SUBECT STANDARDS AND SUBJECT EXAMINATION COMMITTEES
# TERMS OF REFERENCE

Executive Summary:

Each subject administered by a Chapter will have a Subject Standards Committee (SSC) and a Subject Examination Committee (SEC). These committees replace the previous Chapter Examination Committee (CEC) and integrate responsibilities previously upheld by the examiners and CEC. The rationale is to have a structure which is more robust and flexible, allowing the distribution of work amongst a bigger group and including a system of succession planning for mentoring and rotation of members.

The structures below will begin to be implemented from Science Week 2016. The Board of Examiners recognises that these structures may need to be modified to suit some smaller Chapters. Variation from this structure will generally be possible if a reasonable case can be made by the Chapter and will be at the discretion of the Chief Examiner.

Structure:
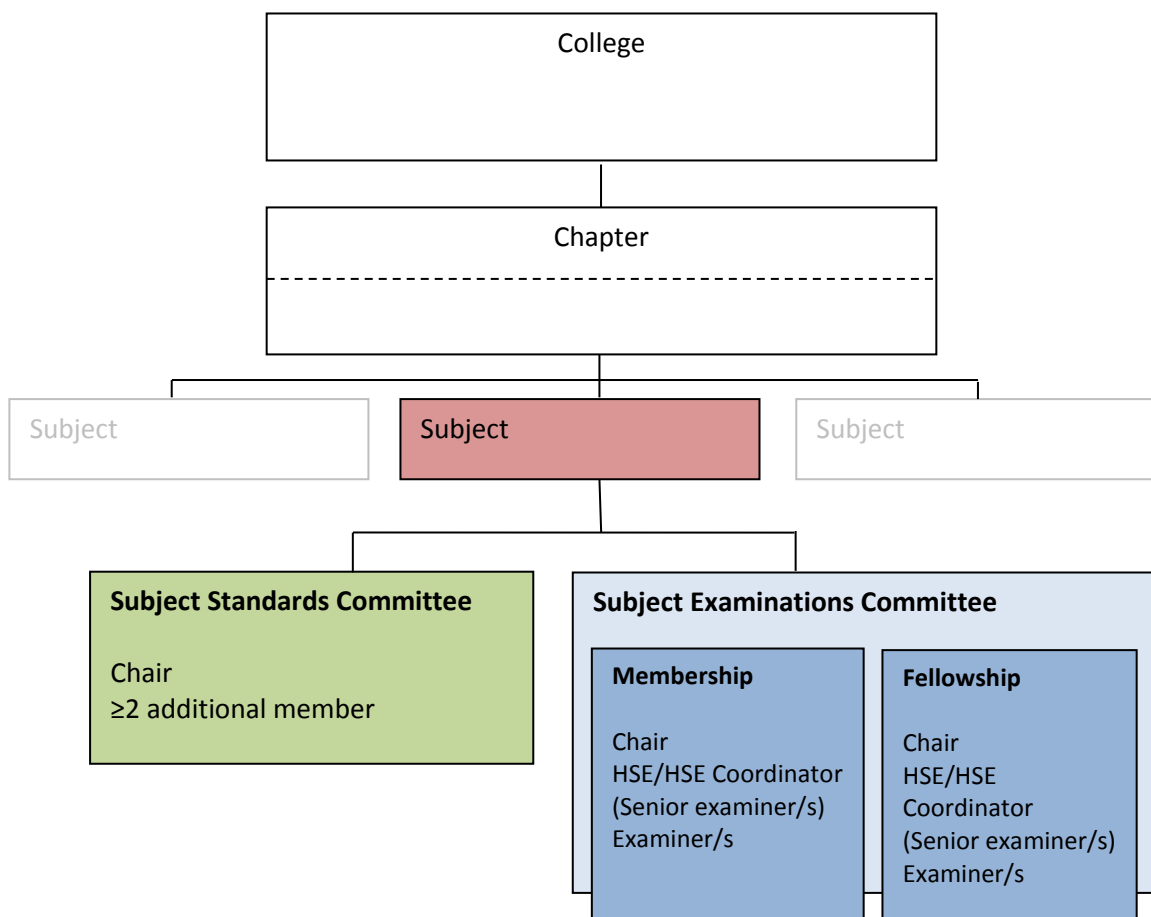
Structure (continued):

1. Each Chapter will establish the following committees for each subject offered:
   - Subject Standards Committee (SSC)
   - Subject Examinations Committee (SEC)

2. Except in exceptional circumstances (e.g. Chapters with small membership numbers), a member cannot be on both committees at the same time, and a BoE member should not be on either committee during BoE tenure.

