

**SUMMARY OF RESPONSES TO EXTERNAL EXAMINERS' COMMENTS, 2012/2013**

Course BVetMed Year 4

Joint report. Name of Examiners: Andria Cauvin (AC), Murray Corke (MC), Neil Hudson (NH), Rachel Burrow (RB)

Examiner Comment	RVC Response
<p><b>3. Assessment Process</b></p>	
<p>Continuing to remind the students to read the questions carefully, write neatly and legibly, and to answer in bullet points where appropriate (ongoing problems in exam technique!) is recommended!</p>	<p><i>Thank you for this reminder. Our student support and development team are now providing exam technique workshops for students at the most relevant times (i.e. just before they are needed) and attendance has been encouraging. We are considering making available example student answers (appropriately anonymised) that include comments from staff and this could also help students to contextualise and understand the importance of what they often think is common sense, but is clearly not.</i></p>
<p>It is recommended that good MCQs should continue to be banked into subject areas and stored for re-use.</p>	<p><i>We are hoping to move from the current 'manual' system of MCQ and EMQ banking to a more effective database system in the near future. Two systems are currently under review for adoption.</i></p>
<p>The external examiners recognise that writing good EMQ questions can be challenging, particularly when attempting to integrate different species and subject areas. Some of the EMQ questions perhaps attempted to cover too wide a subject area and too many species (e.g.EMQ4, integrated toxicology and neurology) making the questions too easy. It was considered that an average student would recognise some of the answer options where species specific narrowing the possible "correct" answers to a choice out of only a few options. These wider areas would perhaps be better examined as multiple choice style questions.</p>	<p><i>We continue to provide staff development in question writing through regular workshops and our annual inset day. We will also feedback question performance to the question writers this year and include specific comments from yourselves where applicable – so thank your for that input. We hope that the question banking software we adopt will allow us to carry these tasks out more easily than what is currently a fairly time consuming 'cut and paste' activity.</i></p>
<p>The examiners felt that both the MCQ and EMQ contained a good range of relatively straightforward questions with inclusion of some more challenging questions. It is appropriate to include questions that are answered correctly by the majority of the year group if the consequences of choosing the incorrect option would have disastrous implications on outcome to the patient. Inclusion of some questions that include knowledge and interpretation of</p>	<p><i>We continue to monitor overall student performance in relation to previous years. We are also examining the standard setting process to determine how successful we are at judging the difficulty of questions in relation to how they actually perform with a cohort. We will ask question writers for their comments on possible reasons for when questions are answered correctly or incorrectly by the majority of the year group so that we can inform our</i></p>

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information are good as these test decision making, prioritisation, etc as well and allow better differentiation of the good students. The students appear to have performed very well in these examinations again this year. We suggest that you reflect on this to ensure that this is due to teaching, course structure, etc rather than the examination becoming easier.	<i>reflection on this process.</i>
<b>4. Assessment Procedures</b>	
The organisation was excellent but the examiners would be grateful if we could be given a longer deadline to review the examination papers for the next year group of 4 <sup>th</sup> year students.	<i>We apologise for the very short timescales that you were presented with to turn the papers around. The request for questions for this exam falls at a difficult time, just after finals, during the summer break and during a busy autumn term for many staff. We will make every effort to give you more time next year.</i>
...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.	<i>The course handbook contains this and is available on the external examiners website. We will remind external examiners about this provision for future exam sittings.</i>
We understand the principles and theory behind examining using the current long answer questions but also appreciate that there are difficulties in the practicalities of writing these questions, particularly in some subject areas. We recommend that the internal examiners review the questions from this examination, how these questions were answered by the students, and formulate some guidelines for all staff members involved in preparation of long answer questions.	<i>We did provide guidelines for writing the long answer questions this year, but we will update these based upon the lessons learnt from the problems that arose this time around.</i>

### List of any particular strengths or distinctive or innovative features in relation to standards and assessment processes that would be worth drawing to the attention of external audiences:

The help given to the external examiners, particularly by Kim Whittlestone and Wendy Mace, for review of the question papers at the RVC has been excellent.

*Thank you. We really appreciate your expertise and input into the successful running of this examination.*

Prepared by: Ana Filipovic ASD

Date: 19<sup>th</sup> December 2012

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