



Statutory Membership Examination Guidance 2024

You are advised to read this guidance carefully and to refer to it as necessary at the different stages of the exam process. It describes the exam application process, the format and content of the exam and gives some advice about preparing yourself to sit the exam.

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1. Introduction

Only veterinary surgeons and veterinary nurses registered with the RCVS can practise veterinary medicine in the United Kingdom. The entitlement to be registered as a member of the RCVS is determined by the **Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966**.

If you would like to register to practise in the UK as a veterinary surgeon but your veterinary degree is not recognised by the RCVS, you must pass the RCVS Statutory Membership Examination.

Membership of the RCVS is not a substitute for a work permit or for meeting UK immigration regulations.

This guidance outlines the process of applying to sit the Statutory Membership Examination. It describes the exam application process, the format and content of the examination and gives some advice about preparing yourself to sit the examination.

You are advised to read this guidance carefully and to refer to it as necessary at the different stages of the exam process

If after reading the guidance, you have questions or require further information, please contact the Examinations Manager on 020 7202 0745 or rcvsexam@rcvs.org.uk. We aim to respond to emails within three working days of their receipt.

1.1. Legislative framework

The Statutory Membership Examination is held under the provisions of Section 6 of the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966, and in accordance with the Regulations made under sub-section (4) of that section. The examination is designed for veterinarians who qualified overseas and who wish to obtain the right to practise in the UK. The examination tests whether a candidate has the knowledge and skills for practising veterinary surgery in the UK. The standard of knowledge and skill required to be shown by candidates to satisfy the examiners in the statutory examination shall be not less than the standard required to qualify as a veterinary surgeon under section 3(1) of the Act.

Success in the examination leads to the right to register and to practise in the UK (subject to visa requirements). Although the UK has now left the European Union (EU) much of the EU legislation still applies in the UK. This means that veterinary surgeons who work in the UK must be aware of both UK and relevant EU legislation as it relates to their veterinary activities in the UK. Candidates should also be aware of any changes in legislation between the devolved regions within the UK.

1.2. RCVS Day One Competences

The Statutory Membership Examination is set to the standards outlined in the RCVS Day One Competences. These are the minimum essential competences that the RCVS expects all veterinary students to have met when they graduate. Further information on the Day One Competences can be found in section 6.1.

1.3. Format of the Examination

The Statutory Membership Examination will normally be held once a year. It will cover the underpinning knowledge and understanding, and practical and professional competences required to practise as a veterinary surgeon in the United Kingdom. This includes coverage of veterinary public health, medicine, surgery, and the husbandry associated with companion animals, production animals and horses.

The Statutory Membership Examination consists of the following components:

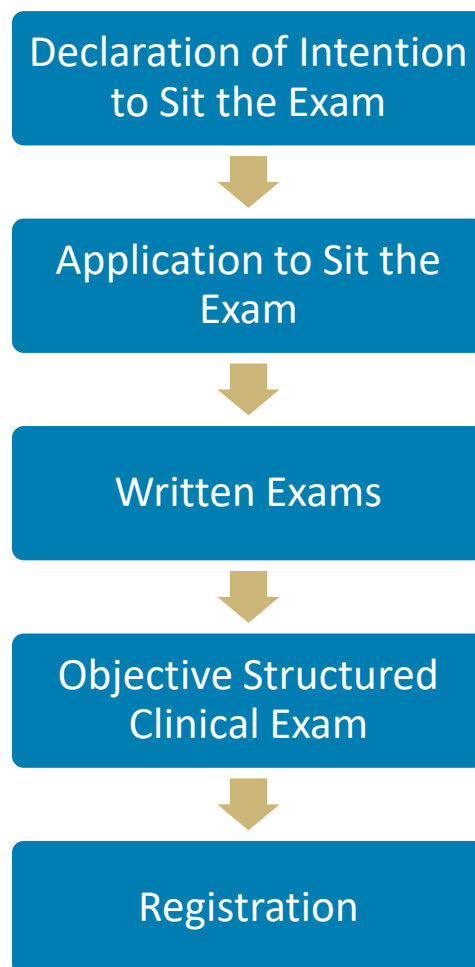
- Written examinations consisting of Multiple-Choice Questions (MCQs) testing the candidate's clinical knowledge across three clinical domains (companion animal, production animal (including veterinary public health) and equine), and their knowledge of the RCVS Code of Professional Conduct.
- An holistic Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE) across three clinical domains (companion animal, production animal (including veterinary public health) and equine).

Candidates must pass the written component before being allowed to proceed to the OSCE.

Further information about the content and format of the examination can be found in sections 6.7 and 6.8.

1.4. Pathway to RCVS membership

There are five stages that potential registrants must complete before they can practise veterinary medicine in the United Kingdom:



These stages are described below:

Stage 1 – Declaration of your ‘Intention to Sit’ the RCVS Statutory Membership Examination.

Submit a completed ‘declaration of intention to sit’ form and provide proof of your veterinary degree, identity, and a completed self-assessment skills list. If you wish to request a reasonable adjustment to the exam process due to a disability or particular need (see section 2.6) or apply for an exemption for the English-language test (see section 2.7) then this is the stage at which to do so. This information will be checked by the Examinations Manager and if you meet our requirements, your name will be added to our active list of individuals preparing for the examination and you will be given permission to ‘see practice’. The process is covered in [section 2](#) of this guidance.

Stage 2 – Application to Sit the Examination

If you are eligible to sit the examination, you will be sent the examination application form. This form must be returned to us by **14 January** in the year in which you wish to sit the examination, along with the entry fee of £2,500 and proof of your International English Language Test System (IELTS) or Occupational English Test (OET) score and letter(s) or Certificate(s) confirming your professional good standing. The exam application process is covered in [section 4](#) of this guidance.

Stage 3 – Written Examinations

The written examinations will normally be held in **Spring** online, using proctored software and a live invigilation process. You must pass all three domains of the clinical paper (companion animal, production animal (including veterinary public health) and equine) as well as the Code of Professional Conduct paper before you can proceed to the OSCE. See [section 6.7](#) for more information.

Stage 4 – Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE)

The final part of the examination is the holistic Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE). This is a practical examination and will be held in the **Autumn** at a veterinary school in the UK. As with the clinical written examination, you must pass all three domains (companion animal, production animal (including veterinary public health) and equine) to pass the OSCE. See [section 6.8](#) for further information.

Stage 5 – Registration

Examination results will be sent via email 4 weeks after the final part of each section (written examinations or OSCE). Successful candidates will be invited to attend the RCVS offices in person or remotely online to register and be admitted to membership. The RCVS usually holds a short ceremony for candidates who have passed the examination.

1.5. Working as a Veterinary Nurse

All veterinary nurses in the UK must be registered with the RCVS. Veterinary surgeons who do not also hold an appropriate veterinary nursing qualification may not apply for registration as a veterinary nurse. This is because the required competences and skills (and their education and training) have significant differences from those of veterinary surgeons. If you wish to ‘see practice’ at a UK veterinary surgery, information about how to do so can be found in [section 3.3](#).

2. Declaring your intention to sit the RCVS Statutory Membership Examination

The 'declaration of intention to sit' form can be found on the RCVS website here:

<https://www.rcvs.org.uk/registration/applications-veterinary-surgeons/statutory-membership-exam>. If

you hold a veterinary degree and intend to sit the RCVS Statutory Membership Examination, you must:

- a. Declare your intention by completing the 'declaration of intention to sit' form
- b. Provide proof of your primary veterinary degree or diploma (see section 2.1)
- c. If available, provide university issued transcripts of your studies (see section 2.2)
- d. Provide your registration certificate or veterinary licence if you have one (see section 2.3)
- e. Provide proof of your identity (see section 2.4)
- f. Confirm your belief that you have the relevant knowledge and skills by completing the self-assessment skills list (see section 2.5)
- g. Apply for exemption from IELTS/OET, if applicable. **Exemptions must be submitted no later than 1 December of the year preceding the exam** (see section 2.5)
- h. Complete a reasonable adjustment application, if required (see section 2.6).

2.1. Proof of primary veterinary degree

The examination regulations require you to provide proof of your primary veterinary qualification (normally a copy of the certificate or diploma that you received upon graduation from your university).

You must send us a copy (photocopy or electronic scan) of your veterinary degree certificate and transcripts (with translations if the documents are not written in English) when you send us your declaration of intention to sit form. Please **do not** send your original veterinary degree certificate, as we cannot be held responsible for any loss if you ignore this instruction.

Please keep your original certificate safe and ensure that it is available for you to bring to your registration appointment after you pass the examination. If we need to see your original veterinary degree certificate beforehand, we will contact you to make an appointment.

