Agenda for the meeting to be held at 9.30 24th November 2026 remote

1.	**Welcome and apologies for absence**	
2.	**Declarations of interest**	
3.	**Education Committee minutes** a) Minutes of meeting held on 15th September 2026	Paper Attached
4.	**Matters arising**	
5.	**Education Department update**	Oral Report
6	**International Accreditation Agreements** a) AVBC agreement update	Paper Attached
7.	**Primary Qualifications Subcommittee (PQSC)** a) Minutes of the PQSC Extraordinary meeting held on 27 August 2026	Paper Attached
8.	**Registration Loophole**	Paper Attached
9.	**VetGDP and CPD Compliance subcommittee** a) Minutes from the subcommittee held 3rd November 2026 b) Update from the VetGDP and CPD Engagement Group c) Evaluation of Outcomes based CPD Requirement d) VetGDP KPI – tolerance levels	Paper Attached Oral Report Paper Attached Oral report
10.	**Specialists** a) Specialist list for ratification	Paper Attached
11.	**CertAVP/ AP Qualification Subcommittee** a) APQSC Minutes 8th October 2026 b) Advanced Practitioner status guidance notes 2027 c) AP List d) RVC request to use CertAVP learning outcomes	Paper Attached Paper Attached Paper Attached Paper Attached
12.	**Examinations** a) Minutes from the SME exam board held on 29th September 2026 b) 2027 SME Guidance c) CertAVP Synoptic Complaint	Paper Attached Paper Attached Paper Attached
13.	**VCCP** a) GP Specialty training – consultation update	Oral Report

	b) Flexible routes update – oral update	Oral Report
14.	**Future Direction of Extra Mural Studies (EMS)**	Paper Attached
15.	**VN Update**	Oral Report
16.	**Risk register (EC and SME)** Items to add to the Risk Register	Paper Attached
17.	**AOB**	
18.	**Date of next meeting**	24 February 2027 Hardwick Street

Britta Crawford
Committee Secretary
November 2026
b.crawford@rcvs.org.uk
020 7202 0777

Education Committee (EC) Membership From July 2026

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	24 November 2026
Title	Statutory Membership (SME) Guidance 2027
Summary	At the meeting in September, Education Committee considered the 2027 SME guidance. At that time, some updates were requested from the registrar in relation to the reasonable adjustments and mitigating circumstances sections. The finalised SME guidance for the 2027 examinations, incorporating amendments requested by Education Committee (EC) members and Exam Board members at the September EC and September Exam Board meetings is provided for final review.
Decisions required	To note
Attachments	Statutory Membership (SME) Guidance 2027
Author	Claire Hobson Examinations Manager c.hobson@rcvs.org.uk

Classifications		
Document	Classification[1]	Rationales[2]
Paper	Unclassified	

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

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

[2]Classification rationales	
Confidential	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

RCVS
Inspiring confidence in veterinary care

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.

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1. Introduction

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

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

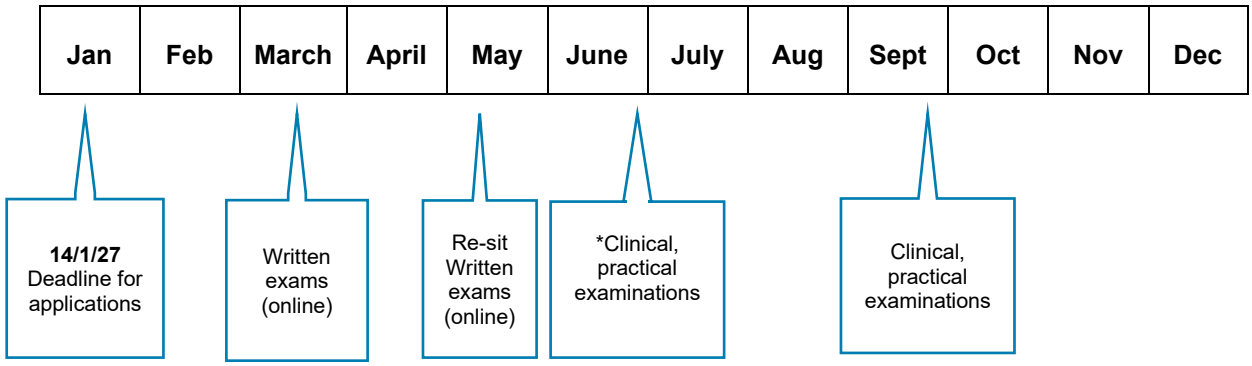
One diet of the Statutory Membership Examination (SME) will normally be held each calendar year. An exam 'diet' refers to the period of time in which a particular exam is held, and for which a fee has been paid and the individual accepted as a candidate.

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.

