

**THE AUSTRALIAN AND NEW ZEALAND
COLLEGE OF
VETERINARY SCIENTISTS**

***EXAMINER
HANDBOOK***

2024

*The ANZCVS recommends that Examiners access the most up to date copy of this handbook from the College website <http://www.anzcv.org.au/examiners/>
Last updated September 2024*

Congratulations on your selection to examine candidates for membership or fellowship of the Australian and New Zealand College of Veterinary Scientists.

The *Examiner Handbook* is intended to guide you on the principles of College assessment, the roles and responsibilities of examiners and the procedures which form the framework within which College assessment activities are managed. This booklet should be used in conjunction with the relevant Subject Guidelines and the *Fellowship Candidate Handbook* or *Membership Candidate Handbook*.

Information on examination processes is available online in the College's [Assessment Policy](#). The College Board of Examiners and College Office Staff are at your service to assist you in your important role as examiner. Please contact us if you require any further clarification.

On behalf of the Board of Examiners, we take this opportunity to extend our thanks to you for acting as an examiner this year. You were selected because of your recognised expertise in your subject in addition to your proficiency in communication and your general professionalism and we look forward to working with you to deliver a very high standard of examination. Resources are available to examiners on the College website [here](#).

BOARD OF EXAMINERS

Please refer to the College's website for information regarding each of the Board of Examiners members on the [website](#).

COUNCIL MEMBERS

Please refer to College [website](#).

COLLEGE ADMINISTRATION

Please refer to College [website](#).

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College acronyms

ANZCVS	Australian and New Zealand College of Veterinary Scientists
BoE	Board of Examiners
CE	Chief Examiner
ACE - TC	Assistant Chief Examiner (Training and Credentials)
ACE - Ex	Assistant Chief Examiner (Examinations)
TCC	Training and Credentials Committee
EC	Examinations Committee
SSC	Subject Standards Committee ¹
SEC	Subject Examinations Committee ¹
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CM	College Manager
ExO	Examinations Officer
HSE	Head Subject Examiner
SE	Senior Examiner (leads an examination team if more than one team of examiners needed)
CSW	College Science Week
FCH	Fellowship Candidate Handbook
MCH	Membership Candidate Handbook
MOC	Maintenance of Credentials

¹ Previous CEC responsibilities now sit with SEC and SSC

Timeline for Examinations

Examination papers **MUST** be submitted by 1 March.

Before examination submission to the College office

Action	Responsibility	Due Date
Nominate examiners to mark candidate written papers and attend the oral examinations. (Dependent on number of candidates enrolled.)	Subject Examination Committee (SEC) Chair	Before 31 October
Appoint examiners	Chief Examiner via College office Examination Officers	By 30 November
Blueprinting of Examination to the current subject guideline Learning Outcomes	HSE in collaboration with examining team	15 December
Examiner Workshop (by invitation from the BoE)	Chief Examiner, Assistant Chief Examiner-Examinations, Examinations Manager	November, and February
Set written, practical and oral questions and marking guides and forward to Head Subject Examiner (HSE)	Each examiner	December – mid-February
Compile the written, practical and oral questions and their marking guides. One document per examination component. Ensure college templates are used and holistic rubrics included where required.	Head Subject Examiner	
Liaise with the SEC Chair about written, practical and oral questions and answer keys to ensure conformity with Subject Guidelines and the Examiners Handbook. The SEC Chair will review practical and oral questions, particularly quality of images, clarity of questions.	Head Subject Examiner SEC Chair	mid- February
SEC-Chair-reviewed written, oral and practical components to be uploaded to the TEAMS site along with marking guides, blueprint and the SEC Chair checklist	Head Subject Examiner <i>(it is the responsibility of the Head Subject Examiner to ensure the review of the examination takes place by the SEC Chair in a timely manner before the paper is submitted to the College office for review)</i>	Before 1st March *(It is imperative that this requested deadline is met as adequate time for editing and preparation of the examination is important to maintain high standard, defensible examinations)

After Examination submission to College office

Action	Responsibility	Due Date
Examination components College formatted	Examinations and Assistant Examinations officers	On submission of the examination component.
College review of examination components and marking guides	Chief Examiner, Assistant Chief Examiner – Examinations, Board of Examiners Examinations Committee	March
College reviewed examination components returned to HSEs for final check and return to College office HSE provides marking guide for examining team to use when marking candidate's papers.	Head Subject Examiner	April May
Finalised version of written papers and practicals uploaded to examination platform	Chief Examiner ACE-Examinations College office	May
Candidates' written examinations available for marking	All examination teams	June, post examination
Check for discrepancies in marks of candidates using the College reporting system	Examiner pairs and Head Subject Examiner overall team of examiners	Prior to the oral/practical exams.
Finalise marking and resolve variances	Examiner pairs and Head Subject Examiner overall team of examiners	Prior to the oral/practical exams.

Before, during and after Oral Examinations

Action	Responsibility	Due Date
Practical examinations ready for marking	All examiners	Prior to the oral exam
Candidates sit their oral examinations, examiners to enter marks and feedback into College reporting system	All examiners	Enter marks on the day of the orals
Feedback comments for failed candidates	All examiners. Head Subject Examiner or Senior Examiner ensure helpful comments are included in College reporting system for poorly answered or incorrect questions	On completion of written and oral examinations; before submission of candidates' final result/s.
Examiner exit interview	All examiners	At end of examination period
Review of examination	All examiners plus SEC and SSC Chairs	At end of examination period and on receipt of feedback from College Office

1. PRINCIPLES OF COLLEGE ASSESSMENT

College assessment practices have been distilled into an [Assessment Policy](#), which provides an overview of all requirements, with links to more detailed information. Further resources, including presentations from Examiners Workshops, are available to examiners on the College [website](#).

1.1. Subject Guidelines should contain Clear Learning Outcomes

*“What does a candidate need to be able to **do** to become a member or fellow of your College Chapter?”*

The examination should aim to assess the intended Learning Outcomes as outlined in the Subject Guidelines.

The depth and breadth of content knowledge required will be indicated within the Subject Guidelines. The references from which this content is derived will also be indicated within the Subject Guidelines.

The candidate will also be assessed on their ability to demonstrate:

- a logical approach
- analysis and synthesis of information,
- clinical reasoning and,
- professional communication.

Membership of the College is an official recognition of a veterinary surgeon’s knowledge and experience in a designated field of veterinary science. Membership is an indication to the profession and the general public of an advanced practitioner, representing a middle-tier of knowledge, competence and experience in a specific area of veterinary practice. Membership is not a specialist qualification. Membership requires examination with members signified by post-nominals MANZCVS.

The awarding of Fellowship of the College signifies that the candidate has sufficient knowledge and experience in a particular area of veterinary science to entitle them to be acknowledged as a specialist or consultant in that area. In addition, answers from candidates should be supported by either universal scientific acceptance or by published scientific information. Candidates for Fellowship must demonstrate through their answers that they have formed their own opinion on issues related to their subject area, and that they can defend that opinion using their experience and knowledge of the subject area, supported by published scientific information.

1.2. Blueprinting for College Examinations

In developing assessment tasks, examiners need to be guided principally by the relevant subject learning outcomes.

Developing an assessment blueprint

In developing a blueprint, the examiners decide how the subject learning outcomes are best mapped against the assessment strategies available to College examiners. i.e.

- Basic concepts & principles written exam (Paper 1)
- Applied & clinical applications written exam (Paper 2)
- Oral/practical exam/s
- Training program

At this stage, examiners may determine the types of questions within each examination that are best suited to different learning outcomes. Examiners should design the assessment tasks so that they

sample broadly across the discipline's body of knowledge, while giving most weighting to the most important areas.

In general, all learning outcomes should be measured. However, this is not always possible. In addition, some learning outcomes will be assessed outside of the formal examination processes. For example, at Fellowship level, some learning outcomes are assessed during review of the Training Program Document by the Training and Credentials Committee, including completion of the case minima and activity log summary. It is the responsibility of the supervisor to sign off on these competencies.

Determining the pitch of the questions

At Membership level, assessment tasks should focus on common problems encountered frequently in the relevant veterinary discipline, without undue obscurity or inclusion of specialist-level detail. As a guide, the level of detail that the examination team can recall (without specific revision of the topic) and apply to a given question is likely to be appropriate to membership examination. More detailed reference to the breadth of current literature would be expected at Fellowship level.

Past examination papers

To improve the sustainability of the examination process, the examination content will not be published online from 2023 as the questions will be banked for future use. Examiners need to keep the examination content secure within the Teams site and this content cannot be used for any purpose other than the ANZCVS examinations.

Candidates will have access to previous examination papers (published prior to 2023) to assist with their preparation for the examination. If the examination format has changed significantly since 2023, additional sample questions will be published online to ensure that candidates have an adequate understanding of the type of questions posed in the examinations.

Summary of blueprinting tasks:

- Identify broad subject-specific testing domains (e.g. species, body systems, pathophysiology, diagnostic tests, therapeutics and management plans) which can be used for searching the question bank and mapping examination content across the blueprint.
- Use (and modify where needed) the College Blueprint template within the Resource folder (or an equivalent document created by the HSE) on Teams to plot the learning outcomes and associated testing domains (eg. body systems, species) across the various components of the examination.
 - Ideally all learning outcomes should be assessed (although weighted according to importance/relevance).
 - Note that some content may lend itself to assessment in a particular format/component and that some of the learning outcomes relating to clinical competency may be assumed to have been achieved for fellowship candidates during the credentialling process).
- Ensure adequate spread of questions across the various testing domains (where relevant)
- Check for excessive duplication of topics or learning outcomes
- Ensure compliance with the question reuse policy
- Ensure a predominance of higher-order questions for Written Paper 2 and the practical/oral examination components.
- It is compulsory for the completed blueprint document(s) to be included in the Teams examination folder and to be reviewed by the SEC Chair and BoE mentor by 15th December the year preceding the proposed examination.

In making these decisions, examiners are guided by:

- subject learning outcomes
- subject-specific domains (broad question tags, such as species, body systems)
- past exam papers in that subject (including compliance with the question reuse policy)
- the standard of expertise expected at the level of examination (Membership or Fellowship).

1.3. Develop Individual Assessment Tasks – Written Examinations

Templates

Question templates have been provided by the college to ensure that the format and content complies with the examination policies.

Templates are also available to facilitate the standardised presentation of laboratory results.

It is compulsory for examining teams to utilise these templates.

Short or long answer questions

Short and long answer questions across all components of the examination must:

- Include an instructional verb to indicate a clear task
- Define the scope of the question clearly to focus/limit the response
- Use professional terminology and define all abbreviations
- Avoid the use of the second person (you/your)

If the learning outcomes are clearly written, with precise behavioural/instructional verbs, then setting the exam questions becomes relatively straightforward.

Writing exam questions is not about being nice, tricky, mean etc – it is *only* about measuring candidate’s performance against the subject learning outcomes. Consideration of taxonomies of learning, and behaviours associated with different levels, can be useful in developing questions for written examinations (see Fig 1).

