

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

***EXAMINER  
HANDBOOK***

**2023**

*The ANZCVS recommends that Examiners access the most up to date copy of this handbook from the College website <http://www.anzcv.org.au/examiners/>  
Last updated October 2023*

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

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

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

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

### **BOARD OF EXAMINERS**

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

### **COUNCIL MEMBERS**

Please refer to College [website](#)

### **COLLEGE ADMINISTRATION**

Please refer to College [website](#).

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Policies and Procedures available on College website

[Examiner information on College website](#)

[Training Resources for examiners on College website](#)

[Subject Standards and Subject Examination Committees information on College website](#)

Fellowship:

[Fellowship sample exam papers from College website](#)

[Fellowship subject guidelines](#)

Membership:

[Membership sample written papers from College website](#)

[Membership subject guidelines](#)

## College acronyms

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

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<sup>1</sup> Previous CEC responsibilities now sit with SEC and SSC

## Timeline for Examinations

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

### Before examination submission to the College office

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

### After Examination submission to College office

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

### During and after Examination Week

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

# 1. PRINCIPLES OF COLLEGE ASSESSMENT

College assessment practices have been distilled into an [Assessment Policy](#), which provides an overview of all requirements, with links to more detailed information. Further resources are available to examiners on the College [website](#). These include presentations by Drs Liz Norman and Sharanne Raidal at past Examiners Workshops and oral examination information to assist examiners.

## 1.1. Subject Guidelines should contain Clear Learning Outcomes

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

Learning outcomes are unambiguous statements of behaviours a successful candidate needs to display in order to be admitted as a member or fellow of the College.

They are based upon behavioural verbs, and need to be specific.

Avoid non-specific verbs such as “know” and “understand” – perceptions of “knowing” or “understanding” may vary between candidates and examiners, or between assessors.

In general, all learning outcomes should be measured. Learning outcomes canvass subject content such as:

- demonstration of mastery of specific discipline knowledge
- personal skills (such as initiative, communication skills, and attitudes)
- academic factors (such as ability to make use of information, think critically, analyse and synthesise ideas and information).

## 1.2. Blueprinting for College Examinations

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

In addition, examiners need to be cognisant of the College’s requirements for admission of all Members and Fellows, i.e.

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

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



## **Developing an assessment blueprint**

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

- Basic concepts & principles written exam
- Applied & clinical applications written exam
- Oral/practical exam/s
- Training program

At this stage, examiners may determine the types of questions within each examination that are best suited to different learning outcomes.

Learning outcomes are rarely equivalent in importance, or encompass similar volumes of content, and some will be evaluated in all assessment activities, while others can only be evaluated in a particular form of assessment.

In general, all learning outcomes should be measured. However, this is not always possible. In addition, some learning outcomes will be assessed outside of the formal examination processes. For example, at Fellowship level, some learning outcomes are assessed during assessment of the Training Program Document by the Training and Credentials Committee. At Membership level, some outcomes may be assumed to have been met by the criteria for eligibility to sit the examination (e.g. by being a veterinary graduate of some years, it may be assumed the candidate demonstrates certain professional behaviours which the chapter feels are integral to membership in their field but which cannot be easily evaluated with the available College assessment strategies).

## **Body of knowledge**

Normally the subject learning outcomes will reflect the body of knowledge in the discipline, but this can depend upon the way the learning outcomes are written. Regardless, examiners should design the assessment tasks so that they sample broadly across the discipline's body of knowledge, while giving most weighting to the most important areas.

## **Membership level questions**

At Membership level, assessment tasks should focus on common problems encountered frequently in the relevant veterinary discipline, without undue obscurity or inclusion of specialist-level detail. As a guide, the level of detail that the examination team can recall and apply to a given question is likely to be appropriate to membership examination. More detailed reference to the breadth of current literature would be expected at Fellowship level. In setting questions and expected responses at either Membership or Fellowship level, examiners should be conscious that questions should be achievable within time and other constraints inherent in examination conditions (e.g. candidates can be expected to read approximately 100 words per minute and to write approximately 20 words per minute).

## **Past examination papers**

Candidates will have access to previous examination papers, or representative questions, and will be guided by these in relation to areas of knowledge that the Chapter typically considers important.

Many candidates' approaches to examination preparation will be strongly influenced by their experience as undergraduate students, where past examination papers would have consistently been a more accurate way to understand what examiners were likely to ask than subject learning outcome statements.

### Summary of tasks:

- Determine which learning outcomes will be assessed in the various examinations (and which are assessed as part of credentialing etc)
- Determine the relevant weighting of topics across the examinations (i.e. the most important topics are given the most weighting)
- Determine the most relevant format of the examinations, using the outline contained in the subject guidelines.

