

Bylaw* on the Qualifying Examination of the European College of Veterinary Public Health (ECVPH)

Article 1: Requirements for admission to sit the examination

The applicant must fulfil the following criteria:

1. Be eligible to be licenced to practice veterinary medicine in a European country.
2. Have a satisfactory moral and ethical standing in the profession.
3. Have successfully completed the standard or alternative residency training program.
4. Have made a scientific contribution relevant to veterinary public health.

The minimum publication requirements are:

- A total of four scientific contributions (e.g., peer-reviewed articles, technical reports, reports to governments, book chapters) submitted at the time of application for sitting the examination;
- At least two of the four contributions must be articles published or accepted in international refereed scientific journals at the time of application for sitting the examination. The applicant must be first author on at least one of the scientific articles. To be considered as an internationally recognised scientific article, the contribution must be published or accepted in a scientific journal included in the most recent *Source Publication List for Web of Science* (http://mjl.clarivate.com/publist_sciex.pdf) or *Scopus*;

Criteria 1, 2, and 4 is evaluated by the Credentials Committee. Criteria 3 is evaluated by the Education Committee.

*Bylaw in accordance with Article 9 of the Constitution. This bylaw was passed by the ECVPH Council on its meeting of 08 Oct. 2010 and was edited on the 26 Sept. 2016 and 29 Jan., 2 July 2018, 6 July 2021, 20 Sept. 2023, 21 June 2024, and 27 Jan 2025.

Article 2: Application procedure

All documents required for the application procedure must be in an electronic format and submitted by the candidate to the Secretariat on or before the deadlines of 1st December or 1st June each year. Late or incomplete applications will be processed and reviewed for examination in the subsequent round. Candidates for the examination may submit their application for the qualifying examination during the final year of their Residency training programme; however, the examination can only be sat following completion of the full requirements of the Residency programme.

Candidates must submit the standard application form (as supplied by the College) together with all other required documentation and the credentials' evaluation fee.

Responsibility for the accuracy and availability of all the required credentials documentation rests with the applicant. The following materials must be submitted:

- A complete application form.
- A copy of the candidate's *Curriculum Vitae*.
- Reference letter(s) from the applicants' Programme Director and Supervisor(s), including the verification that the applicant has a satisfactory moral and ethical standing in the profession according to their best knowledge. In case the Programme Director and Supervisor are of the same institution, one common letter is sufficient.
- Relevant documentation forms: activity logbook, presentation list, DOI addresses (for publications in open access journals) or reprints of publications.
- A proof of payment of the credentials evaluation fee.
- Declare that during the residency training period at least 60 per cent of working time has been devoted to Veterinary Public Health activities, such as research, further training, policy making, control and/or teaching.

If the credentials are accepted by the College, the applicant will be notified by the Secretary via e-mail, within three months of the deadline for submission. The Secretary will notify successful applicants of the procedure for the examination, including payment of the examination fee. Dates and other information pertaining to the examination will be advised by the Chair of the Standing Examination Committee (SEC). The candidate will be informed of the date and venue at least 90 and 30 days, respectively, before the examination.

Unsuccessful applicants will also be notified via e-mail within three months of the deadline for submission by a letter from the Secretary; this letter will describe and explain the deficiencies in the credentials submitted. Any subsequent reapplication must include resubmission of those credentials found deficient, together with a new application form and updated documentation as listed above.

All correspondence related to the application procedure and notification, should be addressed to the Secretary.

Article 3: Membership of the Examination Committee

For each examination, the process of selection and appointment of the Chair and the members of the Examination Committee is managed by the SEC.

Within the ECVPH a SEC is appointed under the chairmanship of the Junior Vice President. This committee is charged with the organisation of the examinations. This committee will draft the written exams and invite certified Diplomates to participate in the Ad Hoc Examination Committee, which is responsible for carrying out the oral exams. The SEC consists of five members: the Junior Vice President as Chairperson, and two members from each of the subspecialties.