The RCVS normally accepts applications from veterinary surgeons who hold a degree or diploma awarded after at least 5 years of full-time study from institutions listed on the World List of Universities or the AVMA-Listed Veterinary Colleges of the World. Where this is not the case the RCVS may require further information to allow us to establish that the national government in the country which awarded the qualification allows you to practise veterinary medicine in that country.

2.2. Transcripts

If your university issued transcripts of your studies, you must send these to the RCVS as part of your declaration of intention to sit the examination. As with your degree, if your transcripts are not in English then you must provide a professionally translated version alongside a copy of the original.

2.3. Registration certificate or veterinary licence

If you are currently, or have at any time, been on a register of persons qualified to practise veterinary surgery in any country or state you must provide details including the registration certificate or licence if this has been issued. This must also be professionally translated into English with a copy of the original also provided.

2.4. Proof of your Identity

You are required to provide a copy of your passport photo page. If your name differs from that on your degree or diploma you must also send a copy of the relevant legal document linking both names e.g., marriage/divorce certificate. If your name differs between documents for another reason, please contact the Examinations Manager for further instruction at rcvsexam@rcvs.org.uk. Please **do not** send your original passport, as we cannot be held responsible for any loss if you ignore this instruction.

2.5. Self-assessment skills list

Applicants **must complete** a self-assessment of their skills and knowledge to demonstrate that they have previously acquired knowledge and experience of the clinical activities featured in the RCVS Day One Competences document [RCVS Day One Competences - Professionals](#). Candidates must meet a minimum required standard in the companion animal, production animal (including veterinary public health) and equine domains to pass the examination. The self-assessment skills list form provides the opportunity for applicants to reflect on the skills they have and make an informed decision about their likelihood of passing the examination. If there are a few areas on the list which need to be covered the applicant should complete an action plan identifying how they will address these areas prior to the examination. This may include undertaking additional training, seeing practice, CPD or other suitable activity.

2.6. Candidates with special requirements or requests for reasonable adjustment

If you need reasonable adjustment or special provision to be made for you in the examination because of a disability or other particular need, you should submit a completed [reasonable adjustment form](#), available on the RCVS website, **as early as possible** in the examination application process. We must be notified no later than the examination entry closing date, otherwise it may not be possible to make the necessary arrangements for you in time. If you fall ill or experience unexpected difficult circumstances prior to or during your exams, please use the mitigating circumstances form [Document library - Professionals \(rcvs.org.uk\)](#).

The RCVS will discuss what arrangements can be made, with you, the Chair of the Statutory Membership Examination Board, and medical advisers as appropriate. Applications made for medical reasons must be accompanied by a current, official medical letter or certificate (translated into English).

Assessments for special educational needs must have been made after your sixteenth birthday.

In some exceptional cases, you may be asked to contribute towards any additional costs incurred depending on the circumstances.

If you are pregnant, and your due date is after the OSCE, please inform us as soon as possible as additional health and safety precautions may have to be arranged for you.

2.7. English language test exemption

All RCVS registrants must be able to communicate effectively in English at an appropriate level. This can be demonstrated by passing either the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) or the Occupational English Test (OET) at the minimum required standard. Further information about these assessments can be found in section 4.2.

If you can demonstrate that your veterinary degree was taught and assessed entirely in English, then you may apply for an exemption from the language test as part of your declaration of intention to sit the RCVS Statutory Membership Examination.

If you wish to apply for the exemption, then this must be done **no later than 1 December the year prior to the exam**. If we do not accept your exemption, then this will allow you enough time to sit one of the English-language tests.

You must arrange for your university to write a letter to the RCVS to formally confirm that your whole veterinary degree was obtained at an English-speaking University where the whole course was taught and assessed solely in the medium of English. This letter must be written in English and be sent directly from the University to the RCVS at rcvsexam@rcvs.org.uk.

We will consider each application on its individual merit. If you are unable to provide this evidence, you will need to take the IELTS or OET test.

2.8. Translations of documents

If any documents submitted as part of the declaration of intention to sit or examination application are not written in English, you must provide an English translation alongside the photocopy of the original document.

All translations must be made by a professional translator and certified by the translator or a university or regulatory body.

2.9. Recent graduates

If you have recently completed your studies and know that you have passed your degree, but your certificate has not yet been issued you are advised to contact the Examinations Manager to discuss the likelihood of you being able to enter the examination. You should be prepared to provide specific information such as the date that your certificate will be available.

2.10. Refugees

Veterinary surgeons seeking humanitarian protection in the UK can seek financial aid provided by the RCVS to sit the Statutory Membership Exam. Evidence of your humanitarian protection status should be submitted during the 'declaration of intention to sit' stage, along with the other documentation and supporting evidence listed above.

The RCVS recognises that due to their situation, refugee veterinary surgeons may be unable to provide this evidence. The Education Department, in conjunction with the SME Board, may be required to exercise their judgment to determine whether a refugee candidate can declare their intention to sit on a case-by-case basis.

Once you have submitted the necessary supporting evidence the Examinations Manager will request financial support. Financial support offered includes:

- IELTS/OET testing
- Statutory Membership Exam fee

Additionally, the RCVS has arranged the opportunity for refugees and asylum seekers to receive free membership from the below organisations:

- British Cattle Veterinary Association
- British Equine Veterinary Association

- British Small Animal Veterinary Association
- British Veterinary Association
- Pig Veterinary Society
- RCVS Knowledge
- Society of Practising Veterinary Surgeons
- Sheep Veterinary Society
- Veterinary Management Group
- VetCT

The Examinations Manager will provide refugees and asylum seekers with a consent form to share necessary details with the above organisations to gain free membership on an annual basis. The organisations retain the right to remove the opportunity of free membership, but the RCVS commends their generosity.

2.11. Submitting your application

You may submit your 'intention to sit' declaration all year round. If you intend to enter the next examination, we must receive completed declarations and supporting documents by **31 December** otherwise we cannot guarantee that we will have sufficient time to carry out the necessary checks before the examination closing date of 14 January. We recommend starting the declaration process around 5 months before the exam.

You should aim to **send all the documents together**. Once all the evidence has been submitted your declaration will be reviewed to establish if you meet our requirements. You will normally receive a written response from us outlining the outcome of your declaration within two weeks of receiving a completed submission. Please note that if we must ask for additional documentation from you then it may take longer to process your submission. If you are eligible to apply to sit the examination, you will be sent an examination application form and a letter confirming that you may "see practice" (see section 3.3). You will also be added to our active list of individuals preparing for the examination.

The evidence you provide will be kept on file as long as you confirm that you are intending to sit the examination. If we believe that you are no longer intending to sit the examination (i.e., five years after last communication) your documents will be archived, and you will be required to submit a fresh declaration.

2.12. Renewal of your Declaration of intention to sit

Accepted declarations of intention to sit expire on 31 September each year. Once your declaration expires, you will be removed from our active list and will no longer be eligible to see practice. If you submitted an initial declaration of intention to sit and did not enter the examination but wish to do so in the next diet, please submit a renewal of intention to sit form between 14 August and 31 September. This also applies to candidates who failed the examination but wish to re-enter in the next diet.

You will not be eligible to see practice unless you have an in-date confirmation of intention to sit letter from the RCVS. If you wish to continue seeing practice after the 31 September, please ensure you submit your renewal of intention to sit in good time to rcvsexam@rcvs.org.uk. Please allow up to four weeks for your renewal of intention to sit to be processed and for a new letter to be generated for you.

3. Preparing yourself for the examination

You are responsible for preparing yourself to sit the examination. We provide information about the examination to assist candidates in their preparation as well as the following support:

- A suggested reading list in appendix 2 of this document
- An online exam preparation course, which includes an example filmed OSCE task <https://academy.rcvs.org.uk/>
- There will be an opportunity for you to determine whether your hardware is compatible
- There will be an opportunity for you to familiarise yourself with navigating through an example exam using the software. **Any issues must be raised with the Examinations Manager as soon as possible.**
- Access to a formative written assessment **for candidates who submit a completed exam application and are accepted as a candidate will be provided nearer the time of the exam.** This contains 110 MCQs in the same format and to the same standard as those that will feature in the written examinations. **Only one opportunity to undertake this formative written assessment is available per candidate.**
- A familiarisation session for candidates who pass the written component and proceed to the holistic OSCE. This will feature models and equipment commonly used in UK veterinary OSCEs. This is an optional session and will not contain any information about the content of the OSCE stations. This will normally be held on the day before the OSCE.

The examination is set to the standard of the RCVS Day One Competences and the OSCE takes a holistic approach aiming to reflect scenarios typically seen in UK first-opinion practice (see section 6). It is therefore recommended that candidates familiarise themselves with the RCVS Day One Competences documents available on our website here: <https://www.rcvs.org.uk/document-library/day-one-competences/>.

