SUMMARY OF RESPONSES TO EXTERNAL EXAMINERS' COMMENTS, 2012/2013
Course: Gateway
Examination: June 2013

Examiner Comment	RVC Response **Note:** Please remember to directly quote (copy and paste) our regulations/procedures e.g. from the intranet http://intranet.rvc.ac.uk/StudentsAndTeaching/RegsAndProcs.cfm	**Actions**
Dr James Moffatt		**RVC list of actions for 2013-14**
3. **Assessment Process** **Paper 1** I had some reservations about this MCQ paper at the draft stage (see earlier report), as some of the questions were not framed appropriately. Some of these problems have been addressed, and I understand what a difficult task it can be to get a multitude of setters to change/reformat questions. Interestingly, some of the more (ideologically) problematic questions ("Which of the following is NOT true…") appear to discriminate between the different abilities of the cohorts quite well. However, the following questions appeared to punish the brighter students and reward the less able: 1, 2, 4, 27, 31, 41, 48. I could see no obvious reason why brighter students appeared to "overthink" these questions and get them wrong, probably because I am not sufficiently familiar with the taught	*We are currently compiling a database of all MCQ that have previously been used in summative examinations. The database will include any available statistics on how students answered the questions and if they are able to discriminate between students achieving better scores overall in the exam.* *We will endeavour to ensure at the question setting stage that we do not use questions in this format.*	Action (if any) date & name: Preparation of a database for all Gateway MCQ is being carried out as part of a pilot project in the Examinations Office. This should be completed in time to be consulted when papers are set for June 2014 (examiner recommendation 1 below) We will review all questions to ensure that papers in the future will not contain questions of this format. Action. Charlotte Lawson, March 2014

Prepared by: Ana Filipovic
Date: 15th July 2013 (edited with JLB comments on 13th August) Edited by TQC Subgroup 3rd Dec 2013   1 of 14

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material. The chief examiner may wish to investigate this further with the individual setters. If MCQ questions were stored in a database with the analysis of student performance, it would be simple to refine and reuse these questions (see Recommendations) year on year. We have found this to be a very useful and time-saving procedure at my own institution once a bank of refined questions has been accumulated.		
Papers 2 & 3: The clinical markers more reluctant to use the upper end of the marking scheme/ marking too closely	*The course director reviews all marks and ensures that any unusual skews and clusters on individual questions are reviewed.*	

Recommendations:
(1) Putting single best answer
    questions into a database, and
    using the analysis of answers to
    sia14 -0.36 288.288.72 19(abas)8.eabasons(os)-2(el)263.16(32 50.52 re W ni)2.6(n)10.5(g)-11.2(s)e.6(y)8.o en   [(uppe.04 268.82.6(ng)-11(i)

redundant, and it is clear that markers simply add up the different sections mathematically. I suggest that continue this practice and that the generic marking scheme is dropped.

(3) Although I understand that it is not RVC policy to standard set MCQ questions, I suggested at the exam board that the Cohen method (used at SGUL) is a relatively simple method for this purpose and might be considered in the future. My quick analysis at the Board meeting revealed an overall pass mark of 48.1% for Paper 1 had this method had been used, which would probably not have changed the overall marks to any significant extent.

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2.   **Candidates**

Please comment, as appropriate, on:

2.1   impressions of candidates' specific areas of strength and weakness, as revealed by the assessment process

2.2   the quality of candidates' knowledge and skills, with particular reference to those at the top, middle or bottom of the range

2.3   the candidates' overall performance in relation to students at a similar stage on comparable courses in other institutions, where this is known to you

I am not able to comment on the success of students in this year's cohort but know from the past that students are well supported and the full range of marks are used. The assessment is fair and covers a range of different techniques thus resulting in students being fully and appropriately assessed. The assessment is comparable with other institutions I am and have been associated with.

3.   **Assessment Process**

Please comment, as appropriate, on:

3.1   the appropriateness of the assessment methods to the subject matter and their relevance to the learning objectives

3.2   the extent to which the assessment processes are rigorous

3.2   whether the assessments reflected the syllabus adequately

3.3   the overall standard of marks

3.4   any changes from previous years in which you have examined

The assessment continues to be rigorous and appropriate to the learning objectives set for the course. Throughout my time as external examiner for this course I have seen good descriptive feedback on the in-course assessment enabling the students to use the information to improve their future work. I have also found the model answers provided with the exam papers extremely useful both in the checking of the assessment prior to the students sitting the papers but also whilst checking through the students papers prior to the exam board sitting. I note the production of model answers as an example of good practice.