The *Ad Hoc* Examination Committee for the oral examination is selected by the SEC of the ECVPH and comprises:

For candidates in the Population Medicine speciality:

- Chair and first Examiner (from the population medicine sub-speciality)
- Second Examiner (from the population medicine sub-speciality)
- Third Examiner (from the food science sub-speciality)

For candidates in the Food Science speciality:

- Chair and first Examiner (from the food science sub-speciality)
- Second Examiner (from the food science sub-speciality)
- Examiner 3 (from the population medicine sub-speciality)

Article 4: Setting-up the examinations

The process of setting up and conducting the examination is managed by, and communicated through, the Chair of the SEC. If a candidate thinks that he or she would need extra time for completing the written or oral exam because of specific special needs, he or she can apply for this by sending a request, at least 4 weeks before the start of the exam, to the Chair of the SEC. In this request, the candidate should clarify in brief why he or she would need extra time and for what part of the exam this extra time is needed. Candidate should include evidence of their special need (e.g. being diagnosed with dyslexia or other); in this way, we can make sure to provide the right support. The Chair of the SEC will send the decision on the request (after consultation the Council

of ECVPH) within 2 weeks after receiving the request. Appeals against this decision can be made following the appeal procedure.

Dates

The ECVPH Council determines one or more examination dates for each year. The dates for written paper and oral examination are posted on the College website and will be notified to eligible candidates via e-mail.

Venues

The examination venue is determined by the SEC. It should have the necessary technical facilities available, as previously requested by the candidate to the Chair of the SEC. Examinations can also be organized online. The Chair of the SEC will determine if the oral part of the exam will be online or face-to-face timely before the date of the written exam. The SEC will provide a platform and candidates will be informed. Before the day of the online exam, a try-out session for examiners and candidates will be organized to test the platform and explain the platform. If technical problems occur during the exam to such a degree that the candidate cannot fulfil the exam in a proper way the Chair of the SEC will inform the Council. The Council then can decide to grant the candidate a new opportunity to sit the exam.

Oral exams (online or face-to-face) are recorded as video files by one of the examiners. The files are transferred to the Chair of the SEC immediately after the exam and must be deleted from computers of examiners as soon as the Chair of the SEC confirms successful receipt. The Chair of the SEC keeps the files until time for potential appeal elapses and must delete them immediately after this period.

Selection of topics for the oral examination:

Both presentation topics will relate to the candidate's sub-speciality. One month before the agreed examination date, the Chair of the SEC will request the topic for the first presentation to be chosen by the candidate, and this must be communicated to the SEC. Subsequently, the topic for the second presentation is proposed by the members of the SEC. The examination timetable is then agreed, and the Chair of the SEC informs the candidate. No later than two weeks before the date of the examination, the Chair sends the topic for the second presentation as agreed by the SEC to the candidate.

Article 5: The Examination Format

All exams will be conducted in English.

The examination comprises two main parts:

1. A written paper
2. An oral examination.

1. Written paper

A. Multiple-choice questions (MCQs are composed of one question (stem) with multiple possible answers (choices), including the correct answer and several incorrect answers (distractors). Candidates will select the correct answer by circling the associated number or letter. There will be fifty questions on the examination; this section should require 1.5 hours duration in total):

- 1) 25 questions on the core curriculum;
- 2) 25 questions on the sub-specialty.

B. Short answer questions are typically composed of a brief prompt that demands a written answer that varies in length from one or two words to a few sentences. They are most often used to test basic knowledge of key facts and terms but can also be used to test higher thinking analytical skills. In the examination four questions should be answered out of the six offered; this section should require 1 hour duration in total:

- 1) Two questions (out of three offered) on the core curriculum;
- 2) Two questions (out of three offered) on the sub-specialty.

