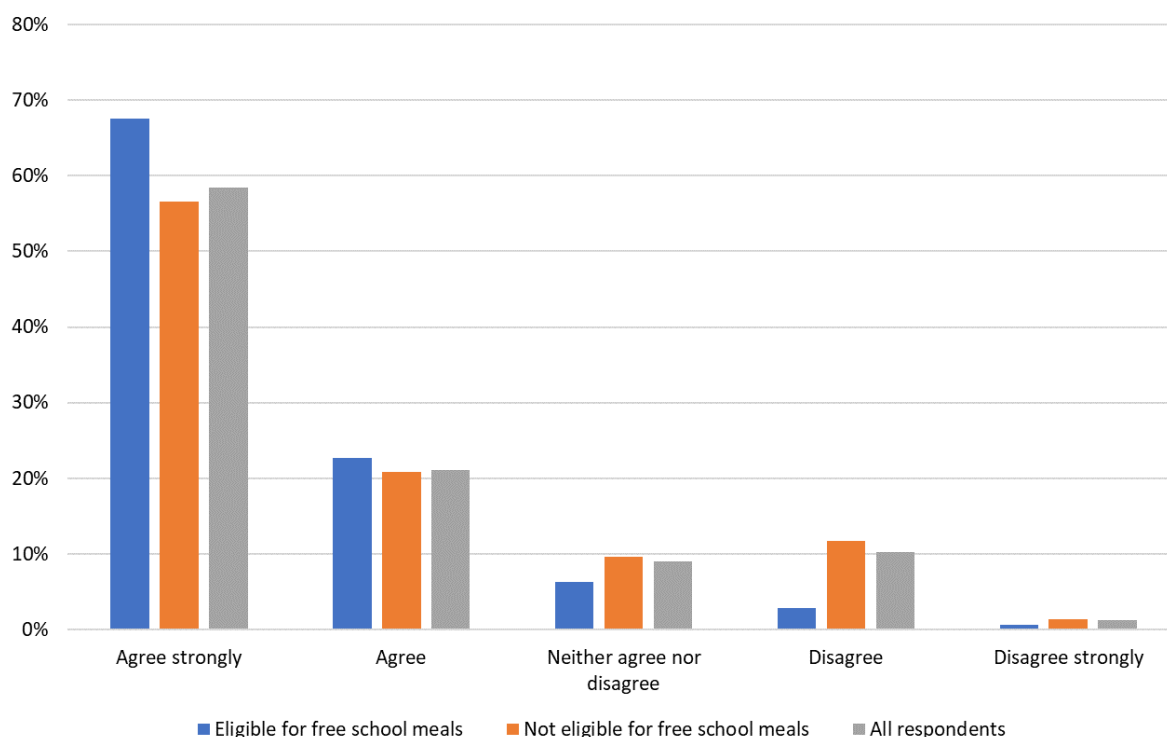


Figure 9: Students agreeing or disagreeing that the cost involved has stopped them from choosing a placement that they would otherwise have liked to undertake, analysed by eligibility for free school meals

Sample size (n) = 1,134

Free school meals eligibility during students' school years is used as a proxy for socio-economic disadvantage during childhood.

² School-age children are eligible for free school meals if a parent or guardian is in receipt of income support, jobseeker's allowance, universal credit or certain other income-based or means-tested benefits. Free school meals eligibility is a common proxy measure for individual-level socio-economic disadvantage (including household income deprivation) during childhood.

Furthermore, the proportion of students who agree or agree strongly that they are worried about their ability to fulfil the EMS requirements due to the costs involved is significantly higher among students who were at some point during their school years eligible for free school meals than those who were not. This is shown in Figure 10 below.

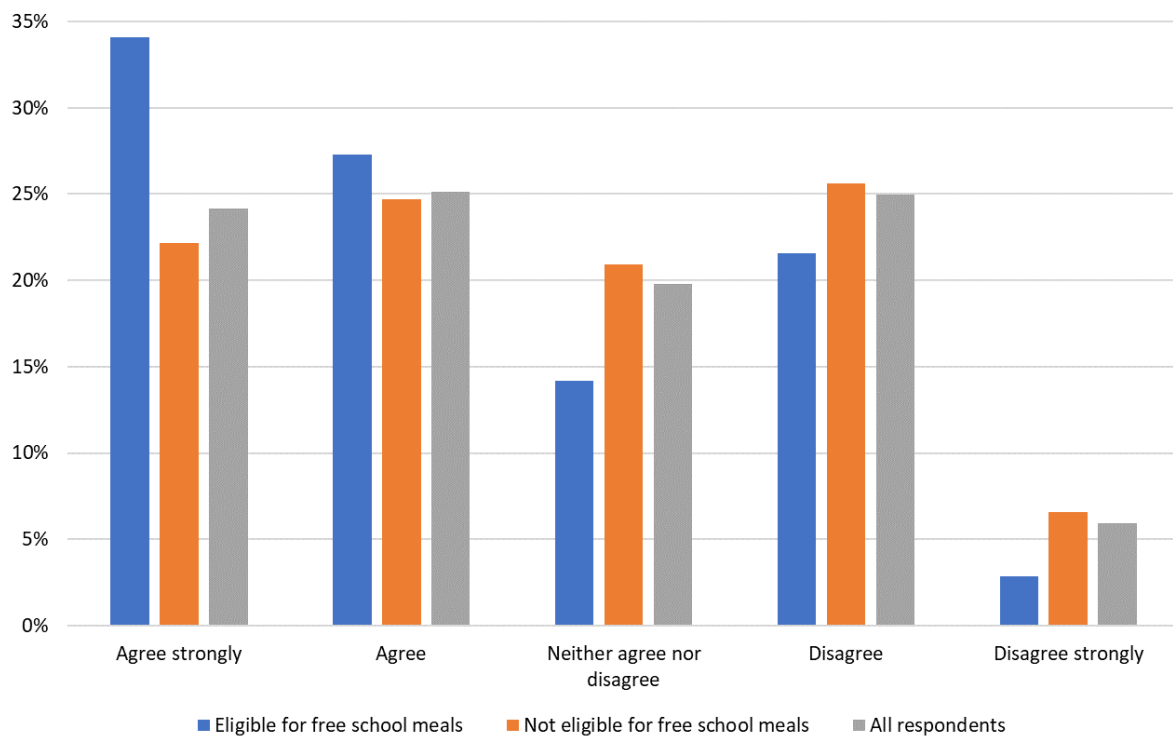


Figure 10: Students agreeing or disagreeing that they are worried about their ability to fulfil the EMS requirements due to the costs involved, analysed by eligibility for free school meals

Sample size (n) = 1,134

Free school meals eligibility during students' school years is used as a proxy for socio-economic disadvantage during childhood.

Figure 11 shows that there is a similar, but less marked, trend when considering students' ethnicity, with students from non-white backgrounds more likely agree or agree strongly that they are worried about their ability to fulfil the EMS requirements due to the costs involved.

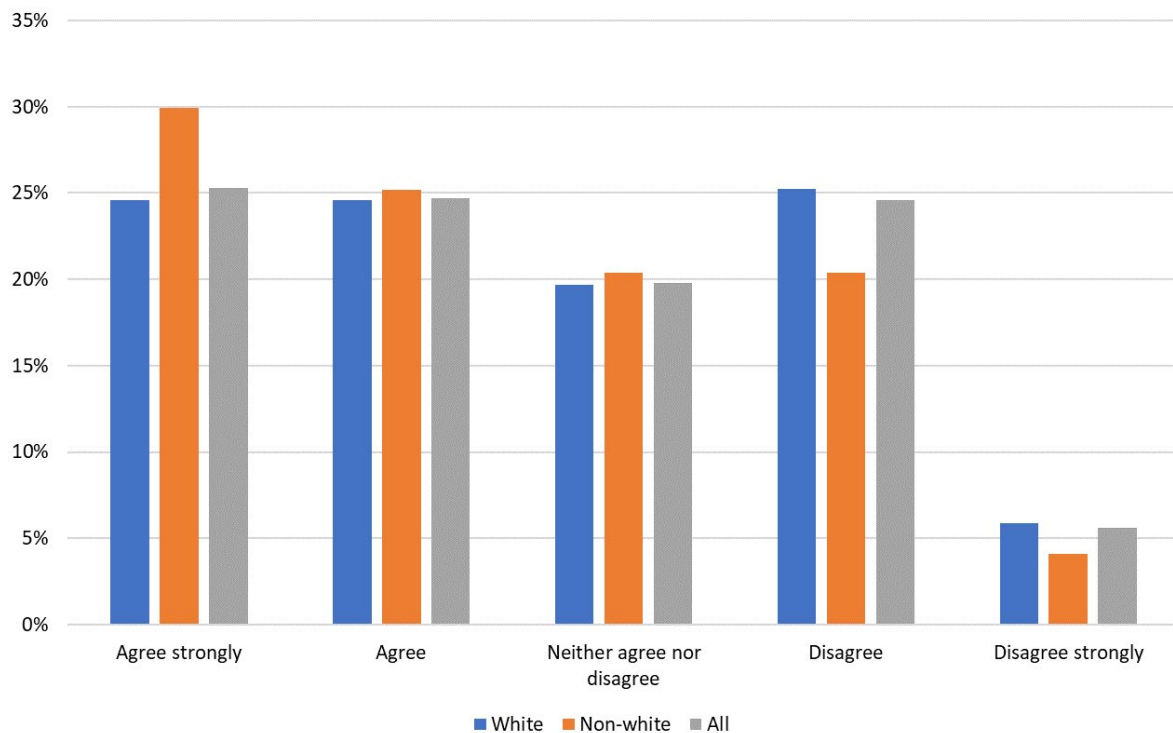


Figure 11: Students agreeing or disagreeing that they are worried about their ability to fulfil the EMS requirements due to the costs involved, analysed by ethnicity