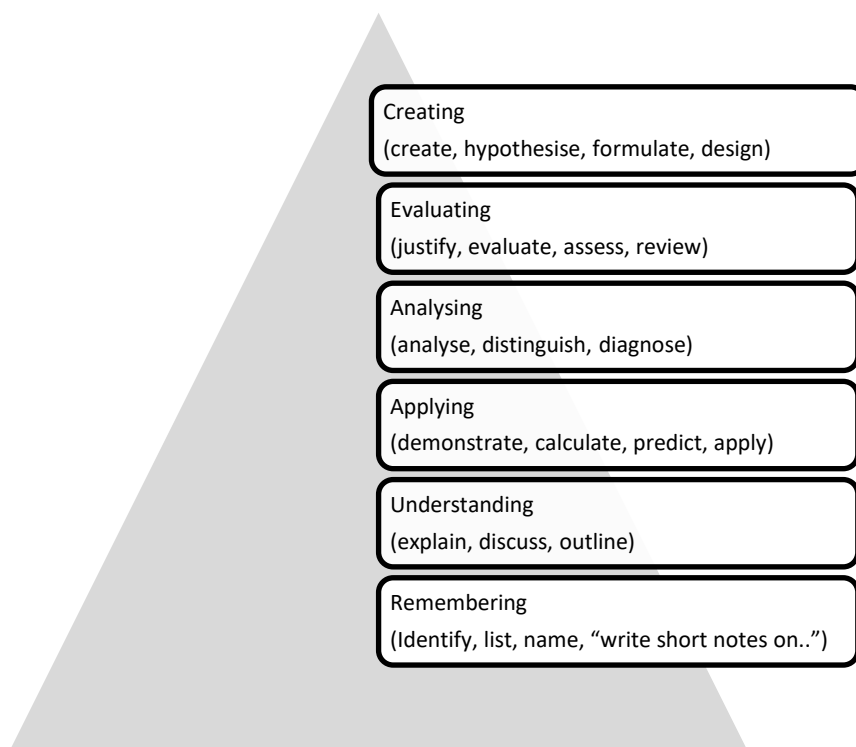
In making these decisions, examiners are guided by:

- subject learning outcomes
- College's expectations of successful candidates for Membership and Fellowship
- past exam papers in that subject
- the standard of expertise expected at the level of examination (Membership or Fellowship).

### 1.3. Develop Individual Assessment Tasks – Written Examinations

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

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



**Fig 1.** An example of a taxonomy of learning outcomes, and behavioural verbs that reflect them. College examinations would be expected to focus on middle- to higher-levels<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> Anderson L and Krathwohl D (2001) A taxonomy of learning, teaching and assessing: a revision of Bloom's taxonomy of educational objectives. New York. Longman.

Each question should contain an instructional verb.

Reference to the second-person point-of-view (eg. What would ‘you’ do?, Outline ‘your’ approach) is not recommended instead, candidates should be asked for ‘an appropriate’ approach/method. Exceptions to this rule include ‘Justify your answer’ or ‘Explain your reasoning’.

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

Some additional considerations in setting written examinations:

### **Multiple Choice Questions**

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

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

One of the persistent misconceptions about MCQs is the belief that they are only suitable for assessing low-level facts. There is now a vast literature (particularly in medical and health professions educational literature) that advances and exemplifies the idea that MCQs can access the applied understanding and clinical reasoning of candidates, using authentic and clinically relevant scenarios. Writing such questions does not necessarily come naturally to academics or professional experts, but many resources exist to support effective training and guidance for writing clinically applicable higher order questions.

Use of MCQs in College examinations must be consistent with the Multiple-Choice Question policy (available to view [here](#)). If examiners would like to use MCQs in their examinations, they need to review the ANZCVS Guidelines for MCQ Writing (available to view [here](#)). Assistance and review of MCQ content for suitability in testing higher order thinking can be requested from the BOE.

### **Choice**

Choice can be detrimental to a candidate because they may not choose in the most advantageous manner. Extra time needs to be provided to select the questions to answer, as the examination paper can become confusing, and it can be difficult to ensure all learning outcomes are assessed.

The College concedes that choice may be needed in some circumstances (e.g. where a Chapter acknowledges “streaming” of candidates’ interests even at membership level).

### **Time to Answer Questions**

Probably the most common error made by new examiners is asking for too much information for the period of time allocated for the question/examination. Remember the candidate needs time to think, structure a response in their mind, and write the response. It can be useful to ask another examiner to answer the question to test the time it takes to respond – candidates will need significantly more time. This is also one of the key functions of the model answers that are submitted with the paper (i.e. they provide some indication of whether the time allocated is likely to be sufficient).

As a guide, it should be anticipated that candidates can write no more than 20 words per minute during an examination, and questions should be designed to be answered completely within this number of words.