3.1. Courses of study

The RCVS does not offer or endorse any course of this type and it would be up to you to decide whether it would be useful to you to attend a course, or not. Please direct any enquiries to the provider of the course you are interested in.

3.2. Studying and access to libraries

Once you have met the examination entry requirements and have been accepted as a candidate to sit the next examination you will be able to obtain membership of the RCVS Knowledge Library.

Examination candidates are offered a special library membership category which allows them to borrow books. There is a fee of £25 for 6 months' membership and an additional fee for sending books in the post. The Knowledge Library is open by appointment only. Please contact the RCVS Knowledge Library by email at library@rcvsknowledge.org or telephone +44 20 7202 0745 in advance to arrange an appointment and to let us know the material you would like to use. Membership forms are available from the library on request.

You may be eligible to apply for a reader's pass to the British Library's science collections. For information about the British Library's admission arrangements please contact them directly or visit their website.

3.3. Practical and clinical experience – Seeing Practice

As well as studying, spending time at UK veterinary practices will help you to gain valuable practical and clinical experience in preparation for the examination. This is referred to as "seeing practice". You

may see practice under the Veterinary Surgeons (Practice by Students) (Amendment) Regulations 1993 [Seeing practice - Professionals \(rcvs.org.uk\)](https://www.rcvs.org.uk). The regulations described below allow you to attend veterinary practices in the UK for the purpose of seeing practice.

Seeing practice in all domains (companion animal, equine, production animal and public health) is strongly encouraged. All aspects of the examination are set in the context of how consultations are carried out in the UK. By seeing practice, you will experience how vets in the UK work and carry out consultations, which may be different to how you were trained. You may also gain exposure to species and diseases that are not common in other regions of the world which will improve your knowledge. Additionally, if English is not your native language it can help improve your communication skills in all formats, which will aid in preparation for the IELTS/OET as well as the exam.

You may not see practice without a valid, in-date letter from the RCVS confirming that you have submitted a completed declaration of intention to sit.

These Regulations permit overseas veterinarians to gain clinical experience in UK veterinary procedures by attendance at a UK veterinary practice for the purpose of entering for the examination. The supervising veterinary surgeon is responsible for what a veterinary student or a candidate for this examination does and, therefore, has discretion to decide what procedures you may carry out. The Regulations set down different degrees of supervision for different procedures.

The Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966 provides, subject to certain exceptions, that only registered members of the RCVS may practise veterinary surgery and the RCVS Code of Professional Conduct for Veterinary Surgeons states that 'Veterinary surgeons must ensure that tasks are delegated only to those who have the appropriate competence and registration'.

Exceptions to this rule are described in the Code's supporting guidance under the heading, 'Treatment of animals by unqualified persons'. The exception at 19.6 enables a registered vet, at his or her discretion, to supervise your seeing practice in the same way that he or she would supervise a veterinary student as part of their clinical training, and the levels of supervision that apply are described in paragraph 19.7. Both paragraphs are set out below:

19.6 "The Veterinary Surgeons (Practice by Students) (Amendment) Regulations 1993 identify two categories of student, full time undergraduate students in the clinical part of their course and overseas veterinary surgeons whose declared intention is to sit the MRCVS examination within a reasonable time. The Regulations provide that students may examine animals, carry out diagnostic tests under the direction of a registered veterinary surgeon, administer treatment under the supervision of a registered veterinary surgeon and perform surgical operations under the direct and continuous supervision of a registered veterinary surgeon.

19.7 The RCVS has interpreted these as follows:

- (a) 'direction' means that the veterinary surgeon instructs the student as to the tests to be administered but is not necessarily present*
- (b) 'supervision' means that the veterinary surgeon is present on the premises and able to respond to a request for assistance if needed*
- (c) 'direct and continuous supervision' means that the veterinary surgeon is present and giving the student his/her undivided personal attention"*

If you see practice under these Regulations, you must notify the RCVS of your arrangements using a “seeing practice” form and provide updates as appropriate. This form is available on the RCVS website at <https://www.rcvs.org.uk/registration/applications-veterinary-surgeons/statutory-membership-exam/>.

Candidates do not need to gain insurance from providers such as the Veterinary Defence Society to see practice in the UK however they should check that any practice they attend has appropriate insurance cover. Employers/host practices must have Public Liability, Employer’s Liability and Professional Indemnity insurance or finances in place to protect the practice, exam candidate and any staff who will be supervising the candidate should a problem occur. This insurance will be valid provided the candidate and staff are not acting outside the legislation described above.

The RCVS cannot help you find a veterinary practice or recommend any establishments and so you must make your own arrangements. The RCVS ‘Find a Vet’ database allows you to search for veterinary practices by geographical location and is available on the RCVS website at [Home - Find A Vet \(rcvs.org.uk\)](https://www.rcvs.org.uk/Find-A-Vet)

It is for you to decide how much time you need to spend “seeing practice” based on your assessment of your abilities and knowledge of UK veterinary practice. You may need to arrange to spend time at several different veterinary practices and/or one or more of the animal charities to gain practical experience with horses, production and companion animals and veterinary public health.

4. Applying to sit the examination

Application forms will be sent out to all of those on the active list prior to the opening of the application window (normally 1 October). Anyone who submits a declaration/renewal of intention to sit during the application window will be sent an application form once their declaration/renewal is accepted by the RCVS.

When you submit the application, you must provide the following:

- a. A completed examination application form (see [section 4.1](#))
- b. An English language test report confirming you have achieved the minimum standard (see [section 4.2](#)) or confirmation of your exemption
- c. Evidence (certificate/letter) of your good professional standing (see [section 4.3](#))
- d. Examination fee in full (see [section 4.6](#))

You will be accepted as an examination candidate only after we have received all the items that make up a complete application. Upon completion of all entry requirements, you will receive written confirmation from the RCVS that you have been accepted as a candidate to sit the next examination.

In addition to meeting the RCVS examination entry requirements, you may also need to obtain entry clearance from the British Embassy or High Commission in the country you are living in, or a national of, to enter the UK to take the examination. The RCVS is unable to offer advice regarding your visa status or work permit status. For such advice, please contact the Home Office.

4.1. Examination application form

The closing date for entry for the examination is 5pm GMT **14 January** each year. It is your responsibility to complete and submit your application by the closing date. All applications must be submitted via email to rcvsexam@rcvs.org.uk.

4.2. English language test report

If you did not apply for an exemption, then you must provide proof that you meet the minimum required standards in the English language. This can be demonstrated via either of the following assessments:

International English Language Testing System (IELTS): Achieving an average score of at least **7.0** across the listening, reading, writing, and speaking components of the **academic** version of the International English Language Testing System (IELTS). A score of 6.5 is allowed in one component provided the remaining components are 7.0 or more and the overall average is at least 7.0: <https://www.ielts.org/>

Occupational English Test (OET): Achieving at least a **grade B** in the listening, reading, writing and speaking sub-tests of the **veterinary** version of the Occupational English Test (OET). A grade C+ is allowed in one sub-test provided the grades for the remaining sub-tests are a B or higher: <https://www.occupationalenglishtest.org/test-information/healthcare-professions/veterinary-science/>

Once you have achieved the required standard in one of these assessments you must arrange for the results to be provided to us. This will be a **Test Report Form** if you took the IELTS or a **Statement of**

Results if you took the OET. You can send your test results to us by post or provide a good quality scanned copy by email (we cannot accept photocopies). Alternatively, you can arrange for your test centre to send them directly to us.

Test scores must be in date on all days you intend to sit all examinations i.e., Spring to Autumn. They are valid for **two years** from the date of your test. We do not accept scores from any English tests other than IELTS or OET.

If you pass some sub-tests of the OET or components of the IELTS but fall below the required standard in others, then you may re-sit those failed sub-tests. Please note that all of the sub-tests/components must be in date for the duration of the examination period.

We will confirm that we have received the test report once we have verified your scores through the IELTS/OET verification service. For OET users, please ensure that you add the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons to the list of verifier institutions permitted to access your results.

Please contact the test centre for up-to-date result time frames. We strongly advise you aim to take your test as far in advance of submitting your application as possible.

4.2.1 English language test validity extension

A passing IELTS/OET is valid for two years. Individuals who have achieved a passing score and have continued to live and/or work in an English-speaking country can request their test results validity to be extended by providing a relevant reference from a qualified and registered veterinary surgeon in an English-speaking country. In the UK this person should be a member of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (MRCVS).

An English-speaking country is defined by the following list: <https://www.gmc-uk.org/registration-and-licensing/join-the-register/before-you-apply/evidence-of-your-knowledge-of-english/using-other-types-of-evidence>.

Your reference should be emailed by the veterinary surgeon writing on your behalf, directly to rcvsexam@rcvs.org.uk and include the following:

- Your name
- The veterinary surgeon's name and registration number
- The address of the veterinary practice
- The dates and amount of time you have spent working with or observing them in practice
- Their assessment of your English skills in writing, reading, listening, and speaking

A reference which is approved by the Examinations Manager will be valid for one year from the date of receipt.