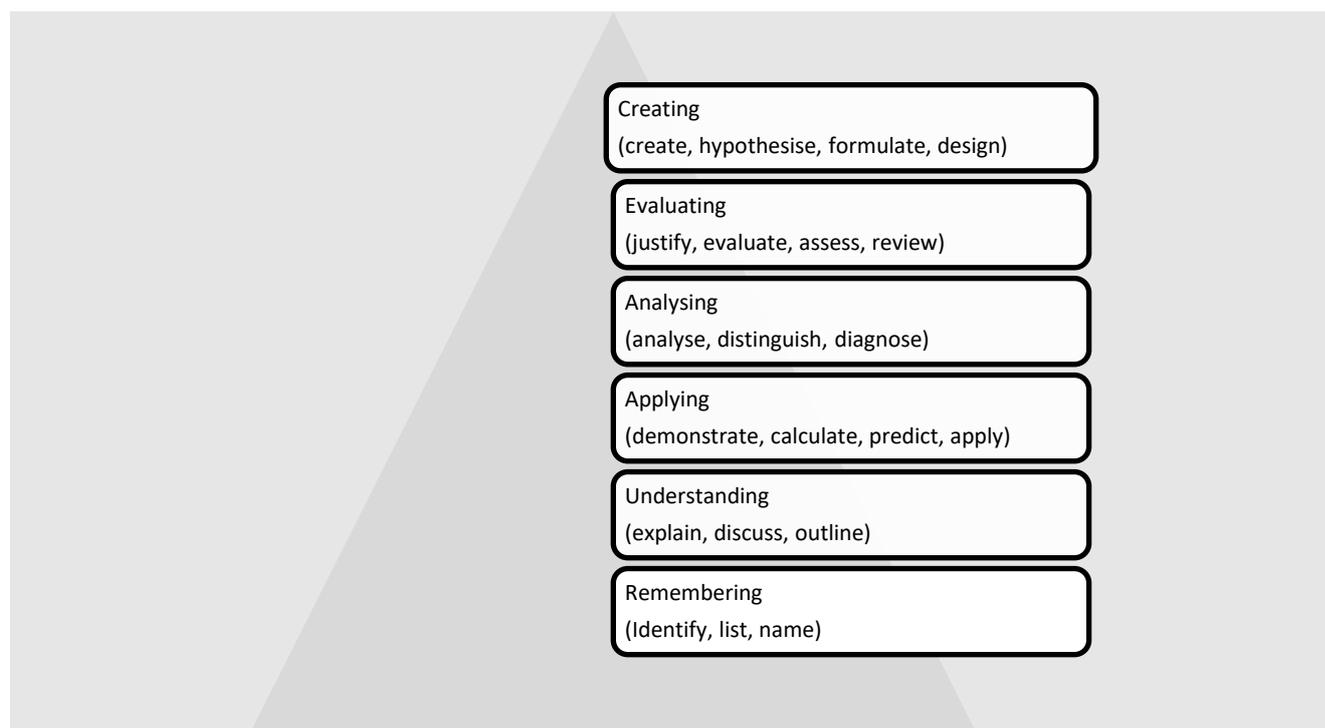


Fig 1. An example of a taxonomy of learning outcomes, and behavioural verbs that reflect them. College examinations would be expected to focus on middle- to higher-levels².

² Anderson L and Krathwohl D (2001) A taxonomy of learning, teaching and assessing: a revision of Bloom’s taxonomy of educational objectives. *New York. Longman.*

For short and long answer questions, each question should contain an instructional verb. (eg describe, formulate, discuss, explain etc). Short or long answer questions should effectively become an instructional statement (ending in a full stop, rather than a question mark). Professional, scientific terminology should be used.

Questions should be succinct. Introductory statements and images are not required unless they contain information that is directly relevant to the question posed (eg. a case scenario).

The extent of the task set by the question should be clearly specified. For example, instead of ‘List the differential diagnosis for this patient’ (which could result in a very long list of any remotely possible differential diagnoses), limit the response and create a higher-order version by asking ‘List the three (3) most likely differential diagnoses in this patient. Justify your answer.’ These types of questions assist the candidate to supply a response that is no more and no less than that contained within the model answer.

Examiners should avoid reference to the second person (you/your) and instead refer to ‘an appropriate’ or ‘an effective’ approach to diagnosis or treatment. If the question were posed as ‘Outline your approach’ - technically any approach that the candidate outlines would be correct as the question does not specify that the approach needed to be appropriate or effective. Exceptions to this rule include ‘Justify your answer’ or ‘Explain your reasoning’.

Care should be taken to avoid double jeopardy scenarios whereby an incorrect answer early in the sequence of questions may impact the candidate’s ability to score marks in subsequent subparts.

Common Terms used in College Examinations

In the context of an examination question, these terms are intended to elicit the following type of information in a candidate’s response:

- **Aetiology:** the candidate should provide information on the cause(s) of disease.
- **Pathogenesis:** the candidate should provide information on the development of disease; specifically the combination of mechanisms that operate at biochemical, cellular, anatomic and physiologic levels to cause the structural, functional and/or clinical manifestations of disease as relevant to the question.
- **Aetiopathogenesis:** the candidate should provide information on both the cause and the development of disease (as listed above under pathogenesis).
- **Pathology:** the candidate should provide information on the structural and functional manifestations of disease; changes in body tissues and organs which cause, or are caused by, disease.
- **Pathophysiology:** the candidate should provide information on functional changes and perturbations of normal physiology attributable to the disease process; or a description of the physiology of the disordered [diseased] state as relevant to the question.
- **Clinical examination:** the candidate should provide information on the general physical examination (including observations, auscultation, palpation, percussion and objective parameters such as heart rate, respiratory rate, temperature) along with neurological, orthopaedic and ophthalmic examinations where relevant. Blood pressure measurement may also be considered part of the clinical examination in small animals.

NB. Diagnostic tests, such as laboratory tests and diagnostic imaging, -are not considered part of the routine clinical examination and candidates should be prompted to consider additional diagnostic testing, or a broader term (such as clinical findings, see description below) should be used.

- **Clinical findings:** the candidate should provide information on all relevant findings reasonably associated with a condition from owner / agent anamnesis (signalment, history, presenting problem) to clinical examination, results of laboratory tests, diagnostic imaging findings and any other relevant investigative processes.

- **Compare:** to find similarities between things, or to look for characteristics and features that resemble each other. Note: when compare is used in this sense, it should be followed by ‘to’ (ie compare X to Y); ‘compared with’ means to find differences. For the exams, it would be best to use ‘compare to’ for finding similarities and ‘contrast’ for finding differences (see below).
- **Contrast:** to find differences or to distinguish between things.
- **Discuss:** to present a detailed argument or account of the subject matter, including all the main points, essential details, and pros and cons of the problem, to show your complete understanding of the subject.
- **Define:** to provide a concise explanation of the meaning of a word or phrase; or to describe the essential qualities of something.
- **Explain:** to clarify, interpret, give reasons for differences of opinions or results, or analyse causes.

Multiple Choice Questions

The MCQ format is commonly used in tertiary and professional assessment contexts and is widely recognised as having several advantages as an assessment including:

- they can be scored quickly, and hence results determined in a timely and efficient way
- they are efficient for candidates to answer, and therefore allow wide sampling of a domain
- the large number of questions that can be administered contribute to relatively high reliabilities
- the language can be controlled and standardised to minimise the effect of differing language competence
- they are amenable to quick and relatively efficient statistical analysis.

Use of MCQs in College examinations must be consistent with the Multiple-Choice Question [policy](#). Examiners tasked with writing MCQs should review the ANZCVS [Guidelines](#) for MCQ Writing. If examiners have not undergone prior training relating in MCQ writing, then participation in an MCQ workshop (or review of archived MCQ workshops available on the ANZCVS website) should be undertaken. Assistance and review of MCQ content for suitability in testing higher order thinking can be requested from the BOE.

Choice

As a general rule, there will be no choice within the examinations. Choice can be detrimental to a candidate because they may not choose in the most advantageous manner. Extra time needs to be provided to select the questions to answer, as the examination paper can become confusing, and it can be difficult to ensure all learning outcomes are assessed.

The College concedes that choice may be needed in some circumstances (e.g. where a Chapter acknowledges “streaming” of candidates’ interests even at membership level). Any subjects that require such choice must outline this clearly within the Subject Guidelines. The choice of elective is made prior to the examination.

Estimating the time/mark allocations for each question

In setting questions and expected responses at either Membership or Fellowship level, examiners should be conscious that questions should be achievable within time and other constraints inherent in examination conditions. Candidates can be expected to read approximately 100 words per minute and to type approximately 20 words per minute. Additional time may also be required for critical thought and structuring the response. One mark is allocated to each minute of time within the examination. Mark allocations should also reflect the importance of the question and any requirement for critical thought (eg. higher-order questions should be allocated more marks than a fact-recall question).

Calculate Mark Allocation

$$\begin{array}{r} \text{Reading time (100 words/min)} \\ + \\ \text{Estimated thinking time} \\ + \\ \text{Writing time (model answer word count/20)} \\ = \\ \text{X minutes/marks} \\ \text{(1 mark/minute)} \\ +/- \\ \text{Additional marks if Q of high importance (e.g. List of the most likely diagnosis)} \end{array}$$

CHECKPOINT: model answer word count divided by 20 should be no greater than the number of marks/minutes allocated to the subpart/question).

One of the key functions of providing a model answer is to ensure that the time allocated will be sufficient for the candidate to deliver the required response. Model answers that have a word count that exceeds the time/mark allocation will require refinement otherwise this may disadvantage the candidate (by inferring that candidates should be able to provide a more detailed response than the time allocation allows).

For multiple-choice questions, up to two different mark allocations can be utilised (reflecting a difference in weighting of fact-recall versus higher-order style questions). MCQs with different mark allocations should be grouped together.

1.4. Assessment Criteria for Marking Questions

The assessment criteria consist of a model answer plus a marking guide and/or a holistic marking rubric. The assessment criteria will indicate the content that is required for a candidate to pass the question but also an indication of how marks will be awarded. The aim of this information is to assist in the consistency of marking across the examining team and to ensure that the exam is fair and defensible. The assessment policy recommends that more complex questions (e.g. higher order questions) be marked by **both** a points-based marking guide and a holistic marking rubric.

Please note that the pass mark across all components of the ANZCVS examinations is 70%.

1.4.1. Model answer

Model answers are usually written as an example of the ideal answer. They are useful for:

- Checking that the expected response matches the question posed
- Checking that the model answer can be provided within the time allocated to the question (while also factoring in reading time and thinking time). As a minimum the word count divided by 20 (candidates expected to type 20 words per minute) should be roughly equal to the number of marks allocated to the question (for fact recall questions) or less than the number of marks allocated to the question (for higher-order questions).
- Indicating the information required for a candidate to pass, plus any points that may distinguish an excellent candidate

By itself, a single model answer is not a marking guide, as it does not indicate how a less than ideal answer should be graded, nor does it allow for a variety of different responses that might effectively address the question.

In general, the model answer can be provided in point form as this makes it easier to identify key content. Highlighting, bolding or different font colouration can be used to distinguish the relative importance of information (and these distinctions can then be easily referenced in the marking guide, (eg. bolded points essential for a candidate to pass OR worth X marks).

The references used to formulate the model answer and the learning outcomes assessed should also be documented as part of the overall marking criteria.