### Common Terms used in College Examinations

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

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

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

- **Clinical findings:** the candidate should provide information on all relevant findings reasonably associated with a condition from owner / agent anamnesis (signalment, history, presenting problem) to clinical examination, results of laboratory tests, diagnostic imaging findings and any other relevant investigative processes.
- **Compare:** to find similarities between things, or to look for characteristics and features that resemble each other. Note: when compare is used in this sense, it should be followed by 'to' (ie compare X to Y); 'compared with' means to find differences. For the exams, it would be best to use 'compare to' for finding similarities and 'contrast' for finding differences (see below).
- **Contrast:** to find differences or to distinguish between things.
- **Discuss:** to present a detailed argument or account of the subject matter, including all the main points, essential details, and pros and cons of the problem, to show your complete understanding of the subject.
- **Define:** to provide a concise explanation of the meaning of a word or phrase; or to describe the essential qualities of something.
- **Explain:** to clarify, interpret, give reasons for differences of opinions or results, or analyse causes.

## **Timelines for Proofing and Preparation of Papers**

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

### **1.4. Develop Individual Assessment Items – Oral and Practical Examinations**

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

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

#### **Conduct of Practical Examinations**

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

Practical examination checklist

Ensure you:

- Check the quality of the examination material. Ensure that materials are clear, legible and of appropriate (good to excellent) quality. Ensure any labels or tags are correctly written and positioned. It is useful to ask another member of the examination team to assess your questions and materials for legibility and quality.
- Check the equipment. Ensure all equipment (e.g. microscopes, data projectors, radiographic viewing boxes, etc) is fully functional.
- Begin and end the examination on time. Any delays to or discrepancies in the scheduled Practical examination timetable can be very disruptive to candidates.
- Check that candidates understand the Examination format. Ensure that all candidates understand exactly how many questions are to be answered, and the time allowed for the examination.

#### **Conduct of Oral Examinations**

Remember the 6 P's – Prior Preparation and Planning Prevents a Poor Performance.

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

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

#### **Introduction:**

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

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

### **Explain the format of the exam:**

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

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

### **Going over written material:**

It is current policy that the written and oral exams are completely independent examinations. This means that a candidate’s performance in the written papers cannot be used to determine what questions might be asked in the oral.

### **A good oral exam has:**

- Relatively little talking from the examiners. Remember it is the candidate’s exam, they should be doing the talking. This means that long introductions including clinical history, signalment etc are suboptimal.
- Questions that are clear and indicate to the candidate what the examiners want. An open-ended question is designed to encourage a full, meaningful answer using the candidate’s own knowledge and/or feelings. It is the opposite of a closed-ended question, which encourages a short or single-word answer.
- Use of audio-visual aids only when they clearly add to the question. This is really extending the above principle. Don’t show pictures unless they are clearly important to the question being asked. Summary slides – for example signalment, presenting signs may be helpful.
- Have concise lab results. If using lab results, do not pass over an entire haematology and biochem printout if the question is focused on liver disease for example. Candidates will often use a lot of time to look at every value, trying to look for traps etc. The BoE would rather examiners use a separate print out that might only have two values on it for the two parameters of interest and then a line saying that all haematology & other biochem was basically normal.
- Clear Powerpoint displays. If using Powerpoint, do not use any presentation tips & tricks – no fancy colours or rotating bits or movement. Just use a simple background and monocolour text. This is not a presentation where examiners need to impress someone with their Powerpoint skills. It is simply a medium to support a question being posed to a candidate.
- An oral examination template is available from the College office. If you have not received this please request the template be sent to you.
- Audiovisuals that are fit for purpose. Fitness for purpose means that selected material needs to meet the examiners’ purpose for the question(s) but does not necessarily need to be perfect or complete (in terms of a series of images). Assessment of fitness for purpose should be made under conditions as similar as possible to those that will be present during the examination. This particularly applies to situations where an original image might be selected for use in an examination and then reproduced, scanned or processed in some way prior to the examination.
- Is prepared well in advance, with no delays. In membership orals there is so little time, it is very important to have carefully designed questions that lead the candidate to where it is that you want them to go. With a complex case you may end up waiting for the candidate to indicate what they would do next. If the candidate says x-ray, you hand him/her a radiograph and so on. This can be done at membership but it must be prepared carefully and experience shows that this approach is more likely to chew up time and reduce the number of questions.

In fellowship this approach can be utilised a little more effectively but still with care to ensure it does not use too much time.

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

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

- Try not to be either negative or positive e.g. be careful about saying “that is good” when you may not necessarily agree with what the candidate is saying or their direction
- Give the candidate time. Be prepared to allow a bit of silence – don’t think you have to jump in and say something or provide direction.
- Indicate that the direction the candidate is heading may be one approach. Ask if there are any other approaches the candidate might like to think about.
- Where the question has a number of points to answer, prompting may be used to ensure that the candidate has completed their answer. This is particularly true of questions that may have multiple components/subparts.
- The oral examinations may have cues factored in, although not all candidates require these.
- Ask the candidate to refer to the literature for support or lack of support for their position (i.e. to argue their case using published literature).
- Don’t labour a point. If the examiner has pursued the above sorts of feedback and feels confident that the candidate has demonstrated the extent of their knowledge in a particular area then it is time to move on. Once you have enough information to indicate that the candidate is right or wrong or has reached the end of their knowledge then move on to another topic.