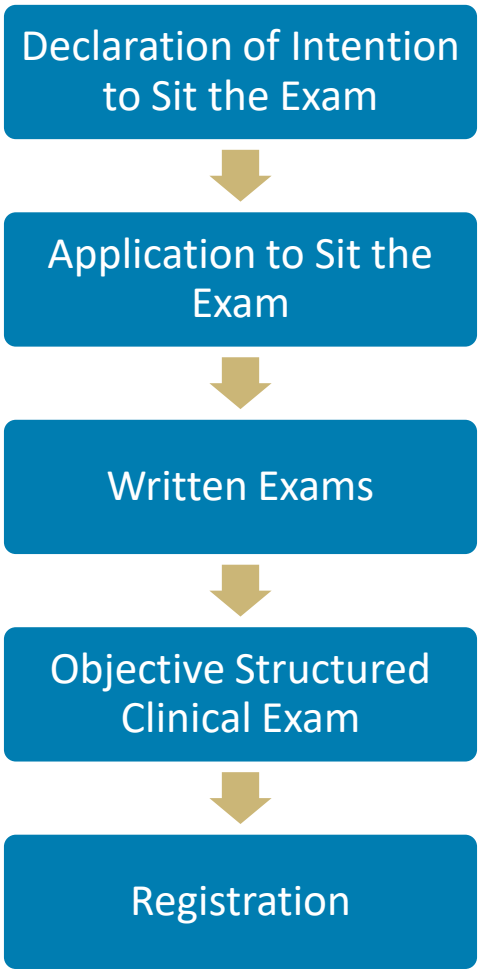
- A clinical, practical examination comprising a holistic OSCE across three clinical domains (Companion Animal, Production Animal (including Veterinary Public Health) and Equine).

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 (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 ensure there is sufficient time to consider it and implement any accommodations ahead of the exams.

Requests for reasonable adjustments will only be considered when they have been submitted through the approved 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.

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. All request for RAs will be considered, however, if it is not possible to make a particular accommodation(s) within a specific sitting/venue a candidate may be offered a deferral to another exam date or venue.

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 may 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.

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 fee (one domain only)

Candidates can request additional support with expenses that may occur during the OSCE, 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 letter issued by the RCVS entitling them to 'see practice'. 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. 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 from (see section 4.1)
b. An English language test report confirming they have achieved the minimum standard (see section 4.2) or confirmation of their exemption
c. Evidence (certificate/letter) of their good professional standing (see section 4.3)
d. A completed reasonable adjustment application, if required (see section 2.6)

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

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

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

In addition to meeting the RCVS examination entry requirements, 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.** Candidates should ensure that they have reviewed the relevant immigration requirements and are satisfied that they can obtain the appropriate visa and/or permission to enter the UK before entering the examination. This will help to avoid the risk of a late withdrawal and any associated loss of examination fees should the candidate be unable to travel to the UK to attend the in-person practical examination.

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.

Separate application forms must be submitted for all components of the exam. Application forms, all required supporting documentation, and the relevant fee must be submitted 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 test results certificate and all other documentation must 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

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 - Only available for candidates if they have passed all 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 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

4.7.1. 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 and from the examination at any stage, and apply for a refund, 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

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 small 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 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 OSCE 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 OSCE) 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 fee being paid. Due to late entry onto the OSCE, this may result in a later OSCE 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 be eligible to proceed to the OSCE. Candidates are advised not to make 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 arrangements to the OSCE venue and for booking their own accommodation.

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, or entering into an OSCE station, 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.

Candidates should note that continuing with the examination constitutes a declaration that they are fit to sit the examination. Mitigating circumstances will be considered by the Examinations team as they are set out on the form and only to consider whether the candidate should be provided with a further opportunity to sit. Mitigating circumstances that are not declared in accordance with this guidance will not be taken into account by the Education team. Any appeal that is based on mitigating circumstances that have not been declared in accordance with this guidance will be dismissed at initial consideration

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 many be considered as an exam security threat. Items of clothing with pockets, buttons and broaches, as well as jewellery, will also be inspected, long sleeves will be asked to be rolled up. Candidates should consider carefully what to wear each day for the exam, as this checking process can take time to complete.

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

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

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

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

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

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

6.8.4. Sample exam questions

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

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

6.9. Objective Structured Clinical Examination

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

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

Stations that assess communication skills may include an actor playing the role of the client or other relevant party. Other stations may involve clinical models/simulators, and some may involve the use of cadavers. Some stations may have a live animal and a model and/or cadaver in separate areas. Some stations may be outside, e.g. in a barn, field or stable; candidates should note that the usual noises and aromas found within these areas cannot be avoided. In all cases, candidates will be expected to perform tasks as if they were treating a live animal and should behave as they would when working in a practice in the UK. These skills will be assessed across companion animal, production animal (including veterinary public health) and equine domains. Candidates must meet the minimum required standard in each of these three domains to pass the examination. There will be **no compensation across domains** i.e., if a candidate falls below the required standard in one domain, then they will fail the examination regardless of how well they did in either of the other domains.

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

Examiners will mark each candidate against a standardised scoring rubric. This will describe to the examiners the performance (knowledge, skills, behaviours) candidates need to demonstrate in order

for them to achieve the allocated marks. All candidates will be marked against the same scoring rubric.

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

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

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

6.9.1. OSCE Examiners

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

6.9.2. Candidate examination conduct (OSCE)

The OSCE 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 devises 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.

