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## BVETMED YEAR 4 EXTERNAL EXAMINERS REPORTS

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Responses to 2015/16 External Examiners' Comments and an update to 2014/15 Actions

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### To be considered at the Spring TQC Meeting

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a. Update to actions from 2014/15

External Examiners' comments	CD response	Update
<p>2.2 ... The quality of the answers from the students attaining distinction level passes was high and it was clear to us how these answers were much better than candidates in lower categories. If there is the perception marks are improving year on year over the coming years, it may be useful to compare different cohorts when questions are re-used.</p>	<p>The comments by the external examiners are appreciated and the Year Leader in collaboration with the Exam Chair and the Exams Office plan to monitor the performance of individual questions as they may be re-used to gauge how certain question perform over time. This will be an ongoing process that will take place during exam paper preparation.</p> <p><b>Action Required:</b> Review of performance of previous exam questions to be carried out by BVetMed Year 4 Leader, Exams Chair and Exams Office during composition of exam paper</p>	<p>The performance of previous exam questions were evaluated in the composition of the first sitting and resit paper in conjunction with Exams Office and question authors and internal assessors. Based on student performance and assessors experience with previous questions, certain questions were removed from papers or were modified. Questions that were previously used relatively unchanged performed similarly to previous performance.</p>
<p>3.1 We would suggest the use of terms 'not', 'least', 'false', 'except' is avoided when new questions are written. We would also recommend that examiners consider re-writing questions</p>	<p>We are extremely grateful for these very detailed and specific comments made on exam questions. The comments made by external examiners on specific questions are being fed back to</p>	<p>As with previous years, question authors (if they are still on staff) will be sent the</p>

<p>from the current bank that contain these terms. A lot of these questions were highlighted by external examiners prior to the examination. According to the questions statistics some questions using negative terms were removed by the external examiners, highlighting that these terms are sometimes confusing.</p> <p>...</p> <p>It is useful for the external examiners when internal examiners make comments on the scripts so we can see when credit has been given.</p> <p>It may be logistically challenging but consideration could be given to the questions being unidirectional i.e answer part 'a' then scripts removed and then answer part 'b'. This may stop candidates trying to pattern spot which then influences later answers. Part a) and part b) could then be marked by the same person removing marking inconsistencies.</p> <p>A compartmental approach (breaking questions into sub-sections) to writing these IR questions (as in question 2) is an alternative as this is likely to make it easier for students to address all areas required and will allow easier marking.</p> <p>The mean marks for Part 2 of questions 3 and 4 were only 1 or 2 CGS grades higher than for Part 1 of these questions. Authors and markers are to be commended on this as it suggests that marks were being allocated for logical approach rather than knowledge recall acquired over the intervening weekend.</p> <p>We suggest consideration is given to integrating professional studies, epidemiology and data analysis into clinical questions rather than generating free standing questions in these areas. This should result in increased credibility for these areas</p>	<p>question authors along with the item analysis statistics and guidance notes on how to interpret exam statistics. We believe that revision of question and/or teaching should be guided by various factors including item analyses - however, there should be caution moderating exam question solely based on exam statistics from single cohort of students. As questions are re-used we amass greater information about the ability of a question to discriminate between students and this should provide more information to examiners (both internal and external) that would allow more informed decisions about how questions or teaching should be adjusted. Comments about the use of terms 'not', 'least', 'false', 'except' in exam questions will certainly be discouraged if not completely eliminated. We will also ask the Exams Office to flag these comments in the question bank so that question authors can consider rewriting their questions. We are also providing greater clarity to internal examiners about writing comments on exam scripts to make it clearer how marks were assigned to individual answers. Comments regarding the format of the exam in terms of making more questions unidirectional will be considered by a special subcommittee charged with streamlining and aligning the examination strategy of the entire BVetMed Programme. We also appreciate comments regarding integration of professional studies, epidemiology and data analysis into clinical questions and will consider this in future examination.</p> <p><b>Action Required:</b> Feedback on specific questions made by external examiners, along with item analysis and guidance notes, to be sent to question authors.</p>	<p>item analysis of how their question performed. Questions that had poor discriminating ability or if the question was moderated or removed by External or Internal examiners are also being sent to question authors or relevant Strand Leader for rewriting.</p>
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<p>amongst the student body and reflects what happens in veterinary practice. It would also allow a greater breadth of species coverage in the integrated reasoning papers.</p>	<p><b>Action Assigned to:</b> Exams Office</p>	
<p>The organisation was excellent and the external examiners are grateful for the time allowed to review the examination papers this year. Provision of exam papers with and without answers was very useful and we would like to continue with this.</p> <p>The help given to the external examiners by Kim Whittlestone, Ruth Serlin, Wendy Mace and the other academic registry staff has been excellent. We recognise the enormity of this task for the RVC and the teaching and marking staff are to be congratulated.</p>	<p>We thank the External Examiners for their comments. We will endeavor to provide exam papers with and without answers as these proved helpful to External Examiners and we would like to continue this. We have also fed back the issues raised by the External Examiners regarding the computer program for External Examiner reports to the Teaching &amp; Quality Assurance Office and IT support.</p> <p><b>Action Required:</b>          Ensure External Examiners receive exam papers with and without answers.          Request IT support to improve the computer program that is used to manage External Examiner Reports.</p> <p><b>Action Assigned to:</b> Dan Chan</p>	<p>The programme is continuously developing and improving. We hope the External Examiners do not experience further problems when writing their report (AQO).</p> <p>External Examiner were sent papers for evaluation with and without answers</p>