4.3. Evidence of your good professional standing

Before an examination entry is accepted, the RCVS must be satisfied that:

- you are of good standing, i.e., that there is no charge of, or ongoing investigation of, crime or unprofessional conduct outstanding against you.
- you are of good character in general terms.
- the information provided relates to your most recent period of veterinary employment and registration or student activity.

- the evidence provided is current and up to date. We accept letters dated within the examination entry period (1 October – 14 January). We do not accept letters dated or received outside this time (15 January - 30 September).

You must provide the RCVS with up-to-date evidence of your good standing each time you apply to sit our examination. Letter(s) must be directly emailed to rcvsexam@rcvs.org.uk

4.4 Who may provide evidence of your good standing?

We require a letter or certificate from the veterinary licensing authority of the country in which you are currently registered or were last registered. This must be accompanied by a notarised English translation where necessary. It should be noted that in some cases, the RCVS may require additional evidence of good character, especially if your registration is not current or you have not practised within the last 3 months. If a letter provided on your behalf does not meet RCVS requirements, we will inform you as soon as possible and the RCVS Registration department will discuss provision of additional suitable documentation with you.

If you have graduated within the last year and have not previously been registered, you should obtain a letter or certificate of good professional standing from the Dean or Principal of the university or college at which you obtained/will obtain your primary veterinary qualification.

The RCVS will not normally accept evidence which is presented by the candidate. However, if your veterinary licensing authority or university cannot provide a letter or certificate written in English, a copy of the letter or certificate may be sent to you, so that you can get it translated. You must then send the original notarised translation to the RCVS. The original copy must still be sent directly from the originator.

It is our experience that some organisations take several months to provide the evidence of good professional standing. You should therefore request the document at the earliest opportunity.

It is your responsibility to ensure that the RCVS receives your letter or certificate of good professional standing. **The RCVS is not responsible for chasing up these letters.** If the evidence is not provided by the examination entry closing date, then it is possible that you will not be able to enter the examination.

If you cannot provide a letter as described above, you will have to arrange for the RCVS to receive evidence of your good standing from other sources. Please send an email to rcvsexam@rcvs.org.uk outlining your query. If necessary, you will be sent a form to complete which will allow the registration team to consider your circumstances and advise you how to meet our requirement.

4.5. Number of examination attempts

Candidates may attempt the examination as many times as they wish. For each attempt, you will be required to pay the full examination fee. The RCVS Education Committee may, if it sees fit, withdraw the right to sit the examination from a candidate. If the committee decides to use their power to do this, that decision will override their rule allowing unlimited attempts at the whole examination.

4.6. Examination fees

The cost of the examination is £2,500. This is made up of the examination fee of £2,200 and a non-refundable administration charge of £300. The examination fees are reviewed on an annual basis.

Each fee allows one attempt at the examination. If you are not successful and decide to sit the examination again a separate application form must be completed, and another fee and administration charge paid.

Payment is made via the RCVS MyAccount portal. Details are provided once all other aspects of the exam application are complete. Please note, all international bank charges are incurred by the person paying the fee, including those levied by our bank, which is approximately £7.00.

4.7. Withdrawal and refunds

If you wish to withdraw from the examination, you must notify the RCVS in writing by email to rcvsexam@rcvs.org.uk. Any refund of an examination fee will be made payable to the person who paid the fee. The administration fee will not be refunded.

The size of the refund you will be eligible for is dependent on when you choose to withdraw:

Time of Withdrawal	Eligible Refund
Before the closing date of 14 January	The examination fee of £2,200, not including the non-refundable £300 administration charge
More than 28 days before examination	Half the examination fee: £1,100
28 days or fewer before the examination	No refund
Failure to attend the examination	No refund

Discretionary refunds on medical or compassionate grounds

If you must withdraw from the examination for medical or compassionate reasons, you may be eligible for a discretionary refund of some or the whole examination fee.

You must submit your request in writing with documentary evidence to support the medical or compassionate grounds cited no later than 28 days after the part of the examination that you missed. You may have to wait several months for a decision because the RCVS committees which have discretion to grant refunds meet at fixed times during the year and it may not be possible to reach a decision outside the meetings.

4.8. Reapplications following failure or withdrawal

Each time you apply to enter the examination you must:

- complete a new application form
- pay the appropriate examination fee
- arrange for the RCVS to receive up-to-date evidence of your good professional standing
- meet any other entry requirements. You will have to sit another academic IELTS or OET test if your previous report is out of date (more than two years old)

5. Admission to the Register

Candidates who pass the whole of the Statutory Membership Examination are eligible for admission to the Register of the RCVS. It is a legal requirement under the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966 that you register and are admitted to membership of the RCVS before engaging in any type of veterinary work in the UK or using the letters MRCVS after your name.

Some successful candidates will also have to meet UK Home Office immigration criteria to work in the UK and may require a work permit. These requirements are separate from the requirement to be registered with the RCVS. Further information on work permits can be found on the Home Office website. Any queries must be directed to the Home Office.

You must have your passport or identity card with you and your original veterinary degree certificate or diploma when you register. Registration fees must be paid before you attend to register. Full details will be sent with your examination results.

5.1. Admissions ceremony

The RCVS usually holds a short ceremony for candidates who have passed the examination.

If you cannot attend this ceremony, you can register at one of the RCVS' regular routine registration sessions or remotely online. Dates are available from the RCVS Registration department. Please note appointments are provided on a first come first served basis. If you need to attend a registration appointment because you have been offered a veterinary position in the UK, and there are no available dates listed ahead of your start date, please submit a copy of the job offer letter you received from your new employer (ensuring it includes your start date) with your Registration Form. Please note this will usually be dependent on the cancellation of an existing appointment, so we are not able to guarantee you an earlier appointment, but we will do our very best.

Registration fees and retention fees are reviewed annually and are increased from 1 April. Please look at the RCVS website for details of current fees <http://www.rcvs.org.uk/about-us/fees/>. If you do not pay your annual retention fee, your name will be removed from the Register, and you will not be able to practise as a veterinary surgeon in the UK.

6. About the examination

This section of the guidance provides information about the scope, standard, format and content of the written examinations and the Objective Structured Clinical Exam (OSCE).

The examination is conducted in English and all communication with candidates, before, during and after the examination will be conducted in English.

6.1. General information

The RCVS Day One Competences are the minimum essential competences that the RCVS expects all veterinary students to have met when they graduate, to ensure that they are safe to practise on day one, in whichever area of the profession they start to work. Veterinarians who qualified overseas are also expected to meet these minimum standards and therefore the examination is designed to provide candidates the opportunity to demonstrate that they meet this minimum standard. You are advised to read the RCVS Day One Competences document carefully and refer to it throughout your exam preparation. The document can be downloaded from the RCVS website.

The clinical written papers and the OSCE are split into three domains: companion animal, production animal (including veterinary public health) and equine. Candidates **must** meet the minimum required standard in each of the three domains and **will not be able to compensate across them**. If a candidate falls below the standard in one domain, **then they will not pass the examination regardless of how well they performed in the other domains**. This applies to both the written and OSCE components of the examination.

The examination will cover the underpinning knowledge and understanding, clinical reasoning, and practical and professional competences required to practise as a veterinary surgeon in the UK including coverage of veterinary public health, medicine, surgery, and the husbandry associated with companion animals, production animals and horses.

Only veterinary surgeons who have submitted an examination application form and supporting documents, paid the examination fee and had their application accepted may attend the examination.

If your application to sit the exam is accepted, you will receive confirmation of the date of your written examinations by 14 February.

Candidates who pass the written component will receive confirmation they can progress to the OSCE at the same time of their written results. The location and approximate date(s) on which their OSCE takes place will also be provided at this time.

Candidates **must achieve a pass in all three domains of the clinical paper as well as the Code of Professional Conduct paper before they can proceed to the OSCE**. All components (written examinations and OSCEs) of the exam must typically be sat in the same year.

Re-sits of failed individual clinical domain written exam papers (Companion Animal, Equine, Production Animal/VPH) are not permitted in the same diet. However, if a candidate has passed all three clinical domains but failed the Code of Professional Conduct paper, they are allowed to re-sit the COPC prior to the practical examination.

If a candidate passes the written exams and subsequently fails the OSCE, they must re-enter all components of the exam (written and OSCE) with a new application.

The examination should not be taken without thorough preparation and exposure to seeing practice within the UK, ideally across all clinical domains of practice.