1.4.2 Marking guide and/or holistic marking rubrics

To complement the model answer, a marking guide and/or rubric should be constructed to indicate how marks will be allocated. This helps to rank the relative importance of the information provided and to indicate what content should be awarded marks. A proportion of marks may be allocated to a variety of components, for example:

- Knowledge content – with highlighted key points worth more marks than other points
- Ranking of information (eg. Differential diagnoses)
- Evidence of critical thought, clinical reasoning or a logical approach
- Justification of the answer

Marking guides:

Marking guides are particularly useful for short-answer or fact-recall style questions where a points-based marking scheme may be used. This may include statements such as:

- The candidate must mention X and adequately justify their answer to pass this subpart
- The bold points within the model answer are worth X marks, non-bolded points worth Y marks
- X mark awarded for correct ranking of the most likely diagnosis
- X marks awarded for justification of the answer

Development of marking guides is a critical part of the examination-setting process as they:

- Ensure that each examiner applies the same criteria to each candidate in the cohort.
- Are essential for moderation purposes; i.e. each examiner understands the standard by which the candidate's response will be assessed.

Examiners must discuss marking guides and agree to them during the development of the examination and therefore before marking can begin. This is true not only of written but also oral and practical components of the examination.

Holistic Marking Rubrics

The use of a holistic marking rubric is recommended for questions that assess higher order thinking versus knowledge recall.

A holistic marking rubric is mandatory for all questions that have a mark value of each question subpart greater than or equal to 6 marks for Membership and 10 marks for Fellowship examinations.

Holistic marking rubric templates are available below. Examiners are encouraged to modify these templates/criteria to suit their discipline. Some Chapters elect to use their modified, discipline-specific template repeatedly across multiple questions, but others elect to modify the template/criteria to suit particular questions (effectively merging the marking guide and holistic rubric). Either approach may be satisfactory as long as the examining team agrees that the rubric is appropriate and easy to apply. Holistic marking rubrics that work well for your discipline can be banked and re-used in subsequent exam cycles.

The following are examples as a guide of how to approach the construction of a holistic marking rubric:

1. Examiners should identify the criteria they wish to assess in the question
2. Examiners should define appropriate performance standards relative to each criterion
3. Within the marks allocated for the question, examiners should determine the relative weighting (marks) for each criterion (eg. X marks allocated to knowledge content, X marks for justification or clinical reasoning).

4. Ensure that the percentage range allocated to each performance category (eg. Clear fail, marginal fail, clear pass, excellent) are preserved. Noting that the minimum mark/percentage allocated to the ‘pass’ category should be 70%.

Holistic Marking Rubric Type 1

Excellent 90 – 100% of available marks	Answer is tailored to the question. Demonstrates a deeper understanding by relating facts to broader concepts (ie. relational answer). Outstanding knowledge of the topic and shows evidence of critical thought processes. For Fellowship, and to a lesser extent Membership, supports arguments with reference to known literature/texts. Answer is communicated in a clear fashion with appropriate usage of the English language. Correct terminology is used.
Sound pass 80 – 89% of available marks	Answer is tailored to the question. Excellent knowledge of the topic. There is minimal to no irrelevant information. Shows evidence of critical thought processes. Answer is communicated in a clear fashion. Correct terminology is used.
Pass 70 – 79% of available marks	Provided an adequate answer to the question. Majority of facts are correct. Logical thought processes are evident. Irrelevant information minimally provided. Answer tends to be multi-structural ie. collection of appropriate facts but lacking in synthesis or understanding of relationship between facts. Correct terminology is used.
Marginal fail 60-69% of available marks	Did not address the question as asked. Many of the facts provided are missing, incorrect or irrelevant. Simplistic answer with insufficient level of application of knowledge to the specific scenario. Includes irrelevant material (rather than integration and application). Answer lacks logical structure and is poorly organised or incoherent. Conclusions are illogical or not supported. Poor or inappropriate application of correct terminology.
Clear fail < 60% of marks available	Did not address the question as asked. Majority of the facts provided are missing, incorrect or irrelevant. Bare minimum answer with insufficient level of application of knowledge to the specific scenario. Includes a large amount of irrelevant material (rather than integration and application). Answer lacks logical structure and is poorly organised or incoherent. Conclusions are illogical or not supported. Poor or inappropriate application of correct terminology.

Example use of holistic rubric Type 1:

A 20-mark question is comprised of two sections, part A worth 15 marks and part B worth 5 marks. Each candidates’ responses are assessed against the model answer with use of the holistic marking guide.

- Candidate A answers the question exceptionally well, demonstrating a deep understanding of the topic. For part A, 90% of 15 marks are awarded, thus part A is 13.5 marks and part B is 4.5 = total mark of 18/20.
- Candidate B answers both parts of the question adequately, thus 70% x 15 = 10.5 plus 70% x 5 = 3.5 = total mark of 14/20
- Candidate C struggles with part A and did not address the question, thus 60% x 15 = 9, but answered part B adequately 70% x 5 = 3.5 = total mark of 12.5/20

Holistic Marking Rubric Type 2

		Standards				Total Mark (12)
		Fail 0-59%	Marginal 60-69%	Pass 70-79%	Excellent 80-100%	
Criteria	Knowledge of subject	Fails to understand or address the topic. Conclusions illogical or not supported.	Shows limited understanding of topic and context. Reasonable grasp of principles.	Thorough understanding of topic and context. Shows evidence of critical thought.	Outstanding knowledge of topic, including comparative work from other species. Critical thought & analysis of literature is demonstrated	/10 marks
		Mark range: 0-5.9	Mark range: 6-6.9	Mark range: 7-7.9	Mark range: 8-10	
	Logical presentation	Answer is disorganised and includes a large amount of irrelevant material	Answer is somewhat disorganized and includes some irrelevant material	The answer is relatively well organized and contains little irrelevant material.	The answer shows a high degree of logical thought and well-constructed argument.	/2 marks
	Mark: 0-1	Mark: 1.3	Mark: 1.5	Mark: 2		
Total for question:						

Access additional information on Examination Marking Guides [here](#).

1.4.3 Assessment Criteria for Short Answer and Multiple Choice Responses

Generally, allocation of marks to these types of answers is straightforward, but weighting of marks (e.g. for different subsections of a question) needs to be clearly described in the examination paper *and in the marking guide* and adhered to by examiners during the marking process.

Timelines for Proofing and Preparation of Papers

All submitted questions will undergo peer review by subject matter experts (SEC Chair) and non-subject matter experts (BOE representatives). Examiners should note that it is not uncommon that revision of the question, model answer or marking guide/rubric may be required following this review process.

Submission deadlines (see page 5 or College website) are important as they allow adequate review, proof-reading and, where necessary, re-formatting of papers. These steps are critical to maintain the integrity of the College's assessment processes, and to avoid confusion during the actual sitting of the paper.

1.5. Make Judgements about Candidate's Overall Performance

The procedures for doing this at membership and fellowship levels are prescribed by the College's [Assessment Policy](#), and described in greater detail in sections 4 (*Procedures for Membership Examinations*) and 5 (*Procedures for Fellowship Examinations*) of this book.

1.6. Moderation

The Head Subject Examiner collaborates with the examiners to ensure moderation of marking within a particular cohort of candidates (i.e. where multiple examiners are used) and also between cohorts (i.e. that the level required is similar across different years in which the examination is offered).

The marking guide and model answers are crucial documentation for ensuring reliable moderation of marking within a cohort of candidates, as it allows different examiners to be guided by the same criteria in allocating marks to candidate responses.

Because moderation of College assessment involves consideration of adequate marking guides, model answers and holistic rubrics, these **MUST** be submitted for review along with the examination paper itself.

1.7. Reflect, and Consider Changes for Next Iteration/Examination cycle

Individual question performance should be reviewed in light of feedback supplied by the College Office. By setting aside a dedicated period for reflecting on the examination process, the examiners may identify areas for improvement in the assessment process, e.g.

- Revise Subject learning outcomes
- Revise format or scope of one or more of the examinations
- Revise resources for oral/practical examinations

The difficulty and structure of the examinations are determined by the Chapter through their SSC members and consistent with common standards upheld by the College for Membership and Fellowship exams. The SSC Chair should ask for feedback from the SEC Chair and examiners on completion of a subject's exam. If the SSC members agree that changes to the examination structure of a component is necessary then they should forward these changes to the College office before September 30 to allow for BoE review and finalising by October 31 of the year preceding the subject's next examination.

2. ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARTICIPANTS IN COLLEGE EXAMINATIONS

All participants are expected to treat College Office staff and Officers, other examiners, Mentors, Observers and/or candidates with respect, and are expected to avoid confrontations with these people in the process of examinations.

Please note that while examiners, as subject experts, are responsible for determining subject content of examinations, the Board through the Chief Examiner and the Assistant Chief Examiner – Examinations are the final authority with regard to examination design and examination delivery.

Candidates are expected to:

- be familiar with the policies and procedures associated with College examination
- display behaviour consistent with the College's mission and objectives
- have no role in selection of examiners
- not communicate with examiners or observers on any matters relating to the examination, or their marks

Examiners are expected to:

- declare potential conflicts of interest at the earliest opportunity to the Examinations Officer for deliberation by the College's Chief Executive Officer
- follow the College's procedures in the conduct of examinations and assessment of candidates
- assist the Head Subject Examiner (HSE) to prepare examination papers *and marking guides* in a timely fashion
- assist in marking candidates' exam components and submit candidates' marks to the HSE for their review (using the College provided system)
- maintain confidentiality during and after the examination process (given examination content may be banked and reused, the material used within the examinations should not be used for any other purpose).

Observers are expected to:

- be present for and to proctor the oral and practical examinations
- usher candidates into examination room (or virtual room), and introduce candidates to the examiners
- monitor the examination process and technique
- report on the conduct of the examination to the Chief Examiner

The Head Subject Examiner (HSE) is expected to:

- ensure the examination complies with the requirements outlined by the Examiner Handbook and related policies (eg. Examination structure policy, MCQ policy, Question reuse policy)
- mentor and coordinate the examination team
- liaise with the SEC Chair during the planning and preparation of the examination paper
- blueprint the examination and negotiate or assign examiners' workload, coordinating the selection and preparation of examination questions by examiners
- flag any questions that have been reused or drawn from the question bank, and to ensure that these questions have been reviewed and, if required, updated.
- ensure that the examination is compiled into one document per component (using the all-in-one question template provided by the college). To minimise workload, it may be advantageous to set up the document with the required number of questions/sections indicated by the Subject Guidelines and the blueprint so that examiners can enter their questions and marking criterion directly into the document on Teams. Use of a single document in Teams ensures adequate version control and security.
- ensure that all examiners are aware of, have access to, and utilise the question templates in Teams.