All stations will include multiple tasks. If a candidate is unable to carry out a particular task within the station, they may wish to bypass it and forgo any relevant marks to focus on other tasks within the station. If candidate is unable to locate any 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 Appeals & examination outcomes

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.

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.

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).

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 components 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.

6.11. Mitigating circumstances

If a candidate has a 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 (MC) 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 continuing with the examination constitutes a declaration that they are fit to sit the examination. Mitigating circumstances will be considered by the Examinations team as they are set out on the form and only to consider whether the candidate should be provided with a further opportunity to sit. Mitigating circumstances that are not declared in accordance with this guidance will not be taken into account by the Education team. Any appeal that is based on mitigating circumstances that have not been declared in accordance with this guidance will be dismissed at initial consideration.

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 on page 39 shows the protentional outcomes of mitigating circumstance:

Prior to the examination
Scenario A:

A candidate is experiencing a serious illness or other exceptional personal circumstances that they believe may affect their ability to sit the examination or impact their performance.



Action:

Notify the RCVS Examinations team as soon as possible.
Do not attempt the examination.
Submit a Mitigating Circumstances Form, together with supporting documentary evidence, requesting that the examination be deferred to the next available examination window.



Candidate completes the examination – Outcome

It is important to note that any candidate who does not inform the RCVS Examinations team of a circumstance that may affect their ability to sit the examination or impact their performance, or who informs the Examinations team of such a circumstance but is advised of the available option and chooses to continue with the examination, will be deemed to have declared themselves fit to sit the examination. Any subsequent application for consideration of mitigating circumstances relating to that illness, condition or personal circumstance will not be considered.



Candidate does not take the exam examination - Outcome

The Examinations Board will review the Mitigating Circumstances Form and any supporting documentary evidence at its next meeting. Once a decision has been made, the candidate will be notified of the outcome by the RCVS Examinations team.

If a candidate is granted a deferral of their examination following an application for mitigating circumstances, a further deferral to a subsequent sitting of the Statutory Membership Examination (SME) will not normally be permitted. Candidates who do not attend the examination after their initial deferral will be required to submit a new application and complete the examination entry process from the beginning

During the examination
Scenario B:

A candidate becomes unwell during the examination or experiences other exceptional personal circumstances that they believe will affect their ability to continue with the examination and impact their performance.



Action:

Inform a TestReach invigilator, OSCE examiner or holding room invigilator immediately. The nature of the issue does not need to be disclosed to that individual at this stage.
The examination will be stopped.
The candidate must submit a Mitigating Circumstances Form, together with supporting documentary evidence, to the RCVS Examinations team.



Candidate continues with the examination - Outcome

It is important to note that any candidate who does not follow the advised actions and chooses to continue with the examination will be deemed to have declared themselves fit to sit the examination. Any subsequent application for consideration of mitigating circumstances relating to that illness, condition or personal circumstance will not be considered.



Candidate stops the examination - Outcome

The Examinations Board will review the Mitigating Circumstances Form and any supporting documentary evidence at its next meeting. Once a decision has been made, the candidate will be notified of the outcome by the RCVS Examinations team.

If a candidate is granted a deferral of their examination following an application for mitigating circumstances, a further deferral to a subsequent sitting of the Statutory Membership Examination (SME) will not normally be permitted. Candidates who do not attend the examination after their initial deferral will be required to submit a new application and complete the examination entry process from the beginning

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 re-sit policy.

Candidate enters the SME written exams (held in March) and pays the written exam fee	Candidate enters the SME written exams (held in March) and pays the written exam fee	Candidate enters the SME written exams (held in March) and pays the written exam fee	Candidate enters the SME written exams (held in March) and pays the written exam fee
Candidate successfully passes all written exam clinical domains and the Code of Professional Conduct exam	Candidate fails one or more of the written exam components	Candidate fails one or more of the written exam components	Candidate fails one or more of the written exam components
Candidate enters into the SME OSCE (held in September) and pays the OSCE fee	Candidate enters the re-sit opportunity for the written exams (held in May) and pays the re-sit fee(s)	Candidate enters the re-sit opportunity for the written exams (held in May) and pays the re-sit fee(s)	Candidate enters the re-sit opportunity for the written exams (held in May) and pays the re-sit fee(s)
Candidate successfully passes all clinical domains within the OSCE and is eligible to register with the RCVS as a Veterinary Surgeon*	Candidate successfully passes all re-sit exams and is eligible to enter the OSCE (September) and pays OSCE fee	Candidate fails one or more of the re-sit exams and is not eligible to proceed to the OSCE	Candidate successfully passes all re-sit exams and is eligible to enter the OSCE (September) and pays OSCE fee
	Candidate successfully passes all clinical domains within the OSCE and is eligible to register with the RCVS as a Veterinary Surgeon*	End of this exam attempt. Future attempts at the SME require a new application	Candidate fails one or more domains of the OSCE
			Candidate may enter the next exam diet and proceed directly to the second sit OSCE (without re-entering the written exams) for 1 attempt only

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: GloucesterHutchinson, 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://clinicallibrary.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 RCVS Academy course **'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/