C. Problem solving (essay) questions test higher-level analysis, synthesis and evaluation. They should be related to real cases. In these questions the candidate will be asked to elaborate on a proposed case including: study design, materials and methods, expected results and proposed remedies. In the examination, two questions should be answered out of three offered in the subspecialty; this section should require one hour duration in total.

The use of a dictionary during the exam is allowed for non-native English speakers.

The completed examination papers are assessed independently by at least two members of the SEC, as chosen by the Chair of the SEC. Each examiner sums the percentages for section A1, A2, B1, B2 and C. For each section, the final sum of percentages is determined as being the mean of the marks given by the two examiners.

The final sum of percentages for each section (A1, A2, B1, B2 and C) is then converted into the final mark for the section: either "passed" ($\geq 50\%$) or "failed" ($\leq 49\%$). The candidate must pass all five sections (i.e. achieve $\geq 50\%$ in each). A $\leq 49\%$ mark for any of the five sections (A1, A2, B1, B2 or C)

represents a failure at the written examination and precludes the candidate from proceeding to the oral part of the examination.

The marking process of the written paper should be completed within a week, and the Chair of the SEC then communicates the results to the Council.

The Secretary communicates the examination results to the Candidate.

2. Oral examination

In the oral examination, the candidates are examined individually following the format described below:

a) Introduction (approximately 5 minutes)

- The Chair of the Examination Committee welcomes all the participants, introduces the examiners to the candidate, asks for any relevant last-minute comments from those present, and formally opens the session by inviting the candidate to present on their first topic.

b) Examination - part I (approximately 60 minutes)

- The candidate presents their first topic (the one chosen by the candidate) within a 15 minute period.
- The Chair thanks the candidate and invites the second examiner to ask questions.
- The second examiner asks one or more brief question(s) related mainly to the subject of the first topic but may also relate to any other aspects of the ECVPH curriculum (this should take approximately 15-20 minutes, including answers).
- The Chair thanks and then invites the third examiner to ask questions.
- The third examiner asks one or more brief question(s) related mainly to the subject of the first topic, but which also may relate to any other aspects of the ECVPH curriculum (this should take approximately 15-20 minutes, including answers).
- The Chair thanks, and asks a brief question related mainly to the first topic, but which also may relate to any other aspects of the ECVPH curriculum. This should take approximately 10-15 min, including answers.

c) Examination – part II (approximately 60 minutes)

- The candidate presents the second topic (as chosen by the Examination Committee) within a 15 minutes period.
- The Chair thanks and then invites the second examiner to ask questions.
- The second examiner asks one or more brief question(s) related mainly to the second topic, but which also may relate to any other aspects of the ECVPH curriculum. Approximately 15-20 minutes are allocated for this, including answers.

- The Chair thanks and then invites the third examiner to ask questions.
- The third examiner asks one or more brief question(s) related mainly to the second topic, but which also may relate to any other aspects of the ECVPH curriculum (approximately 15-20minutes are allocated for this, including answers).
- The Chair thanks the third examiner, and asks a brief question related mainly to the second topic but which also may relate to any other aspects of the ECVPH curriculum. Approximately 10-15minutes are allocated for this, including answers.

d) Examination – part III (approximately 30 minutes)

- The candidate is asked random questions based on elements within the entire curriculum
- The second examiner asks several questions on any aspect of the ECVPH curriculum. Approximately 10 minutes are allocated for this, including answers.
- The Chair thanks and then invites the third examiner to ask questions.
- The third examiner asks several questions on any aspect of the ECVPH curriculum. Approximately 10 minutes are allocated for this, including answers.
- The Chair thanks the third examiner and asks several questions on any aspects of the ECVPH curriculum. Approximately 10 minutes are allocated for this, including answers.
- The Chair thanks everyone present, and asks the candidate to wait outside the room (i.e. “break-out room” during online exams), while the examiners consider the marks awarded.

e) Marking of the candidate (approximately 10 minutes)