Sample size (n) = 1,134

Non-white ethnicity includes Asian / Asian British (Bangladeshi, Indian, Pakistani, or other Asian background), Black / African / Caribbean / Black British, Mixed / From multiple ethnic backgrounds, and Other.

This trend is stronger among students with caring responsibilities. As Figure 12 shows, students with primary or secondary caring responsibilities are significantly more likely to agree or agree strongly that they are worried about their ability to fulfil the EMS requirements due to the costs involved.

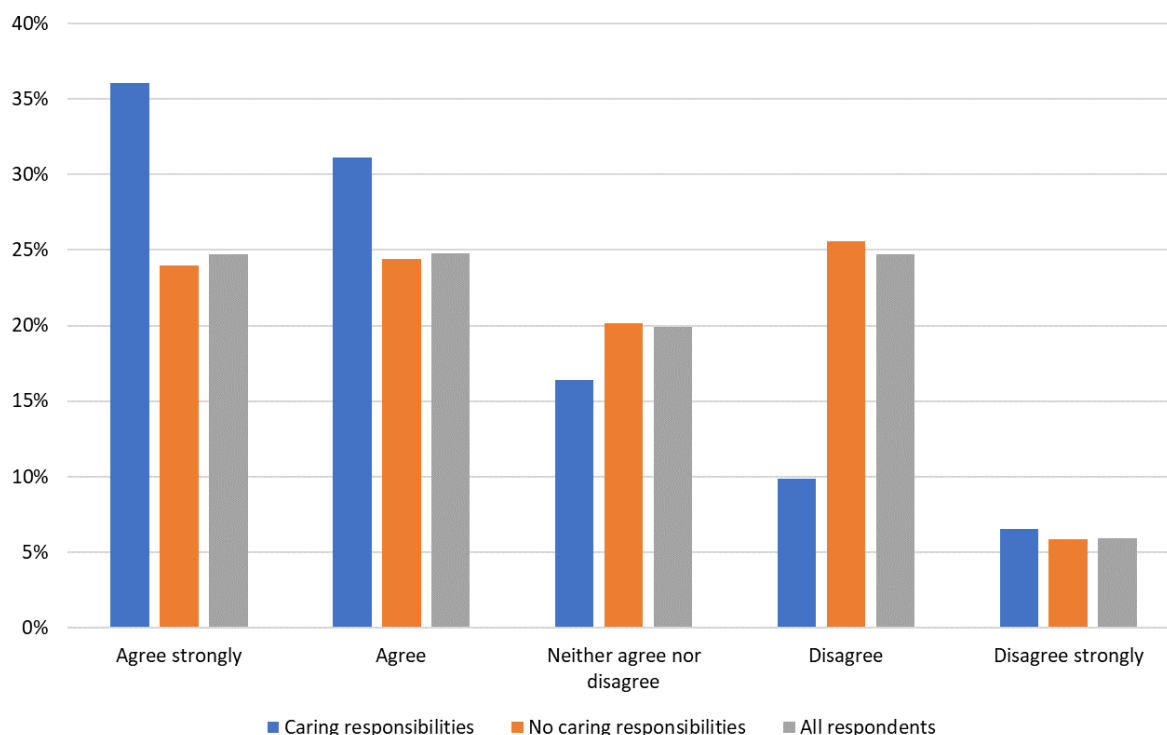


Figure 12: Students agreeing or disagreeing that they are worried about their ability to fulfil the EMS requirements due to the costs involved, analysed by caring responsibilities

Sample size (n) = 1,134

Caring responsibilities include Primary carer of a child/children (under 18), Primary carer of disabled adult (18 and over), Primary carer of older person, and Secondary carer (another person carries out the main caring role)

Even at an aggregate level, though, almost half of students are worried about their ability to fulfil the EMS requirements due to the costs involved.

*“EMS costs are breaking me.”
Second year student*

While students report that they were generally aware when they applied for their course of the need to undertake EMS placements, the specific demands of finding, undertaking and paying for placements have for many come as an unwelcome surprise.

2.5 The availability of bursaries and other financial support

There is a small amount of financial support available to students in respect of their EMS placements. Some veterinary schools offer small travel or other bursaries to students, which are available – depending on the veterinary school – to all students, to students who apply successfully or to students who qualify on the basis of specific means-testing criteria.

One veterinary school also provides students with a daily travel and subsistence allowance whilst they are on clinical placement.

*“Members of vet school staff have been very harsh when talking about the costs involved in EMS. One member of staff suggested I get a job during term time. I was working two jobs at the time.”
Third year student*

Some placement providers, notably some larger chains of veterinary practices, offer bursaries to students undertaking placements with them. Others provide placement students with in-kind

support, such as free food and/or accommodation. Such placements, incidentally, are in extremely high demand and are commonly booked-up one or more years in advance.

Most students, though, received no financial or in-kind support in respect of their most recent placement. This is highlighted in Figure 13 below.

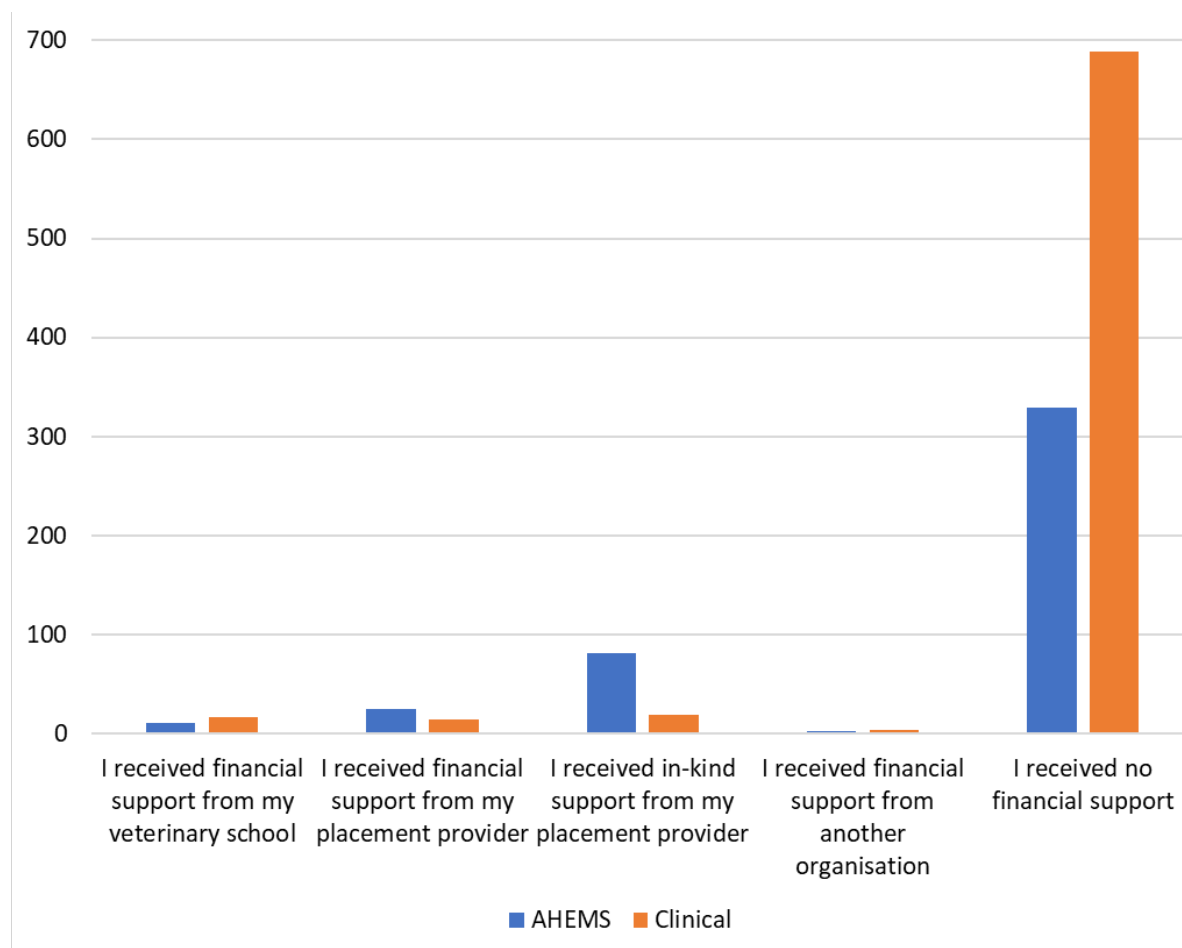


Figure 13: Number of students receiving financial or in-kind support in respect of their most recent placement