### **Ending the exam:**

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

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

### **A simple alternative is:**

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

Should the examiners ask for feedback from the candidate about the exam process or the written papers? The College recommends that this sort of questioning be avoided. All candidates do get asked to provide written feedback on the exam process in a confidential process and this information is passed back to the SECs.

### **Working out the pass marks for candidates:**

Time will be required between candidates to add examination results to see if a candidate has passed, failed or in membership received a supplementary examination for the following year. The Senior Examiner will add up the marks after the candidate has left the room.

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

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

## 1.5. Assessment Criteria for Marking Questions

The ANZCVS requires marking guides for Membership and Fellowship examinations to consist of model answers. In addition, the use of a holistic marking rubric is recommended for questions that assess higher order thinking versus knowledge recall.

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

Marks are awarded on the basis of standards of performance against different criteria which have been developed by Chapters and published in the subject guidelines for each subject.

### Marking Rubrics and Model Answers

A marking guide describes the criteria against which a candidate's answer will be assessed (e.g.: knowledge of content, problem solving, communication) as well as the levels that indicate a pass, fail, and sometimes other standards (e.g.: clear pass, marginal pass, marginal fail, clear fail). It may include specific content (e.g.: a passing answer must include mention of fact a, b and c) or may be very general (e.g.: the passing candidate justifies their conclusions).

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

- Ensure an examiner applies the same criteria to each candidate and that all examiners are applying the same criteria.
- Are essential for moderation purposes; i.e. each examiner understands the standard by which the candidate's response will be assessed.

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

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

- checking the question can be answered in the available time,
- checking the expected answer corresponds to what is being asked in the question.

The ideal answer should include:

- the learning outcome(s) addressed by the question (including the level of knowledge expected)
- Information that should or could be included in a correct answer should be detailed or outlined in point form. This is needed to allow the review process to ensure that the question as written will elicit this information in the candidates' responses, as well as to ensure examiner agreement on the type of information considered relevant. In determining the amount of information that should be included in a response, examiners are reminded that candidates can be expected to type approximately 20 to 25 words per minute in exam conditions (and can read approximately 100 words per minute). A model answer can be used to evaluate this.

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



For questions requiring application of higher order thinking and not just knowledge recall, the candidates answer should be assessed using a holistic marking rubric against the model answer as written by the examiners. A holistic marking rubric is mandatory for all questions that have a mark value of each question subpart greater than or equal to 6 marks for Membership and 10 marks for Fellowship examinations.

Examiners should select one of the 2 types of marking rubrics detailed in this guide (Holistic Marking Rubric Type 1 or Type 2).

Examiners are required to develop their own marking guides, and different guides may be needed for each question in the examinations. Examples of criteria and standards that might be appropriate for written exam questions are provided in the template below (examiners should modify the examples provided to suit their own context). Examiners may elect to modify criteria to suit their discipline, or a particular question. More, or fewer criteria, or different standards may be appropriate - the design principle is important:

The following are examples as a guide:

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

## Holistic Marking Rubric Type 1

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

Example use of holistic rubric Type 1:

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

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

## Holistic Marking Rubric Type 2

		Standards				Total Mark (10)
		Fail	Marginal	Pass	Excellent	
Criteria	Knowledge of subject	Fails to understand or address the topic. Conclusions illogical or not supported.	Shows limited understanding of topic and context. Reasonable grasp of principles.	Thorough understanding of topic and context. Shows evidence of critical thought.	Outstanding knowledge of topic, including comparative work from other species. Critical thought & analysis of literature is demonstrated	
		Mark: 0-5	Mark: 5.5	Mark: 6-6.5	Mark 7-8	
	Logical presentation	Answer is disorganised and includes a large amount of irrelevant material	Answer is somewhat disorganized and includes some irrelevant material	The answer is relatively well organized and contains little irrelevant material.	The answer shows a high degree of logical thought and well-constructed argument.	
		Mark: 0-0.5	Mark: 1	Mark: 1.5	Mark: 2	
Total for question:						

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

### Assessment Criteria for Short Answer and Multiple Choice Responses

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

#### 1.6. Make Judgments about Candidate's Overall Performance

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

#### 1.7. Moderation

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

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

A crucial step in moderation of College assessment is provided by the submission, along with the examination paper itself, of adequate marking guides, with model answers.

## **1.8. Management of Large Examining Teams**

In subjects where examining three or more examining teams are required (2 examiners per team), the HSE should function to coordinate and lead the team in order to ensure the quality and timely production of the examinations, and the delivery of valid and fair examinations for all candidates in that subject. As such, the HSE's people management skills are as important as his/her discipline knowledge and expertise. Membership HSEs do not have to be Fellows or Diplomats.

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

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

- The creation and use of effective marking guides.
- All examiners should discuss the marking guide as a team and come to a common understanding of how to apply it.
- When assigning examining pairs, priority should be given to assigning less experienced with more experienced examiners.
- The HSE should perform some early cross-marking to flag any discrepancies in marking approaches between pairs of examiners (for example the HSE may cross-mark the first three candidates for all examiners).