b. 2015/16 Collaborative Report written by Wendela Wapenaar (Nottingham), Rachel Burrow (Liverpool), Clare Allen (Cambridge), Robert Foale (Nottingham)

# Collaborative Report

Exam board meeting: 18-Dec-2015

**Bachelor of Veterinary Medicine, Year 4, 2015/16**

**Lead examiner: Dr Wendela Wapenaar**

**Collaborating examiner(s): Ms Rachel Burrow, Dr Clare Allen, Professor Robert Foale**

## The Programme

Please comment, as appropriate, on the following aspects of the programme:

### 1.1 Course content

Appropriate and comprehensive

**Response from college requested: NO**

**Professor R.F**

The course content appears to be comprehensive and appropriate for year 4 students

### 1.2 Learning objectives, and the extent to which they were met

Appropriate

**Response from college requested: NO**

**Professor R.F**

The learning objectives appear to be appropriate and are met to a good standard

### 1.3 Teaching methods

The success of the majority of candidates suggests that learning and teaching objectives are being met.

**Response from college requested: NO**

**Professor R.F**

I have not directly observed any of the teaching undertaken, but judging by the high examination success percentage, I have reason to believe that the teaching methods employed must be satisfactory

### 1.4 Resources (in so far as they affected the assessment)

Sufficient resources were available for the assessments to be completed to a good standard.

**Response from college requested: NO**

**Professor R.F**

Clearly available and students have used the resources to good effect

### 1.5 Please provide any additional comments and recommendations regarding the Programme

No major changes suggested.

**Response from college requested: NO**

**Professor R.F**

I was extremely impressed with the standard of the examination and also by the efforts the College has gone to to ensure that the examination was a fair, yet detailed, assessment of the students performance and learning. I have no recommendations for change for this year

## Student performance

Please comment, as appropriate, on:

### 2.1 Students' performance in relation to those at a similar stage on comparable courses in other institutions, where this is known to you

Whilst it is difficult to compare students between universities when different examination techniques are used for student assessments, the candidates' overall performance was considered to be comparable with veterinary students at a similar level of their training at Universities of Liverpool, Cambridge and Nottingham.

Response from college requested: **NO**

Professor R.F

The examinations I am used to at the University of Nottingham have some similarities to those used at the RVC, but it is hard to make a direct comparison. However, I believe that overall the performance of the RVC students was at least comparable to those at Nottingham.

**COURSE DIRECTOR: Mr Dan Chan**

**Course Director Response:**

We thank the External Examiners for their insight and we find it reassuring to hear that our students' overall performance is comparable to other leading veterinary institutions.

**Action Required:**

**Action Deadline:**

**Action assigned to:**

### 2.2 Quality of candidates' knowledge and skills, with particular reference to those at the top, middle or bottom of the range

We sampled candidates from the different boundaries (pass-fail, pass-merit, merit-distinction). Overall the standard of most of the candidates was good and the RVC is to be congratulated on the calibre of students in this cohort. The examination covered a wide subject area and the students appeared to cope well with answering questions on a wide range of subject areas in several different formats.

Response from college requested: **NO**

Professor R.F

My impression was that the overall standard of this student cohort was that their knowledge and performance was at a high standard. Furthermore, the examination clearly separated the candidates with good, average and poor performance, but the number of candidates with worryingly poor performance was small.

**COURSE DIRECTOR: Mr Dan Chan**

**Course Director Response:**

We thank the External Examiners for their assessment of our students' calibre.