6.2. Venues

The written examination will be administered online usually over a period of one to three weeks. The clinical domain exams last for 2 hours and the RCVS Code of Professional Conduct exam lasts for 2 hours and 15 minutes. You will be able to take the examination from a secure, appropriate location of your choosing in your own country of residence, live proctoring and invigilation will be used throughout your exams. Any suspicious behaviour shown or an unsuitable environment may prevent you from completing your exam. You must inform the RCVS Examinations Manager of the country and time zone in which you will be sitting the exam.

The examination will be invigilated remotely by a member of the software team by utilising your webcam and microphone to observe and take a recording of you during the examination session. The software will lock down your computer for the duration of the examination session: you will not be able to navigate away and access the internet or other files/programs stored on your machine. The hardware requirements can be found at [Information for Exam Candidates | TestReach](#)

Details of the live invigilation process will be provided to candidates prior to taking the exam.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you have the necessary hardware to run the examination software and it (including equipment, good internet, a webcam and microphone) is in full working order. There will be no opportunity to re-sit or appeal any components of the examination due to hardware failure. Re-sits will only be considered for a verifiable fault with the examination software which was outside of your control.

There will be an opportunity for you determine whether your hardware is compatible prior to the exam. Any issues must be raised with the Examinations Manager as soon as possible.

The software utilises advanced artificial intelligence and in-person live proctoring to detect potentially suspicious behaviour in the video record, such as eye movements suggesting that a candidate is reading a study aid or noises in the room which could suggest a candidate is being fed answers. Any suspicious behaviour suggestive of cheating may result in your exam being paused or stopped during the exam, while an investigation is completed by a exam security invigilation member of the software team, this will also be referred to the Examination Board and the Registrar, who will review all reports of the alleged misconduct and consider if there is sufficient evidence for the allegation to be pursued (see section 6.14 of the 2020 Statutory Membership Examination Guidance published on our website for further information on the examination misconduct policy).

You must conduct yourself during this examination no differently than if it were being held in a regular, invigilated test centre. You must, conduct the exam in an environment similar to that of an invigilated test centre or exam room.

Candidates who pass the written components will proceed to the OSCE. This will take place at a UK veterinary school in Autumn.

Candidates are responsible for making their own travel and accommodation arrangements.

It should be noted that the examination is designed and delivered by the RCVS and therefore all correspondence should be directed to us. Candidates must not contact the exam software company or the vet school directly (unless instructed to do so by us) as they will not be able to offer assistance.

6.3. Emergency evacuation procedures

If you are required to evacuate the building where you are completing your remote online written examination, then do so immediately and according to the instructions set out by the building's regulator. You must notify the invigilator and examinations manager about your need to evacuate **as soon as it is safe to do so**.

If during the practical examinations, you are instructed to evacuate the examination area you should follow instructions provided by the examiner or other test centre personnel. You should leave the examination area in an orderly way, without taking anything with you, or talking to other candidates. You must assemble at the designated area and not leave this area. If you are permitted to return to the examination area, you should do so immediately when you are instructed. Candidates who are absent once the examination has re-started will not be compensated for any time lost.

6.4. Identification

At the start of each exam, you will be asked to show your ID such as a passport, please also be aware at any point during the exam, you may be asked to present this again to the live invigilators.

6.5. Prohibited items

For the written examination, the following items must not be present in the room whilst the examination is in session:

- Any educational, test preparation or study materials
- Electronic devices other than the computer on which you will be taking the examination. These include mobile phones, tablets, hand-held computers, pagers, voice-controlled devices (such as an Alexa for example) and smartwatches. If a device is seen, your exam may be stopped or you may be asked to show this to screen and be observed turning this off and placing this in view of the invigilator.
- Bracelets or jewellery which bang or scratch on the table should be removed to prevent any unnecessary noise which could trigger the invigilation software. Exceptions to this can be found in section 6.8.4. A thorough exam security check will take place. Items of clothing with buttons, broaches and pockets will be asked to be presented to the invigilator for exam security checking. Pockets may be asked to be emptied. Items such as jewellery and glasses may also be requested to be shown to the invigilator.
- Stationary, paper and calculators are not needed and not allowed to be with you at the time of the exam. These are included online within the exam software.

A room scan will be completed prior to the exam. You will be asked to show the walls of the entire room along with the ceiling and floor.

Please complete your exam sat at a table or desk (not sat on a sofa for example). You will be asked to complete a 360-degree scan of the desk/table and chair you are using when taking the exam.

Walls within the room where possible are to be free from posters, pictures, shelves etc. If these can not be removed, please note you may be asked to present these areas to the invigilator.

Take the exam in a room with a door that closes, so you are not disturbed.

All forms of glasses and ear plugs will be asked to be presented to the invigilator for exam security checking.

Mobile phones, pagers and electronic devices must be turned off and moved to a different room.

Revision notes, textbooks, articles, journals, and study aids must not be present in the room whilst the examination is in session

You are not permitted to take any of the following items into the OSCE.

- Any educational, test preparation or study materials
- Personal items, including mobile phones, hand-held computers, pagers, smartwatches, or other electronic devices (clocks will be provided where required)
- Bags, purses, wallets
- Coats and outdoor wear not required for the examination
- Bracelets or jewellery which bang or scratch on the table must be removed to prevent disturbance to other candidates. Exceptions to this can be found in section 6.8.4.
- Pencil cases or stationery (these will be provided for you).

Secure space will be provided at the venue for you to store your personal belongings.

6.6. Fit to sit the examination

By presenting yourself at the examination centre (which in the case of the written examination shall be interpreted as logging onto the software), you are indicating that you are fit to sit the examination. If you become unwell at any point during the examination, you should inform one of the test administrators or examiners immediately. If you are not fit to sit the exam for any reason, a mitigating circumstances form needs to be completed and submitted to the examinations manager. [Document library - Professionals \(rcvs.org.uk\)](#) Medical evidence will be asked to be provided.

6.7. Written examinations

The written examination consists of three, clinical domains (companion animal, production animal (including veterinary public health) and equine) as well as an open-book examination testing your knowledge of the RCVS Code of Professional Conduct (60 multiple-choice questions). You must pass all these components to be eligible to proceed to the OSCE. The written examination will take place remotely within a period of one to three weeks. The clinical domain exams last for 2 hours and the RCVS Code of Professional Conduct exam lasts for 2 hours and 15 minutes.

The use of foam ear plugs to decrease noise is allowed. These must be presented to the live invigilator at the start of the exam, these will then be checked to ensure they are not a means of communication (e.g., Bluetooth enabled).

6.7.1 Clinical exam

This examination consists of 350 clinically relevant Multiple-Choice Questions (MCQ) that test both knowledge and clinical reasoning. These will cover three domains:

- Companion animals – approximately 50% of total questions
- Production animals (including veterinary public health) – approximately 30% of total questions
- Equine – approximately 20% of total questions

The questions typically consist of a clinical vignette (a clinical scenario which you might come across in your day-to-day practice), with five answer options. Candidates are required to select the **single best answer**. With this type of question, several of the options are potentially correct but one is a better match to the question than the others by a clear margin.

You must meet the minimum required standard in each of the three domains. There will be **no compensation across domains** i.e., if you fall below the required standard in one domain, then you will fail the examination regardless of how well you did in either of the other domains.

Ensure that you allow yourself enough time to log into the software before the examination is due to start. The formative assessment mock test will have given you an idea of how much time you will require.

All candidates will take the exam at the same time using the UK time zone, during the exam you cannot get up and leave the desk, for example no opportunity for a toilet break.

Negative marking will not be applied.

6.7.2. Code of Professional Conduct exam

This is an open book MCQ examination designed to test your knowledge of the RCVS Code of Professional Conduct and its application to veterinary scenarios. It will also test knowledge of key organisations and standards relevant to a veterinary surgeon practising in the UK. As with the clinical examination, please ensure that you leave yourself enough time to log in before the exam begins.

You may access a searchable PDF copy of the RCVS Code of Professional Conduct [Code of Professional Conduct for Veterinary Surgeons - Professionals \(rcvs.org.uk\)](https://www.rcvs.org.uk) to assist you with this examination. Please note, you are still expected to complete this paper under examination conditions and that any allegations of misconduct, such as communication between candidates, will be referred to the Examination Board and the Registrar in line with section 6.14 of the guidance.

The length of this examination session is 2 hours 15 minutes with no opportunity for toilet breaks.

We strongly recommend that you familiarise yourself with the RCVS Code of Professional Conduct and Supporting Guidance when preparing for the exam. If you pass all three clinical domain written examinations but fail the Code of Professional Conduct exam you will be permitted a re-sit opportunity prior to the practical OSCE examinations.

Negative marking will not be applied.

6.7.3. Candidate examination conduct (written examinations)

When logging into the software to take the examination, you will need your username, password and identification.

You will be expected to behave as if you were sitting the exam in a physical examination centre. Mobile phones, pagers and electronic devices must be turned off and stored away from your exam room. Revision notes, textbooks, articles, journals, and study aids must not be present in the room whilst the examination is in session.