Sample size (n) = 1,134

Individual students may have received more than one source of support

The way in which financial support is targeted varies considerably. Financial support from veterinary schools is typically targeted at students from lower-income backgrounds or those facing financial hardship, though one veterinary school offers a modest annual travel allowance to all students and a small daily subsistence payment to students on clinical placements.

Where placement providers operate a formal bursary scheme, this is sometimes – but not always – targeted at students facing financial hardship. Other placement providers tend to provide financial support to all placement students. It is worth reiterating, though, that the proportion of placement providers offering any form of financial support at all is very low.

Of those students who received financial or in-kind support from their placement provider, most of these were engaged in lambing placements during the Easter vacation. Even on lambing placements, however, such support was rare.

Many students have expressed surprise at the low level of financial support available in respect of EMS. And even where such support is available, it is seen as insufficient to make a significant difference to students' ability to meet the costs associated with their placements.

"If I didn't come from a family that had the ability to support me financially for EMS I categorically would have not been able to complete it."

Final year student

CASE STUDY

FIRST YEAR STUDENT

Katie* is in the first year of her veterinary studies. She is 19 years old and aspires to be a small animal vet specialising in exotic species. She lives in on-campus university accommodation during term time, but in the vacation periods she returns to her family home in the West Country. When at home, she shares a car with her older sister. She is also able to borrow a car from a relative.

In addition to her tuition fee loan, Katie receives a maintenance loan of just over £10,000 per year, which covers her rent and her day-to-day living expenses. For anything else, she has to draw on money that she has saved from working in the vacation periods.

Katie has so far undertaken one three-week lambing placement on a local farm. Access to such placements is highly competitive and they are booked up quickly once the main sector body's placement list has been published. Katie only managed to get her placement because someone else had dropped out. Until this point, she had been very worried that she would not find a placement.

She had to spend about £25 on protective clothing for the placement, on top of the £400 that she had paid for specialist equipment, such as a stethoscope. She lived at home for the duration of the placement, to avoid having to pay for additional accommodation or food, but spent about £90 on fuel for her car. The placement was in a rural location and was not accessible by public transport, so a car was the only way to get there. The running costs for her car come to around £2,500 per year.

Katie is not able to work during term time, but has a regular job in the hospitality sector near to her family home during the vacation periods. She is employed on a zero-hours contract, but usually benefits from regular shifts and a steady source of income.

Due to her lambing placement in the Easter vacation, however, Katie was not able to accept any shifts at work. This resulted in lost income of around £1,300. She has not been offered any shifts since then, either, and has also not been invited to work events, which makes her worry that she may find it difficult to find work there in the future.

Because of the costs associated with EMS placements, Katie tries to find placements that are within 30 to 45 minutes drive of her family home, so that she can minimise travel costs while also saving on food and accommodation expenses. She needs to balance this, though, against the need to find placements working with different animal species in a range of veterinary environments.

Katie knew when she applied for her course that she would need to undertake placements in the vacation periods, but the difficulty in finding suitable placements and the costs associated with undertaking them – primarily travel, accommodation and lost income – have been an unpleasant surprise.

Katie recognises that finding the 'right' placements, especially in specialist areas like exotics, can be important for networking and for career development. She now has placements lined up for the summer vacation, including on a farm, in an animal sanctuary and in a veterinary clinic. This has relieved her initial anxiety about meeting the EMS requirements. But with some of the more desirable placements now booking up for 2025, she knows that she needs to keep looking ahead.

** Not her real name*

CASE STUDY

SECOND YEAR STUDENT

Sarah* is in the second year of her veterinary studies. She is undertaking her studies in the United Kingdom, but her family lives overseas and she returns to the family home during the vacation periods.

Sarah's most recent placement was three weeks in an equine establishment in her home country. Large animal placements are few and far between in the rural area in which her family lives, so it took her a considerable amount of time and effort to set it up. The placement itself was expensive. In addition to the £200 cost of a return flight home, £120 for insurance and £200 in other one-off costs, Sarah had to pay a £200 fee to the placement provider and to spend £60 on specialist personal protective equipment.

The placement venue was three hours away from Sarah's family home, so she had to pay for accommodation for the duration of her placement. This came at a cost of £150 per week. In addition, she spent £75 per week on fuel for her car to get to and from the placement and £30 per week on food.

For the duration of her placement, Sarah was unable to undertake paid work that she would otherwise have taken on to help fund her studies. This came at a cost of £400 per week in lost income. Sarah also incurs annual costs in excess of £1,000 relating to her EMS placements as a whole. This includes the cost of owning and running her car (which she would not need if she did not have to undertake placements) and liability insurance.

Sarah has so far completed 10 weeks of her animal husbandry EMS placements. She normally tries to find placements close to her family home, as this means that she can stay at home and keep her travel and accommodation costs to a minimum. Because of this, though, she feels that she has missed out on exciting placements that she would otherwise have liked to undertake, such as on larger farms and in a zoo.

She is also worried that, because all of her farm experience is on small local family farms, she lacks the experience of large-animal handling and of industrial-scale farming that her peers have gained. Looking ahead to her clinical EMS placements, Sarah is concerned that, because her placements are likely to be with small local veterinary practices, she will not get as much emergency or surgical experience as her fellow students.

She fears that she will not be able to complete enough placement weeks or that she will do too many weeks in the same place, because it is affordable and easy to get to, and that these weeks will not be approved by her university's placements team. Sarah is, furthermore, deeply anxious about her ability to continue to finance her EMS placements and her studies more generally. She knew that she would need to undertake placements, but she had not appreciated how hard it would be to find these placements and how expensive the travel, accommodation and other costs associated with them would be.

It has come to the point where Sarah can no longer afford to fly home to see her family, to put petrol in her car or even to comfortably pay for her weekly shop. And as costs continue to rise, she is considering seriously whether or not she can afford to continue with her course.

** Not her real name*

CASE STUDY

FINAL YEAR STUDENT

David* is entering the final year of his veterinary studies. He is from a low-income, single-parent household and was inspired to undertake a veterinary science degree by his participation in one of his university's widening participation programmes while he was at school. He enjoys all aspects of his studies and is looking forward to his veterinary career.

Because of the pandemic, David was required to undertake only 20 weeks of clinical EMS, rather than the usual 26 weeks. He has so far completed 15 ½ weeks of placements and plans to complete the rest over the course of his final year studies.

David has been surprised by the burdens of finding and completing his EMS placements. He knew about the requirement when he applied for his course, but had not appreciated how much placements would cost and how all-consuming EMS would be. He is also rather dismayed at how little support he has received from his veterinary school in finding and undertaking placements.

The main costs that David has incurred in respect of EMS are those associated with getting to and from his placements. David has access to a car, but the need to commute up to 40 miles a day for his placements has meant spending a considerable amount of money on fuel. He has also spent more on food while he has been out working with vets than he would have done at home.

In addition to these direct costs, David has found it difficult to undertake paid part-time work in the vacation periods, due to the demands of his placements.

David has avoided spending money on accommodation during his placements by staying with his mother and by only undertaking placements within a forty-mile radius of her home. While this has helped David to manage the costs associated with his placements, it has also placed restrictions on the placements that he has been able to undertake.

The nearest farm that offers placements, for example, is forty miles from David's mother's home, so David was only able to spend one week on placement there before the travel costs became too expensive. And he would like to undertake placements in specialist veterinary practices, in particular those that specialise in feline care, but the nearest ones that offer placements are too far for him to commute and he cannot afford to stay away from home for a week at a time.