**Action Required:**

**Action Deadline:**

**Action assigned to:**

### 2.3 Please provide any additional comments and recommendations regarding the students' performance

Seeing the level of some of the questions (i.e. EMQ on clinical neurology) students have been taught well in the majority of topics. Some topics (EMQ equine nerve blocks and anatomy) were less well answered and it would be worthwhile to reflect on potential reasons for this.

**Response from college requested:** NO

**Professor R.F**

I have the same opinion as the lead examiner

**COURSE DIRECTOR: Mr Dan Chan**

**Course Director Response:**

We thank the External Examiners for their comments. All of the EMQ themes that had 3 or more scenarios answered incorrectly by >50% of students are being sent to question authors (and Strand Leader) with the item analyses so that questions and taught material can be reviewed by teaching staff.

**Action Required:**

Feedback on EMQ question performance to be sent to question author/Strand Leader with item analyses for review.

**Action Deadline:**

31-Mar-2016

**Action assigned to:**

Dan Chan and Exam Office

Please comment, as appropriate, on:

### 3.1 Assessment methods (relevance to learning objectives and curriculum)

#### Paper 1a – MCQ

The MCQ covered a good range of subjects and included some questions that tested interpretation of information as well as factual recall. There was a good range of questions in terms of topics and difficulty. This was fair and inclusion of some questions that are challenging is appropriate and gave the good candidates a chance to demonstrate this. The questions were very well written on the whole. Two questions were removed – see below for more detail. There were several questions that the external examiners would recommend being reviewed by the question writers as detailed below:

Q4. What have the students been taught here because the external examiners believe that the answer is debatable? Whilst this question does perform adequately on review of the statistics the external examiners suggest this question could be re-written for future use.

Q30. This is a hard question, although inclusion of questions such as this is appropriate.

Q42. Poor student performance, although the question appeared valid. The examiners considered this to be a good and fair question and were surprised on the poor performance. It would be best to avoid options in the answers that are directly opposing to avoid students answering tactically, although that does not appear to be the case here. Option (e) should perhaps say 'glue-on' shoe.

Q44. Removed because the most appropriate treatment depends on a number of factors (80% of candidates chose option (a) which was the incorrect answer). This could be a good question if the scenario can be expanded.

Q50. Removed, because the correct answer depends on which exotic disease (small pox, FMD, Schmallenberg?) is being considered, in some situations vaccination is 'better' than test and cull? The examiners recommend that the question is changed to make it more specific in the future ('what is best used' is different in different situations).

Q54. The external examiners recommend that this question is re-assessed before it is used again. The question was actually answered reasonably well, according to the options available, but the "correct" answer is not how this cat would be best managed in practice. The external examiners suggest that specific fluid therapy rates, times, reassessment, etc could be added. Alternately option (c) could be isotonic bolus (? mls/kg) and re-assess and this would then be the correct answer?

#### Paper 1b - EMQ

The external examiners feel that although the Extended Matching Question (EMQ) paper was quite difficult, that it performed well, and was generally very well written. The returning examiners noted that there was improvement on the consistency of these questions from previous years, and the team setting these questions should be commended for this. Also, the students generally performed well, and at a level that the examiners feel was appropriate for the stage that they are at in their education. In some themes, (e.g. EMQ 3 Neurology) the students performed particularly well in an area that is often considered difficult, and both the students and the teaching team should be commended for this.

Some of the individual themes in this section were felt to be at quite a difficult level (e.g. EMQ 2 Endocrine disease: EMQ 6 Equine Lameness Diagnosis), but that this may be appropriate, especially since this seems to have been accounted for by the standard setting process and it is appropriate to have a range of difficulty across the whole exam. The range in difficulty seemed to work particularly well with themes where the first few questions were relatively straightforward and tested core knowledge and skills, and then the last one or two questions tested more advanced knowledge and skills.

The scope of the paper seemed to be reasonably varied and appropriate, although the external examiners note that there were two themes on sheep medicine, and two themes on equine lameness. This may be appropriate as long as the exam, as a whole, fits the blueprinting across all topics.

The external examiners looked at each question's statistics, focusing on how the students performed in that question, the difficulty level, and how well the questions discriminated between the quintiles of student overall performance. In general, the questions that the students did not perform well on were usually in the category of more difficult questions, and the statistics for those questions reflected that they discriminated well. In the cases where the student performance was low, the external examiners also re-examined the question itself, to see if there was a lack of clarity in the question, or if the answer could reasonably be misinterpreted. The examiners paid particular attention to questions where the majority of the students selected the same incorrect answer, and attempted to determine if the incorrect answer could be argued to be acceptable.