The exams will be live-proctored by a member of the exam software invigilation team. They will ask you to show them (via your laptop/computer camera) a full scan of your room, chair and desk/table. Please ensure you take the exam within a room you are comfortable to show the invigilator. Exams cannot be completed if this is not done to the satisfaction of the invigilator. Items such as glasses,

electronic devices seen within the area will be asked to shown to the invigilator. The invigilators are trained to detect suspicious items and detect untoward behaviour that many be considered as an exam security threat. Items of clothing with pockets, buttons and broaches, as well as jewellery, will also be inspected, long sleeves will be asked to be rolled up. Consider carefully what you will wear each day for the exam, as this checking process can take time to complete.

It will not be possible to take toilet or rest breaks whilst the examination is in session. Please ensure that you are comfortable and prepared before the examination session begins.

No other person is permitted to be in the room with you whilst the examination is in session.

You must not leave the room for any reason other than an emergency whilst the examination is in session.

Communication of any kind with anyone else during the examination is strictly forbidden and if this takes place an exam security invigilator will be asked to intervene.

You will have the option to finish the examination early if you desire. Once you have finished the examination and submitted your answers the invigilation conditions will be lifted (if appropriate) until the start of the next exam session. You will not be permitted to re-visit your answers once you have completed and submitted your examination.

If you experience any problems with the computer during the examination, alert the live invigilators so that they can support you, and after the exam contact the examination manager immediately. You may be asked to complete a mitigating circumstances form.

6.7.4. Sample questions

We have provided a small sample of clinical MCQ questions in Appendix 1 so that you can see what format of questions will be included in the examination.

There will be a one opportunity to access a formative assessment scheduled with 110 MCQ questions to aid your exam preparation (100 clinical MCQs and 10 relating to the RCVS Code of Professional Conduct). These questions reflect the breadth and scope of the questions that you can expect to see in the paper and will provide you with an opportunity to experience the style of questions contained within the actual examination. If you have any concerns after taking this test, you should contact the Examinations Manager as soon as possible at rcvsexam@rcvs.org.uk

6.8. Objective Structured Clinical Examination

The clinical, practical examination will be in the form of an holistic Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE). The RCVS has decided to use OSCEs as this is in line with current best practice in veterinary medical assessment. OSCEs are a fair, valid, and reliable assessment method; all candidates will be assessed on identical clinical scenarios and practical tasks, asked the same questions, and be scored with a standardised methodology.

The OSCE is a multi-station circuit of clinical / professional scenarios which candidates have 20 minutes to complete. Each station within the OSCE assesses a range of skills all of which enable candidates to demonstrate RCVS Day One Competences. The stations are designed with a holistic approach to emulate typical consultations seen in UK general practice, for example the ability to take a history, examine an animal then decide on the next step to be taken and communicate that back to the

client. A video recording of a typical holistic OSCE station used in the exam is available here: [RCVS Academy](#) and further information about the course can be found here ['Working in the UK' online courses for veterinary professionals educated outside of the UK - Professionals \(rcvs.org.uk\)](#)

Stations that assess communication skills may include an actor playing the role of the client or other relevant party. Other stations may involve clinical models/simulators, and some may involve the use of cadavers. Some stations may have a live animal and a model and/or cadaver in separate areas. In all cases, you will be expected to perform tasks as if you were treating a live animal and behave as you would when working in a practice in the UK. These skills will be assessed across companion animal, production animal (including veterinary public health) and equine domains. Candidates must meet the minimum required standard in each of these three domains to pass the examination. There will be **no compensation across domains** i.e., if you fall below the required standard in one domain, then you will fail the examination regardless of how well you did in either of the other domains.

The scenarios which feature in these OSCE stations are based on common and/or important clinical scenarios you might encounter in veterinary practice. They will be at the level of the RCVS Day One Competences. These may differ from other countries and therefore you should ensure that you are familiar with the methodology you are required to follow.

Examiners will mark you against a standardised scoring rubric. This will describe to the examiners the performance (knowledge skills, behaviours) they need to see you demonstrate in order for you to achieve the allocated marks. All candidates will be marked against the same scoring rubric.

Each station rubric will assess some or all of the following constructs:

- Animal handling and management
- History taking
- Examination skills
- Diagnosis (clinical judgements)
- Technical skills
- Treatment planning (clinical decision making)
- Communication skills
- Professionalism (including safety)
- Organisation (including time management)

The examiners record their marks independently. During the examination no examiner knows the marks you have scored at any other station. They will not provide you with any feedback on your performance whilst the exam is in session.

6.8.1. Examiners

The examiners are appointed by the RCVS. There will be two independent examiners per OSCE station who will observe you during the examination. The examiners will be experienced veterinary surgeons who have received training to ensure that the assessment is valid and reliable.

6.8.2. Candidate examination conduct (OSCE)

The OSCE exam period can typically take between 3 and 5 days to complete, however this may be liable to change depending on the number of candidates who enter the examination.

When you arrive at the examination centre you will be shown to a waiting room and your identity will be checked. You will be given a badge that displays your candidate number. This badge must be

visible for the duration of the OSCE so that the examiners can identify you. You will also receive a briefing about the examination process.

Your personal belongings must be placed in the locker or secure area indicated by the test centre staff. Mobile phones, pagers and electronic devices must be turned off before being placed in the secure storage area. Neither the test centre nor the RCVS will be held responsible for lost, stolen or misplaced items. You will not be permitted to take any equipment into the examination (except for the items detailed in section 6.8.4). Everything else you require will be provided.

Friends, relatives, or children are not allowed to wait in the test centre.

The OSCE consists of thirteen stations in separate circuits, such as a clinical skills lab, equine centre, or production animal centre. Examination administrators will ensure that you are at the correct circuit and have plenty of time to change into the correct clothing before the exam start time.

At the allocated start time, you will be taken to the examination area where you will be shown to your first OSCE station. You will be given 3 minutes to read the instructions outside the station (reading time may vary, based on candidates with reasonable adjustments). This will include a brief background related to the clinical scenario and instructions for completing the task(s). These instructions contain all the information required for you to complete the station so ensure you take the time to read them very carefully. Once the reading time has elapsed, you will enter the station and begin the task(s). A copy of the station instructions will be available inside for your reference.

You will have 20 minutes to complete each station. **You are responsible for managing your own time in the station.** Each station will include a mechanism by which you can monitor your time for the duration of the scenario. Note that some stations may contain more than one practical task; therefore, you are advised to plan your time carefully. If you are unable to carry out a particular task, you may wish to bypass it and forgo its marks to focus on other tasks within the station. Once the station's time has elapsed, you will move on to the next station. Other than as directed in the candidate instructions, you should refrain from initiating conversation with the examiner or any other personnel present during a station.

You are advised to check carefully that you have completed all the tasks before leaving the station as once you leave you will not be permitted to re-enter. When you finish each station, you may leave and sit on the chair indicated by the invigilator and wait until the audio announcement tells you to move to the next station. You are not permitted to communicate with other candidates while waiting.

Scheduled breaks will be provided as appropriate. If you need to use the toilet during the OSCE an invigilator will escort you. You will not be given additional time to complete the examination if you do take an unscheduled break. When you have completed all stations in the circuit, you will be taken back to the waiting area.

6.8.3. Health and safety

Working with animals carries with it an element of risk which you are consenting to by entering this examination. In the process of running the examination, the RCVS and the venue will take appropriate steps to mitigate any such risks as far as possible. Neither the RCVS nor the venue may be held responsible for any injuries sustained by a candidate as a result of his/her negligence either through their actions during the examination or their failure to wear adequate protective gear (see section 6.8.4).

As the examination involves the use of live animals, the examiner may stop you at any time during the examination if it appears that your level of competence is such as to jeopardise the safety and/or welfare of the animal or examination personnel.

6.8.4. Dress code, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and equipment

Candidates are required to follow the dress code outlined in this section. Clothing and footwear are not provided by the RCVS or the examination centre, therefore candidates are required to bring their own. It is important that these have been thoroughly cleaned to prevent cross contamination.

You will be expected to bring the following equipment with you:

- Stethoscope
- Fob watch or wristwatch with a second hand for use in clinical examinations of animals (smart watches are prohibited)

For Health & Safety purposes, jewellery including piercings should be removed and hair should be tied back out of the face.

The RCVS recognises there are different religious and cultural beliefs amongst candidates and that candidates may have medical conditions. The RCVS guidance on Religious Clothing and Beliefs can be found [here](#). If you believe these may impact the dress code stated, then please contact the Examination Manager before 31 December.

