
BVETMED YEAR 4 EXTERNAL EXAMINERS REPORTS

- a. Update to actions from 2014/15

Collaborative Report

Assessment Procedures

Please comment, as appropriate, on:

3.1 Assessment methods (relevance to learning objectives and curriculum)

Paper 1a – MCQ

The MCQ covered a good range of subjects and included some questions that tested interpretation of information

Based on this analysis, the external examiners would like to draw particular attention to the following issues:
EMQ 1; Q1. Option A is too broad, since it could be interpreted to apply to any immune mediated response, and so we recommend amending this answer to 'primary immune mediated disease' in future iterations of this question.

EMQ 1; Q4. Borrelia is not common in the UK, is it appropriate having 2 EMQs on this (see also EMQ 4; Q19)?

EMQ 1; Q5. Good question, difficult but discriminates well. (German Shepherd, Lymphoma stage 4)

EMQ 2; Q7. Could data be presented in a Table? As written it is difficult to sort through the details of the case. This is a difficult scenario, but is written as a fair, classic referral presentation. Use with caution.

EMQ 2; Q10. Students seem to have demonstrated confusion between hyper- and hypo-adrenocorticism. Appears to be lack of understanding, rather than a fault with the question.

EMQ 3; Q11-15. Done well, good performance overall. Good clinical scenarios.

EMQ 4; Q19. Borrelia is not common in the UK, is it appropriate having 2 EMQs on this (see also EMQ 1; Q4)?

EMQ 5; Q24. Students seemed to confuse gid and listeria although the description in the question is clear.

EMQ 5; Q25. Students seem to have difficulty recognising scrapie, although the scenario appears to be presented in a straightforward manner.

EMQ 7; Q31-35. Straightforward and well written series of questions, however, students seemed to perform less well than would be expected. So examiners were concerned about students' knowledge of equine distal limb anatomy/understanding of nerve blocks. Questions perform less well than expected. Is it because they have not done/seen diagnostic analgesic blocks? If so, would this be a more appropriate question for final 5th year exams, rather than 4th year?

EMQ9; Q44. Can we add another distractor with a canine connection (e.g. 'Brucella caninum') in the list or other scenario with a dog story but without abortion, otherwise a strategic student can select the correct answer to this question based on the canine reference only.

EMQ10; Q46. The word 'some' makes this question confusing, since it is hard to know if only some animals were observed, or all animals were observed, but only some were showing eyeball rotation. Therefore we recommend removing the word 'some' if the question is used again in the future. Furthermore, 'showing eyeball rotation' is vague - do you mean normal rotation of an animal looking around, or downward rotation indicating stunning?

Finally, is b) an incorrect option, or can it be interpreted as a more conservative, but still appropriate response, especially if animal welfare is being prioritised? Based on the multiple levels of confusion with this question, the external examiners opted to allow both options b) and c) as correct answers for this exam.

EMQ11: Q51-55 Difficult, but good questions. Q55, in particular, requires two-stage thinking. Can see why haemopoietic would be considered the correct answer in such a complex question, so, consider taking it out as an option for future uses of the question.

EMQ12. Q60. Would be better to have images for these questions in addition to the text description of the cases, if possible.

Paper 2

As an overall summary, the external examiners are of the opinion that the long answer paper was a well balanced examination that covered very many aspects of the taught course and asked the students a considered and detailed mixed of factual recall, data interpretation and reasoned thinking in the areas of professional skills and clinical knowledge.

All of the borderline scripts (fail, pass/merit, merit/distinction level, approx. 25 scripts) were marked by externals. If these did not include the range of marks per question (top, middle, bottom), further scripts were selected to specifically represent these performances to see if they reflected the performance indicated in the model answer. For some questions, the external examiners found it difficult to interpret the model answer and get to the same mark as given according to the CGS. Some models answers described pass/merit/distinction level answers well, but in particular for Q3, this was found to be difficult. We appreciate not every level in the CGS can be justified in a written model answer, but we feel it would be beneficial and extremely helpful if model examples of answers that would be awarded the three pass grades (pass, merit and distinction) could be provided in future years as from those answers, the external examiners can then justify further CGS classification based on information provided in the model answer. With the increasing desire of students to know that there is complete transparency in the marking process, inclusion of this information would also be important to warrant justification of their given marks. We also recommend that this exercise be performed for previously used exam questions if it is anticipated that the same questions would be used again, as this would provide a good example for future markers and external examiners, to confirm consistency and fairness in the marking process.