- ensure that all examiners are aware of, and able to comply with, exam submission deadlines (timeline)
- ensure examination components are peer-reviewed by the examination team, with particular attention to the suitability of the marking guides/rubrics (given all examiners will need to be comfortable with applying these during the marking process). Each of the examining team should work within the same document on Teams so that there is adequate version control and the document is secure at all times.
- submit the examination paper, along with marking guides, to the relevant SEC Chair for review prior to submission to the College Office by the nominated deadline
- address requests for amendments from the College Office in a timely manner
- ensure each examiner has the correct marking guide for each exam component and is aware of how to use the marking guides
- check in with examiners early in the marking process to identify if the marking criterion require any amendments, to identify any errors/issues and to minimize the need for remarking and moderation
- ensure each examiner enter marks and candidate feedback appropriately online
- review the written and practical marks for each candidate for accuracy, completeness and discrepancies/variance, taking into account examiners comments on performance. If excessive variance is found, remark according to College policy. Identify any issues regarding examination questions or disparities between examining teams.
- ensure adequate feedback has been entered into the online platform by the examining team for failed candidates. This applies to all components of the examination (written papers, practical and oral examinations).
- be available to talk to other examiners about issues that may arise at the oral examinations
- be available to talk with the Chief Examiner / Examination Committee members about issues that may arise during College examinations

The Senior Examiner is appointed by the HSE and is expected to:

- be responsible for ensuring sufficient helpful comments for failed candidates in the College recording platform
- identify any discrepancies in candidates' marks before finalising candidates' results through the College recording platform.

SEC Chair is expected to:

- nominate potential examiners to the Chief Examiner
- mentor new SEC members on their role and succession planning
- liaise with the HSE during examination planning to ensure their consistency with the Subject Guidelines and the Examiner Handbook. The Chair must not be an examiner or have any potential conflicts of interest with any candidates.
- be responsible for reviewing and editing draft examination papers and marking guides, prior to their submission to College Office, and for completion of the SEC Chair checklist
- liaise with the HSE to ensure submission of papers in a timely fashion
- report to the Chapter AGM on their subject examination(s)

In addition to the examination-related roles and responsibilities identified above, SEC members are expected to:

- facilitate development of a question bank for each Section of the examination
- review candidate and examiner feedback collated by the Board of Examiners after the annual examinations and, if necessary, suggest Subject Guideline amendments to the Subject Standards Committee (SCC).

College Office Staff are expected to:

- assist examiners, particularly HSE, during preparation and conduct of examinations. This includes providing exam templates for examiners to use, facilitating access to Teams, first

round review of submitted examinations (using the Office Staff exam checklist) and formatting examinations to the College style guidelines

- advise candidates on administrative matters associated with examinations
- liaise with the Chief Examiner and EC committee on all matters associated with examinations
- provide a link between the BoE and the Council, Chapters and members

The Chief Examiner is expected to:

- oversee the entire examination and assessment processes of the College
- appoint examiners, on advice from SEC Chairs, ACE - Ex and College office staff
- assist examiners, as required, at all stages of the examinations process
- chair Board of Examiners
- consider, and be the decision maker, in instances of disparity in marks between examiners

The Assistant Chief Examiner (Examinations) is expected to:

- assist with the entire examination and assessment processes of the College
- assist examiners, as required, at all stages of the examinations process
- chair Board of Examiners Examination Committee

The Examination Committee is expected to:

- review all examination components and provide advice to examiners with written feedback
- assist examiners, as required, at all stages of the examinations process
- assist the entire examination and assessment processes of the College

The Board of Examiners is expected to:

- contribute constructively to the examination process by peer review of submitted material
- ratify results of examinations
- implement the College's training and examination system, including conduct of examinations, review and development of policy, guidelines and procedures relating to credentialing and examination of candidates.

3. PROCEDURES FOR EXAMINERS (GENERAL)

3.1. Subject Examination Committee (SEC)

The size and composition of each SEC will vary according to the number of candidates presenting for examination. The SEC is the group of discipline experts responsible for design, delivery and assessment of examination components and included two examination teams, one for Membership and one for Fellowship as required.

Please refer to the Subject Standards Committee and Subject Examinations Committee Handbook available on the College [website](#).

3.2. Appointment of Examiners

3.2.1 All examiners are appointed by the Chief Examiner. The SEC Chair provides a list of examiners in each subject to the College before October 31. Subject examiners will typically be selected from the SEC. The composition of the SEC is described in the SEC Terms of Reference, in the Subject Committees [Handbook](#)

In the absence of an SEC recommendation(s), examiners will be chosen by the Chief Examiner.

3.2.2 An attempt should be made to ensure that at least one examiner in each subject/ examining pair has had previous experience in examining for the College.

3.2.3 Chapters are encouraged to rotate examiners. It is recommended that members be appointed to the SEC for a term of 3 to 4 years, to facilitate smooth succession planning with members rotating through the roles.

3.2.4 Examiners operate in teams of two at membership level, and two to three at fellowship level. Membership examining teams will examine up to twelve in the oral examinations. Fellowship examining teams will examine up to three candidates. When the threshold is exceeded another team of examiners will be appointed.

In subjects with a large number of candidates there will be multiple examining teams each team led by a **Senior Examiner** who is responsible for finalising allocated candidates' marks and ensuring sufficient comments available for failed candidates in the College recording platform. The Senior Examiner is appointed by the HSE and is the most experienced examiner in the team. The Senior Examiner reports to the Head Subject Examiner.

3.2.6 Non-College examiners may be used if appropriate examiners are not available within the College, and the nominee is approved by the Chief Examiner.

3.2.7 Overseas examiners (from countries other than Australia or New Zealand) may be used at the discretion of the Chief Examiner if the appropriate expertise is not available within Australia or New Zealand and/or the use of a high profile overseas examiner may assist the quest for international recognition of College qualifications. Chapters wishing to use overseas examiners should write to the Chief Examiner before 31 October in the year preceding the examination.

3.2.8 Candidates have no role in the choice of examiners.

3.3. Management of Large Examining Teams

In subjects where three or more examining teams are required (2 examiners per team), the HSE should function to coordinate and lead the team in order to ensure the quality and timely production of the examinations, and the delivery of valid and fair examinations for all candidates in that subject. As

such, the HSE's people management skills are as important as their discipline knowledge and expertise. Membership HSEs do not have to be Fellows or Diplomats.

Leadership of the examining team should include coaching examiners, identifying and addressing issues that may arise. The HSE will assist, challenge and guide the team, ensuring a partnership in which all examiners contribute to ensure exam components are developed and delivered in a timely manner and to a high standard. In large examiner teams there is a greater need for moderation of marks awarded for written and oral examination components by different examiners to ensure consistency and equivalence for all candidates, and there is a need to ensure that all examiners are contributing to the development, delivery and marking of the exam. This would generally mean that the HSE is focused on supporting the other examiners but does not themselves mark papers or deliver oral examinations. The HSE should review marking to ensure consistency between examiners, and agreement between qualitative assessments and marks.

To promote consistency in marking across examiners, the following methods should be employed:

- The creation and use of effective marking guides.
- All examiners should discuss the marking guide as a team and come to a common understanding of how to apply it.
- The HSE should perform some early cross-marking to flag any discrepancies in marking approaches between pairs of examiners (for example the HSE may cross-mark the first three candidates for all examiners). Early discussion should be held with all examiners regarding any area(s) of the examination or marking guides/rubrics that are not performing well and that need amendment before the bulk of the cohort are assessed

The role of the HSE is to ensure that the examining team functions effectively to provide a fair and appropriate examination. Indicators that the examination was appropriately delivered include:

- Examination development / delivery milestones are met in a timely manner
- Review of exam components within the Chapter and within the College is used constructively to refine and improve the examination
- Review processes and feedback indicates that the examination team is functioning effectively and examination components are of a high standard
- Examiner feedback indicates that all examiners contributed equitably to examination development and delivery, and were satisfied with the function of the examination team
- Candidate feedback indicates that the examination was fair and appropriate
- Candidate pass rates, where appropriate, are used to review and reflect on the standard (difficulty) of the examination and indicate that the exam was delivered to an appropriate standard.

3.4. Conduct of Examiners

The conduct of examiners is critical to the College's ability to fulfill its mission, and to the assessment processes that underpin the integrity and reputation of the membership and fellowship qualifications. For these reasons;

3.4.1 Examiners are expected to be punctual and meet deadlines for submission of examinations.

3.4.2 Examiners with a conflict of interest (refer to policy [here](#)) are expected to reveal such a conflict to the Chief Examiner at the earliest opportunity. Conflicts of interest may occur when an examiner has had, or has, a relationship with one or more candidates such as;

- Being close relatives (e.g. sibling, spouse, cousin)
- Close personal relationships
- Research collaborations
- Supervisory or other close working relationships

Conflicts of interest might also occur when a candidate and examiner are in a position of potential business competition. The veterinary profession is a small community, so if there is any doubt about a potential conflict of interest, the Chief Examiner should be consulted.

3.4.3 Examiners must maintain the confidentiality of each candidate's examination responses and marks, including the written papers and records of practical and oral examinations.

Examiners must **not** discuss the examination with anyone, except the following people, where necessary:

- Subject examiners,
- Observer of the oral and practical,
- Members of the Board of Examiners,
- Members of College Council,
- College Office Staff and
- Persons nominated by Council in the event of an appeal.

Examiners must not discuss examinations, or examination results, in any public areas during the College Examination period or at Science week.

3.4.4 Examiners do **not** communicate with candidates about the examination, unless it is with the written permission of the Chief Examiner and through the College office.

Examiners must not discuss results with candidates under any circumstances.

Any attempts by a candidate to contact an examiner about an examination or examination results should be reported to the Chief Examiner.

3.4.5 Any email correspondence relating to examinations should be written in the expectation that such correspondence could become public at some later stage.

3.5. The Examination Process - General

Each examiner will submit marks and feedback into the College examination platform. **Further information regarding utilising the College examination platform will be provided to all examiners before marking of candidates' written papers.**

3.5.1 Examination Location

Written examinations and Membership Practical examinations may be offered in selected major centres. Oral examinations for Membership are currently offered via zoom. Fellowship Practical and Oral examinations will be offered at a single central location.

3.5.2 Anonymity of candidates

Candidates are identified by a candidate number for the written examinations to maintain their anonymity until the grading of written papers is complete, and by number and name for the oral and practical examinations.

3.5.3 Marking of written papers and oral/practical examinations

3.5.3.1 The marking of the written papers and oral/practical examinations is conducted independently of each other.

3.5.3.2 The Head Subject Examiner reviews marks awarded by examiners for each question.

Where marks awarded by different examiners for the same question or sub-question worth 6 marks or more differ by more than 10% of the marks available, the Head Subject Examiner (or Senior Examiner) must request that the examiners each re-grade that question.

As an indication, this means that examiners may discuss discrepancies when there are differences in questions or sub-questions that are worth between: 6-10 marks, by more than one mark; and 11-20 marks, by more than two marks.

If, after a process of discussion and review of the answer given and the marking guide, the marks awarded by different examiners for the question or subquestion still differ by more than 20%, or the overall result for the paper differs by more than 10%, then the Chief Examiner of the College will be notified and that question, answer key and the candidate's answer for that question may be sent to another examiner for consideration at the discretion of the Chief Examiner.

Persons will be regarded as suitable to act as another examiner if they meet the following criteria:

- Not involved in training or mentoring of the candidate, and
- Preferably have previously examined at the same examination level in the same discipline

In this instance the Chief Examiner, in consultation with two members of the Board, will make a decision on the marks to be awarded, taking into account the marks and comments from all the examiners.

3.6. Examination Structure

Examiners and candidates can find the structure of each component in the subject guidelines. Examiners must adhere to these outlined examination structures when designing each exam component.

Revisions to examination structure can be planned as part of subject guidelines review and must be submitted to the College Office by 30 September in the year preceding examinations. Changes to examination structure are not permitted after 31 October the year preceding examinations.