Based on this analysis, the external examiners would like to draw particular attention to the following issues:  
EMQ 1; Q1. Option A is too broad, since it could be interpreted to apply to any immune mediated response, and so we recommend amending this answer to 'primary immune mediated disease' in future iterations of this question.

EMQ 1; Q4. Borrelia is not common in the UK, is it appropriate having 2 EMQs on this (see also EMQ 4; Q19)?

EMQ 1; Q5. Good question, difficult but discriminates well. (German Shepherd, Lymphoma stage 4)

EMQ 2; Q7. Could data be presented in a Table? As written it is difficult to sort through the details of the case. This is a difficult scenario, but is written as a fair, classic referral presentation. Use with caution.

EMQ 2; Q10. Students seem to have demonstrated confusion between hyper- and hypo-adrenocorticism. Appears to be lack of understanding, rather than a fault with the question.

EMQ 3; Q11-15. Done well, good performance overall. Good clinical scenarios.

EMQ 4; Q19. Borrelia is not common in the UK, is it appropriate having 2 EMQs on this (see also EMQ 1; Q4)?

EMQ 5; Q24. Students seemed to confuse gid and listeria although the description in the question is clear.

EMQ 5; Q25. Students seem to have difficulty recognising scrapie, although the scenario appears to be presented in a straightforward manner.

EMQ 7; Q31-35. Straightforward and well written series of questions, however, students seemed to perform less well than would be expected. So examiners were concerned about students' knowledge of equine distal limb anatomy/understanding of nerve blocks. Questions perform less well than expected. Is it because they have not done/seen diagnostic analgesic blocks? If so, would this be a more appropriate question for final 5th year exams, rather than 4th year?

EMQ9; Q44. Can we add another distractor with a canine connection (e.g. 'Brucella caninum') in the list or other scenario with a dog story but without abortion, otherwise a strategic student can select the correct answer to this question based on the canine reference only.

EMQ10; Q46. The word 'some' makes this question confusing, since it is hard to know if only some animals were observed, or all animals were observed, but only some were showing eyeball rotation. Therefore we recommend removing the word 'some' if the question is used again in the future. Furthermore, 'showing eyeball rotation' is vague - do you mean normal rotation of an animal looking around, or downward rotation indicating stunning?

Finally, is b) an incorrect option, or can it be interpreted as a more conservative, but still appropriate response, especially if animal welfare is being prioritised? Based on the multiple levels of confusion with this question, the external examiners opted to allow both options b) and c) as correct answers for this exam.

EMQ11: Q51-55 Difficult, but good questions. Q55, in particular, requires two-stage thinking. Can see why haemopoietic would be considered the correct answer in such a complex question, so, consider taking it out as an option for future uses of the question.

EMQ12. Q60. Would be better to have images for these questions in addition to the text description of the cases, if possible.

## Paper 2

As an overall summary, the external examiners are of the opinion that the long answer paper was a well balanced examination that covered very many aspects of the taught course and asked the students a considered and detailed mixed of factual recall, data interpretation and reasoned thinking in the areas of professional skills and clinical knowledge.

All of the borderline scripts (fail, pass/merit, merit/distinction level, approx. 25 scripts) were marked by externals. If these did not include the range of marks per question (top, middle, bottom), further scripts were selected to specifically represent these performances to see if they reflected the performance indicated in the model answer. For some questions, the external examiners found it difficult to interpret the model answer and get to the same mark as given according to the CGS. Some models answers described pass/merit/distinction level answers well, but in particular for Q3, this was found to be difficult. We appreciate not every level in the CGS can be justified in a written model answer, but we feel it would be beneficial and extremely helpful if model examples of answers that would be awarded the three pass grades (pass, merit and distinction) could be provided in future years as from those answers, the external examiners can then justify further CGS classification based on information provided in the model answer. With the increasing desire of students to know that there is complete transparency in the marking process, inclusion of this information would also be important to warrant justification of their given marks. We also recommend that this exercise be performed for previously used exam questions if it is anticipated that the same questions would be used again, as this would provide a good example for future markers and external examiners, to confirm consistency and fairness in the marking process.

One final comment with regard to aiding the external examiners establishing the mark given within the CGS, when marking it would be extremely helpful if markers put numbers or justification on the side of the scripts (or elsewhere) to document justification for the mark given. This makes the process more transparent for external examiners but also for potential students appealing their mark/results.

