MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTION POLICY

AUSTRALIAN AND NEW ZEALAND
COLLEGE OF VETERINARY SCIENTISTS

Policy Number	6.2.1	Version	2.1
Updated by	BoE	Approved on	5/12/2024
Responsible person	Chief Examiner	Scheduled review date	October 2027

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline the accepted use of multiple-choice questions in College examinations.

This policy covers both Membership and Fellowship.

If there is any uncertainty about any aspect of this policy, contact the CEO, Examinations Manager or Examinations Officer through the College Office.

Policy

Examiners may include multiple-choice question (MCQ) sections within the written and practical components of the examinations if they are consistent with College approved guidelines, as outlined in the procedures to follow. Multiple-choice question components may be secured for future reuse (as allowed under the reuse of questions policy) under certain conditions contained within the procedures.

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MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTION PROCEDURE

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Responsible person	CE/ACE Ex	Scheduled review date	October 2027

Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of the Examinations administration team to ensure that Examiners are aware of the multiple-choice question policy.
It is the responsibility of the Subject Examination Committee Chair and the Head Subject Examiner to ensure that the examinations are constructed according to this policy.
It is the responsibility of the Subject Examination Committee Chair to ensure that the MCQs have undergone peer-review by subject experts.
It is the responsibility of the Board of Examiners to ensure that the final, peer-reviewed MCQs comply with the policy below.

Procedures

1. The Chapter must specify in the subject guidelines that MCQs might be included in the examination components.

2. The MCQs will be grouped together in one section(s) within each examination component.
   2.1. 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). Mark allocations need to factor in reading time and thinking time.
   2.2. Multiple-choice questions with the same mark allocations need to be grouped together (ie. there may be up to two parts within the multiple-choice section). Any differences in mark allocations between groups of MCQs must be clearly indicated so that candidates are able to budget their time accordingly.

3. The MCQ section of any examination paper must not comprise more than 50% of the marks allocated to the paper without the approval of the Chief Examiner.

4. The questions must predominately test levels of knowledge higher than recall, ideally with a maximum of 50% at recall level in Paper 1 (Basic Science) and no more than 25% at recall level for other components (Paper 2 and Practical).

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5. Where an MCQ refers to a published article, sufficient bibliographic information must be provided within the question to enable the candidate to clearly identify the source being referenced. **At a minimum, the reference should include the author(s), year of publication, article title and journal title.** References should be presented consistently throughout the examination and formatted in accordance with API referencing guidelines.

   For example:
   Smith, A.B., Jones, C.D., (2024). *Clinical outcomes following treatment of feline ureteral obstruction*. Australian Veterinary Journal.

   Recall the following paper:
   Smith, A.B., Jones, C.D., (2024). *Clinical outcomes following treatment of feline ureteral obstruction*. Australian Veterinary Journal.
   From this paper, what was the most commonly reported complication following treatment of feline ureteral obstruction?

6. The question stem should use positive terminology, be succinct and posed as a question rather than an open-ended sentence.
   6.1. The stem should pass the “cover test” (ie. should be answerable without needing to read the options).
   6.2. Generally, the use of ‘which’ is preferred over ‘what’ within the question stem, as there are a limited number of options available.
   6.3. Avoid the use of the first- or second-person (you or your) within the stem.

7. The general format of the MCQs will include one correct answer and three distractors.
   7.1. The use of an answer or distractor containing multiple alternatives (e.g. a and b, or a and d), multiple true/false options, ‘all of the above’ or ‘none of the above’ is not acceptable.
   7.2. Each distractor should be plausible and homogeneous for content, length and detail.
   7.3. Each distractor should be grammatically correct in relation to the question posed in the stem (to avoid cueing).
   7.4. There should be a single best answer.

8. Question tagging:
   8.1. All MCQs should be tagged with subject specific domains (eg. for clinical subjects this may be a body system, species or other domains extracted from the blueprinting document).
   8.2. These domains/tags will aid with question banking. This will also enable failed candidates feedback on their performance within individual domains across the examination.
   8.3. The SEC/SSC should create a list of the subject specific domains to be used for consistency across examination components and examination cycles.
   8.4. The HSE should ensure the examining team are aware of the subject specific domains so that questions can be tagged appropriately and consistently.

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9. All MCQs must be peer-reviewed by at least one subject matter expert and a person with formal MCQ training (eg. a member who has attended the ANZCVS MCQ workshop or equivalent training). Review by non-subject matter experts can also be valuable as they may be better able to pick up on inadvertent cueing.
   9.1. The College encourages Chapters to establish MCQ development and review committees to help facilitate MCQ banking.

10. It is the responsibility of the HSE in the subject to ensure that the current guidelines on MCQ reuse are being met.

11. Examiners accessing MCQs from a question bank are required to review the question, correct answer, and distractors to ensure the applicability of the question and the validity of the components. The MCQs in the bank will have an indication of the subject matter, the correct answer, and the source of information (if relevant).
    11.1. Any reused questions within the subject must be flagged and the year(s) of prior use documented.

12. Candidates wishing to review their examination paper after the examination will not be permitted access to the MCQ component of the examination and will be given a summary of total marks obtained in this section only.

13. The HSE and SEC Chair should assess the performance of each MCQ after each examination cycle (either subjectively or using the question statistics report). This information can be used to identify questions that are appropriate for banking and those that require further review/editing.

14. Sample questions should be available online to facilitate candidate preparation. The number of questions required is equivalent to 20% of the number of questions intended to be used in the examination. Sample questions must be peer-reviewed and submitted to the College Office for publishing by December 1st in the year before the examination. Such questions do not need to change from year to year unless changes in the format or the proportion of the questions planned for future examinations dictate they should be updated.

Related Documents

- Reuse of Questions Policy
- Question Banking Policy
- Examination Structure Policy
- Multiple-choice question writing Guidelines

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