David paid the costs associated with his EMS placements initially by saving part of his student loan to cover the summer vacation period, but this proved insufficient. He subsequently took out an overdraft, but that ran out, too, so he changed banks to gain access to a larger overdraft facility. When he reached the limit of this overdraft, he took the difficult decision to borrow money from family members. He found this very hard to do.

David is currently managing his finances on a month-by-month basis. He has enough money to pay his expenses for the next few weeks, but takes on ad hoc part-time work during term time to make financial ends meet. Without this additional income, which also needs to cover the costs associated with his intra-mural rotations, he does not think he would be able to complete his final year of study.

** Not his real name*

Statutory Membership Examination Guidance 2027

Individuals are advised to read this guidance document carefully and refer to it throughout the examination process.

The guidance sets out the application requirements, details the structure and content of the examination, and provides advice to assist candidates in preparing for the examination.

Contents

1. Introduction	4
1.1. Legislative framework	4
1.2. RCVS Day One Competences	4
1.3. Format of the Examination	5
1.4. Pathway to RCVS membership	6
1.5. Working as a Veterinary Nurse	8
2. Declaring an intention to sit the RCVS Statutory Membership Examination	9
2.1. Proof of primary veterinary degree	9
2.2. Transcripts	9
2.3. Registration certificate or veterinary licence	9
2.4. Proof of identity	10
2.5. Self-assessment skills list	10
2.6. Candidates with special requirements or requests for reasonable adjustment	10
2.6.1 Pregnant candidates	12
2.7. English language test exemption	11
2.8. Translations of documents	11
2.9. Recent graduates	13
2.10. Refugees	13
2.11. Submitting an application	15
2.12. Renewal of a declaration of intention to sit	15
3. Preparing yourself for the examination	14
3.1. Courses of study	16
3.2. Studying and access to libraries	14
3.3. Practical and clinical experience – Seeing Practice	17
4. Applying to sit the examination	18
4.1. Examination application form	17
4.2. English language test report	19
4.2.1 English language test validity extension	20
4.3. Evidence of good professional standing	18
4.4 Who may provide evidence of good professional standing?	21
4.5. Number of examination attempts	22
4.6. Examination fees	22
4.7. Withdrawal and refunds	21
4.8. Reapplications following failure or withdrawal	21

Commented [CH1]: Once content has been signed off, page numbers to be updated

5. Admission to the Register	22
5.1. Celebratory ceremony.....	22
6. About the examination	23
6.1. Examination format	23
6.2. Exam results and re-sit options	23
6.3. Examination venues	27
6.4. Emergency evacuation procedures.....	28
6.5. Identification	28
6.6. Prohibited items	29
6.7. 'Fit to sit' the examination	29
6.8. Written examinations	30
6.8.1. Clinical domain examinations	30
6.8.2. Code of Professional Conduct exam.....	31
6.8.3. Candidate exam conduct (written exams)	31
6.8.4 Sample exam questions	32
6.9. OSCE.....	33
6.9.1. OSCE examiners.....	30
6.9.2. Candidate examination conduct (OSCE).....	30
6.9.3. Health & safety.....	31
6.9.4. Dress code, Personal Protective Equipment & equipment.....	32
6.10. Examination outcomes & appeals	33
6.11. Mitigating circumstances	33
6.12 Confidentiality and test security	34
6.13. Misconduct.....	34
Appendix 1	35
Candidate flowchart	35
Appendix 2	36
Example Clinical MCQ questions	41
Appendix 3	37
Suggested Reading list.....	42

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 (SME).

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. We aim to respond to emails within three working days of receipt.

1.1. Legislative framework

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

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

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

1.2. RCVS Day One Competences

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

1.3. Format of the Examination

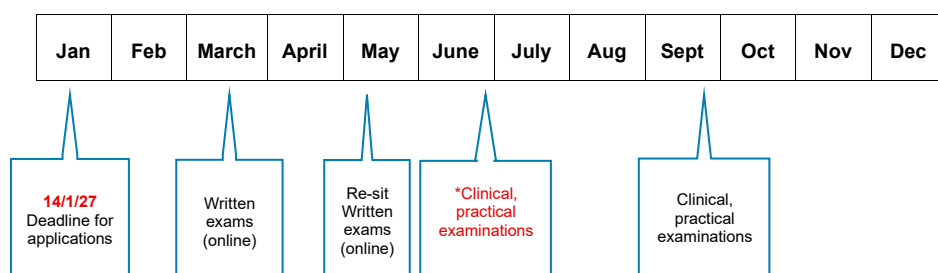
One diet of the Statutory Membership Examination (SME) will normally be held each calendar year. An exam 'diet' refers to the period of time in which a particular exam is held, and for which a fee has been paid and the individual accepted as a candidate.

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 (MRCVS) and practise in the UK.

An overview of the schedule for the 2027 examination diet is provided below.

Timings are approximate and may be subject to amendment.



*To accommodate higher candidate volumes, additional examination dates for the clinical, practical component of the examination may be introduced where necessary, this usually takes place in the summer.

If a candidate is successful in all written papers and enters the clinical, practical exam (the Objective Structured Clinical Examination (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, referred to as the 'second sit' of the OSCE, (without the requirement to sit the written exams again and taking only the OSCE components in which they were previously unsuccessful). If such candidates are subsequently unsuccessful in their second sit of the OSCE, any future attempts at the Statutory Membership Examination must be started from the beginning of the process; to include both the written and clinical, practical components again.

Please note that the revised examination rules with regards to re-sits of the written examinations and second sit at the OSCE apply solely to candidates entering examination diets from 2025 onwards. Results from examinations sat under previous regulations cannot be carried forward to the new policy, and results obtained under the new policy cannot be applied to previous examination diets.

The Statutory Membership Examination 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:

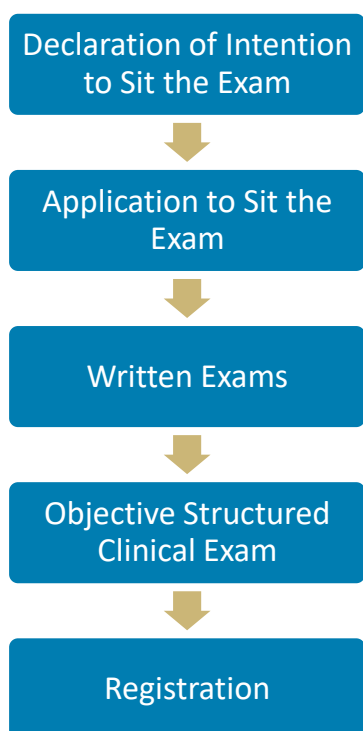
- Written examinations consisting of multiple-choice questions (MCQs) testing the candidate's clinical knowledge across three clinical domains (Companion Animal, Production Animal (including Veterinary Public Health) and Equine), and their knowledge of the RCVS Code of Professional Conduct.
- A clinical, practical examination comprising a holistic OSCE across three clinical domains (Companion Animal, Production Animal (including Veterinary Public Health) and Equine).

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

Further information regarding 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 reviewed by the Examinations team and if all requirements are met, the individual will be added to our 'Active List' of those preparing for the examination and permitted to gain clinical and practical experience for the examination, by 'seeing practice' in the UK.

The declaration process is outlined 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 [Disclose convictions and adverse findings | Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons](#).

Stage 2 – Application to Sit the Examination

If an individual has completed the declaration process and is eligible to apply to sit the Statutory Membership Examination, they will be provided with the exam application form for the written component of the examination.

The application form must be submitted by the application closing date, which is the 31 December 2026, and payment made prior to 14 January 2027 for the 2027 examination diet. Please note that the closing and payment date may vary from year to year. The completed form should be submitted together with the following:

- Up-to-date evidence of good professional standing;
- Evidence that English language requirements for the examination have been met;
- Payment of the initial examination entry fee of £1,437.

Separate fees and application forms are required for entry into the re-sit written examinations, initial attempt at the OSCE, and second sit of the OSCE. Please refer to [section 4.6](#) for further information.

The examination application process is outlined in detail in [section 4](#) of this guidance.

If a candidate wishes to request Reasonable Adjustments (RAs) within the examination process, due to a disability or particular need, they must complete and submit the Reasonable Adjustment request form to rcvsexam@rcvs.org.uk along with relevant supporting documentation, during the examination application period. RAs cannot be considered for review by the Examinations Board if the RA form or supporting evidence is not supplied.

Further information regarding Reasonable Adjustments can be found within [section 2.6](#) of this guidance.

Stage 3 – Written Examinations

The written examinations will normally be held online, using proctored software and a live invigilation process. Candidates 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 they can proceed to the OSCE. Please refer to [section 6.7](#) for more information.

