

The following details will continue to be captured via the online reporting process:

- Name(s) of External Examiner(s) contributing to a collaborative or individual report Murray Corke, Rachel Burrow, Neil Hudson, David Walker
- Programme Title and Award BVetMed Year 4
- Collaborative partner and location (if applicable)
- Year of Examination 2013-14
- Examination (only applicable to BVetMed)
- Date(s) of attendance at the RVC: Dec 2013

The online system will capture agreed sign-off by each collaborating external examiner or individual where necessary.

Instructions for completion:

1. For sections 1 - 4 please type your comments in the spaces provided. You are asked to indicate if you expect to receive a response from the College.
2. For section 5, please delete as appropriate (Yes, No or N/A). You are asked to provide additional comments, particularly if you answered 'No'.
3. Names of all students and staff should be omitted from external examiners' reports, to maintain appropriate confidentiality.
4. Unless comments are returned within three weeks of completion of the Exam Board meeting, it may not be possible to act upon these comments in the forthcoming academic year.
5. Please return expense claims with receipts attached by post to the Academic Quality Manager, The Royal Veterinary College, Hawkshead Lane, North Mymms, Hatfield, AL9 7TA.

Thank you!

Please comment on the areas detailed below, highlighting the appropriateness and strengths and/or weaknesses.

1. Programme	External Examiner comments: For Publication	A response from the College is required, if yes, please check the box [✓]	College Response: (Where the response requires action(s), each action must be outlined, a completion date given and a responsible individual named)
1.1. Course content	Satisfactory	[]	Response: Action (if any) date & name:
1.2. Learning objectives	Satisfactory	[]	Response: Action (if any) date & name:
1.3. Teaching methods	The success of the majority of candidates suggests that learning and teaching objectives are being met.	[]	Response: Action (if any) date & name:
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: Action (if any) date & name:
Please provide any additional comments and recommendations regarding the Programme:		[]	Response: Action (if any) date & name:

Please comment on the areas detailed below, highlighting strengths and/or weaknesses.

2. Student performance	External Examiner comments: For Publication	A response from the College is required, if yes, please check the box [✓]	College Response: (Where the response requires action(s), each action must be outlined, a completion date given and a responsible individual named)
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, Edinburgh and Cambridge.	[]	Response: Action (if any) date & name:
2.2. Quality of candidates' knowledge and skills, with particular reference to those at the top, middle or bottom of the range	Overall the standard of the candidates is good. 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. The quality of the answers from the students attaining distinction level passes was high.	[✓] It remains necessary to continue to remind the students to read the questions carefully, and to write neatly and legibly.	Response: Action (if any) date & name: Learning support have been asked to remind students of these points in one-to-one sessions and group/lecture situations as appropriate. 28/01/14 KDW
Please provide any additional comments and recommendations regarding the students' performance:	The long answer papers produced a wide range of answers with some good answers demonstrating that this was a fair examination modality with an appropriate marking scheme However, those candidates that did not answer the long answer paper questions well, were hampered in some cases by failure to plan and structure their answers appropriately.	[✓]It remains necessary to remind students to plan and structure their answers in a logical fashion	Response: Action (if any) date & name: Learning support have been asked to remind students of these points in one-to-one sessions and group/lecture situations as appropriate. 28/01/14 KDW

Please comment on the areas detailed below, highlighting appropriateness and strengths and/or weaknesses.