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

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

## **1.9. Reflect, and Consider Changes for Next Iteration/Examination Period**

By setting aside a dedicated period for reflecting on the examination process, the examiners may identify areas for improvement in the assessment process, e.g.

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

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

## 2. ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARTICIPANTS IN COLLEGE EXAMINATIONS

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

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

*Candidates are expected to:*

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

*Examiners are expected to:*

- assist the Head Subject Examiner (HSE) prepare examination papers *and marking guides* in a timely fashion
- assist in marking candidates' exam components and submit candidates' marks to the HSE for their review (using the College provided system)
- declare potential conflicts of interest at the earliest opportunity to the Examinations Officer for deliberation by the College's Chief Executive Officer
- follow the College's procedures in the conduct of examinations and assessment of candidates

*Observers are expected to:*

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

*The Head Subject Examiner (HSE) is expected to:*

- liaise with the SEC Chair during the planning and preparation of the examination paper
- blue print the examination and negotiate or assign examiners' workload, including questions to be contributed by the HSE
- mentor and coordinate the examination team
- ensure that all examiners are aware of, and able to comply with, exam submission deadlines (timeline)
- coordinate the preparation of examination questions by examiners
- in consultation with the examination team, select and collate questions
- compile the examination paper
- ensure examination components are reviewed by the examination team
- control versions and circulation of revisions so that team members receive the most recent documents in a timely manner
- submit the examination paper, along with marking guides, to the relevant SEC Chair member for review prior to submission to the College Office
- address requests for amendments from the College Office in a timely manner
- ensure each examiner has the correct marking guide for each exam component, is aware of how to use the marking guides and enters marks appropriately or forwards completed marking sheets
- collate written and practical marks awarded by examiners for each question (including sub parts) and examiners comments on performance
- review the written and practical marks for each candidate for accuracy, completeness and discrepancies

- identify any discrepancies between examiners and, if necessary, remark according to College policy
- review candidates' marks submitted by examining teams through the College reporting platform, to assist in ascertaining if there are any issues regarding examination questions or disparities between examining teams
- be available to talk to other examiners about issues that may arise at the oral examinations
- be available to talk with the Chief Examiner / Examination Committee members about issues that may arise during College examinations

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

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

*SEC Chair is expected to:*

- nominate potential examiners to the Chief Examiner
- mentor new SEC members on their role and succession planning
- be responsible for reviewing and editing draft examination papers, and marking guides, prior to their submission to College Office, and for completion of the SEC Chair checklist
- liaise with the HSE to ensure submission of papers in a timely fashion
- report to the Chapters AGM on their subject examination(s)

*In addition to roles and responsibilities identified above, SEC members are expected to:*

- liaise with the HSE during examination planning to ensure their consistency with the Subject Guidelines and the Examiner Handbook. The Chair must not be an examiner or have any potential conflicts of interest with any candidates
- aim to facilitate development of a question bank for each Section of the examination
- review and take appropriate action e.g. suggest modifying Subject Guidelines and/or examination format to the Subject Standards Committee (SSC) following Chapter review of the Candidate feedback (comments and suggestions) collated by the Board of Examiners after the annual examinations.

*College Office Staff are expected to:*

- assist examiners, particularly HSE, during preparation and conduct of examinations. This includes providing exam templates for examiners to use and formatting examinations to the College style guidelines
- advise candidates on administrative matters associated with examinations
- liaise with the Chief Examiner and EC committee on all matters associated with examinations
- provide a link between the BoE and the Council, Chapters and members

*The Chief Examiner is expected to:*

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

*The Assistant Chief Examiner (Examinations) is expected to:*

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

*The Examination Committee is expected to:*

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

*The Board of Examiners is expected to:*

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



### 3. PROCEDURES FOR EXAMINERS (GENERAL)

#### 3.1. Subject Examination Committee (SEC) (*see College website for more information*)

The size and composition of each SEC will vary according to the number of candidates presenting for examination. The SEC is the group of discipline experts responsible for design, delivery and assessment of examination components at Membership and Fellowship levels.

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

#### 3.2. Appointment of Examiners

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

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

3.2.2 The size of the Subject Examinations Committee (SEC) should be determined by the Chapter, in consultation with the College, based on the typical number of Membership and Fellowship candidates. The Subject Examinations Committee (SEC) includes two examination teams, one for Membership and one for Fellowship, as required.

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

3.2.4 Chapters are encouraged to rotate examiners.

3.2.5 Examiners operate in teams of two at membership level, and two to three at fellowship level. Membership examining teams will not be asked to examine more than twelve candidates (ten if the examinations has a practical component). Fellowship examining teams will not be asked to examine more than three candidates. When the threshold is exceeded another team of examiners will be appointed.

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

3.2.7 Non-College examiners may be used if appropriate examiners are not available within the College, and the nominee is approved by the Chief Examiner. Non-veterinarians may be used but their appointment must first be ratified by Council.