The dates of the exams may vary within each diet of the examination (and are subject to change at short notice).

Individuals on the Active List will be provided with exam dates prior to the application closing date in January.

Stage 3a: Written examinations

For the **2027** 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 **2027**, subject to application and payment of the re-sit **examination fees**. Results will be issued four weeks after the date of the **final re-sit exam paper**.

Candidates who are unsuccessful in one or more domains of the written examination must re-sit all failed domains at the re-sit written examination sitting in May, if they wish to proceed to sit the OSCE. Candidates are not permitted to defer individual failed domains to a later examination diet or to re-attempt failed domains separately across multiple examination sittings. Any required re-sits must be completed in full at the next available opportunity.

If a candidate does not pass all the components of the written examinations within the re-sit exams, they may not proceed to the OSCE. 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 **or other suitable venue** in the UK.

As with the clinical written examinations, candidates must pass all three domains (Companion Animal, Production Animal (including Veterinary Public Health) and Equine) to pass the OSCE. Please refer to [section 6.8](#) for further information.

The dates of the OSCE may vary within each diet of the examination. However, the OSCE is typically held in September. **Additional sittings may also be available in the summer, if candidate numbers are sufficient.**

If a candidate is successful in all written papers and 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, **referred to as the 'second sit' of the OSCE** (without the requirement to sit the written exams again and taking only the OSCE components in which they were previously unsuccessful).

If they are subsequently unsuccessful in the OSCE for a second time, any future attempts at the Statutory Membership Examination must be started from the beginning of the process; to include both the written and clinical, practical components again.

Stage 5 – Registration

Examination results will be sent via email 4 weeks after the final paper of the written examination, and 4 weeks after or the final day of OSCE examinations.

Candidates who are successful within the OSCE will be provided with details on how to register / be admitted for membership with the RCVS. The RCVS usually holds a short celebration 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 of veterinary nurses (and their education and training) have significant differences from those of veterinary surgeons.

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: [Statutory Membership Exam | Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons](#).

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 required to attempt the exam, by completing the Self-assessment Skills List (see section 2.5);
- g. Apply for exemption from English language testing requirements (IELTS/OET), if applicable.

Exemptions must be submitted no later than 1 December of the year preceding the exam (see section 2.5)

2.1. Proof of primary veterinary degree

The examination regulations require individuals to provide proof of their primary veterinary qualification (such as 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 professional translation of the documents into English, if required) must be submitted with the completed '*Declaration of Intention to Sit*' form.

Applicants should not send original veterinary degree certificates to the RCVS by post. We cannot be held responsible for the loss of any original documents sent through the postal system.

Original copies of veterinary degree certificates should be kept safe and available in case they are required in the future. If a review of an original veterinary degree certificate is required, the RCVS will contact the individual to make an appointment for this.

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 list of [Universities Worldwide](#) 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 whether the national government in the country which awarded the qualification allows an individual to practise veterinary medicine in that country.

2.2. Transcripts

If an individual's university has issued transcripts of their studies, these must be submitted 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, 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 be professionally translated into English with a copy of the original also provided.

2.4. Proof of identity

Individuals are required to provide a **colour** copy of the photo/information page from their current in-date passport. If their name differs from that on their degree or diploma certificate, they must also send a copy of the relevant legal document linking both names, such as a marriage/divorce certificate.

If their name differs between documents for another reason, the individual should contact the Examinations team at rcvsexam@rcvs.org.uk for further instruction.

Applicants **should not** send their original passport to the RCVS by post. We cannot be held responsible for the loss of any original documents sent through the postal system.

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](#). 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 **written and/or practical** examination because of a disability or other particular need, they should submit a completed **Reasonable Adjustment form** and guidance available on the RCVS website, **as early as possible** in the examination application process.

Candidates who wish to apply for reasonable adjustments must submit a separate, formal request, for each component of the examination, together with the required supporting evidence. This request must be received no later than the (written and/or practical) examination entry closing date, in order to be given sufficient time to consider and implement any accommodations ahead of the exams.

Requests for Reasonable Adjustments will only be considered where they have been submitted through the prescribed process and within the published deadlines. Requests made through alternative channels, including email correspondence, informal discussions, or other means outside the approved process, will not be accepted or considered.

Applications must be accompanied by a current, official medical letter or certificate, or educational assessment/report and other relevant documentation as outlined in the **reasonable adjustment guidance**. This must be professionally translated into English if required and should state the accommodations recommended by the health professional.

Commented [CH2]: 2027 RA form to be add to link here and uploaded on website

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

The RCVS examinations board will agree the adjustments / arrangements which can be provided, through discussions with the examination host venue, medical advisers and candidate, as appropriate.

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. A candidate may also be required to defer to the next available examination window if the host venue cannot accommodate or implement the required adjustment, or where the need for the adjustment arises from a temporary circumstance.

This requirement is in place to ensure that all requests are assessed consistently, fairly, and in accordance with the College's published procedures.

2.6.1. Pregnant Candidates

Candidates who will be pregnant at the time of sitting the Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE) component of the Statutory Membership Examination (SME) should be aware that certain activities undertaken during the examination may present risks during pregnancy.

Pregnant candidates should contact the RCVS examinations team in writing at rcvsexam@rcvs.org.uk as soon as possible to ensure that the relevant risk assessment, including details of any potential risks to pregnant candidates and mitigations associated with participation in the OSCE, can be shared with them.

Candidates must review this information with an appropriate healthcare professional before deciding whether to proceed with the examination or request a deferral to the next available OSCE sitting following their pregnancy. Candidates who wish to sit the OSCE while pregnant will be required to submit a 'fit-to-sit' letter from their healthcare professional. This letter must confirm that the healthcare professional has considered the potential risks identified by the RCVS and considers the candidate fit to participate. Where a healthcare professional considers a candidate fit to sit the OSCE, any potential reasonable adjustments that may be required should be discussed with the candidate. Candidates who require reasonable adjustments in relation to their pregnancy should submit a request in accordance with the process outlined in Section 2.6 of this guidance.

If a candidate's healthcare professional advises that they should not undertake the OSCE at that time, the candidate should submit a request for consideration of mitigating circumstances for deferral to the next available OSCE sitting following their pregnancy. Further information regarding mitigating circumstances requests can be found within section 6.11 of this guidance.

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 regarding these assessments can be found in [section 4.2](#).

Commented [LP3]: If this is in relation to the pregnant candidates, our legal advice was clear that we cannot refuse a candidate entry to an exam on this basis and it is their choice to adopt any risk as highlighted by us. @Clare Paget please can you check this wording

If a candidate can demonstrate that their veterinary degree was taught and assessed entirely in English, they may apply for an exemption to English language testing requirements as part of their declaration of intention to sit the 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 for exemption, 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 veterinary degree was obtained at an English-speaking University where the entirety of the course was taught and assessed solely in the medium of English. **The RCVS cannot contact the University to request this.** This letter must be written in English and be sent directly from the University to the RCVS at rcvsexam@rcvs.org.uk.

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

2.8. Translations of documents

If any documents submitted as part of a declaration of intention to sit or examination application are not written in English, professional English translations 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 Examination **Team** 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. Applicants with UK humanitarian protection status

Veterinary surgeons who hold official refugee or asylum status in the UK may seek financial assistance provided by the RCVS to sit the Statutory Membership Exam.

Evidence of the applicant's in-date humanitarian protection status (such as Home Office-issued documentation or an eVisa) 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 veterinary surgeons with humanitarian protection status may be unable to provide the documents required when declaring an intention to sit the exam. The Education department, in conjunction with the Examinations board, may be required to exercise their judgment to determine whether an individual can declare their intention to sit on a case-by-case basis.

An agreed amount of funding has been allocated to support up to 10 candidates per examination diet, across all aspects of the examination. This includes:

- IELTS/OET examination fee
- Initial written examination fees
- One re-sit written examination paper fee per candidate
- Initial OSCE examination fees

- Second-sit OSCE attempt examination fees

Candidates can request additional support with expenses that may occur during the OSCE exams, such as accommodation costs, travel expenses and a contribution towards meals. These costs may be paid directly or reimbursed upon submission of valid receipts, subject to prior approval.

Additionally, the RCVS has arranged the opportunity for candidates with UK humanitarian protection status to receive free membership with 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 eligible candidates with a consent form to allow the sharing of the information required to access complimentary annual membership with the organisations listed above. Although these organisations reserve the right to withdraw this offer, the RCVS greatly appreciates their generosity in supporting candidates.

Candidates will have one funded attempt at the Statutory Membership Examination and are strongly advised not to apply to sit the exam until they are fully prepared to do so, as additional attempts are not funded.