Examination structure is subject to the following limitations:

- The maximum duration for each written examination paper is two hours for membership examinations and four hours for fellowship examinations
- Both written papers must be of the same total marks
- It is recommended that there be 60 marks allocated per hour of examination
- All questions and sub-questions must be out of a whole number of marks
- The perusal time for written exams will be 15 minutes for membership and 20 minutes for fellowship
- During perusal time candidates will be allowed to write on scrap paper only
- There will be no perusal time for practical examinations
- No more than 50% of an examination component (based on available marks) shall consist of multiple-choice questions
- If there are multiple-choice questions these must be together in one section
- Up to two different mark allocations can be used for multiple-choice questions (eg higher order questions may be allocated more marks than fact recall style questions).
- True-false questions, matching questions, fill in the blank questions are not acceptable
- Ancillary materials used in examinations must be of very high quality and contain adequate information for interpretation (for example an indication of magnification on micrographs). Please refer to the [Guidelines](#) for the use of digital images within ANZCVS examinations for further information.

3.7. Reuse of Question in Subsequent Examinations

- No more than 50% of the multiple-choice questions per examination component within the current examination cycle may be reused from the previous two examination cycles in that subject.
- No more than 30% of the non-MCQ section (containing short and/or long answer questions) of any examination component can be substantially similar to questions offered in the previous three examination cycles in the same subject.
- Any exam question that is reused must be identified as such by the Head Subject Examiner at the time of submission of the draft examination to the Board of Examiners.

3.8. Use of Acronyms and Copyright Policy

3.8.1. Use of Acronyms

Where you use an acronym in any examination question, the term it relates to must be written out in full wherever the term first appears in the question. NB: this requirement applies even where you consider the acronym to be common knowledge.

3.8.2. Copyright policy

In order for the College to be able to manage how it deals with examination materials, **and to ensure that there is no breach of copyright, the College requires you to identify any material used that might belong to another person.**

For example:

- A photograph or drawing taken from a text book, journal, article etc
- A radiograph, scan, photograph or other image **not** made by you/your employee in **your business**
- A radiograph, scan, photograph or other image **made by you** as an **employee of another person's business** (including veterinary practices and universities)
- A radiograph, scan, photograph or other image supplied by a client (ie. made by someone else)
- Written questions copied from another source

You should footnote the source of this information within the examination itself (eg in the 'notes' section in Powerpoint or as a footnote in a Word document)

If you have any doubts, you may contact the College on 07-3423 2016.

The College's *Copyright Policy* can be read [here](#).

License over examinations

By agreeing to prepare an examination for the College, you agree to give the College a license to republish the examination.

This means the **ownership** of copyright in new material created in the examination **remains with the author(s)** (ie. you as examiner and any other examiners who have contributed).

3.9. Securing Examinations and Question Banking

3.9.1. Securing Examinations

From 2022 written examinations will not be uploaded to the website to facilitate the development of question banking. Candidates will be able to view past examinations published online prior to that date.

New sample questions are required when there are planned changes to the format of the questions used for examinations or if changes in current knowledge and practice dictate that the questions need revision.

Sample questions must be submitted to the College Office by October 31 the year before the examination.

The sample questions must be representative of and sufficient in number to give candidates a good idea of the range of structure, style and type of questions to be used in the permanently secured component across the breadth of learning outcomes. A minimum of 5 MCQs are required. For other question types, at least 5 sample questions are required.

Marking guides for sample questions shall not be provided.

Sample questions need to be peer-reviewed by the Chapter when the subject guidelines are reviewed.

3.9.2. Question banking policy

Security

- The College encourages the development of question banks
- If HSEs wish to access the question bank they may contact the College office
- Ultimately, access to the membership subject bank will be limited to current membership and fellowship examiners for that subject or subject area. Access to the fellowship subject bank will be limited to Fellows who are current fellowship examiners. Access to the fellowship bank by non-Fellows who may be examining will be at the discretion of the Chief Examiner on request by the Chapter Executive.
- The College Office will maintain the infrastructure supporting question banks on behalf of Chapters and control access according to Chapter instructions within the limits set out in this policy. Chapters will be responsible for entering and maintaining content.

Types and sources of questions banked

- Questions may be written specifically for the bank. Chapters may solicit questions from Chapter members, potential candidates or other sources. The Chapter Executive must take measures to ensure that questions provided are original questions, not held under copyright by another party.
- Questions may also be banked from past examinations, whether or not the examinations have been permanently secured.

Reuse of questions

- The reuse of questions [policy](#) will apply, limiting the proportion of questions that can be repeated from previous examinations, even if examinations have been permanently secured.

Collation of ancillary information

Questions to be banked must have ancillary information collated contemporaneously with questions being used and/or added to the bank. The responsibility for collating this information rests with the Examiners for that examination period and must be uploaded to the database when questions are uploaded.

- Question author(s)
- Names of all those who have viewed the question (including candidates, examiners, BoE members and College staff)
- Date of question creation/submission into question bank
- Time allowance for the question (for candidates to answer it)
- Question type (eg: MCQ, long answer)
- Whether the question is of “fact-recall” or “higher-order” type
- Topic of the question
- Learning outcomes assessed in the question
- Date(s) of question use
- Date(s) of question revision and revisions made

Question performance information such as:

- How candidates responded when question was used
- How well question functioned to elicit expected answers
- Suggested areas for improvement if subsequently used
- Exemplars of answers of various standards and marks awarded

Revision of questions

All questions and marking guides extracted from the bank need reassessment by the current examiners and may need revision.

3.10. Guidelines for the use of images in ANZCVS examinations

These guidelines apply to radiographs, ultrasound, CT and MR images

1. Image selection:
 - a) Ensure that the images are relevant to the question.
 - b) If more than two images are provided (for example orthogonal images), the images should be sourced from the same patient.
 - c) If you have a question in which you would like to provide images but don't have images that are suitable, please review the question image bank, or contact the Radiology Chapter who can provide appropriate images.
2. Image Quality:
 - a) Ensure that all images are of high quality and provide clear visibility of the relevant structures. Poor-quality images can make it difficult for candidates to interpret and answer questions accurately.
 - b) All radiographic images should have "post processing shuttering", that is removal of the white border from around the images.
3. File Format: Save all images in the JPEG format, as it is widely supported and ensures high image quality while keeping file sizes manageable.
4. Image labelling: Clearly label each image according to the image tagging standard operating procedure (SOP) included in the Examiners Handbook.
5. Image display:
 - 5.1. Diagnostic imaging:
 - a. All images should be cropped to the region of interest (for example do not include radiographs of the thorax and abdomen if the question pertains to the thorax)
 - b. All images should be displayed according to "hanging protocol conventions".
 - i. As appropriate to the projection/scan plane:
 - a. Lateral to the left of the image
 - b. Dorsal/cranial/proximal to the top of the image
 - c. Cranial/rostral to the left of the image
 - d. The right side of the patient to the left of the image
 - c. All images should be displayed on a black background to reduce glare.
 - d. All images should be de-identified and any distracting text cropped/covered.
 - e. Images should have a clear L or R marker if relevant.
 - f. For oral and practical examinations, a lead in PowerPoint slide of thumbnail images of all images provided for the question is recommended, followed by slides displaying the images separately, as appropriate for the body part imaged.
 - g. Clear still images are preferable to CT movies.
 - 5.2. Cytology and histology images:
 - a. The image should have true colour, be clear and in focus

- b. Ensure that the image is white balanced
- c. Check the image is not pixellated
- d. Indicate stain used (unless that is what is being tested)
- e. Ensure image has scale bar or magnification - something to allow scale to be assessed (eg an erythrocyte)
- f. Ensure there are no artefacts in the image (unless that is what is being tested)
- g. The lesion should ideally be in the centre of the image

5.3. Gross pathology images

- a. The image should have true colour, be clear and in focus
- b. The tissue should be at the centre of the image
- c. Gross image should allow orientation eg visualise head, adjacent organs etc or this should be provided eg image of mucosal surface of stomach or provide 2 images – one with perspective and the other closeup
- d. Avoid light reflection off the surface and minimise shadows as this can mimic a lesion or be distracting
- e. Left and right should be labelled if 2 organs (eg if both kidneys are in the image)
- f. If sectioning a lesion in half then completely section – don't leave the two halves connected
- g. Fresh tissue is much better to photograph than fixed tissue
- h. Use a plain background for gross images cleaned of blood
- i. Must have scale bar (e.g. ruler adjacent the tissue)

5.4. Other images:

- a. Patient
 - i. Must be relevant to the clinical case – depicting clinically relevant information
 - ii. Needs to be consistent with the signalment provided
- b. ECG trace
 - i. Indicate the lead, paper speed (eg. 25mm/sec) and gain (eg. 10 mm/mV)
 - ii. Ensure there are no artefacts associated with the trace (unless that is what is being examined)
- c. Endoscopy
 - i. The images/video should have true colour, be clear and in focus
 - ii. Ensure images are white balanced
 - iii. The orientation should be indicated or described (unless there is an identifying feature in the image, eg. dorsal tracheal membrane, angularis)
 - iv. Avoid light reflection off the surface as this can mimic a lesion or be distracting
 - v. Display the image on a black background to minimise glare
- d. Medications
 - i. The generic drug name should be visible and clear (if this is not the case, then the generic drug name should be listed or described separately)

3.11. The Examination Process – Written Papers

3.11.1 During the written examination process, the HSE is responsible for preparation of examination papers and marking guides, marking, and reporting of results to the Chief Examiner. (See also *Section 2 – Roles & Responsibilities*)

3.11.2 Written examination papers, having been reviewed by the SEC Chair, are to be submitted to the College Office for review before March 1st, one document per component. After submission to the College Office, the written paper questions and marking guides are

reviewed by members of the Board of Examiners. **It is imperative that requested deadlines are met, as adequate time for review and preparation of the examination is important to maintain high standard, defensible examinations.**

- 3.11.3 Examiners must record actual marks given for each answer, or parts thereof, into the College recording platform. All examiners use the same grading or marking criteria for each question.
- 3.11.4 Each answer is assessed independently by each examiner.
- 3.11.5 [Feedback](#) is an important aspect of the learning candidates gain from examinations. Particularly when low marks are given, it is essential that the examiner record the reason(s) for this in the College recording platform for candidate feedback.
- 3.11.6 Once marking of papers is completed, and prior to the practical/oral examination, examiners submit written paper results in the College recording platform for the Head Subject Examiner to review. Any discrepancies that have not been resolved by examining teams must be deferred to the Head Subject Examiner, if necessary the HSE may need to discuss reasons for disparities with the Chief Examiner.

3.12. The Examination Process - Practical and Oral Examinations

- 3.12.1 The structure and content of the practical and oral examinations is an important early priority during the examination planning process.
- 3.12.2 Practical examination and oral examination questions, formats and marking guides, using the approved templates, must be submitted by the HSE to the SEC Chair in a timely fashion to allow feedback from the SEC Chair to be taken into consideration prior to submission of the paper to the College office, along with the written components and signed SEC Chair checklist, prior to 1 March.

3.12.3. Develop Individual Assessment Items – Oral and Practical Examinations

Oral and practical examinations can provide rapid insight into a candidate's depth of knowledge and understanding. Some learning outcomes will only be able to be assessed by this type of examination, and care should be taken to ensure these are considered when mapping the overall assessment strategy against the subject learning outcomes.