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

3.2.9 Candidates have no role in the choice of examiners.

### 3.3. Conduct of Examiners

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

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

3.3.2 Examiners with a conflict of interest are expected to reveal such a conflict to the Chief Examiner at the earliest opportunity. Conflicts of interest may occur when an examiner has had, or has, a relationship with one or more candidates such as;

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

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

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

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

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

Examiners must not discuss examinations, or examination results, in any public areas during the College Exam and Science week.

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

Examiners must not discuss results with candidates under any circumstances.

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

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

### 3.4. The Examination Process - General

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

#### 3.4.1 Examination Location

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

#### 3.4.2 Anonymity of candidates

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

#### 3.4.3 Marking of written papers and oral/practical examinations

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

3.4.3.2 The Head Subject Examiner reviews marks awarded by examiners for each question. Where marks awarded by different examiners for the same question or for a sub-question differ by more than 10% of the marks available, the Head Subject Examiner (or Senior Examiner) must request that the examiners each re-grade that question. As an indication, this means that examiners may discuss discrepancies when there are differences in questions or sub-questions that are worth between: 1-5 marks, when the marks differ by more than half a mark; 6-10 marks, by more than one mark; and 11-20 marks, by more than two marks.

If, after a process of discussion and review of the answer given and the marking guide, the marks awarded by different examiners for the question or sub-question still differ by more than 20%, or the overall result for the paper differs by more than 10%, then the Chief Examiner of the College will be notified and that question, answer key and the candidate's answer for that question may be sent to another examiner for consideration at the discretion of the Chief Examiner. Persons will be regarded as suitable to act as another examiner if they meet the following criteria:

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

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

### 3.5. Examination Structure

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

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

Examination structure is subject to the following limitations:

- The maximum duration for each written examination paper is two hours for membership examinations and four hours for fellowship examinations
- Both written papers must be of the same total marks
- It is recommended that there be 60 marks allocated per hour of examination
- All questions and sub-questions must be out of a whole number of marks
- The perusal time for written exams will be 15 minutes for membership and 20 minutes for fellowship
- During perusal time candidates will be allowed to write on scrap paper only
- There will be no perusal time for practical examinations
- No choice of questions or parts of questions is permitted except in subjects for which the subject guidelines specify that candidates can elect to meet some learning outcomes and not others. For such subjects, choice is permitted across the electives but not within the elective.
- No more than 20% of an examination component shall be multiple choice question type
- If there are multiple choice questions these must be together in one section
- The following question types are primarily used to test fact-recall rather than higher order thinking and thus are unlikely to be acceptable for fellowship and membership examinations: true-false questions, matching questions, short answer (fill in word or single sentence) questions.
- Ancillary materials used in examinations must be of very high quality and contain adequate information for interpretation (for example an indication of magnification on micrographs).

### 3.6. Reuse of Question in Subsequent Examinations

- No more than 20% of the questions in any written or practical examination can be substantially similar to questions offered in the previous three examinations offered in the same subject.
- Any exam question that is reused must be identified as such by the Head Subject Examiner at the time of submission of the draft examination to the Board of Examiners.

### 3.7. Use of Acronyms and Copyright Policy

#### 1. Use of Acronyms

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

#### 2. Copyright policy

While the College has a right to use copyright material belonging to others in its examinations without seeking prior permission, the same does not apply to other uses, such as later hosting written examinations on its website for the benefit of future Candidates.

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

For example:

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

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

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

The College's *Copyright Policy* can be read in full in the *Policies and Procedures Handbook*, available on the College website.

#### License over examinations

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

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

### 3.8. Securing Examinations and Question Banking

#### 1. Securing Examinations

All components of all exams will be initially secured at every examination venue.

Examinations not initially secured because of a breach of procedures, will not be considered permanently secured.

From 2022 written examinations will not be uploaded to the website to facilitate the development of question banking.

Chapters may choose to permanently secure particular components of the examination or all components of the examination.

Chapters wishing to hold examination components permanently secured must submit sample questions to the College Office by October 31 the year before the examination.

The sample questions must be representative of and sufficient in number to give candidates a good idea of the range of structure, style and type of questions to be used in the permanently secured component across the breadth of learning outcomes. For MCQs the number of questions required is equivalent to 20% of the number of questions intended to be used in any one examination. For other question types, at least 5 sample questions are required. Sample questions may be derived from past papers.

Marking guides for sample questions shall not be provided.

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

Sample questions need to be reviewed by the chapter when the subject guidelines are reviewed.

## **2. Question banking policy**

### **Security**

- The College encourages the development of question banks
- A separate bank will be kept for each subject or related subject area that wishes to bank questions. For subjects banking both membership and fellowship questions, a separate bank will be kept for each level.
- Access to the membership subject bank is limited to current membership and fellowship examiners for that subject or subject area. Access to the fellowship subject bank will be limited to Fellows who are current fellowship examiners. Access to the fellowship bank by non-Fellows who may be examining will be at the discretion of the Chief Examiner on request by the Chapter Executive.
- The College Office will maintain the infrastructure supporting question banks on behalf of Chapters and control access according to Chapter instructions within the limits set out in this policy. Chapters will be responsible for entering and maintaining content.