4.2   arrangements for marking
4.3   procedures followed by the Board of Examiners
4.4   the participation of External Examiners in the process
4.5   adequacy of External Examiners' briefing
4.6   comparison with previous years in which you have examined

Over the past few years I have commented upon the importance of annotation on the exam scripts, even last year there were still cases when there was no evidence to show how the marker has arrived at the mark awarded. It is vital that this continues to be raised so that the internal examiners continue to improve on the situation. As I commented before, the sector is moving to a position where students may well ask to look at their scripts and thus the annotation is vital.

5.   Please delete responses as appropriate

5.1   Comments I have made in previous years have
        been acted upon   YES   ~~NO~~   ~~N/A~~

5.2   An acceptable response has been made   YES   ~~NO~~   ~~N/A~~

5.3   I approved the papers for the Examination   YES   ~~NO~~   ~~N/A~~

5.4   I was able to scrutinise an adequate sample of students'
        work and marks to enable me to carry out my duties   ~~YES~~   ~~NO~~   N/A

5.5   I attended the meeting of the Board of Examiners held
        to approve the results of the Examination   YES   NO   N/A

As this is my final year I would like to take this opportunity to thank the team for making this a rewarding experience.

Signed   Date   17th July 2013

**FOR COMPLETION
AFTER THE
EXAMINATION**

THE ROYAL VETERINARY COLLEGE

EXTERNAL EXAMINER'S REPORT

Name of Examiner   **Dr James Moffatt**

Programme   **Gateway**

Year of appointment   **2013**

Year of Examination   **2013**

Examination   **June 2013**

Dates of attendance at the RVC   **3/7/2013, 4/7/2013**

Please comment on the areas detailed below. If you have no comments in a particular area, please state "Satisfactory", "Good" or "Excellent".

1.   **The Programme**

Please comment, as appropriate, on the following aspects of the programme:

    1.1   course content
    1.2   learning objectives, and the extent to which they were met
    1.3   teaching methods
    1.4   resources (in so far as they affected the assessment)
    1.5   the overall quality of the Programme, as revealed by the student
           performance, with specific reference to particular strengths and
           weaknesses
    1.6

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The course content is broad and appropriate for the intended cohort of students. This exam is a good mixture of different assessments, challenging the students in different ways. There is an even spread of marks reflecting this. As I suggested during my initial consideration of the draft exam, some of the MCQ questions have been edited/reformatted although there is room for additional improvement. Unless otherwise noted, I have found the marking of the papers to be fair and consistent.
I found the quality of the students to be impressive; indeed two achieved distinctions. Some of the taught material is quite complicated (involving e.g. complex cell signalling pathways) and the students have mostly risen to the challenge.

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2.   **Candidates**

Please comment, as appropriate, on:

> 2.1   impressions of candidates' specific areas of strength and weakness, as revealed by the assessment process
> 2.2   the quality of candidates' knowledge and skills, with particular reference to those at the top, middle or bottom of the range
> 2.3   the candidates' overall performance in relation to students at a similar stage on comparable courses in other institutions, where this is known to you

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The range of student performance is fairly wide, as might be expected from this cohort of students. Many students struggled particularly with Paper 3, which required more detailed and lengthy responses. Some of the better students from this cohort are probably no different academically than B.Sc. (Biomedical Science) students at my institution or indeed the RVC B Vet Sci students.

3.   **Assessment Process**

Please comment, as appropriate, on:

> 3.1   the appropriateness of the assessment methods to the subject matter and their relevance to the learning objectives
> 3.2   the extent to which the assessment processes are rigorous
> 3.2   whether the assessments reflected the syllabus adequately
> 3.3   the overall standard of marks
> 3.4   any changes from previous years in which you have examined

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Paper 1
I had some reservations about this MCQ paper at the draft stage (see earlier report), as some of the questions were not framed appropriately. Some of these problems have been addressed, and I understand what a difficult task it can be to get a multitude of setters to change/reformat questions. Interestingly, some of the more (ideologically) problematic questions ("Which of the following is NOT true…") appear to discriminate between the different abilities of the cohorts quite well. However, the following questions appeared to punish the brighter students and reward the less able: 1, 2, 4, 27, 31, 41, 48. I could see no obvious reason why brighter students appeared to "overthink" these questions and get them wrong, probably because I am not sufficiently familiar with the taught material. The chief examiner may wish to investigate this further with the individual setters. If MCQ questions were stored in a database with the analysis of

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5.   Please delete responses as appropriate

5.1   Comments I have made in previous years have
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5.2   An acceptable response has been made   N/A

5.3   I approved the papers for the Examination   N/A

5.4   I was able to scrutinise an adequate sample of students'
         work and marks to enable me to carry out my duties   YES

5.5   I attended the meeting of the Board of Examiners held
         to approve the results of the Examination   YES

5.6   Candidates were considered impartially and fairly   YES

If you have replied No to any of these questions, please comment more d [(t)-145.9(y)8.( )Tj -35.87 -1.152