All eligible candidates wishing to sit the examination in the next diet will be asked to reflect on their readiness for the examination. This includes completing a self-assessment exercise, providing evidence of any recent clinical practice experience, and attempting a formative written examination paper via TestReach. The formative paper covers the companion animal, production animal, veterinary public health, equine, and RCVS code of professional conduct domains. If a candidate has completed the formative paper previously, their past results may be used instead.

The Examinations board will assess applications against these criteria and identify those candidates considered most likely to succeed in the examination. Based on this assessment, funding may be awarded to up to 10 candidates in the relevant examination year. Candidates who are not approved for funding will be invited to reapply the following year or may enter the examination if they are able to meet the required fees themselves.

Financial support for additional attempts at the exam is not normally permitted. However, candidates may request this opportunity if they believe they have a strong case to put forward to the Examinations board for review. The candidate must submit:

- A written statement explaining why they believe they will be successful in the next attempt.
- Supporting evidence (e.g., results of previous attempts, study plans, letters of recommendations from mentors/practices).

Approval of additional attempts can only be granted if the Examinations board agrees the chances of success at the next attempt are very likely and the budget allows for this opportunity.

2.11. Submitting an application

An individual may submit a 'declaration of intention to sit' the Statutory Membership Examination all year round.

However, 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 '**SME – Initial Intention and Seeing Practice**' letter issued by the RCVS. If an individual wishes to continue to see practice in the UK after the 30 September, they must ensure they submit a renewal of intention to sit in good time to rcvsexam@rcvs.org.uk. Please allow up to four weeks for a renewal of intention to sit to be processed and for a new letter to be issued.

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: [RCVS Academy](#)
- 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](#).

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 online and print resources. There is a fee of £25 for 6 months' membership.

Library members have access to a wide range of full-text online journals and to 'VetMed Resource', a comprehensive online bibliographic database to search the literature. The library also holds printed books from the RCVS suggested reading list. As much of our material is held off site, please contact us at library@rcvsknowledge.org in advance to arrange a visit, together with a list of the material you would like to see.

To join the RCVS Knowledge library, please complete this form:

<https://www.rcvsknowledge.org/library-and-information-services/statutory-membership-examination-candidates/>

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 | Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons](#). 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 [Seeing practice | Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons](#).

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](#).

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 **provided** to all **individuals** on the Active List **on** 1 October, when the **initial written exam application** window opens. **Those** who submit a declaration/renewal of intention to sit during the application window can request an application form once their declaration/renewal is accepted by the RCVS.

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

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

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

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

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

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

4.1. Examination application form

The initial written exam application form and all required evidence / components of the application must be received by 31 December. The exam payment closing date is subject to change; however, this is typically 12 noon GMT on 14 January each year.

Candidates applying to sit a re-sit written examination, the OSCE, or a second sit of the OSCE must submit separate examination application forms, all required supporting documentation, and the relevant fee by the deadlines specified in [section 4.3](#).

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.

Failure to submit the required documentation and make payment by the published closing dates will result in the application being deemed incomplete and the candidate being unable to sit the relevant examination component. Candidates will then be required to apply for the next available examination sitting, subject to the applicable regulations and deadlines.

Late applications and/or late payments for any component of the Statutory Membership Examination will not be accepted. Candidates are requested not to contact the RCVS to seek an extension or exception to the published deadlines, as these are applied consistently to all candidates.

4.2. English language test report

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

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

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

Once a candidate has completed one of these assessments, the results must be submitted to rcvsexam@rcvs.org.uk for review. The Examinations team will inform the candidate if they meet the required criteria.

Test scores must be in date on all days the candidate intends to sit all examinations i.e., from March through to September. 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 directly for the most up-to-date information on result timeframes. Candidates are strongly advised to take the test as early as possible before submitting their application, as the initial written examination application form, all required supporting documentation, evidence of achieving the required score in the English language test, and the test results certificate must all be received by 31 December.

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

- Candidate's name
- The veterinary surgeon's name and MRCVS 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 the candidate's 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 emailed **directly to rcvsexam@rcvs.org.uk from the candidate's licensing authority.**

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 obtaining these letters.** If the evidence is not provided by the examination entry closing date, **the candidate 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 **by alternative means.** An email should be sent to rcvsexam@rcvs.org.uk outlining **the candidate's** query. If necessary, they will be sent a form to complete which will allow the registration team to consider their circumstances and **advise upon how this requirement may be met.**

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 [Disclose convictions and adverse findings | Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons](#).

4.5. Number of examination attempts

Individual candidate examination outcomes, including passes and fails, are reported to the RCVS Education Committee.

Candidates may attempt the written examination as many times as they wish. However, if a candidate is unsuccessful within the clinical, practical examination (OSCE) on three or more occasions (this includes initial attempt and second sit OSCE), the Education Committee may withdraw that candidate's right to sit the Statutory Membership Examination again. If the committee decides to exercise their authority to do this, that decision will override the rule to allow unlimited attempts at the written examination.

For each attempt, candidates will be required to pay the required examination fee (refer to section 4.6).

4.6. Examination fees

The examination fees are reviewed on an annual basis.

The examination fees for each component of the 2027 exam must be paid for in full and within the deadlines set below.

Exam component and information	Fee	Deadline date
Initial exam entry fee - Includes one initial attempt at the full written exams, held in March 2027	Examination fee of £1,129 plus a £308 administration charge (Total £1,437)	14 January 2027
Re-sit written examinations - Only available for candidates if they have taken and failed any domains within the written exam paper held in March 2027	Examination fee of £462 plus a £51 administration charge (total £513) per clinical exam domain re-sit	20 April 2027
OSCE Exam - Only available for candidates if they have passed <u>all</u> components of the written exam, held in 2027 (dates TBC)	Examination fee of £1,129	15 July 2027
Second sit OSCE - Only available for candidates if they have taken and failed any component of the OSCE during the 2027 examination diet - Held in 2028 (dates TBC)	Examination fee of £462 plus a £51 administration charge (Total £513) per OSCE exam domain required. If taking entire OSCE, examination fee of £1,129 plus a £308 admin charge (£1,437)	14 January 2028

Payment is to be made via the candidate's RCVS MyAccount portal. Details are provided once all other aspects of the exam application are complete. Please note, all international bank charges are

incurred by the person paying the fee, including those levied by our bank, which is approximately £7.00.

4.7. Withdrawal and refunds

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

The refund amount 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.: • March written exam closing date - 14 January • Re-sit May exam closing date – 20 April • OSCE entry closing date – 15 July	The full examination fee, not including the non-refundable administration charge
More than 28 days before the examination	Half the examination fee, not including the non-refundable administration charge
28 days or fewer before the examination	No refund
Failure to attend the examination	No refund

Discretionary refunds on medical or compassionate grounds

If a candidate needs to withdraw from the examination for medical or compassionate reasons, they may be eligible for a discretionary refund of part or all of the examination fee. Requests must be made by submitting a mitigating circumstances form. Candidates must clearly indicate on the form that they are requesting to be withdrawn from the exam and for a discretionary refund to be granted on medical or compassionate grounds, rather than a deferral to the next available examination diet.

Completed forms, along with supporting information, must be supplied within the deadline stated on the mitigating circumstances form. Candidates should be aware that a decision may take several months, as the RCVS committees responsible for considering discretionary refunds meet at scheduled times during the year and may not be able to consider requests outside of these meetings.

Candidates who withdraw from the examination at any stage may re-enter in a future examination diet and will be required to undertake the entire examination process again as a new candidate.

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
- Arrange for the RCVS to receive up-to-date evidence of their good professional standing
- Provide evidence that English language requirements have been met and remain valid
- Pay the relevant examination fees

5. Admission to the Register

Commented [CH4]: Add link to MC form

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.

Full details regarding applications to join the Register will be provided with the candidate's examination results.

5.1. Celebratory ceremony

The RCVS may hold a short celebratory ceremony for candidates who are successful within the Statutory Membership Examination.

Candidates will typically be permitted to bring up to two guests to the celebratory ceremony. As capacity at the venue is limited, guest attendance is subject to availability. A guest fee applies for each attendee, which must be paid in advance of the ceremony. Further details regarding guest registration, fees, and booking arrangements will be provided to eligible candidates by the RCVS Events team Events@rcvs.org.uk.

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 refer to the RCVS website for details of current fees: [Fees | Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons](#).

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 domains within the written examination** held in March, they may choose to re-sit these papers during May the same year, subject to payment of the relevant re-sit examination fees.

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 **is therefore successful within the entirety of the written component of the examination**, 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 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. **This is referred to as the 'second sit' OSCE.** Such candidates may not defer beyond the next diet, and if they fail the OSCE domains on this second sit, 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 **team** 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). 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.