Clothing requirements for each section of the OSCE are as follows:

Component	Clothing Requirements
Companion Animal	Clean scrubs or a lab coat and suitable footwear (no open toe shoes).
Production Animal and Veterinary Public Health	Clean overalls or boiler suit and clean wellington boots. Waterproofs may be worn if preferred but are not mandatory. After the exam, candidates must carry out a complete hand and boot wash, remove any waterproofs and change into regular shoes.
Equine	Clean overalls or boiler suit and sturdy boots. No waterproofs or wellington boots are allowed in the stables. Protective headgear will be provided by the RCVS.

Please do not wear and/or cover up areas of scrubs/overalls/boilers suits that have your name embroidered on to the clothes. Please remove any name badges.

6.9. Notification of examination results

Examination results will be sent via email no longer than 4 weeks after the final part of the section (written exams or OSCE). Please note that no results are given by telephone.

6.10. Examination Outcomes and Re-sit Policy

The pass mark for each examination is determined using a recognised standard setting methodology. This evidence-based approach considers the relative difficulty of each of the questions in the exam to determine a fair pass mark in line with the standard expected. Candidates will be notified whether they have achieved the pass mark or not – pass marks will not be published, and feedback will not be available.

If you fail the clinical written examination, you will not be permitted to proceed to the OSCE. If you pass all three domains in the clinical written examination but fail the Code of Professional Conduct examination, you will be invited to re-sit the Code of Professional Conduct exam. If you pass this re-sit exam, you will be eligible to proceed to the OSCE.

If you pass the written examinations and the OSCE you will be invited to apply to register.

If you pass the written exams then fail the OSCE, you will need to re-enter the entire exam (written and OSCE) as a new candidate if or when you decide to try again, and pay the full examination fee.

You are not able to carry marks over from previous sittings.

6.11. Examination appeals

The RCVS has an examination appeals procedure carried out in accordance with Examination Appeals Rules made by the Council. An appeal may be made only in respect of the conduct of the examination and not against the academic judgment of the examiners. Appeals must be made using an appeal form obtainable from the RCVS and submitted to rcvsexam@rcvs.org.uk within 28 days of the date of the letter advising you of the examination result.

6.12. Mitigating circumstances

If you feel there are serious mitigating circumstances (such as a sudden onset of illness) affecting your performance at the examination, you must report these to rcvsexam@rcvs.org.uk at the earliest opportunity. If you become ill during the exam session you must notify the live invigilators and examination manager immediately.

If you cannot attend the examination because of serious illness or a different overwhelming problem, you should notify us that you will not be attending as soon as possible. After the examination you will be required to complete a mitigating circumstances form providing the circumstances and evidence.

A mitigating circumstances form will be available from the RCVS on request. Completed forms along with supporting information must be supplied within six days of the examination (written or OSCE). Each application will be considered on an individual basis.

6.13. Confidentiality and test security

The results of the examination must be an accurate reflection of the candidate's knowledge and skills as a veterinary surgeon. Any cheating or misconduct before, during or after the examination may raise doubts about your fitness to practise.

All examination material remains the property of the RCVS and you are not permitted to reproduce or attempt to reproduce examination materials through memorisation or other means. **You must not share information about the questions or cases used in the examination.** You must not provide information relating to the examination content that may give unfair advantage to individuals who may be taking the examination, including, without limitation, posting information regarding the examination content on the internet, on social media or providing it to anyone involved in the preparation of candidates.

If you become aware of or witness any attempt to compromise the examination, please report it to the RCVS.

6.14. Misconduct

If you engage in unacceptable or improper behaviour before, during or after the examination to attain success then your results will be annulled, and you may be barred from entry to future examinations.

Misconduct includes, but is not limited to:

- Failure to comply with reasonable instruction of an examination official.
- Refusal to complete scans of the room or comply with the requests of the invigilator during exam security checks.
- Verbal or physical abuse of any person or animal such that an examiner or member of the examination team is made to feel intimidated or unsafe
- Disruptive behaviour during the examination or during break times.
- Copying or attempting to copy the work of another candidate.
- Disclosing content from an examination to a third party, either in person or via email or social media.
- Removing examination materials from the examination that you have not previously been authorised to remove. This includes removing materials by using recording devices and taking photographs.
- Bringing items into the examination other than those you have been permitted to use.
- Communication either verbally or via signals with other candidates whilst under examination conditions.
- Impersonation of a candidate or allowing yourself to be impersonated.
- Bribery, or attempted bribery of any personnel involved in the design, development, delivery of the examination.
- Being part of in person or virtual groups, who share information that may breach exams and not reporting this.

Allegations of misconduct will be referred to the Examination Board and the Registrar, who will review all reports of the alleged misconduct and consider if there is sufficient evidence for the allegation to be pursued. Candidates accused of misconduct will have the opportunity to provide a defence. We may withhold candidate results while we investigate an allegation of misconduct.

Appendix 1

Example Clinical MCQ questions

The single best answer is highlighted

1. You are called to see an 8 year old horse with anorexia, signs of depression and weight loss. Your clinical examination reveals no obvious abnormalities with the exception of poor body condition and icterus of the sclera. In light of the history and clinical findings, what are the most relevant plants or trees to look for in the horse's grazing environment?
 - Alfalfa
 - Foxglove
 - Oak trees
 - Ragwort
 - Yew
2. You are at a routine fertility visit at a dairy farm and are presented with a cow listed as 'oestrus not observed'. On trans-rectal ultrasound the cow has a large thick walled ovarian cyst. The cow's blood progesterone is raised (5ng/ml). What would be the most appropriate treatment?
 - Insert an intravaginal progesterone device for 10-12 days
 - Manual rupture of the cystic structure
 - Single injection of pregnant mare serum gonadotrophin (PMSG)
 - Single injection of gonadotrophin releasing hormone (GnRH)
 - Single injection of prostaglandin
3. You detect a grade V/VI pansystolic left apical murmur in a 10 year old Toy Poodle. The heart rate is 140 beats per minute. The owner reports that the dog has recently started coughing at night. What is the most appropriate method of investigation to determine whether treatment for congestive heart failure is required?
 - 2D echocardiography
 - Auscultation
 - Chest radiography
 - Electrocardiography
 - Serum pro-BNP assay

Appendix 2

Suggested Reading list

The reading list is divided into the three clinical domains: companion animal, production animal (including veterinary public health) and equine. This is followed by a general list containing texts which are relevant to more than one species. Websites that give information about current UK legislation of relevance to veterinary surgeons are listed, as well as some recommended veterinary journals and publications. You should read widely and be familiar with current issues and UK-specific problems. The reading list should act as a guide to the depth of knowledge required and should not be considered as a complete summary of the required knowledge.

You are also recommended to review the Day One Competences published by the RCVS (link below). This sets out the minimum essential competences (comprising knowledge, skills, and attitudes) required to register with the RCVS.

Equine

Auer, J.A. and Stick, J.A. (eds) (2018) *Equine Surgery* 5th ed Philadelphia: Saunders

Baxter, G.M. (ed) (2011) *Adams and Stashaks Lameness in Horses*. 6th ed Oxford: Wiley Blackwell

Knottenbelt, D.C. and Pascoe, R.R. (2013) *The Colour Atlas of Diseases and Disorders of the Horse*. London: Wolfe. ISBN 9780723436607

Mair, T. et al (eds) (2012) *Equine Medicine, Surgery and Reproduction*. 2nd ed London: CRC Press

Munroe, G.A. and Weese, J.S. (2011) *Equine Clinical Medicine, Surgery and Reproduction* London: CRC Press

Reed, S.M. et al (2017) *Equine Internal Medicine*. 4th ed. Philadelphia: Elsevier. ISBN 9780323443296

Companion animal

Books covering general medicine and surgery:

Fossum, T.W. (ed) (2018) *Small Animal Surgery*. 5th ed. St Louis: Mosby

Hill, P.B. et al (2011) *100 Top Consultations in Small Animal General Practice*. Oxford: Wiley Blackwell

Johnson, A. and Tobias, K.M. (eds) (2018) *Veterinary Surgery: Small Animal*. Philadelphia: Saunders

Maddison, J. et al (2015) *Clinical Reasoning in Small Animal Practice*. Oxford: Wiley Blackwell

Nelson, R. and Couto, C.G. (eds) (2013) *Small Animal Internal Medicine*. 5th ed. St Louis: Elsevier. ISBN9780323086820

Schaer, M. and Gaschen, F.P. (2016) *Clinical Medicine of the Dog and Cat*. 3rd ed. London: CRC Press

Books covering more specific disciplines

BSAVA produce a series of books and manuals which provide comprehensive coverage of a wide range of small animal disciplines. The following are some examples which you may find useful. Further information can be found on their website: www.bsava.com.