The external examiners did have a concern relating to the consistency in marking discrimination of question 3 as will be detailed later. A worthwhile experiment may be the marking of a question by the same person (blinded to previous marks) with a time period in between. As far as we know this has not been done, and although difference

may be small, these differences may have significant results for some students.

Overall, our compliments go to the markers who took the huge effort to read through and mark such a large number of scripts, of which the handwriting of some was a true challenge. The external examiners are of the opinion that in the future it would be worth reminding students that the legibility of their writing may influence their mark.

Detailed question review:

#### Question 1

This was a well-constructed question regarding the potentially challenging issue of social media use in clinical practice that gave the students clear guidance as to what the examiners were looking for in their answers. There is therefore however a frustration that, like many of the students, the model answer does not actually answer the question; the question clearly states the candidates need to "write a practice policy". An ideal answer therefore should contain an introduction giving justification as to why a policy is required and then state a policy with justifications and illustrative examples. The model answer describes what an ideal policy should contain and gives the examiners clear indications as to how to differentiate between pass/fail candidates and distinction candidates, but it does not itself provide a policy as the question requests. The external examiners have therefore reviewed the scripts and the applied marking scheme in this context.

The majority of the scripts reviewed revealed that the students answered this question in the same way as the model answer (ie: describing a policy rather than stating one) and as a result, we feel that if this question was to be used again in the future (which we would support), it needs to be re-written to ask "what do you think should be included in a practice policy on the use of social media" rather than specifically ask the candidates to write a policy alone, or the model answer and the subsequent marking should reflect the question more specifically if writing a policy is what the internal examiners wish to see.

The external examiners were satisfied that the marking of all of the scripts was fair, consistent and for this question it was clear how the standard marking scheme had been applied with reference to the model answer. It was interesting to note that some of the candidates who failed the examination overall passed this question and in general the question was answered well with relation to the model answer. There was also a wide spread of marks with the lowest scoring scripts being clearly inadequate and marked accordingly, whilst the highest scoring script actually answered the question with a clear written policy along with providing clear explanations and examples.

#### Question 2

This question performed well and was clearly asking students to reason and think. Like question 1, the model answer for this question should be improved and it would be especially helpful to describe a pass/merit/distinction answer, to make it easier for externals and other reviewers to understand why a certain mark on the CGS was awarded.

The external examiners were satisfied that the marking was consistent and fair. Two scripts were discussed with the question author and clarity was provided for the marking of certain students who only completed part of the question.

The external examiners would like to suggest improvements are made to sub-question c; specifically by stating in the question whether or not the examiners wish to receive a definition of the further analyses that the question asks the candidates to list. The external examiners have a concern that in this case and perhaps some other situations, it is possible that the students who attempted to write in a concise manner (as requested in the question) failed to obtain marks by not including this additional information.

#### Question 3

Whilst the external examiners feel that question 3 has the potential to be a very good discriminating question due to the complexity of the clinical case described, the reasoned thinking and clinical deduction required and the multiple body systems involved, this was the question we have had most difficulties with marking and reviewing for the reasons given below:

Relationship of model answer to Common Grading Scheme (CGS)

- There was a lack of transparency regarding how the question was marked, which raised concerns about consistency of the marking, and made it hard for external examiners to assess the process
- This was discussed with the lead question author, and marked half of the answers with one other marker. This person described the process and the team approach to marking the question; this correspondence greatly helped to satisfy us that the emphasis for providing credit was on the students' reasoning process, rather than on a "keyword checklist," which allowed the external examiners to assess the marking of this question as appropriate and fair.
- Recommendation: we recommend that the markers for this question write some notes regarding their approach to marking this question. This would be of benefit to future markers if this question is used again, and would also help external examiners in the future to understand how the marking was achieved.

Model Answer

- The model answer for this question was at a very high level of performance (82 score), which seemed to be unrealistically high for most 4th year students. However, this also made it hard to relate the marking of student answers to the model, and then to the CGS.
- When discussed with the question writer, he agreed that, in retrospect, the level of the written model answer was found to be very high, and so they had set it as being equivalent to an 82 in the CGS for their marking process. He acknowledged that this was higher than most students could obtain, and that, therefore, this provided some difficulties in marking the question.
- Recommendation: we would suggest that the examiners or question setters develop one or more alternative

model answers, in addition to the current one, that was set at a more appropriate “Good Pass” level, and consider adding a marginal or failing answer example for comparison as well. It may be possible to use examples of anonymised student answers from this exam for this purpose.