3. SSC and SEC members may be existing Chapter office holders. However, Chapters should attempt to appoint members of these committees from the body of the Chapter membership to represent the interests of the entire Chapter, and to distribute the workload.

4. SSC and SEC members that have conflict of interest (COI) (refer to COI policy) cannot participate in the credentials assessment or the design, construction, review or delivery of the examination for the relevant examination year. In these circumstances, a replacement will be nominated by the Chapter President.

5. The Chairs of the SSC and SEC will work together to ensure Chapter examinations and credentialing processes represent appropriate, discipline-specific standards.

6. The SSC will be composed of a minimum of two Chapter members (ideally at least three if the Chapter has Membership and Fellowship subjects).
   a. For Chapters that have a Membership subject, at least one member of the SSC should be a Membership recipient not in a Fellowship training program.
   b. For Chapters that have a Fellowship subject, ideally at least two members of the SSC should be Fellowship recipients. Associate Members of the College may be part of the SSC.
   c. It is recommended that members be appointed to the SSC for a three-year term and sequentially rotate off to ensure adequate succession. The Chair of the SSC should have at least one year's experience on the committee before being appointed as Chair.

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

   The SEC will be Chaired by a Member or Fellow of the Chapter with previous experience as an Examiner. For further detail of examining teams refer to the Examiners Handbook.

In addition to the Chair of the SEC, the recommended composition at each level is a minimum of two Chapter members who are involved in the design, construction, review and/or delivery (including marking) of the examination.

    a. A majority (and at least two) of the Membership examination team should be Members (not Fellows, Associate Members or residents in Fellowship training programs).

    b. Where possible, the Fellowship examination team should have a majority of Fellows (not Associate Members or Diplomats).

    c. Subsequent to 4a. and 4b. above, Associate Members can be members of the SEC.

    d. Each SEC member will be appointed at the Chapter Annual General Meeting (AGM), typically for a term of four years, subject to Chapter size, examination demand and examiner availability. It is recommended that there be a rotation of members, one new member replacing one retiring member at each AGM.

    e. In general, the position of Chair is rotated annually, with the current Chair stepping down from the SEC, a previous Head Subject Examiner (HSE) progressing into the position of Chair, and an experienced examiner progressing to Head Subject Examiner.

    f. During tenure on the SEC a member must not be involved in mentoring candidates.

Subject Standards Committee (SSC)

Roles of the SSC

1.1. To review and update the chapter's Subject Guidelines for Membership and Fellowship, ideally on a three yearly basis but not longer than every five years, using the templates provided by the College office.

    1.1.1. The Chair of the SSC should liaise with the Chair of the SEC after each examination period to determine if changes to the Subject Guidelines are needed.

1.2. To promote mentoring and candidate preparation within the Chapter.

1.3. To provide clarification and advice to the Board of Examiners Training and Credentials Committee (TCC) regarding the content of proposed training programs, as required.

1.4. Two Fellows of the SSC are required to review the subject specific credentialing materials including activity logs, publications and credentials documents and advise the Assistant Chief Examiner (Training and Credentials) on the acceptability of these documents. Any Activity Log Summary (ALS) that accompanies an Annual Supervisors Report (ASR) in subjects that do not have defined case minima will be sent to the SSC for assessment annually e.g. Avian Medicine.

Reporting of the SSC

1.5. To report to the Chapter AGM at Science Week

1.6. To report all SSC decisions to the Chapter Executive and College Examinations Officer.

Subject Examinations Committee (SEC)

Roles of the SEC

2.1. To design, construct, review and deliver (as appropriate) the written, practical and oral examinations and marking guides for both the Membership and/or Fellowship examination.

2.2. For each Membership and Fellowship examination team, the following roles are recommended:

2.2.1 An experienced examiner is appointed as the **Chair** and will provide oversight and leadership of examination processes for the subject. The Chair supports the Head Subject Examiner or HSE Coordinator by providing guidance, communicating with the College, succession planning to ensure that new Examiners are recruited from Chapter membership, and providing mentoring of Examiners as needed. The Chair of the SEC collaborates with the Chair of the SSC by providing feedback on the examination period to facilitate review of Subject Guidelines.