### **Types and sources of questions banked**

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

### **Reuse of questions**

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

### **Collation of ancillary information**

Questions to be banked must have ancillary information collated contemporaneously with questions being used and/or added to the bank. The responsibility for collating this

information rests with the Examiners for that examination period and must be uploaded to the database when questions are uploaded.

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

Question performance information such as:

How candidates responded when question was used

How well question functioned to elicit expected answers

Suggested areas for improvement if subsequently used

Exemplars of answers of various standards and marks awarded

### **Revision of questions**

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

### 3.9. Securing Multiple Choice Questions

Examiners may choose to secure multiple choice components of examinations for future reuse (as allowed under the reuse of questions policy) by retaining written examination papers and preventing them being available for review by candidates, under the following conditions:

- 3.9.1. Examiners must specify that the multiple choice component of the examination should be secured when they submit the examination to the College Office in line with the specified deadlines.
- 3.9.2. The multiple choice section of the examination will be designed to be presented to the candidate as a separate section of the examination.
- 3.9.3. The College acknowledges that circumstances where candidates are able to recall the questions and circulate these amongst potential future candidates cannot be prevented. It is therefore of critical importance that examiners select multiple choice questions from a large bank of potential questions and that examiners are aware that the Board of Examiners has already imposed a limitation on the number of questions that can be repeated from year to year. The Board of Examiners may further restrict or control the reuse of questions in future if indicated.
- 3.9.4. Candidates wishing to review their examination paper after the examination will not be permitted access to the multiple choice component of the examination, and will be given a summary of total marks obtained in this section only.
- 3.9.5. Examiners wishing to secure examinations must also prepare, in advance, a set of sample questions of the same type, format and covering a representative range of learning outcomes that will be publicly released to candidates to aid their study. The number of questions required is equivalent to 20% of the number of questions intended to be used in the examination. Questions must be submitted to the College Office by December 1<sup>st</sup> in the year before the examination. Such questions do not need to change from year to year unless changes in format of the questions used for examinations dictates they should be updated.
- 3.9.6. The College will maintain a secure electronic storage area for the questions to which access will be strictly controlled and limited as determined by the Chapter (see point 7).
- 3.9.7. The Chapter must develop a plan for controlling access to the questions so that potential future candidates (who may be serving on the SEC) are not given access to questions which are used in their exam even if their potential candidacy is some years away. This plan must include methods of adequate peer review of questions. The plan must be submitted to the College office along with the request for examinations to be secured.



### 3.10. The Examination Process – Written Papers

- 3.10.1 During the written examination process, the HSE is responsible for preparation of examination papers and marking guides, marking, and reporting of results to the Chief Examiner. (See also *Section 2 – Roles & Responsibilities*).
- 3.10.2 Written examination papers, having been reviewed by the SEC Chair, are to be submitted to the College Office for review before March 1<sup>st</sup>. After submission to the College Office, the written paper questions and marking guides are reviewed by members of the Board of Examiners. **It is imperative that requested deadlines are met, as adequate time for review and preparation of the examination is important to maintain high standard, defensible examinations.**
- 3.10.3 Examiners must record actual marks given for each answer, or parts thereof, into the College recording platform. All examiners use the same grading or marking criteria for each question.
- 3.10.4 Each answer is assessed independently by each examiner. 3.10.5 .
- 3.10.5 Feedback is an important aspect of the learning candidates gain from examinations. Particularly when low marks are given, it is essential that the examiner record the reason(s) for this in the College recording platform for candidate feedback.
- 3.10.6 Once marking of papers is completed, and prior to the practical/oral examination, examiners submit written paper results in the College recording platform for the Head Subject Examiner to review. Any discrepancies that have not been resolved by examining teams must be deferred to the Head Subject Examiner, if necessary the HSE may need to discuss reasons for disparities with the Chief Examiner.

### 3.11. The Examination Process - Practical and Oral Examinations

- 3.11.1 The structure and content of the practical and oral examinations is an important early priority during the examination planning process.
- 3.11.2 The appropriate Practical Examination Template is required to be completed and submitted to the College Office with the examination by 1 March.
- 3.11.3 Practical examination and oral examination questions, formats and marking guides must be submitted by the HSE to the SEC Chair in a timely fashion to allow feedback from the SEC Chair to be taken into consideration prior to submission of the paper to the College office.

The practical examination is to be submitted to the College office with the signed SEC Chair checklist by 1 March. The oral examination is to be submitted to the College office with the signed SEC Chair checklist by 1 March.

- 3.11.4 Use of animals

The Board of Examiners does not encourage the use of animals during the examination process. However, if it is felt necessary by the examiners, a submission must be made in writing to the Chief Examiner, by 1 March in the year of the examination. The Chief Examiner will consider each submission and is the final arbiter for all requests for animal use during the examination process. Once approval is granted by the Chief Examiner, the existing College policy on the use of animals applies.

