

Constitution and Function of Boards of Examiners

1.1. Constitution and Terms of Reference of Boards of Examiners

Purpose

On behalf of Academic Board to exercise the fair and just use of regulations and uphold academic standards in respect of the assessment of students on taught courses.

Terms of Reference

Within the terms of the programme specification of an individual course and Royal Veterinary College regulations to be responsible for and have authority to deal with:

- The approval of the questions and format used in examination papers and other forms of assessment.
- The moderation of marking standards and so the approval of the results.
- Decisions relating to the progression of students and termination of study.
- Recommendation to Academic Board for the conferral of awards upon individual students.

Consideration of the spread of results and the quality of students' work in order to report upon:

- The nature, appropriateness and conduct of forms of assessment.
- The standards set and the standards achieved.
- The performance of students.

Membership

- Chair.
- External Examiner(s).
- Course Director and Year Leaders (where appointed).
- All academic and teaching staff contributing to the assessment of students

In attendance: Secretary, who has undergone relevant training at RVC, appointed by the Academic Registrar.

Quorum:

- Chair.
- At least one External Examiner.
- Course Director (where appointed) or nominated deputy.
- At least five members of contributing members of academic staff providing all sections of the course are represented.

1.2. Boards of Examiners

1.2.1 The Examination for each course shall be conducted by a Board of Examiners. Where a course has more than one Board of Examiners the structure of Boards shall be approved by Academic Board.

1.2.2 Chair and Deputy Chair

The Board of Examiners shall have a Chair, being a senior member of academic staff appointed by the Academic Board and who has undergone relevant training at RVC. The Chair should not have been involved in the assessment of students (or whose involvement has been very limited) for the course in question. Normally, a member of staff with substantial responsibility for a course shall not serve simultaneously as Chair of a Board of Examiners in respect of that course. A Deputy Chair will also be appointed.

1.2.3 Internal Examiners

The Academic Board shall be responsible for the appointment of Internal Examiners. Internal Examiners materially contribute to a course of study. Internal Examiners are anyone who has been an Assistant Examiner for a minimum of 6 months, and has completed the 'Internal Examiner' training, and has not had any marking 'issues' in their period as an Assistant Examiner (marking discrepancies, lack of annotation, etc).

1.2.4 Assistant Examiners

Any new member of staff with 'academic' duties within their role (i.e. could / will be marking something in the future) should automatically become an Assistant Examiner. These individuals include Staff Veterinary Nurses, Staff Veterinary Surgeons, for example those working at the Beaumont Sainsbury Animal Hospital (BSAH), postgraduate students including interns, residents and those studying for Master's or Doctoral degrees etc.

Assistant Examiners can assist in the marking of scripts and in the conduct and marking of practical components of the examination. Staff members so appointed shall also be eligible to assist in setting examination papers. Postgraduate students so appointed may not examine at a level higher than that to which they are themselves qualified. Assistant Examiners shall not participate exclusively in oral examinations unaccompanied by an Internal Examiner, but may take part in examinations of specimens or animals, where these are components of a more complex oral examination; they shall not be entitled to attend meetings of the Boards of Examiners. Assistant Examiners should be trained to become Internal Examiners.

1.2.5 Assessors

The Academic Board may appoint Assessors, who shall normally be permanent members of academic staff of another institution or individuals of similar standing and/or experience, to assist in the setting and marking of examination papers in specialist areas of the curriculum. Assessors shall be entitled to attend meetings of the Board of Examiners and to participate in its discussions, but may not vote.

1.2.6 Any member of the Board of Examiners should normally have no close personal involvement with a candidate. College staff, interns and residents should not take part in the assessment of a candidate with whom they have close personal involvement.

1.3. Duties of External Examiners

1.3.1 The main duties of External Examiners include:

- (a) Ensuring that the assessment schedule satisfies the objectives of the course and covers the specified content.
- (b) Approving all written examination papers.
- (c) Confirming that the standard of marking is satisfactory, by scrutinising a sample of scripts and coursework.
- (d) Observe oral examinations.
- (e) Observing clinical examinations
- (f) Ensuring that there are no irregularities in the conduct of the examination and that it has been conducted in accordance with the Regulations.
- (g) Attending meetings of Board of Examiners held to determine the results of examinations, and participating fully in all their decisions. In exceptional circumstances and with the prior agreement of the Exam Board Chair, an External Examiner may be permitted to attend the meeting remotely via video call. At least one External Examiner must be present at the Board of Examiners.
- (h) Approving results by signing lists of results.
- (i) Submitting a report to the College each academic year. When appropriate, External Examiners may submit a confidential report to the Principal.

1.3.2 The External Examiners are also asked to flag at the Exam Board meeting any batches of marking that lack annotations for the purpose of helping to determine why a mark(s) has been provided.

If marking is identified that lacks annotation, the Exam Board Chair must confirm the findings of the External Examiners with the Exams Office. Once confirmed, the Exam Board Chair has two options:

- (i) To liaise with the individual internal marker(s) directly and provide feedback on how their annotations may be improved for future.
- (ii) To liaise with the individual internal marker(s) Head of Department with the expectation that they will discuss a lack of annotation with the relevant individual.

1.3.3 External Examiners may make representations to the Principal if they are dissatisfied with any decision of a Board of Examiners.

1.4. Meetings of Boards of Examiners

- 1.4.1 The results of the examination shall be determined by meetings of the Board of Examiners. Such meetings shall have a formal agenda.
- 1.4.2 No persons other than the examiners, assessors and administrative staff responsible for examinations shall be permitted to attend meetings of the Board of Examiners, except that assistant examiners may be invited to attend for discussion as required.
- 1.4.3 Records of the candidates' marks in class tests, formal course work, and practical assessments shall be available for inspection.
- 1.4.4 The result of the examination shall be determined in accordance with the approved assessment regulations for the course
- 1.4.5 The views of the External Examiners must be particularly influential in the case of disagreement about a particular candidate, but the decision shall be arrived at by a majority vote of the examiners present. The Chairman shall have a casting vote in addition to his or her own vote.
- 1.4.6 A record shall be kept of each meeting of the Board of Examiners at which the results of examinations are determined, and particularly of those cases which required special consideration.

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Amended by:	Academic Quality Manager & Head of Exams 13.11.20
	Academic Registrar 29.11.19
	Academic Quality Manager 27.11.17
Amendments approved by:	Academic Quality Manager 25.04.16
	Academic Board 11.12.19
	TQC and LTAC - 2017
	LTAC - 09.03.16