Candidates will have the opportunity to check whether their hardware, software and internet connection are compatible with the examination platform before the examination. However, compatibility cannot be guaranteed, as internet connectivity and equipment performance may change or be affected by unforeseen technical issues. Candidates are advised to have back up equipment available. If candidates encounter any problems during this process, they must contact the Examinations team as soon as possible. If candidates encounter any problems during the live examination, they must contact TestReach in the first instance for urgent technical support.

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. **Candidates are advised not to make holiday or other non-essential commitments until the OSCE dates have been confirmed, as the OSCE must be completed within the same examination diet as the written examination.**

Candidates are responsible for making their own travel and accommodation arrangements for 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 **OSCE host venue** 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 **at any point** 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), **additional screens/monitors** and smartwatches **or smartglasses**. 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, **smartglasses** or other electronic devices (clocks/timers 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.
- **Pencils, pens or paper (candidates will be provided with paper and a pen in the reading area of each OSCE station. These materials will be collected at the end of the station)**

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

6.7. 'Fit to sit' the examination

Candidates who present for an examination, which includes logging into the examination software for the written examination, are declaring themselves fit to sit the examination.

If a candidate becomes unwell during the examination, they should inform a test administrator or examiner immediately. The examination will be stopped, and the candidate must submit a mitigating circumstances form to the Examinations team. Medical evidence may be requested in support of the application.

If a candidate is unwell or experiencing personal circumstances that may affect their ability to sit the examination before the examination takes place, they should not attempt the examination. Instead, they should submit a mitigating circumstances form to the Examinations team. Medical evidence may be requested.

Candidates must submit the mitigating circumstances form and any supporting documentary evidence within the timeframes specified on the form.

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 | Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons](#) 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

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 encountered in veterinary general practice. They will be at the level of the RCVS Day One Competences. These may differ from other countries and therefore candidates should ensure that they are familiar with the methodology they are required to follow.

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

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

- Animal handling and management
- History taking
- Examination skills
- Diagnosis (clinical judgements)

- Technical skills
- Treatment planning (clinical decision making)
- Communication skills
- Professionalism (including safety)

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 **invigilators** 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. **Candidates may move the timer around with them if preferred, and can ask a member of the examinations team to hold this for them.**

Some stations may contain more than one **part, such as a practical task.** If a candidate is unable to carry out a particular **part of the station,** they may wish to bypass it and forgo its marks to focus on other **parts** within the station. **If candidate is unable to locate an item within the station, they may ask the examiners to direct them to this.**

Once the time allocated to the station has elapsed, **the invigilators will instruct candidates either to move to the next station or to remain where they are until they are collected and escorted back 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: [Guidance on Religious Clothing and Beliefs](#). If a candidate believes their beliefs may impact the dress code stated, then please contact the Examination team 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 robust boots which cover the ankles. 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

Examination results will be released to candidates 4 weeks after the date of the final paper within the written examination and 4 weeks after the final date of the practical examination.

The pass mark for each written 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 who achieve a pass in all domains of the written and practical component of the examination will be notified that they have successfully passed the examination. In such cases, no marks, scores, or numerical information relating to performance will be provided.

Candidates who are unsuccessful in one or more domains of the written examination will receive feedback indicating the extent to which their performance fell below the pass mark in each failed domain. This information will be provided as a numerical value showing the difference between the candidate's score and the pass threshold for the relevant domain. Candidates who are unsuccessful in one or more domains of the practical examination will receive feedback indicating the extent to which their performance fell below the pass mark in each failed domain. This information will be provided as a score out of 5, with 3 out of 5 representing the minimum pass mark.

Pass marks will not be published, and feedback will not be available.

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

A candidate cannot progress to the OSCE without first passing all of the written examinations. Candidates accepted onto the 2025 exam onwards, who fail one or more of the written exams taken in March 2027, have an opportunity to re-sit these papers in May 2027, 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, 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.

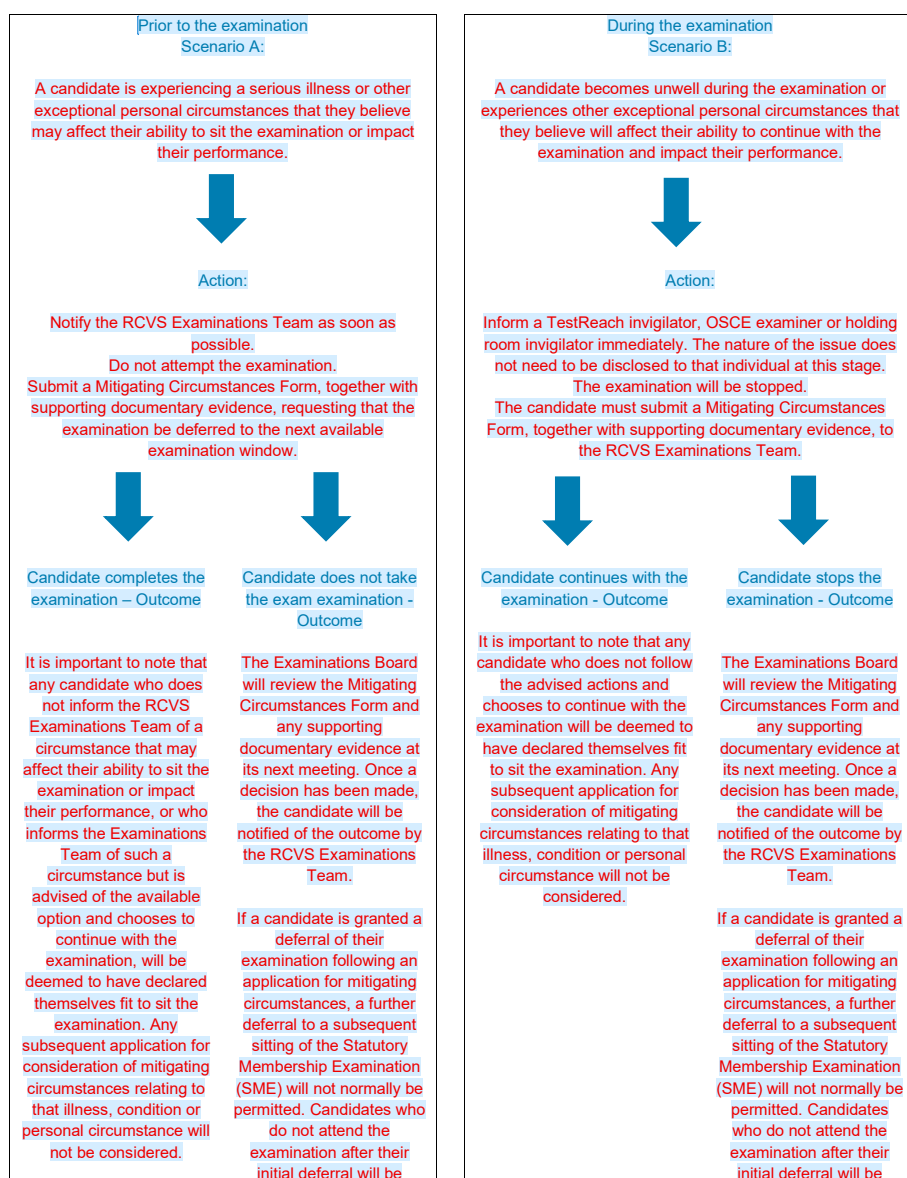
6.11. Mitigating circumstances

If a candidate is serious illness or experiencing personal circumstances that may affect their ability to sit the examination before the examination takes place, they should not attempt the examination. Instead, they should submit a Mitigating Circumstances form to the Examinations Team. Supporting documentary evidence may be requested. Candidates should note that presenting for the examination, which includes logging into the examination software for the written examination, constitutes a declaration that they are fit to sit the examination.

If a candidate becomes unwell during the examination, they should inform a test administrator or examiner immediately. The nature of the issue does not need to be disclosed at that stage. The examination will be stopped, and the candidate must submit a Mitigating Circumstances form to the Examinations Team. Medical evidence may be requested in support of the application. Candidates should note that requesting to continue with examination constitutes a declaration that they are fit to sit the examination, and the request for consideration of mitigating circumstances will be void.

Candidates must submit the Mitigating Circumstances form and any supporting evidence within the timeframes specified on the Mitigating Circumstances form.

If a candidate has been granted a deferral of their exams following an application for consideration of Mitigating circumstances, it is not possible to defer again to a subsequent diet of the SME. Candidates will be required to start the process from the beginning if they do not attend the exam following initial deferral. The flowchart below shows protentional outcomes of mitigating circumstance:



required to submit a new application and complete the examination entry process from the beginning

required to submit a new application and complete the examination entry process from the beginning

Commented [LP5]: I think this needs further work and would prefer it is discussed with the exam board before being signed off. Have left it in here for feedback from EC members in the meantime.

