ROLE OF THE EXTERNAL EXAMINER

How the system works at the RVC
Who we are:

Cheryl Jackson – Academic Quality Manager

Robert Abayasekara – Teaching Quality Committee Chair

John Sanger – Head of Examinations

Ana Filipovic – Academic Quality Officer ‘Standards’

Rhiannon Prescott – RVC Learn (Virtual Learning Environment) Learning Technologist
The main purposes of external examining are:

• to verify that academic standards are appropriate for the award, or part thereof (appointed to examine);

• to help institutions assure and maintain academic standards across HE awards;

• to help institutions to ensure that their assessment processes are sound, operated fairly and in line with the institution's policies and regulations.
An external examiner is:

**core definition**

- a person from another institution or organisation who monitors the assessment process of our institution for fairness and academic standards
External Examiners play an important role in our assurance of quality and standards.

Their duties are comprehensive, and include:

- ensuring that the assessment schedule satisfies the objectives of the course and covers the specified content;

- approving all written examination papers;

- confirming that the standard of marking is satisfactory, by scrutinising a sample of scripts and, optionally, coursework;

- observing (not participating in) oral, practical and clinical examinations;

- ensuring that there are no irregularities in the conduct of the Examination and that it has been conducted in accordance with the Regulations;
External Examiners play an important role in our assurance of quality and standards.

Their duties are comprehensive, and include:

• attending meetings of examiners held to determine the results of examinations, and participating fully in all their decisions;

• approving results by signing lists of results;

• Submit an annual (individual/collaborative) report to the College;

• If appropriate, submit a confidential report to the Principal if dissatisfied with any decision of a Boards of Examiners.
Information we provide:

The College’s Academic Quality, Regulations and Procedures

External Examiner information on website

RVC Learn – this is the College’s Virtual Learning Environment: username and password supplied by Ana Filipovic (afilipovic@rvc.ac.uk)

- Overall objectives for part of course you examine (*Learn*)
- Learning objectives (*Learn*)
- Programme Specification (*Website*)
- Assessment and Award Regulations (*Ana*)
- Course work - with contribution to in-course assessment specified (*Exams*)
- Examination timetables (*Website*)
- Examination papers (*Exams*)
- Marking scheme and mark descriptors (*Website*)
- External Examiner reports for the previous year with the College’s responses (*Website*)
Part A: Setting and maintaining academic standards
(UK Quality Code for Higher Education)

• Qualification Frameworks
• Characteristics Statements
• Credit Frameworks
• Subject Benchmark Statements e.g. Veterinary Science, Veterinary Nursing, Biosciences etc.

Threshold Academic Standards:
• Minimum level of achievement students are to demonstrate to be eligible for an award.
• These levels are described by a qualification descriptor.
• The levels are agreed across the UK.

Academic Standards:
The standards as set and maintained by the institution – our award of academic credit or qualifications, which may exceed the threshold academic standards.
Useful information continued....

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Higher Education Academy – professional development for external examiners

The HEA has developed a course for external examiners, which is designed to be complementary to a higher education provider’s induction and training provision for their external examiners.

The HEA has been working with a group of higher education providers to deliver the course at their institution (for their own academic staff) and from January 2018, aspiring or experienced examiners can complete. The RVC has not been involved in the pilot.

Further details about the course with some feedback from External Examiners who Have taken part in the pilot can be found here: https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/hefce-degree-standards
External Quality Monitoring

- External examiners
- Periodic reviews (<6yr)

Professional external auditing bodies
   e.g. RCVS, AVMA, EAVE

“Consumers”
- Employers
- Graduates

RVC

HEFCE Annual Provider Review

FHEQ

National HE benchmark statements
Process of appointment

- Approached by Course Director/Year Leader
- Nomination & CV submitted to Academic Quality manager
- Nomination & CV scrutinised by TQ Committee
- Nomination approved by Exam Board Chair
- Approved by Academic Board
“Institutions will make every effort to ensure that their external examiners are competent to undertake the responsibilities defined in their contract.”

Team Concept

- ‘Team’ of examiners should satisfy criteria laid down in the procedure....
Institutions should ensure that, once appointed, external examiners are provided with sufficient information and support to enable them to carry out their responsibilities effectively. Specifically, external examiners must be properly prepared by the recruiting institution to ensure they understand and can fulfil their responsibilities.

Accompanying paperwork should be comprehensive.