### 3.11.5 Observers

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

The role of the observer is to:

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

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

- 3.11.5.2 Only appointed examiners and the observer are present with the candidate during oral and practical examinations.

- 3.11.5.3 If the Head Subject Examiner wishes to invite an additional person to be present, they must write to the College Office to seek approval from the Chief Examiner at least two weeks prior to the examination.

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

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

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

- 3.11.6 At the oral examination, the candidate, two or more examiners, and an observer, will meet in the one virtual space or room if the oral examination is in person.
- 3.11.7 Questions are shared between the examiners.
- 3.11.8 During the oral, **no** records concerning the written papers or practical, or written notes about the oral examination should be visible to the candidate.
- 3.11.9 A candidate's performance in a written paper must not influence the choice of questions or question content in the oral examination.
- 3.11.10 Copies of all supportive materials for practical and oral examinations such as slides and images must be provided to the College office for safe storage.

### 3.12. Oral Examination Policy

1. Examiners must contribute to the construction of the oral examination by providing questions and marking guides to the Head Subject Examiner. All questions and marking guides must be reviewed and agreed upon by all the examiners delivering the oral examination including all materials to be used, for example images, radiographs, ECG's and histopathological slides.

They must also be reviewed by the SEC Chair and the BoE as is the normal procedure for all other examination components.

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

## Guidance notes for examiners

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

Many things need to be the same:

#### 1. Scenario details and ancillary data

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

#### 2. The general plan of "main" questions

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

#### 3. Qualifiers and cues

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

Examples of qualifiers to a question about management might include:

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

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

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

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

#### 4. The order of each scenario

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

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

#### 1. Exact wording

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

For example one examiner might ask a candidate

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

Another may say:

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

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

*Examiner: yes that's right*

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

## **2. Number of qualifiers provided**

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

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

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

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

## **4. The order of questions**

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

## **How similar must exams on subsequent days be?**

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

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

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

### 3.13. Examiner Report and Finalisation of Results

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

### 3.14. Candidate Notification of Grade (PASS, FAIL SUPPLEMENTARY)

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

### 3.15. Examiner Payment and Reimbursement of Expenses

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

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

## 4. PROCEDURES FOR EXAMINERS (MEMBERSHIP)

### 4.1. Membership Definition

4.1.1 Membership of the College signifies the following:

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

### 4.2. Examination Format (Membership)

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

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

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

### 4.3. Written Papers (Membership) (Component 1)

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

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

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

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

4.4.2 The oral examination begins with straightforward questions then progresses to the more difficult.

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

#### 4.5. Grading (Membership)

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

4.5.2 It is essential that marking of the written papers is completed, that grades are collated and that examiners have conferred about each candidate **before the oral examinations take place.**

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

4.5.4 Marking guides are required for all questions.

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

#### **4.6. Examiner Reporting (Membership)**

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

## 5. PROCEDURES FOR EXAMINERS (FELLOWSHIP)

### 5.1. Fellowship Definition

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

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

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

### 5.2. Examination Format (Fellowship)

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

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

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

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

### 5.3. General Expectations at Fellowship level

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

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

### 5.4. Written Papers 1 and 2 (Fellowship)

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

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

5.4.3 Marking guides are required for each question.

## 5.5. Practical (Fellowship)

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

## 5.6. Oral (Fellowship)

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

## 5.7. Grading (Fellowship)

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

- 5.7.3 The **practical** examination will be marked independently by each examiner who will return a mark (as a percentage) for the practical. The mean of the examiner marks will be the overall mark for the practical component.
- 5.7.4 The **oral** examination will be marked independently by each examiner who will return a mark (as a percentage) for the oral. The mean of the examiner marks will be the overall mark for the oral component.
- 5.7.5 The pass mark for each section is 70%.
- 5.7.6 Candidates will pass the fellowship examination once they have achieved a pass mark in all four sections.
- 5.7.7 The 70% pass mark for each section is absolute; there is no opportunity to compensate in other sections for one failed section.
- 5.7.8 Candidates are not required to re-sit components in which they have already achieved a pass. When re-sitting, candidates must re-sit all failed components in the same examination year.
- 5.7.9 Candidates are only allowed to attempt the examination three times. These three attempts must be within a four year period. Candidates may apply for deferral of one exam period during this time. If all four components are not passed within this time period, the candidate is required to refresh credentials and sit all four components again.
- 5.7.10 Candidates reattempting sections of the examination will pay a fee for each section to be reattempted, which will be communicated to them.

## **5.8. Examiner Reporting (Fellowship)**

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

## **6. Subject Examinations Committee (SEC) Chair**

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

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

Available from College website:

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

[Examination checklist Guidance notes](#)

## 7. APPENDIX – FORMS AND TEMPLATES

### i. College Examination Blueprinting *(Example from Equine Medicine 2010\_12)* *(Template on College website)*

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

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