Good preparation and standardisation of the examination procedures is critical to ensuring the reliability and validity of these tasks.

Conduct of Practical Examinations

Remember the candidates will be tired and stressed. The instructions should be very clear.

Practical examination checklist

Ensure you:

- Check the quality of the examination material. Ensure that materials are clear, legible and of appropriate (good to excellent) quality. Ensure any labels are correctly positioned.
- Check the equipment. Ensure all equipment (e.g. microscopes, data projectors, radiographic viewing boxes, etc) is fully functional.
- Begin and end the examination on time. Any delays to or discrepancies in the scheduled Practical examination timetable can be very disruptive to candidates.
- Check that candidates understand the Examination format.

Conduct of Oral Examinations

It is important that, before the first exam of the day:

- the examiners are familiar with the format (via zoom or in person)
- they have checked all videos are working,
- they have conducted a ‘dry run’ of the exam to ensure that the questions and images appear correctly, legibly and in the right order, and that the examination can be conducted within the available time.
- both examiners are comfortable with the exam questions and the exam format (e.g. which examiner asks which question),
- the examiners have predetermined how to mark the oral questions according to a marking guide and will both mark each question against the same criteria.

Introduction:

The BoE Observer will admit the candidate and introduce them to the examiners. The Observer will then tell the candidate that they are just observing and taking no active part in the exam process.

It is important that the examiners make the candidate feel at ease with some introductory remarks.

Explain the format of the exam:

The examiners should outline how the oral is to be conducted.

“The examination will take about 45 minutes to an hour. I will start with some questions, then we will move from examiner to examiner. Take your time, ask for clarification if you need to. We will periodically be showing you images or lab reports. Please let us know if any of the images or questions are not clear. You may make notes and periodically we will also be making notes.”

A good oral exam has:

- Relatively little talking from the examiners. Remember it is the candidate’s exam, they should be doing the talking. This means that long introductions including clinical history, signalment etc are suboptimal.
- Questions that are clear and indicate to the candidate what the examiners want. An open-ended question is designed to encourage a full, meaningful answer using the candidate’s own knowledge and/or opinion. Conversely, a closed-ended question encourages a short or single-word answer.
- Consider asking subparts of questions sequentially, candidates can struggle to remember all aspects of the question if delivered at once.
- Use audio-visual aids only when they clearly add to the question. Don’t show pictures unless they are clearly important to the question being asked. Summary slides – for example signalment, presenting signs may be helpful.
- Have concise lab results. If using lab results, do not pass over an entire haematology and biochem printout if the question is focused on liver disease for example. Candidates will often use a lot of time to look at every value, trying to look for traps etc. The BoE would rather examiners use a separate print out that might only have two values on it for the two parameters of interest and then a line saying that all haematology & other biochem was otherwise normal. If you choose to highlight abnormal values in bold, please be consistent throughout the examination.
- Clear Powerpoint displays. If using Powerpoint, do not use any presentation tips & tricks, just use a simple background and monocolour text.
 - An oral examination template is available from the College office and should be available in the Teams site.

- Audiovisuals that are fit for purpose - selected material needs to meet the examiners' purpose for the question(s) but does not necessarily need to be perfect or complete (in terms of a series of images). Assessment of fitness for purpose should be made under conditions as similar as possible to those that will be present during the examination. This particularly applies to situations where an original image might be selected for use in an examination and then reproduced, scanned or processed in some way prior to the examination.

A good oral exam is prepared well in advance, with no delays. In membership orals there is so little time, it is very important to have carefully designed questions that lead the candidate to where it is that you want them to go. With a complex case you may end up waiting for the candidate to indicate what they would do next if the question is framed sequentially. For example, it may be better to ask for a diagnostic plan and award marks for that as a whole, then provide a test result such as a radiograph for their interpretation.

How does a good examiner handle the candidate when the candidate starts to go down the wrong path?

Oral exams have to take into account the individual – some are introverted some extroverted, some confident, some not. The shy, non-confident candidates require more time and need encouragement and gentle handling. Examiners may find that they have to change their handling of a particular candidate during the exam process:

- Try not to be either negative or positive e.g. be careful about saying “that is good” when you may not necessarily agree with what the candidate is saying or their direction Consider neutral responses such as ‘thankyou’.
- Give the candidate time. Be prepared to allow a bit of silence – don’t think you have to jump in and say something or provide direction.
- Indicate that the direction the candidate is heading may be one approach. Ask if there are any other approaches that may be appropriate for this case.
- Where the question has a number of points to answer, prompting may be used to ensure that the candidate has completed their answer. This is particularly true of questions that may have multiple components/subparts. Prompts should be pre-planned (so that the candidate experience is consistent across multiple examining teams) but they should only be used if the candidate has neglected to cover key points of the question/model answer. The need for prompting can be factored into the marking scheme (ie. Those candidates that cover all of the information without requiring prompts should score better than those that required multiple prompts to extract the same information).
- Where necessary, ask the candidate to justify their response. In the case of fellowship candidates, referencing literature may be requested/required.
- Don’t labour a point. If the examiner has pursued the above sorts of feedback and feels confident that the candidate has demonstrated the extent of their knowledge in a particular area then it is time to move on. Once you have enough information to indicate that the candidate is right or wrong or has reached the end of their knowledge then move on to another topic. If a candidate has already answered the next part of a question, this can be acknowledged.

Ending the exam:

Give a little bit of thought to how you will end the examination and in particular the choice of words.

Examiners may say for example: “Well that is great, we are finished and you are now free to go.” What they mean is isn’t it great that the exam is over?! What the candidate sometimes hears is “you did great”. It is really important not to use words that can be misinterpreted by the candidate as being indicative of how they have performed.

A simple alternative is:

“We have come to the end of our time period. Thank you for your interest in the subject. The Observer will now run through a few details with you. Enjoy the rest of your day.”

All candidates will be given an opportunity to provide written feedback on the exam process in a confidential process and this information is passed back to the SECs. Examiners must not engage in oral feedback to the candidate.

Working out the pass marks for candidates:

Time will be required between candidates to add examination results to see if a candidate has passed, failed or, in membership, received a supplementary examination for the following year.

The Senior Examiner will add up the marks after the candidate has been excused. Discussion of the marks is done in the presence of the observer.

Filling out the Candidate information to candidates that didn't pass: *(see 3.2.6, 3.12 & 3.13)*

Constructive feedback from examiners to candidates who did not pass the examination is required. This specific information is relayed to candidates if they request feedback (the majority of failed candidates do request feedback from their examiners).

3.12.4 Observers

- 3.12.4.1 The Chief Examiner appoints an observer for each oral and practical examination. The observer may be a member of the Board of Examiners or any appointee of the Chief Examiner.

The role of the observer is to:

be present for and to proctor the oral and practical examinations,
monitor the examination process and technique, and
report on the conduct of the examination to the Chief Examiner, including any concerns.

The observer should be present for all examiner discussions on the oral examinations.

- 3.12.4.2 Only appointed examiners and the observer are present with the candidate during oral and practical examinations.
- 3.12.4.3 If the Head Subject Examiner wishes to invite an additional person to be present, they must write to the College Office to seek approval from the Chief Examiner at least two weeks prior to the examination.

This approach must explain the reasons for inviting the additional person. If approval is granted, the College office informs the candidate(s) in writing prior to the week of the oral examinations:

- that there will be an additional person present with the Chief Examiner's approval and the name of that person
- the reason for the additional person being present
- that the invited person will not take part in any aspect of the examination

Candidates are asked to contact the College office immediately if they have any objection to the additional person's presence. The invited person must be placed in the room in such a position that they are clearly not actively involved in the examination process (in zoom with audio and video muted), nor likely to distract the candidate. The invited person must not speak to anyone in the room during the examination and must not be involved in asking questions of the candidate.

- 3.12.4.4 At the oral examination, the candidate, two or more examiners, and an observer, will meet in the one virtual space or room if the oral examination is in person.

- 3.12.4.5 Questions are shared between the examiners.
- 3.12.4.6 During the oral, **no** records concerning the written papers or practical, or written notes about the oral examination should be visible to the candidate.
- 3.12.4.7 A candidate's performance in a written paper must not influence the choice of questions or question content in the oral examination.
- 3.12.4.8 Copies of all supportive materials for practical and oral examinations such as slides and images must be provided to the College office for safe storage.

3.13. Oral Examination Policy

1. Examiners must contribute to the construction of the oral examination by providing questions and marking guides to the Head Subject Examiner. All questions and marking guides must be reviewed and agreed upon by all the examiners delivering the oral examination including all materials to be used, for example images, radiographs, ECGs and histopathological slides. They must also be reviewed by the SEC Chair and the BoE as is the normal procedure for all other examination components.
2. Oral examinations are to be submitted on Word and Powerpoint templates provided by the College. A separate examination must be provided for each day of examination.
3. The oral examination for each candidate within a subject will be standardised so that the same number of questions of similar scope and depth of areas assessed and addresses the same learning outcomes.
 - a) The same examination questions will be used for all candidates examined in a subject on the same day and by all examining teams in that subject working concurrently on the same day.
 - b) For subjects in which oral examinations span more than one day of examining, the questions must be changed after each full day of examining, while maintaining the number of questions and the similarity in scope, depth and learning outcomes assessed.
4. The degree of sameness of the examinations within a day will be such that the same content, materials (scenarios, images, radiographs, etc), cues and qualifiers will be used by all examiners, and the questions will be as much the same as possible while still allowing for examiners to individualise the examination to explore the knowledge of each candidate. Specific guidance is given in the Guidance Notes for Oral Examinations, below.
5. The amount and type of cueing may be (inversely) proportional to candidate knowledge and reasoning. A strong candidate may pre-empt subsequent material. Examiners should identify in advance where and how they may need to cue candidates during the oral examination so that all candidates receive similar cues, as required. Examiners should also consider how the need for cues is reflected in their marking guide. Any additional cueing required during the examination should be recorded in examiners' notes and will likely influence marks awarded.
6. Membership oral examinations will be designed to last approximately 45 minutes and Fellowship oral examinations to last 60-120 minutes as specified in the subject guidelines. The exact duration of the examination for each candidate may vary depending on the speed with which the candidate proceeds through the questions.
 - a) Candidates will not be allowed unlimited time to answer questions, and examiners will move ahead to the next question after a reasonable time if candidates cannot answer. Examiners are responsible for time management of the examination.
 - b) Candidates are expected to present themselves for examination composed and ready to begin. Delays at the start or during an examination of more than five minutes will not be allowed.

Guidance notes for examiners

How much "the same" do oral exams held on the same day need to be?

Many things need to be the same:

1. Scenario details and ancillary data

All details of the scenario presented should be identical, including the facts given to candidates and the data presented (eg tables, lab data, images, radiographs).

2. The general plan of "main" questions

The general or main questions must be the same. So, for example, if a candidate is to be given a scenario and then asked about their management plan, management must be covered with all candidates. Similarly, if the candidates are to be asked to explain or justify their answer, then all candidates must be asked this.

3. Qualifiers and cues

Qualifiers express limits or provide additional detail about the type of answer candidates should give and help the candidate to understand the focus of the question. Cues are used to prompt the candidate to expand or extend their answer. Examiners should be aware that candidates may variably look for additional cues and should be vigilant in directing the candidate back to the question to avoid excessively directing candidate responses.