If any doubt please inform us (we can always provide more information!)
The Exams Office Team

Hawkshead Office - Eclipse building
Camden Office - Hobday building

**John Sanger** – Head of Examinations (HH & Camden)
- GradDip Equine Locomotor Research
- PGDip Veterinary Clinical Practice

**Wendy Mace** – Senior Examinations Officer (HH)
- BVetMed Year 4
- BVetMed Year 5 (Final Year)

**Carole Weightman** – Examinations Officer (HH)
- BVetMed Year 3
- Masters in Veterinary Medicine (MVetMed)

**Laura Rigney** – Examinations Officer (HH)
- BSc/FD Veterinary Nursing
The Exams Office Team

**Emma Rosenberg** – Examinations Officer (HH & Camden)
- BVetMed Graduate Year (Accelerated)
- MSc Veterinary Education (VetEd)
- MSc Wild Animal Biology / Health (WAB & WAH)
- Graduate Diploma Veterinary Nursing

**Lauren Christian** – Examinations Officer (Camden)
- BVetMed Year 1
- BVetMed Year 2
- MSc Veterinary Epidemiology (VetEpi)

**Adam Osgood** – Examinations Officer (Camden)
- MSci/BSc Biological Sciences All Years
- Veterinary Gateway Year
- BSc Comparative Pathology
- MSc One Health

Please contact one of us if you have a question or exams@rvc.ac.uk
Information we provide you with:

- Examination questions should be sent to you, for scrutiny, well in advance of the examination;

- All questions should be provided with key point model answers and, if appropriate, how marks are to be allocated for sub-sections of questions
External Examiners should see:

- Completed course work contributing to in-course assessment
- Written scripts
- Practical exams (questions and answer sheets)
- Mark sheets and associated statistics
- List of candidates taking oral exams/structured orals at re-sits
External examiners’ reports

“External examiners are appointed by an institution and their reports are an important component of an institution's internal and external quality assurance processes.”

No report = No fee!
An institution should ask its external examiners, in their **expert** judgement, to report on:

- whether the academic standards set for its awards, or part thereof, are appropriate;

- the extent to which its assessment processes are rigorous, ensure equity of treatment for students and have been fairly conducted within institutional regulations and guidance;

- the standards of student performance in the programmes, or parts of programmes, which they have been appointed to examine;

- where appropriate, the comparability of the standards and student achievements with those in some other higher education institutions;

- good practice they have identified.
Examiners submit **final** reports to RVC via [online system](#).

During exam board meeting, inform exams officer:
- whether an individual or collaborative report will be submitted
- if collaborative, who will act as lead examiner

After exam board meeting, emails will guide you through the process.

Final reports needs to be submitted online:
- within 3 weeks of exam board meeting
- if collaborative, once agreed by all examiners

**ONLY FINAL REPORTS MUST BE SUBMITTED – ONCE ALREADY AGREED BY ALL AUTHORS**

Any queries contact Ana Filipovic [afilipovic@rvc.ac.uk](mailto:afilipovic@rvc.ac.uk)
Log In

Please enter your username and password. If you do not have logon username, please contact Ana Filipovic, Academic Quality Officer at filipovic@rvc.ac.uk.

For password problems, please contact the Library & Information Services helpdesk: 02074685181 or helpdesk@rvc.ac.uk

Please note: Javascript and cookies have to be enabled to use this website

Account Information

Username: 
Password: 

☐ Keep me logged in

Log In
Instructions for completion:

- For sections 1-3 please type your comments in the spaces provided. You are asked to indicate if you expect to receive a response from the College.
- For section 4, please select as appropriate (Yes, No or N/A). You are asked to provide additional comments, particularly if you answered 'No'.
- Names of all students and staff should be omitted from external examiners' reports, to maintain appropriate confidentiality. Please do not include any text that could identify individual staff/students (for example, providing a candidate number of a student if they were the only individual undertaking the module/exam).
- Text is saved when user tabs out of the textbox or the mouse is clicked outside the textbox.
- 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.
- Please return expense claims with receipts attached by post to the Academic Quality Manager, The Royal Veterinary College, Havickshead Lane, North Mymms, Hatfield, AL9 7TA.
External Examiner Report System

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

1.1 Course content
   Please check if you require a response from the College.

1.2 Learning objectives, and the extent to which they were met
   Please check if you require a response from the College.

1.3 Teaching methods
   Please check if you require a response from the College.

1.4 Resources (in so far as they affected the assessment)
   Please check if you require a response from the College.

1.5 Please provide any additional comments and recommendations regarding the Programme
   Please check if you require a response from the College.
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:

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

5.2 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)

Please check if you require a response from the College.

Submit
Process of consideration

1. Reports received through the online system
2. Course Directors are invited to consider External Examiners comments and provide response and course of action where appropriate
3. Response and Actions form part of the Course Director’s annual report (AQIR)
4. Annual Quality Improvement Group meets to consider and approve External Examiners Report and responses to their comments (College Response)
5. Approved External Examiner report and College Response is published on the RVC website.
Closing the loop

Have concerns that you have raised been addressed adequately?

- Opportunity to respond on receipt of responses
- Asked the following year if you feel your concerns have been addressed
Old and new?

**Historical role**
- Quality control of product
- Examine every student
- Participate in oral examinations
- Observe all aspects of all assessments

**New role**
- Quality control of process
- Observe representative cross section of assessments
- Flag poorly annotated scripts or scripts without any annotations to the Exam Board Chair
Thank you!

- If you require any further information or clarification prior to the examinations please contact the relevant Course Director, the Academic Quality Officer or the Examination Office.