3. Assessment Process	External Examiner comments: For Publication	A response from the College is required, if yes, please check the box [✓]	College Response: (Where the response requires action(s), each action must be outlined, a completion date given and a responsible individual named)
<p>3.1. Assessment methods (relevance to learning objectives and curriculum)</p>	<p>Paper 1a. Several MCQ questions were identified by the external examiners prior to the examinations as being beyond the level required for Day One Competency. Where statistical analysis confirmed that a large majority of candidates had struggled with such questions, the marks from these questions were removed from the final totals.</p> <p>Paper 1b- EMQ We recognize that writing EMQ questions is challenging, but there is a need for sufficient relevant distractors for each of the questions, otherwise candidates may be able to spot the answer (see for example EMQ3 Questions 13 and 14 for each of which only 2 possible answers appear in the list). This point was raised in the examiners' report from December 2012.</p> <p>EMQ2 questions 6-10 were challenging, we suggest that orthopedics questions should concentrate on principles rather than specific fracture fixation methods. Ophthalmology and neurology appears to lend themselves well to EMQ questions. EMQ7 questions were reasonable,</p>	<p>[] Paper 1a. We encourage the MCQ question authors of Q12, Q18, Q54, Q55 and Q57 to look at the question statistics. It is recommended that good MCQs should continue to be banked into subject areas and stored for re-use. This should reduce pressure on staff for writing new questions and aid in standard setting and comparison of year groups of students.</p> <p>Integrated Reasoning (Papers 2a and 2b) We suggest that it is desirable to minimize the number of markers of a question to ensure a unified approach to marking. Multiple marking of some initial papers helps to provide a level playing field. We suggest that markers should monitor each others' marking standards by double marking some papers throughout the marking process (relay marking). If a marking grid is to be used to guide mark allocation, we suggest that the grid should allow for marks from 0- 100%.</p>	<p>Response: Action (if any) date & name:</p> <p>All question writers are now sent their questions back with the statistics next to them and encouraged to consider re-wording or replacing poorly performing questions.</p> <p>We are looking forward to being able to use the new question banking software - probably starting in 2015.</p> <p>The points about markers and marking grids were discussed at the exam board and these will be taken forward to next year's exam implementation. The integration of questions issue will require further discussion and some trialling with a possible clinical/ethical question, as has been the focus in previous years. Securing enough markers for all the clinical questions is the major task to be overcome as well as getting the balance right so that students cannot avoid professional studies all together.</p> <p>28/01/14 KDW</p> <p>Response from Matthew Pead 13/03/14: Difficulty can only be judged in the context of an exam – again banking questions helps with this. Difficult questions should NOT be eliminated from exams as exams should allow the best to excel. "Difficult" questions may be eliminated if their scope lies outside the learning objectives or the core knowledge, but the default should be to leave them in and let standard setting sort the difficulty.</p>

	<p>but have all students completed their abattoir extramural study? Many answers appeared to reflect lack of practical experience. EMQ8 – could questions be more succinct, possibly in tabulated form or bullet points? EMQ9 Question 44 needed more information on the appearance of the foreign body or possibly a radiograph. EMQ10 Question 47 appeared to be a difficult question appears, possibly due to candidates' lack of clinical experience of such cases. EMQ10 Question 48 was removed from the examination based on the statistics. We encourage the question author to look at the question statistics. EMQ11 Question 54 the answer was possibly made too obvious by use of 'perianal' in stem and answer.</p> <p>Integrated Reasoning (Papers 2a and 2b) We acknowledge the value of the Integrated Reasoning papers to assess logical clinical reasoning and ability to use clinical information appropriately. It was clear that previous experience of setting and marking such an examination has been used to refine the process. We make the following recommendations to further the development of this form of examination.</p> <p>The amount of time provided for the various elements of the examination</p>	<p>It is noted that use of a grid is different from the Common Grading Scheme (CGS) initially proposed to grade these answers, and we suggest that this is discussed and a consistent approach used in future. If a marking grid is to be used, all markers of a question should use the same grid. Summary comments and marks/ annotation on scripts by some markers were helpful in understanding the grade allocated. Question 1 presented some difficulties with significant discrepancies (3 CGS grades) between sample marking by the question author and 2 of the main markers (No marking grid was used for this question due to the nature of the question). We are grateful for the patience and diligence of the markers who re-marked this question to resolve these issues. A compartmental approach (breaking questions into subsections) to writing these IR questions is suggested as this is likely to make it easier for students to address all areas required and for easier marking. Questions 1 and 4b could have benefitted from this approach. The mean marks for Part 2 of questions 3 and 4 were only 1</p>	
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	appears to be appropriate.	<p>or 2 CGS grades higher than for Part 1 of these questions. This contrasts with a greater increase in grades in 2012. Authors and markers are to be commended on this as it suggests that marks were being allocated for logical approach etc. rather than regurgitation of knowledge acquired over the intervening weekend.</p> <p>We suggest that 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 amongst the student body and reflects what happens in veterinary practice. It would also allow a greater breadth of species coverage in the IR papers</p>	
3.2. Extent to which assessment processes are rigorous	We are satisfied that the assessment processes are rigorous	[]	Response: Action (if any) date & name:
3.3. Consistency of the level of assessment with the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ)		[]	Response: Action (if any) date & name:
3.4. Standard of marking	We are satisfied with the standard of marking	[]	Response: Action (if any) date & name:

3.5. Opinion on changes to the assessment process from previous years in which you have examined		[]	Response: Action (if any) date & name:
Please provide any additional comments and recommendations regarding the assessment process:	We suggest that question setting is done by those teaching the material, as soon as possible after finishing delivering their course. This should ensure that questions should reflect material covered during their course set at an appropriate level of difficulty. Where this is not possible we suggest that such questions be reviewed by others in that discipline to ensure that the level of difficulty is appropriate.	[]	Response: Action (if any) date & name: This is a good suggestion and has been passed on to the head of exams for consideration of how this would be implemented across all courses. KDW His response is below: Writing of single response questions like MCQ and EMQ at the time of teaching is perfectly feasible – they then just go in to the bank (and if we have enough for that subject in the bank then they can be excused writing the question) Question writers should be writing questions constructively aligned with their leaning objectives and at a core knowledge level.

Please comment on the areas detailed below, highlighting strengths and/or weaknesses.

4. Procedures	External Examiner comments: For Publication	A response from the College is required, if yes, please check the box [✓]	College Response: (Where the response requires action(s), each action must be outlined, a completion date given and a responsible individual named)
4.1. In your view, are the processes 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)	The processes for assessment and the determination of awards are sound and fairly conducted	[]	Response: Action (if any) date & name:
4.2. Opinion on changes to the procedures from previous years in which you have examined		[]	Response: Action (if any) date & name:
Please provide any additional comments and recommendations regarding the procedures:	The external examiners appreciate seeing question authors' comments on their initial feedback on the draft paper. It would be helpful to see the comments of the other external examiners at this point, so that areas of general concern can be identified before the examiners' meeting.	[]	Response: Action (if any) date & name: We will be implementing this suggestion from 2014 onwards. KDW

5. General Statements	[YES] [NO] [N/A] check as appropriate	Additional comments, particularly if your answer was no:	A response from the College is required, if yes, please check the box [✓]	College Response: (All responses leading to an action must note an identified timeframe and responsible individual. Please outline the action and a date by which the action will be taken)
5.1. Comments I have made in previous years have been addressed to my satisfaction	YES		[]	Response: Action (if any) date & name:
5.2. An acceptable response has been made	YES		[]	Response: Action (if any) date & name:
5.3. I approved the papers for the Examination	YES		[]	Response: Action (if any) date & name:
5.4. I was able to scrutinise an adequate sample of students' work and marks to enable me to carry out my duties	YES		[]	Response: Action (if any) date & name:
5.5. I attended the meeting of the Board of Examiners held to approve the results of the Examination	YES		[]	Response: Action (if any) date & name:
5.6. Candidates were considered impartially and fairly	YES		[]	Response: Action (if any) date & name:
5.7. The standards set for the awards are appropriate for qualifications at this level, in this subject	YES		[]	Response: Action (if any) date & name:
5.8. The standards of student performance are comparable with similar programmes or subjects in other UK institutions with which I am familiar	YES		[]	Response: Action (if any) date & name:
5.9. I have received enough support to carry out my role	YES		[]	Response: Action (if any) date & name:
5.10. I have received sufficient information to carry out my role (where information was insufficient, please give details)	YES		[]	Response: Action (if any) date & name:
5.11. Appropriate procedures and processes have been followed	YES		[]	Response: Action (if any) date & name:
5.12. The processes for assessment and the determination of awards are sound	YES		[]	Response: Action (if any) date & name:

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:

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)

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. Also, it would be useful for new examiners to be provided with a broad outline of the syllabus that is being examined in these exams, with the associated learning objectives included.

The help given to the external examiners by the Chairman of Examiners and Academic registry staff has been excellent. The external examiners also appreciate the efforts of the Professional Studies examiners in re-marking the long answer question and we are grateful for their prompt attention to this matter.

All External Examiner reports will be responded to via the following process [<http://www.rvc.ac.uk/Examiners/documents/ExternalExaminerReports.pdf>] and in time for the annual RVC Inset Day on Assessment.