#### Difficulty of the question

- The case used for this question is very complex, and involves many body systems in the horse. In addition, the final findings are difficult to interpret and relatively rare in clinical practice.
- The difficulty of this case could make it an appropriate and discriminating assessment of the students’ ability to sort through, organise and analyse complex clinical findings.
- However, in combination with the difficulties of the marking process due to previous comments about the model answer, this difficulty contributed to the complexity and lack of transparency of the marking process.
- Recommendation: if the recommendations about the model answer and marking process are followed, then the difficulty of this question could make it a useful and appropriate assessment, as long as it is appropriately blueprinted as a more difficult question.

#### Marking inconsistencies

- It was noted that there were some inconsistencies in how some scripts were marked, especially in the marginal pass/fail areas. For example, papers with the same score, were found to be of different standards when compared side-by-side
- This may be due to the difficulties, discussed above, of using the high standard of the model answer for marking, which meant that it was hard to discriminate between the student responses in a consistent way. Therefore, there was a tendency for the marking to cluster the results close together around the pass/fail mark.
- This was discussed with one of the markers (not the question setter) and upon re-examining several sample papers with the same score, she acknowledged that there was some inconsistency, although it was agreed that remarking them would not change the scores significantly enough to make a significant difference to individual students. Furthermore, since the markers used a team approach to marking the question, the external examiners are satisfied that none of the students were disadvantaged significantly by this clustering of the scores; rather, the clustering simply diminishes the discrimination of the question.
- Recommendations: we accept the marking of this question as fair and consistent for the purposes of this exam, although we reiterate our recommendations to develop a more rigorous, transparent marking scheme for this question in the future.

#### Question 4

This was a good question that considered a clinical scenario that could be encountered in general practice. The question tested the students in a number of ways in addition to simple factual recall. The first part of the question (part a) involved interpretation of clinical and radiographic findings and then provision of treatment options with obtainment of informed consent. The second part of the question (part b) focused on a post-operative complication and explored appropriate antibiotic usage and communication skills. The general mark scheme/comments provided to the external examiners gave good indication of the examiners' allocation of marks for a distinction and merit level answer. This question should be considered as a good example to guide examiners in their preparation of future long answer questions for this examination paper.

**Response from college requested: YES**

#### Professor R.F

As above

#### COURSE DIRECTOR: Mr Dan Chan

#### Course Director Response:

We thank the External Examiners for their very thorough and helpful comments regarding specific questions on this exam. Each of the questions that have been highlighted by the External Examiners, along with comments and recommendations will be forwarded to question authors/Strand Leader for review of question and taught content. Revised questions will be uploaded onto our Question Bank database and previous questions will be archived to prevent their future use. Question authors/Strand Leaders will also be sent item analyses and guidance notes on interpreting item analyses to guide revision of question wording or authoring new questions.

Similarly, comments regarding the Long Answer questions, observations regarding marking of the questions and recommendations for composition of model answers will be sent to question authors. With the planned call for new Long Answer questions for next year's exams, instructions will include how the model answer must reflect how the students are to answer the question, and how it must clearly define how students will be awarded distinction/merit/pass/fail. Instructions to question markers already include how scripts must be annotated to indicate justification for marks. The Exam Office will be instructed to return scripts to question markers if scripts are not annotated to indicate how marks were awarded. The sample marker will be tasked to indicate whether scripts they sampled contained notes that justified mark awarded.

#### Action Required:

Feedback on specific questions highlighted by External Examiners, along with item analyses and explanatory notes of item analyses to be sent to question authors and Strand Leaders.

Call for new Long Answer questions to include a example model answer that matches what students are being asked to answer, and that it clearly states how students are to be marked as distinction/merit/pass/fail. Question markers to be informed that scripts that do not contain explanatory notes justifying mark assigned will be returned by the Exam Office to question marker for comments to be added to marked scripts

**Action Deadline:**

31-Aug-2016

**Action assigned to:**

Dan Chan and Exams Office

### 3.2 Extent to which assessment procedures are rigorous

We are satisfied that the assessment processes are rigorous

**Response from college requested: NO**

**Professor R.F**

I am of the opinion that these examination are rigorous and cover all aspects of the taught course well

**COURSE DIRECTOR: Mr Dan Chan**

**Course Director Response:**

We thank the External Examiners for their assessment.