Bains, S.J. et al (eds) (2012) Manual of Canine and Feline Surgical Principles: a Foundation Manual BSAVA Quedgeley: Gloucester

DeCamp, C.E. et al (eds) (2015) Brinker, Piermattei and Flo's Handbook of small animal orthopaedics and fracture repair. 5th ed. Philadelphia: Saunders

Duke-Novakovski, T., de Vries, M. and Seymour, C. (2016) Manual of Canine and Feline Anaesthesia and Analgesia. 3rd ed. BSAVA Quedgeley: Gloucester

Gould, D. and McLellan, G.J. (2014) Manual of Canine and Feline Ophthalmology. 3rd ed. BSAVA Quedgeley: Gloucester

Harcourt-Brown, F. and Chitty, J. (2013) Manual of Rabbit Surgery, Dentistry and Imaging. BSAVA Quedgeley: Gloucester

Harvey, A. and Tasker, S. (2013) Manual of Feline Practice: a Foundation Manual. BSAVA Quedgeley: Gloucester

Holloway, A. and McConnell, J.F. (2013) Manual of Canine and Feline Radiography and Radiology: a Foundation Manual. BSAVA Quedgeley: Gloucester

Hutchinson, T. and Robinson, K. (2015) Manual of Canine Practice: a Foundation Manual. BSAVA Quedgeley: Gloucester

King, L.G. and Boag, A. (2018) Manual of Canine and Feline Emergency and Critical Care. BSAVA Quedgeley: Gloucester

Meredith, A. and Lord, B. (2014) Manual of Rabbit Medicine. BSAVA Quedgeley: Gloucester

Meredith, A. and Johnson Delaney, C. (2010) Manual of Exotic Pets. 5th ed. Quedgeley: Gloucester

Miller, W.H. et al (2013) Muller and Kirk's small animal dermatology. 7th ed. Missouri: Elsevier Mosby

Production animals

General

Constable, P.D. (2016) Veterinary medicine: a textbook of the diseases of cattle, horses, sheep, pigs and goats.

NADIS Animal Health Skills (subscription required): <https://clinicallylibrary.nadis.org.uk/>

Bovine

Ball, P.J. H. and Peters, A.R. (2004) Reproduction in cattle. 3rd ed. Oxford: Wiley

Blowey, R.W. and Weaver, A.D. (2011) A Colour Atlas of Diseases and Disorders of Cattle. 3rd ed. St Louis: Mosby

Cockcroft, P. (ed) (2015) Bovine Medicine. 3rd ed. Oxford: Wiley

Weaver, A.D. et al (eds) (2018) Bovine Surgery and Lameness. 3rd ed. Oxford: Wiley

Sheep

Scott, P.R. (2015) Sheep Medicine. 2nd ed. London: CRC Press

Winter, A.C. and Clarkson, M.J. (2012) A Handbook for the Sheep Clinician. 7th ed. Wallingford: CABI

Pigs

Taylor, D.J. (2013) Pig Diseases. 9th ed London: 5M Publishing

Poultry

Greenacre, C.B. and Morishita, T.Y. (eds) (2015) Backyard Poultry Medicine and Surgery A Guide for Veterinary Practitioners. Oxford: Wiley Blackwell

Sainsbury, D. (2000) Poultry Health and Managements. 4th ed. Oxford: Blackwell

Veterinary public health

Brown, M. (2000) HACCP in the Meat Industry. Boca Raton: CRC Press

Buncic, S. (2006) Integrated Food Safety and Veterinary Public Health. Wallingford: CABI

Colville, J. and Berryhill, D. L. (2007) Handbook of Zoonoses St Louis: Mosby

Collins, D.S. and Huey, R.J. (2015) Gracey's Meat Hygiene. 11th ed. London: Saunders

General reading list

This list contains texts which are relevant to more than one species.

Clarke, K.W., Trim, C.M. and Hall, L.W. (2013) Veterinary anaesthesia. 11th ed. London: Saunders

Cockcroft, P.D. (2003) Handbook of Evidence Based Veterinary Medicine. Oxford: Wiley

Constable, P.D. et al (2016) Veterinary Medicine. 11th ed. London: Saunders

Coombes, N. and Silva-Fletcher, A. (2018) Veterinary Clinical Skills Manual. Wallingford: CABI

Gray, C. and Moffet, J (2010) Handbook of Veterinary Communication Skills Oxford: Blackwell

Latimer, K.S. and Robert, D.J. (2011) Duncan and Prasse's Veterinary Laboratory Medicine: Clinical Pathology. 5th ed. Oxford: Wiley

McDonald, P. et al (2011) Animal Nutrition. 7th ed. Harlow: Pearson

Noakes, D.E., Parkinson, T.J. and England, G.C.W. (2018) Veterinary Reproduction and Obstetrics. 10th ed. London: Saunders

Taylor, R.L. et al (2015) Veterinary Parasitology. 4th ed. Oxford: Wiley

Zachary, J.F. (ed) (2017) Pathologic Basis of Veterinary Disease St Louis: Mosby

Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE) resources

This list contains resources which may provide additional support in preparation for the practical exam:

Bexfield, N. Lee, K. eds (2014) BSAVA Guide to Procedures in Small Animal Practice. BSAVA Quedgeley: Gloucester

Coombes, N. Silva-Fletcher, A. eds. (2018) Veterinary Clinical Skills Manual. CABI, Wallingford

Bristol Vet School Clinical Skills Booklets: <https://www.bristol.ac.uk/vet-school/research/comparative-clinical/veterinary-education/clinical-skills-booklets/>

Legislation

You should familiarise yourself with UK legislation that may be relevant to veterinary practice in the UK, including the following areas:

- Animal health
- Animal welfare and the health and safety of humans
- Food including milk
- Medicines and residues
- Pet passports
- Slaughterhouses, meat hygiene and meat inspection
- Transport and marketing of animals
- The Veterinary Surgeons Act 1996, available on the RCVS website at <https://www.rcvs.org.uk/document-library/veterinary-surgeons-act-1966/>

You should always check that any legislation you refer to is the current legislation. You can check by referring to www.legislation.gov.uk which contains up to date information.

The Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) is the UK government department responsible for policy and regulation on the environment, food, and rural affairs. The website contains information covering food, farming, wildlife, and pets. Website: www.defra.gov.uk

The Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) is an executive agency of the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs, and works on behalf of the Scottish Government and Welsh Government. Its role is to safeguard animal and plant health. Website: www.apha.gov.uk

The Food Standards Agency – website: www.food.gov.uk

Information about medicines legislation, control of drug usage, good practice and the cascade can be found in the publications section of the Veterinary Medicines Directorate's website – www.vmd.defra.gov.uk

Animal husbandry

You need to be familiar with the animal husbandry of all species commonly kept as pets in the UK and farmed in British agricultural systems. Books are not listed here. You should seek assistance from a librarian if you have difficulty finding appropriate books. For production animals the following publications are recommended: Livestock Farming, Dairy Farmer, Pig Farming, The Sheep Farmer, What's New in Farming and Farmers Weekly.

Veterinary Publications and Journals

You are advised to read the following journals and publications:

- The Veterinary Record
- In Practice
- Journal of Small Animal Practice
- Equine Veterinary Education
- UK Vet
- Publications from the British Equine Veterinary Association – www.beva.org.uk
- Publications from the British Small Animal Veterinary Association – www.bsava.com

Summary of useful websites

RCVS Knowledge Library - <https://knowledge.rcvs.org.uk/library-and-information-services/>

RCVS Code of Professional Conduct for Veterinary Surgeons – available on the RCVS website at www.rcvs.org.uk/vetcode

RCVS Day One Competencies – available on the RCVS website at <https://www.rcvs.org.uk/document-library/day-one-competences/>

www.beva.org.uk – British Equine Veterinary Association (BEVA)

www.bsava.com – British Small Animal Veterinary Association (BSAVA)

www.bva.co.uk – British Veterinary Association (BVA)

www.defra.gov.uk – Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA)

www.apha.gov.uk - The Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA)

www.food.gov.uk – Food Standards Agency (FSA)

www.legislation.gov.uk – managed by the National Archives, publishes all UK legislation on behalf of His Majesty's government

www.rcvs.org.uk – Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS)

www.vmd.defra.gov.uk – Veterinary Medicines Directorate (VMD)

www.oie.int – World Organisation for Animal Health

Other support which you might be interested in

The **'Working in the UK – Veterinary Surgeons'** provides overseas vets with the necessary information and support needed to practise in the UK and prepare for the SME. Further details can be found online: <https://academy.rcvs.org.uk/>

VetAbroad is a company with many years of experience helping non-UK vets understand what the UK veterinary profession, employers and society require of them. This makes for an easier transition into UK practice life and enables individuals to develop successful professional careers. Managing Director Luis Sainz-Pardo can be contacted by email at luis@vetabroad.com. Please mention that you heard about VetAbroad from the RCVS so he can explain the services that can most benefit you. More information is available at www.vetabroad.com.