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:

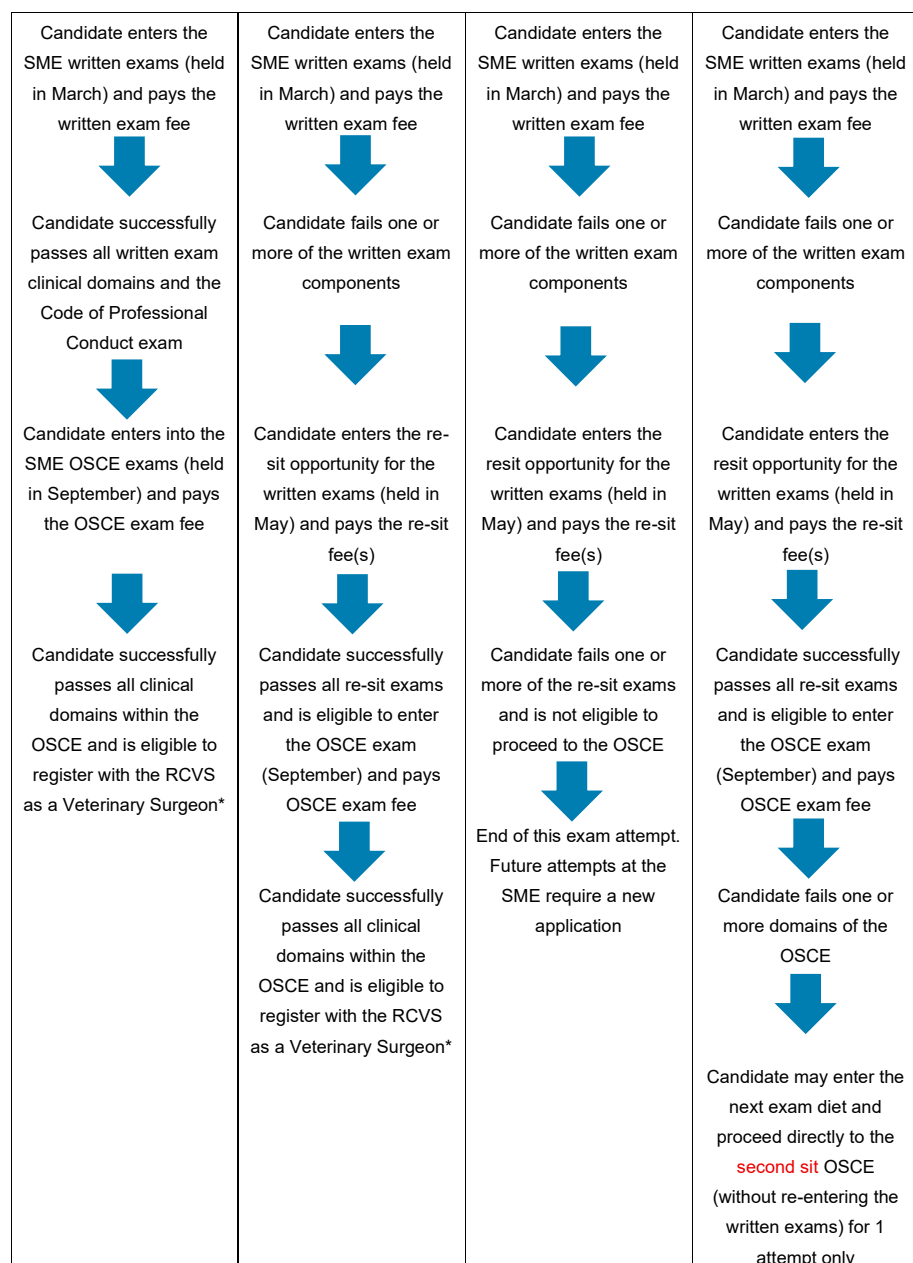
- Failure to comply with reasonable instructions given by an examination official.
- Failure to comply with any aspect of the exam conditions.
- Refusal to complete scans of the room or comply with the requests of the invigilator during exam security checks.
- Verbal or physical abuse of any person or 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: [RCVS Day One Competences](#). This sets out the minimum essential competences (comprising knowledge, skills, and attitudes) required to register with the RCVS.

Equine

- Auer, J.A. and Stick, J.A. (eds) (2018) *Equine Surgery* 5th ed Philadelphia: Saunders
- Baxter, G.M. (ed) (2020) *Adams and Stashaks Lameness in Horses*. 7th ed Oxford: Wiley Blackwell
- Knottenbelt, D.C. and Pascoe, R.R. (2014) *The Colour Atlas of Diseases and Disorders of the Horse*. 2nd ed. London: Wolfe.
- Mair, T. et al (eds) (2012) *Equine Medicine, Surgery and Reproduction*. 2nd ed London: CRC Press
- Munroe, G.A. (ed) (2019) *Equine Clinical Medicine, Surgery and Reproduction*. 2nd ed. London: CRC Pres
- Reed, S.M. et al (2017) *Equine Internal Medicine*. 4th ed. Philadelphia: Elsevier. ISBN 9780323443296

Companion animal

[Books covering general medicine and surgery:](#)

- Fossum, T.W. (ed) (2018) *Small Animal Surgery*. 5th ed. St Louis: Mosby
- Gardiner, A. and Quain, A. (2025) *The Veterinary General Practice Casebook. Companion Animal Clinics*. London: Taylor and Francis
- Johnson, A. and Tobias, K.M. (eds) (2018) *Veterinary Surgery: Small Animal*. Philadelphia: Saunders
- Maddison, J. et al (2022) *Clinical Reasoning in Veterinary Practice*. 2nd ed. Oxford: Wiley Blackwell
- Nelson, R. and Couto, C.G. (eds) (2019) *Small Animal Internal Medicine*. 6th ed. St Louis: Elsevier.

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

Books covering more specific disciplines

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Production animals

General

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

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

Bovine

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

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

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

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

Sheep

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

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

Pigs

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

Poultry

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

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

Veterinary public health

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

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

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

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

General reading list

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE) resources

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

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

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

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

[RCVS Day One Competencies for Veterinary Surgeons Document](#)

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

Legislation

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

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

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

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

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](#)

The Food Standards Agency – website: [Homepage | Food Standards Agency](#)

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

Animal husbandry

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

Veterinary publications and journals

You are advised to read the following journals and publications:

- The Veterinary Record
- In Practice
- Journal of Small Animal Practice
- Equine Veterinary Education
- UK Vet
- Publications from the British Equine Veterinary Association – www.beva.org.uk
- Publications from the British Small Animal Veterinary Association – www.bsava.com

Summary of useful websites

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

RCVS Code of Professional Conduct for Veterinary Surgeons – available on the RCVS website at [Code of Professional Conduct for Veterinary Surgeons | Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons](#)

RCVS Day One Competences – available on the RCVS website at [RCVS Day One Competences](#)

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

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

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

www.bcva.org.uk – British Veterinary Cattle Association (BCVA)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Other support which you might be interested in

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

Summary	
Meeting	Education Committee
Date	15 September 2026
Title	2027 Statutory Membership Examination (SME) guidance and associated forms
Summary	The SME guidance and associated forms are updated annually, and all proposed changes must be reviewed and approved by the Examinations board and Education Committee. For ease of review, all proposed amendments are shown in red text. The main changes for the 2027 edition include: - Updated 2027 examination dates, timelines and fees. Fees have increased in line with Consumer Price Index, in line with the 2025 Statutory Instrument rules. - The 'fit to sit', mitigating circumstances and reasonable adjustments sections, together with the associated application forms, have been revised to improve candidates' understanding of these processes. - Additional guidance for pregnant candidates requiring specific arrangements during practical examinations. - Clarification of examination conditions and candidate behaviour expectations. - Inclusion of information relating to examination attempts funded under the UK Humanitarian Protection Status policy (previously approved by the Education Committee and Finance and Resources Committee).
Decisions required	Approval of the 2027 SME Guidance.
Attachments	None.
Author	Claire Hobson Examinations Manager c.hobson@rcvs.org.uk

Classifications

Document	Classification ¹	Rationales ²
Paper	Unclassified	

¹Classifications explained

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

²Classification rationales

Confidential	1. To allow the Committee or Council to come to a view itself, before presenting to and/or consulting with others 2. To maintain the confidence of another organisation 3. To protect commercially sensitive information 4. To maintain public confidence in and/or uphold the reputation of the veterinary professions and/or the RCVS
Private	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