**Action Required:**

**Action Deadline:**

**Action assigned to:**

### 3.3 Consistency of the level of assessment with the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ)

Consistent

**Response from college requested: NO**

**Professor R.F**

Consistent

### 3.4 Standard of marking

We are satisfied with the standard of marking, and refer to Section 3.1 for recommendations

Response from college requested: **NO**

Professor R.F

I have not used the Common Grading Scheme for marking before, but after having assessed the scripts I felt that the vast majority of marks awarded were appropriate and that the scheme worked well. However, it is clear that the use of the CGS means that the model answers provided must always be detailed and clear and it would help external examiners (and students in the situation of an appeal) for the model answers to always give clear indication of what points the internal examiners felt were essential. This was achieved in the majority of questions but care must be taken to ensure this is consistent

**COURSE DIRECTOR: Mr Dan Chan**

**Course Director Response:**

We appreciate the External Examiners comments and actions to address recommendations are detailed in response to Section 3.1

**Action Required:**

**Action Deadline:**

**Action assigned to:**

**3.5 In your view, are the procedures for assessment and the determination of awards sound and fairly conducted? (e.g. Briefing, Exam administration, marking arrangements, Board of Examiners, participation by External Examiners)**

Yes

Response from college requested: **NO**

Professor R.F

Yes

**3.6 Opinion on changes to the assessment procedures from previous years in which you have examined**

We have been satisfied with the changes made based upon previous comments.

Response from college requested: **NO**

Professor R.F

n/a

### 3.7 Please provide any additional comments and recommendations regarding the procedures

We acknowledge that despite questions being reviewed by a number of people, including the external examiners, unforeseeable problems with questions are only apparent when students answer the questions. The examination process continues to improve each year and we recommend all question writers to review the statistics for their questions to continue to improve the examination process.

**Response from college requested:** **NO**

**Professor R.F**

None

**COURSE DIRECTOR: Mr Dan Chan**

**Course Director Response:**

We thank the External Examiners for their comments and recommendations. As detailed in Section 3.1, item analysis statistics to be forwarded to question authors and Strand Leaders in order to improve the examination process

**Action Required:**

**Action Deadline:**

**Action assigned to:**

## General Statements

### 4.1 Comments I have made in previous years have been addressed to my satisfaction

Yes

**Additional comments, particularly if your answer was no:**

It was very useful for replies to external examiners individual comments to be distributed to all external examiners prior to the external examiners meeting.

**Response from college requested:** NO

Professor R.F

n/a

### COURSE DIRECTOR: Mr Dan Chan

**Course Director Response:**

We appreciate the External Examiners comments and will endeavour to continue to supply External Examiners the response from question authors regarding their specific comments.

**Action Required:**

**Action Deadline:**

**Action assigned to:**

### 4.2 An acceptable response has been made

Yes

**Additional comments, particularly if your answer was no:**

**Response from college requested:** NO

Professor R.F

n/a

#### 4.3 I approved the papers for the Examination

Yes

Additional comments, particularly if your answer was no:

A possibility to review newly added questions that replaced questions after our first review, would be appreciated

Response from college requested: **NO**

Professor R.F

I was appointed as an external examiner too late to be able to approve the examination papers but I was given opportunity to review all of the questions before attending

**COURSE DIRECTOR: Mr Dan Chan**

**Course Director Response:**

We appreciated the External Examiners' request and plan to submit any revised question or replaced question to External Examiner following initial review

**Action Required:**

Submit to External Examiners revised questions or replacement questions following initial review

**Action Deadline:**

01-Nov-2016

**Action assigned to:**

Exams Office

#### 4.4 I was able to scrutinise an adequate sample of students' work and marks to enable me to carry out my duties

Yes

Additional comments, particularly if your answer was no:

Response from college requested: **NO**

Professor R.F

Yes

#### 4.5 I attended the meeting of the Board of Examiners held to approve the results of the Examination

Yes

Additional comments, particularly if your answer was no:

Response from college requested: **NO**

Professor R.F

Yes



#### 4.6 Candidates were considered impartially and fairly

Yes

##### Additional comments, particularly if your answer was no:

With respect to the fire alarm/evacuation during EMQ paper sat at Furzefield Sport Centre:

The fire alarm was unavoidable and evacuation of the building was essential.

The external examiners considered whether this incident could have advantaged or, in particular, disadvantaged any students. Any potential advantage gained by cheating is unquantifiable, but considered likely to be minimal. As the examination is standard set with a fixed and predetermined pass mark each individual student is unaffected by the marks obtained by their colleagues so if any student did receive any benefit from cheating this would have no effect on any others.