Examples of qualifiers to a question about management might include:

- *over the first 3 days*
- *Outline any additional management steps that could be considered in this case. assume you have an unlimited budget and all the equipment you would like.*

Examples of planned cues might include reminding the candidate to consider sub-parts of question (if forgotten):

- *before progressing to the next disclosure, ask candidate if there is anything further they would consider*

In constructing the examination, examiners need to think carefully and plan for the qualifiers and cues that might be needed for an adequately prepared candidate, and ensure that equivalent delivery is provided to all. This will require detailed thought and planning.

4. The order of each scenario

Each scenario planned should be presented to candidates in the same order.

Things that would usually be the same but may need to differ:

1. Exact wording

We have no wish for examiners to have to read exact wording from a script, although they may need to look at detailed notes to ensure that all scenario details, ancillary data and the same qualifiers are provided to each candidate at the appropriate stage. To ensure the exam is defensible, it is still important that an instructional verb is included in the question and that there is no reference to 'you'/'your' unless asking for candidates to justify their answer/reasoning.

For example one examiner might ask a candidate

"Okay let's move on now and outline an appropriate management plan for this patient if there were no financial or equipment limitations. Let's just talk about the next 3 days for now. Tell me as if you were speaking to a colleague."

Another may say:

Examiner: Outline an appropriate management plan for this case if you could spend any money and access any equipment? Imagine you are explaining the plan to a colleague. Let's just concentrate on the next 3 days.

Candidate: ok so you just want the first 3 days?

Examiner: Yes that's right

Note that all candidates should be given the qualifiers without them having to ask, however candidates may ask for qualifiers to be repeated or clarified and examiners should answer.

2. Number of qualifiers provided

With careful planning all necessary qualifiers should be identified in advance. However, if it is discovered during an examination that further qualifiers than were planned are needed, examiners should insert the new qualifiers into the questions for subsequent candidates and also communicate with examiners examining at the same time so that they also insert the new qualifiers.

3. Additional questions to explore the depth of knowledge of a candidate

Examiners may need to add additional clarification questions above those planned in order to check the depth of understanding of a candidate about particular points they have made. However, in most instances it is appropriate to ask all candidates to justify their interpretations, plans or other statements. Asking for justifications should not be reserved for candidates who give an incorrect or unusual answer.

Examiners must not give hints or advice or clues to the correct or best answer to any candidate.

4. The order of questions

Generally the order that questions are asked within each scenario presented should be the same from candidate to candidate. However examiners may find that some candidates pre-empt questions and may jump ahead before they have been asked. Examiners do not have to interrupt the flow of this, but should ensure that candidates have all necessary information (including qualifiers) to answer at that point. Examiners should also be sure to come back to cover all parts of the question that were planned. For example, if a candidate has anticipated subsequent parts of the questions but the answer is incomplete, the next part(s) of the question may be pre-empted with *You have already answered part of the following question...* Conversely, if the question has been thoroughly answered it does not have to be revisited.

How similar must exams on subsequent days be?

If a subject is examined over more than one day, different questions should be used for each day of examining. While the questions need to be different, the following aspects need to be kept as much the same as possible:

- There should be the same number of “main” questions or scenarios
- The learning outcomes covered by the questions should be the same. This may be at a broad level. For example if the learning outcome concerns animal nutrition, then animal nutrition should also form the basis for the second day’s question. The day one may address a deficiency of one element and day two may address over-supplementation with another element.
- As far as possible the level of difficulty should be kept the same.
- The marks per question should remain the same

This type of similarity can often be achieved by substituting a different scenario but retaining the same questions.

3.14. Examiner Report and Finalisation of Results

- 3.13.1 The Head Subject Examiner is responsible for checking for examination result disparities, and consulting with examiners the reasons for these disparities. If necessary, the HSE may need to discuss reasons for disparities and/or confirm the finalised results of all sections of the examinations with the Chief Examiner.
- 3.13.2 Examiner comments and the marks awarded need to be consistent. A lack of consistency between examiner comments and marks awarded sends an inconsistent message to the candidate, Board of Examiners and an Appeal Committee. *An example of this might be where the Examiner Report strongly supports a FAIL grade, although the candidate mark of 54% for one section falls only 1% short of the 55% that is a SUPPLEMENTARY grade.*
- 3.13.3 When a candidate fails, it is the responsibility of the Head Subject/Senior Examiner to ensure sufficient, helpful feedback is provided in the College reporting platform for the candidate.
- 3.13.4 The Chief Examiner reports any marking disparities and their actions to the Board of Examiners; however, the final decision regarding the outcome of these examinations is made by the Chief Examiner.
- 3.13.5 Once the Chief Examiner is satisfied with the submitted results for a subject, the finalised examination results are submitted to the Board of Examiners for final ratification.

3.15. Candidate Notification of Grade (PASS, FAIL SUPPLEMENTARY)

- 3.14.1 Candidates are able to access their overall result on a specified date once all results are ratified by the Board of Examiners and are further notified in writing. If a delay in notification of the Candidate is anticipated, the candidate will be informed by email of the reasons for the delay.
- 3.14.2 Candidates should direct all enquiries re notification of results to the College Office.
- 3.14.3 Unsuccessful candidates may request further feedback on their performance and access to their examination papers. The process of requesting marks is separate to the appeal process and aims to assist unsuccessful candidates identify areas of weakness or poor performance.
- 3.14.5 **Appeals** are conducted according to the Appeal Procedures detailed in the *Policy and Procedure book available on the College website.*

3.16. Examiner Payment and Reimbursement of Expenses

All information regarding examiner payments and reimbursement of expenses can be found on the College website in the Membership Info /Examiners section

The College policy on Payment of Examiners can be found [here](#).

The College policy on reimbursement of expenses can be found [here](#).

4. PROCEDURES FOR EXAMINERS (MEMBERSHIP)

4.1. Membership Definition

4.1.1 Membership of the College signifies the following:

“Membership of the College is an official recognition of a veterinary surgeon’s knowledge and experience in a designated field of veterinary science. Membership is an indication to the profession and the general public of an advanced practitioner, representing a middle-tier of knowledge, competence and experience in a specific area of veterinary practice. Membership is not a specialist qualification. Membership requires examination with members signified by post-nominals MANZCVS.”

4.2. Examination Format (Membership)

The following general format will be followed for all membership examinations and will be constructed to conform to the *Membership Candidate Handbook* and the specific description in the Subject Guidelines.

The membership examination has **two separate components**:

1. **Written Papers** (*Component 1*)
Written Paper 1 (minimum two hours): Principles of the Subject
Written Paper 2 (minimum two hours): Applied Aspects of the Subject
2. **Practical/oral** (*Component 2*)
For most disciplines, the **practical/oral** section is a single, combined oral examination. *Some disciplines (e.g. Radiology, Pathology) have practical examinations.*

4.3. Written Papers (Membership) (Component 1)

- 4.3.1 The written examination will comprise two separate two-hour written papers taken on the same day. There will be an additional 15 minutes perusal time for each paper. Each paper should require candidates to answer several questions within the two hour period.
- 4.3.2 The structure of each paper is based on the Subject Guidelines for that particular subject. **Written paper 1** tests basic concepts and principles relevant to the subject. **Written paper 2** addresses the practice and applications of the subject.
- 4.3.3 Examinations will not be biased towards any candidate’s special interest.
- 4.3.4 Questions may be essay type, a series of short answers or multiple choice. When there are a mixture of question types they should be grouped by section. **Marks allocated to each question and to each subsection of questions will be clearly indicated on the written paper.**

4.4. Practical/Oral (Membership) (Component 2)

4.4.1 For most disciplines, the practical/oral Section is a single, combined oral examination, aided by case presentations, and multimedia (e.g. images, video etc). This component will be at least 45 minutes in duration.

Some disciplines (e.g. Veterinary Radiology, Veterinary Pathology) have practical examinations. In these disciplines, the structure and content of the practical examination and its answer key should also be reviewed by the Chapter Examination Committee prior to submission to the College Office by 1st March.

4.4.2 For subjects with a practical examination copies of all supporting materials such as slides and images must be provided to the College Office for safe storage.

4.5. Grading (Membership)

4.5.1 **Written Papers 1 and 2 (Component 1)** will be marked independently by each examiner, who will return the breakdown of marks (both before and after the examiners have conferred) and a mean mark (as a percentage) for each paper. The mean of the examiner marks for each written paper is the overall mark for that paper. The mean of the overall marks for written papers 1 and 2 is the overall mark for the written component.

4.5.2 It is essential that marking of the written papers is completed, that grades are collated and that examiners have conferred about each candidate **before the oral examinations take place**. [Feedback](#) on failed major questions and failed or marginal papers as a whole should be completed as soon as possible after each examination component as the examiners will not know in advance who may fail overall.

4.5.3 Component 2 (Oral or Practical) will be marked independently by each examiner, who will return a mark (as a percentage) for the component. The mean of the examiners' marks will be the overall mark for the component.

4.5.4 Marking guides are required for all questions.

4.5.5 **Examination Grade (PASS, FAIL or SUPPLEMENTARY) (Membership)**

MEMBERSHIP EXAMINATION			
SECTION MARK			EXAM GRADE
One Component only	Other Component	Average of both Components	
≥55	≥70	≥70	PASS
≥55	≥70	<70	SUPPLEMENTARY (need ≥70 to pass Supp)
candidate fails to fulfill the above conditions of PASS or SUPPLEMENTARY			FAIL

4.5.6 A **PASS** will be awarded if the candidate achieves at least 55% in one component (written or oral) **AND** at least 70% in the other component (written or oral) of the examination, **AND** achieves an overall average mark of at least 70%

- 4.5.7 A **SUPPLEMENTARY** examination may be offered in a maximum of one component if the candidate achieves at least 55% in that component AND at least 70% in the other component, but achieves an overall average mark of less than 70%.

The supplementary examination will be offered at the next College examination period.

The supplementary examination will be prepared and graded in the same manner as any other College Membership examination. The examiners may or may not be the same examiners as those who conducted the primary examination. A pass will be awarded if the candidate achieves at least 70% in the supplementary examination, or at least 55% in the supplementary examination AND at least 70% in the other component that was passed at the previous attempt AND the overall average of the supplementary mark and the previously passed component is at least 70%. If these conditions are not met, the candidate will fail. A second supplementary will not be allowed from a supplementary examination; rather the candidate must sit all examination components again.

- 4.5.8 The candidate will **FAIL** if they do not fulfill the conditions of a PASS or SUPPLEMENTARY examination grade.

4.6. Examiner Reporting (Membership)

- 4.6.1 Details of whether the candidate has passed, failed, or is to be offered a supplementary examination are calculated through the College reporting system.
- 4.6.2 In the event of a ‘fail’ or ‘supplementary’ result candidates can request the examiners comments which are intended to advise the candidate the reason for their failure and give guidance for re-sitting the examination.
- 4.6.3 The Head Subject Examiner/Senior Examiner ensures sufficient [comments](#) are available giving the candidate reasons for their failure and suggestions for preparing to re-sit the examination.

5. PROCEDURES FOR EXAMINERS (FELLOWSHIP)

5.1. Fellowship Definition

5.2.1 The award of fellowship of the College is conferred upon a veterinarian who is eligible to sit and successfully passes an examination in a given fellowship subject.