- The Chair asks each of the examiners to announce their assessment of the three parts of the oral exam as either “passed” or “failed”, along with a brief justification of their decision. The candidate must pass all three parts of the exam to pass the exam overall.
- The Exam is considered as “passed” when all three examiners agree that each part of the exam has been successfully completed. If the “pass mark” is not agreed unanimously, the candidate fails.
- The Chair puts forward a pre-prepared written Examination Note (see below) and asks the two Examiners and the Observer to sign.

f) Closure (approximately 5 min)

- The Chair invites the candidate to return to the examination room, and gives a preliminary and informal decision regarding the outcome of the examination. The Chair informs the candidate that he/she will receive the formal mark in writing from the Secretary following ratification by the ECVPH Council.
- The Chair closes the examination.
- Within one week of the examination, the Chair will send the signed Examination Note to the Secretary and the exam video recording to the Chair of SEC.
- The Secretary communicates the examination results to the Education Committee and to the Candidate.

The candidate or the examiners can ask for a short break (approximately 5 minutes) between the parts of the exam.

Article 6: Overall decisions derived from the Qualifying Examination

The examination results (based on both written paper and oral examination) are ratified by the Council.

In order to be certified as a Diplomat of the European College of Veterinary Public Health:

- (1) All parts and sections of the examination must be successfully completed.
- (2) Candidates must pass the examination within eight years of completing their training programme, and may sit the examination on four occasions only.

Credentials of candidates who pass the examination will be forwarded to the President by the Chairperson of the SEC via the Education Committee.

Failure to fulfil any of these requirements necessitates the candidate to repeat and satisfactorily complete the credentials process, either partly or fully. Such a candidate may do so at the discretion of the Credentials Committee. Additional periods of training and/or experience may be recommended by the SEC.

If the written part of the examination is not passed successfully, further advice regarding remedial training/experience in one or other subject(s) can be given by the SEC. In all cases a re-application is required to be made in full.

If a candidate passes the written but not the oral component of the examination, the SEC will advise the applicant on the areas of remedial training/experience required. Reapplication will then require admission to the second part of the examination only. In this case, the candidate must provide the Committee with evidence that he/she has fulfilled adequately the additional, remedial training requirements, and for this to be substantiated by the supervising Diplomat(s).

Full re-application credentials must include:

- a. A written outline of the re-applicant's self-evaluation and his/her remedy to correct the deficiencies.
- b. A completed examination application form.
- c. An updated *curriculum vitae* should be provided. An addendum should reflect training and experiences directed toward correcting the deficiencies as noted by the report from the

Credentials Committee.

- d. At least one letter of reference. This/these letter(s) should specifically address the efforts taken by the applicant to correct the deficiencies of previous examinations.
- e. All pertinent correspondence should be provided. This should include a list of all dates of previous application(s) and related correspondence.

Article 7: Disciplinary actions and appeals procedure

1. In the event of improper conduct by the candidate at any stage of the examination process, the Council shall have the authority to recommend censure, suspension, or cancellation of the examination and/or the results. All deliberation thereon shall be guided by highest standards. The candidate concerned shall therefore have the opportunity to lodge an appeal before the Council in person.

2. In the event of an adverse decision by the SEC and/or the Council, including denial of adequacy of credentials prior to examination for certification or a negative result (fail mark) at the examination, the person concerned may submit an appeal in writing to the Council for consideration within thirty days of the adverse decision. The Council shall re-consider on the grounds that the decision may have been made erroneously due to:

- a) Disregarding or failing to follow stated College procedures; and/or
- b) Failing to consider relevant documentation presented.

The Council shall deliver in writing its final decision within ninety days following receipt of the appeal. If the appellant is not satisfied with the final decision, he or she may appeal to representatives of the European Board of Veterinary Specialisation (EBVS). The request for such an appeal must be submitted in writing and be accompanied by proof of payment of € 1000 to EBVS. In the case of a positive outcome of the appeal, this amount will be reimbursed in full.