This role will include:

- reviewing the final draft,
- recommending any changes,
- completing the SEC Chair Checklist and submitting this document to the College Examinations Officer.

2.2.2 The **Head Subject Examiner** (when 1-2 teams of examiners) is responsible for the development, timely production and delivery of high quality examinations, and for marking of the examination. The Head Subject Examiner may seek guidance or advice from the Chair as required. The responsibilities of this role will include:

- ensuring blueprinting of the examinations in accordance with Subject Guidelines,
- assigning responsibility to the examination team for preparing examination questions and marking guides,
- contributing to the production of examination questions and marking guides,
- collating the questions and producing the final examination and marking guides,
- communicating examination progress to the College Examinations Officer,
- ensuring all examination components conform to Subject Guidelines,
- ensuring amendments recommended by the Board of Examiners review are addressed and revised examination components are returned to the College Examinations Officer in a timely manner,
- providing the correct version of marking guides to all examiners completing candidate marking,
- reviewing the examiner marks if issues of marking discrepancies are raised,

- coaching on delivery of oral exams including time management and planned cueing,
- ensuring consistency during delivery of oral examinations (e.g. the need for additional cueing, interpretation of questions and adjustment of marking schemes).

For large teams (when 3 or more teams of examiners are required, i.e. > 24 Membership Candidates, ≥ 6 Fellowship Candidates or ≥ 6 examiners), the HSE becomes the **HSE Coordinator**. The HSE Coordinator provides leadership across the teams to coordinate the production and delivery of examinations (but does not directly assess candidates as the primary marker of written questions or deliver and assess oral examinations), including to:

- review the examiner marks and resolve any discrepancies with the examiners,
- analyse overall candidate results and, if necessary, initiating remarking or adjustment of marking guides to ensure consistency between examining teams,
- attend the oral and practical examination venue to ensure effective examination delivery and facilitate marking and moderation of results,
- coach and support examiners on delivery of oral exams, including time management and planned cueing, to ensure consistent examination delivery between rooms and, if necessary, on consecutive days,
- (e.g. the need for additional cueing, interpretation of questions and adjustment of marking guides),
- finalise marks and ensure examiner feedback has been provided for all candidates.

2.2.2   In examinations where there is more than one examination team, a **Senior Examiner** is appointed to each additional examination pair. Senior Examiners are responsible for consulting with each other and Head Subject Examiner/HSE Coordinator (as indicated) to ensure consistency of marking and of examination delivery between oral examination rooms.

2.2.3   Members of the SEC who are not part of the examining team can contribute to development of the examination components. Each member is responsible to the Head Subject Examiner for timely completion of assigned work.

2.2.4   It is recommended that, under the direction of the Head Subject Examiner, all examination team members review the final written, practical and oral examination questions and marking guides.

2.3. With due consideration of College processes and policies, the SEC should promote engagement of members with available opportunities for training in examination development and delivery. Specific examiner training or workshops may be recommended by the Board of Examiners.

2.4. Examiner and candidate feedback collated by the College office after the annual examinations at Science Week should be considered in the development of future examinations.

2.5. The SEC may develop question banks for each section of the examination, in accordance with College policies. Examination teams may utilise contributions from other Chapter members to develop examination question banks.
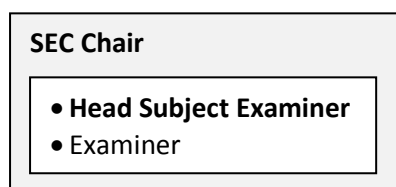
Reporting of the SEC

2.6. To report to the Chapter AGM at Science Week any matters relating to the examination process that do not fall under confidentiality clauses.