5.2.2 The award of fellowship of the College implies that the awardee:

"has sufficient knowledge and experience in a particular area of veterinary science to entitle them to be acknowledged as a specialist or consultant in that area"

5.2. Examination Format (Fellowship)

Specific format parameters can be found in the subject guidelines. The following general format will be followed for all fellowship examinations and will be considered the minimum requirements for all fellowship subjects:

The fellowship examination has **four separate, autonomous components**:

1. **Written Paper 1** (minimum three hours): This written paper will focus on the basic science and principles of the subject.
2. **Written Paper 2** (minimum three hours): This written paper will focus on the practice and clinical applications of the subject.
3. **Practical** (minimum one hour): This component will consist of a mixture of case presentations, multimedia (e.g. images, videos, and histology slides), problem solving and theory, for which written or oral answers will be required.
4. **Oral** (minimum one hour): The candidate will be expected to be able to discuss any aspect of the subject, communicating in a scientific and professional manner.

The practical and oral components must total at least three hours when combined. The time thresholds are minimum thresholds. Individual chapters may exceed the thresholds (refer to Subject Guidelines).

5.3. General Expectations at Fellowship level

5.3.1 Answers expected of candidates should be supported by either widespread scientific acceptance or by published scientific information.

5.3.2 Candidates for fellowship must demonstrate through their answers that they have formed their own opinion on issues related to their subject area, and that they can defend that opinion using their experience and knowledge of the subject area, supported by published scientific information.

5.4. Written Papers 1 and 2 (Fellowship)

5.4.1 **Written Papers 1 and 2** each comprise a separate component of the fellowship examination. Twenty minutes perusal time will be allowed before the beginning of each paper. Each paper will require candidates to answer a series of questions.

5.4.2 Questions may be essay type, a series of small parts or multiple choice. **Marks allocated to each question and to each subsection of questions will be clearly indicated on the written paper.**

5.4.3 Marking guides are required for each question.

5.5. Practical (Fellowship)

- 5.5.1 The structure and content of the practical examination and its answer key must be determined by the examiners and reviewed by the Chapter Examination Committee prior to submission to the College Office. Copies of all supporting materials such as slides and images must be provided to the College office for safe storage.
- 5.5.2 It is essential that marking of the written papers is completed, that grades are collated, and that examiners have conferred about each candidate **before the oral and practical examinations take place.**
- 5.5.3 The practical examination should be of sufficient duration to adequately assess the candidate's practical application of their knowledge. If more than three hours is required, a break is mandatory.
- 5.5.4 Every attempt should be made to assess practical skills.

5.6. Oral (Fellowship)

- 5.6.1 The oral examination must be conducted separately from the practical. The structure and content of the oral examination and its answer key must be determined by the examiners and reviewed by the Subject Examination Committee prior to submission to the College Office.
- 5.6.2 All fellowship oral examinations will be sound-recorded using digital recorders.
- 5.6.3 The oral examination provides a forum for the candidate to justify their views on important, novel or controversial techniques or issues relative to the particular discipline to the examiners. The ability of a specialist to form an opinion, effectively refuting or upholding emerging or established views in their discipline, is important and examiners should identify and pursue at least one such topic with the candidate.
- 5.6.4 Marking guides are required for all questions.

5.7. Grading (Fellowship)

- 5.7.1 All four components of the examination (two written papers, the oral and the practical exams) are regarded as separate components for the purposes of assessment.
- 5.7.2 **Written Papers 1 and 2** will be marked independently by each examiner who will return the breakdown of marks (both before and after the examiners have conferred) and a mean mark (as a percentage) for each paper. The mean of the examiner marks for each written paper will be the overall mark for that paper. ***Each written paper is a separate component of the examination.***
- 5.7.3 The **practical** examination will be marked independently by each examiner who will return a mark (as a percentage) for the practical. The mean of the examiner marks will be the overall mark for the practical component.
- 5.7.4 The **oral** examination will be marked independently by each examiner who will return a mark (as a percentage) for the oral. The mean of the examiner marks will be the overall mark for the oral component.
- 5.7.5 The pass mark for each section is 70%.

- 5.7.6 Candidates will pass the fellowship examination once they have achieved a pass mark in all four sections.
- 5.7.7 The 70% pass mark for each section is absolute; there is no opportunity to compensate in other sections for one failed section.
- 5.7.8 Candidates are not required to re-sit components in which they have already achieved a pass. When re-sitting, candidates must re-sit all failed components in the same examination year.

5.8. Examiner Reporting (Fellowship)

- 5.8.1 Details of whether the candidate has passed or failed a component are calculated through the College reporting system.
- 5.8.2 In the event of a FAIL grade, the Head Subject Examiner/Senior Examiner ensures sufficient comments are available giving the candidate reasons for their failure and suggestions for preparing to re-sit the examination.

6. Subject Examinations Committee (SEC) Chair

It is the responsibility of the HSE to ensure that review of the examination takes place by the SEC Chair in a timely manner before the paper is submitted to the College Office for review. The written examination papers are to be submitted to the College Office with the signed SEC Chair checklist.

The SEC Chair Checklist is available in the Subject Committees Handbook, the College website and electronically from the College office.

Available from College website:

[Subject Examinations Committee \(SEC\) Chair examination checklist](#)

7. APPENDIX – FORMS AND TEMPLATES

Policies and Procedures available on College website

[Examiner information](#)

[Training Resources for examiners](#)

[Subject Standards and Subject Examination Committees information](#)

Fellowship:

[Fellowship sample exam papers](#)

[Fellowship subject guidelines](#)

Membership:

[Membership sample written papers](#)

[Membership subject guidelines](#)

i College Examination Blueprinting (Example from Equine Medicine 2010_12)

(Template on College website)

<p style="text-align: center;">Learning outcome</p> <p>The candidate will expect to have:</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Draft questions or tasks/topics/concepts</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Notes</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Assessed in: P1, P2, Prac, Oral, Credentials</p>
<p>1. A detailed and broad knowledge of diseases of horses based on the experience of a significant case load which should be documented</p>			
<p>2. A thorough knowledge of the structure, function and dysfunction of all equine organ systems in health and disease This shall include the eye, the skin and reproductive organs despite the other specialties in these areas.</p>			
<p>3. A thorough knowledge of all relevant methods of diagnosis, treatment, management and prevention of equine diseases and the ability to apply this with complete competence</p>			
<p>4. A thorough knowledge of applied clinical pharmacology and therapeutics in the treatment of equine diseases and performance disorders</p>			
<p>5. A thorough knowledge of equine husbandry in Australia/New Zealand including</p>			

<p style="text-align: center;">Learning outcome</p> <p>The candidate will expect to have:</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Draft questions or tasks/topics/concepts</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Notes</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Assessed in: P1, P2, Prac, Oral, Credentials</p>
<p>stud, racing, competition and pleasure horse practices as they affect horse health, welfare and performance</p>			
<p>6. A good knowledge of poisonous plants, toxins and envenomations encountered in Australia/New Zealand and the syndromes they cause in horses</p>			
<p>7. A broad knowledge of epidemiological principles and their application to disease control programs and preventive medicine programs</p>			
<p>8. A knowledge of exotic equine diseases and their potential importance to Australia and New Zealand</p>			
<p>9. Evidence of significant contributions to knowledge in the theory or practice of equine medicine.</p>			

ii Examiner feedback to candidates

Reasons for providing more specific guidance

Quality of feedback varies in detail and in quality and usefulness

- Some feedback amounts to telling the candidate exactly what they got wrong and effectively providing the answer key as a corrective
- There is often duplication and redundancy of comments if the feedback from both examiners is included
- Some poorly answered questions have no feedback, some well answered questions have unnecessary feedback
- Some feedback focuses on marks denied or awarded than the reasons
- Some feedback implies that the candidate “doesn’t know” something when all that can actually be said is that the knowledge was not demonstrated.

Badly organised, excessively detailed or inadequate feedback requires a significant amount of amendment and editing by the ACE/other EC member(s) which drags out the timely provision of feedback.

Considerations for additional guidance

The purpose of examiner comments is to give failing candidates “reasons for their failure and suggestions for preparing to re-sit the examination.”

This service is available to failing candidates (including those awarded supps) and is not expected to be made available to candidates who pass overall.

Examiners should routinely provide feedback on any failed/marginal question (for larger questions including those with sub-parts) or any failed individual paper/ examination (written 1 and/or 2, practical, and/or oral).

This is best done at the time of marking or, in the case of the orals, as soon as practicable after marking that candidate and before finishing the orals for that day.

Recommendations for examiners

To avoid doubling-up and repetition with comments, and make the process efficient and not burdensome but retaining its usefulness to the candidate the following is recommended:

- The examining pair determines who is responsible for writing the formal feedback, but both examiners check it, with the HSE having responsibility for the depth and quality of the final product.
- The examining pair might elect to split the feedback by question or by the paper/oral as a whole, and even take turns e.g. after each oral. However, in each case, the one writing the feedback should access notes and consult with their examining partner to ensure that both examiners’ opinions and observations are taken into account.
- Feedback should consist of general observations and overall appraisal, rather than providing the “answers” which the candidate got wrong or effectively supplying the answer keys for questions in which they performed poorly. Indications of marks awarded or not awarded should NOT be given. The feedback can be followed by general advice for further study or mentoring in exam technique as appropriate.

Examples of appropriate feedback:

- Whilst several important points were covered, the answer as a whole lacked detail and cohesion.
- Whilst some essential points were covered the answer did not specifically address the pathophysiology as the question required, but rather focused on aetiology.

- The list of differential diagnoses was not comprehensive / was poorly prioritised / contained differentials that were not appropriate for the signalment or clinical picture
- The treatment plan contained some essential points but also the recommendation to [do X] would likely have adverse consequences for the patient
- The answer was very brief and lacking in detail
- The answer listed more than the required [points] so only the first [required number] were considered, and unfortunately these were incorrect.
- The answer contained considerable irrelevant material
- The answer mainly discussed treatment, whereas the question required discussion of further diagnostics
- The answer contained some appropriate points but also erred with respect to [specify]
- The diagnostic plan contained appropriate tests, but the order was inappropriate, as [X should be done before Y]
- Whilst the answer contained a fairly sound general approach, the candidate did not appear to consider [X]/ the candidate omitted [X]

Avoid subjective comments/phrases such as

- “The candidate does not understand [X]” — Rather, “the candidate did not demonstrate an adequate depth of understanding of [X]”
- “This would have killed the dog” — Rather, “the candidate’s proposed approach would have had significant adverse effects given that...”
- “The candidate didn’t think of [X]” — Rather, “the answer does not consider [X]”

Avoid statements which imply the examiner knows the candidate’s state of mind, e.g. “confused about,” “doesn’t understand,” “didn’t read the question,” or comments which question the candidate’s competency.

Avoid words to the effect that the candidate’s answer didn’t match the marking key, rather than the assessment relying on key points and holistic impression.

E.g. “The answer lacked key points with respect to [X]” or “the answer lacked sufficient detail” rather than “the answer didn’t include all points” which implies structure and reasoning were not taken into account.

Consider whether feedback on questions which were well answered is necessary. Some encouraging specifics might be appropriate for a well answered question, particularly in contrast to other poorly answered question(s) but generally the mark awarded will indicate that it was adequately answered.