With respect to potential disadvantages, the examiners consider that this incident would have had a minimal impact on performance. To assess this more objectively the entire examination results were very carefully scrutinized. On careful review of the results across all parts of the examination the external examiners found no indication that any student was disadvantaged by the fire alarm although we appreciate that this may not be possible to confirm with data available.

The external examiners are particularly concerned about the student(s) who e-mailed and telephoned the examination organisers and senior tutor to complain regarding the unfairness that he/she had left the examination hall before the fire alarm and thus had not had the opportunity to cheat. The external examiners feel very strongly that this student should be warned regarding this behaviour, particularly that suggesting/condoning dishonesty and unprofessional behaviour is covered by "fitness to practice" and is contrary to the RCVS Code of Conduct and is a disciplinary matter.

For future examinations the external examiners recommend that the process of evacuation of the building in the event of an emergency such as a fire alarm is explained and that students are reminded that whilst safety is of primary concern, that the students should behave as under examination conditions until told otherwise; specifically that conversation about the examination and the use of mobile phones is not allowed. In addition, the external examiners suggest that before examinations students should be reminded to maintain a professional conduct throughout the examination and the consequences of unprofessional behaviour.

**Response from college requested: YES**

**Professor R.F**

Yes

**COURSE DIRECTOR: Mr Dan Chan**

##### Course Director Response:

We appreciate the efforts by the External Examiners in scrutinising the potential impact the disruption to the examination may have had on student performance. We are very thankful to the External Examiners for their assessment and recommendations for the future. The students who have made statements that are deemed to be below acceptable professional standards have been referred to the Senior Tutor and the Academic Progress Committee. As per recommendations made by the External Examiners, all examination briefings to students will include instructions for evacuation during examinations and also a reminder that all students must behave under examination conditions until the examination is complete.

##### Action Required:

Examination instructions to include evacuation procedures. Student briefings to include reminder of required professional conduct during examinations.

##### Action Deadline:

20-Jan-2016

##### Action assigned to:

Exams Office

4.7 The standards set for the awards are appropriate for qualifications at this level, in this subject

Yes

Additional comments, particularly if your answer was no:

Response from college requested: NO

Professor R.F

Yes

4.8 The standards of student performance are comparable with similar programmes or subjects in other UK institutions with which I am familiar

Yes

Additional comments, particularly if your answer was no:

Response from college requested: NO

Professor R.F

Yes

4.9 I have received enough support to carry out my role

Yes

Additional comments, particularly if your answer was no:

Response from college requested: NO

Professor R.F

Yes, but as a new examiner my role was made extremely easy due to the experience and knowledge of two of the other external examiners and I have to say that without their support I would have found the process harder.

4.10 I have received sufficient information to carry out my role (where information was insufficient, please give details)

Yes

Additional comments, particularly if your answer was no:

Response from college requested: NO

Professor R.F

I think that more information could have been made available and in particular to explain in more detail exactly what the role of the external was considered to be. It would have been beneficial for me to have attended the INSeT day before examining, but I understand why this was not possible this year

**4.11 Appropriate procedures and processes have been followed**

**Yes**

**Additional comments, particularly if your answer was no:**

**Response from college requested: NO**

**Professor R.F**

yes

**4.12 The processes for assessment and the determination of awards are sound**

**Yes**

**Additional comments, particularly if your answer was no:**

The processes for assessment and the determination of awards are sound and fairly conducted.

**Response from college requested: NO**

**Professor R.F**

Yes

## Completion

**If you have identified any areas of good practice, please comment more fully here. We may use information provided in our annual external examining report:**

**Do you have any suggestions for improvements based on experience at other institutes? We may use information provided in our annual external examining report:**

The organisation was excellent and the external examiners are grateful for the time allowed to review the examination papers this year. Provision of exam papers with and without answers was very useful and we would like to continue with this.

The help given to the external examiners by Kim Whittlestone, Ruth Serlin, Wendy Mace and other academic staff has been excellent. We recognise the enormity of this task for the RVC and the teaching and marking staff are to be congratulated.

**Response from college requested: NO**

**Professor R.F**

None

**COURSE DIRECTOR: Mr Dan Chan**

**Course Director Response:**

We appreciate the comments and assistance provided by the External Examiners and thank them for their thorough assessment of our examination. We will continue to provide exam papers with and without answers as recommended by External Examiners.

**Action Required:**

**Action Deadline:**

**Action assigned to:**

**External Examiner comments: For College information only (Responses to External Examiners are published on the College's website. Please only use this box to add any comments that you wish to remain confidential, if any)**

**Response from college requested: NO**