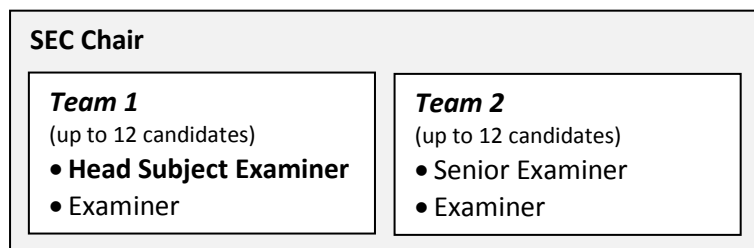2.7. To report all SEC decisions to the Chapter executive and College Examinations officer.
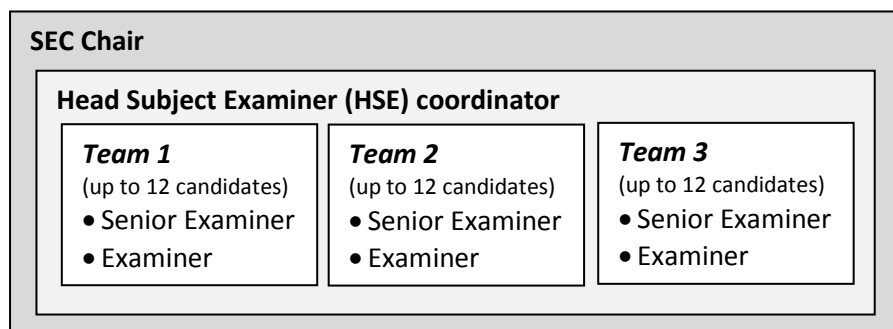
Summary diagram for SEC

Membership

For ≤12 candidates

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┌─────────────────────────────────┐
│ SEC Chair                       │
│  ┌───────────────────────────┐  │
│  │ • Head Subject Examiner   │  │
│  │ • Examiner                │  │
│  └───────────────────────────┘  │
└─────────────────────────────────┘
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For 12 – 24 candidates

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┌──────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│ SEC Chair                                      │
│  ┌─────────────────────┐ ┌──────────────────┐ │
│  │ Team 1              │ │ Team 2           │ │
│  │ (up to 12 candidates)│ │(up to 12 candidates)│
│  │ • Head Subject Examiner│ │ • Senior Examiner│ │
│  │ • Examiner          │ │ • Examiner       │ │
│  └─────────────────────┘ └──────────────────┘ │
└──────────────────────────────────────────────┘
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For >24 candidates – additional teams will be required for each additional group of up to 12 candidates.

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┌───────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│ SEC Chair                                                  │
│  ┌──────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐ │
│  │ Head Subject Examiner (HSE) coordinator              │ │
│  │  ┌─────────────┐ ┌─────────────┐ ┌─────────────┐     │ │
│  │  │ Team 1      │ │ Team 2      │ │ Team 3      │     │ │
│  │  │(up to 12    │ │(up to 12    │ │(up to 12    │     │ │
│  │  │ candidates) │ │ candidates) │ │ candidates) │     │ │
│  │  │• Senior     │ │• Senior     │ │• Senior     │     │ │
│  │  │  Examiner   │ │  Examiner   │ │  Examiner   │     │ │
│  │  │• Examiner   │ │• Examiner   │ │• Examiner   │     │ │
│  │  └─────────────┘ └─────────────┘ └─────────────┘     │ │
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└───────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
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Fellowship

For ≤3 candidates

> **SEC Chair**
>
> > • **Head Subject Examiner**
> > • Examiner

For 3 – 6 candidates

> **SEC Chair**
>
> > **Team 1**
> > (up to 12 candidates)
> > • **Head Subject Examiner**
> > • Examiner
>
> > **Team 2**
> > (up to 12 candidates)
> > • Senior Examiner
> > • Examiner
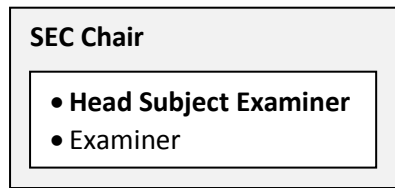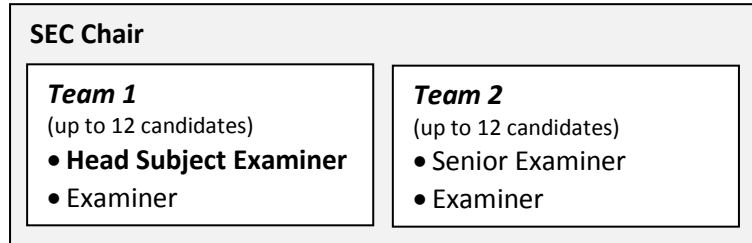
For >6 candidates – additional teams will be required for each additional group of up to 3 candidates.

> **SEC Chair**
>
> > **Head Subject Examiner (HSE) coordinator**
> >
> > > **Team 1**
> > > (up to 12 candidates)
> > > • Senior Examiner
> > > • Examiner
> > >
> > > **Team 2**
> > > (up to 12 candidates)
> > > • Senior Examiner
> > > • Examiner
> > >
> > > **Team 3**
> > > (up to 12 candidates)
> > > • Senior Examiner
> > > • Examiner