One final comment with regard to aiding the external examiners establishing the mark given within the CGS, when marking it would be extremely helpful if markers put numbers or justification on the side of the scripts (or elsewhere) to document justification for the mark given. This makes the process more transparent for external examiners but also for potential students appealing their mark/results.

The external examiners did have a concern relating to the consistency in marking discrimination of question 3 as will be detailed later. A worthwhile experiment may be the marking of a question by the same person (blinded to previous marks) with a time period in between. As far as we know this has not been done, and although difference

may be small, these differences may have significant results for some students.
Overall, our compliments go to the markers who took the huge effort to read through and mark such a large number of sc

model answers, in addition to the current one, that was set at a more appropriate "Good Pass" level, and consider

Feedback on specific questions highlighted by External Examiners, along with item analyses and explanatory

3.4 Standard of marking

We are satisfied with the standard of marking, and refer to Section 3.1 for recommendations

Response from college requested: NO

Professor R.F

I have not used the Common Grading Scheme for marking before, but after having assessed the scripts I felt that the vast majority of marks awarded were appropriate and that the scheme worked well. However, it is clear that the use of the CGS means that the model answers provided must always be detailed and clear and it would help external examiners (and students in the situation of an appeal) for the model answers to always give clear indication of what points the internal examiners felt were essential. This was achieved in the majority of questions but care must be taken to ensure this is consistent

COURSE DIRECTOR: Mr Dan Chan

Course Director Response:

We appreciate the External Examiners comments and actions to address recommendations are detailed in response to Section 3.1

Action Required:

Action Deadline:

Action assigned to:

3.5 In your view, are the procedures for assessment and the determination of awards sound and fairly conducted? (e.g. Briefing, Exam administration, marking arrangements, Board of Examiners, participation by External Examiners)

Yes

3.7 Please provide any additional comments and recommendations regarding the procedures

We acknowledge that despite questions being reviewed by a number of people, including the external examiners, unforeseeable problems with questions are only apparent when students answer the questions. The examination process continues to improve each year and we recommend all question writers to review the statistics for their questions to continue to improve the examination process.

Response from college requested: **NO**

Professor R.F

None

4.1 Comments I have made in previous years have been addressed to my satisfaction

Yes

Additional comments, particularly if your answer was no:

4.3 I approved the papers for the Examination

4.6 Candidates were considered impartially and fairly

4.7 The standards set for the awards are appropriate for qualifications at this level, in this subject

Yes

Additional comments, particularly if your answer was no:

Response from college requested: NO

Professor R.F

Yes

4.8 The standards of student performance are comparable with similar programmes or subjects in other UK institutions with which I am familiar

4.11 Appropriate procedures and processes have been followed

Yes

Additional comments, particularly if your answer was no:

Response from college requested: NO

Completion

If you have identified any areas of good practice, please comment more fully here. We may use information provided in our annual external examining report:

Do you have any suggestions for improvements based on experience at other institutes? We may use information provided in our annual external examining report:

The organisation was excellent and the external examiners are grateful for the time allowed to review the examination papers this year. Provision of exam papers with and without answers was very useful and we would like to continue with this.

The help given to the external examiners by Kim Whittlestone, Ruth Serlin, Wendy Mace and other academic staff has been excellent. We recognise the enormity of this task for the RVC and the teaching and marking staff are to be congratulated.

Response from college requested: NO

Professor R.F

None

COURSE DIRECTOR: Mr Dan Chan

Course Director Response:

We appreciate the comments and assistance provided by the External Examiners and thank them for their thorough assessment of our examination. We will continue to provide exam papers with and without answers as recommended by External Examiners.

Action Required:

Action Deadline:

Action assigned to:

External Examiner comments: For College information only (Responses to External Examiners are remain confidential, if any) wish to

Response from college requested: NO

