

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:

1. Be qualified to practice veterinary medicine in a European country.
2. Have a satisfactory moral and ethical standing in the profession.
3. Have completed at least 1 year of internship or other practical experience relevant to veterinary public health.
4. Have successfully completed the standard or alternative residency training program.
5. Have made a scientific contribution to either population medicine or food science, as evidenced by publications; and demonstrated by a high standard of proficiency in the chosen subspecialty.

In keeping with the constitutional objectives of the ECVPH, each applicant must contribute to the literature. The minimum requirements are:

- One (1) and preferably two (2) papers as a first author published (or accepted) in internationally refereed scientific journals. To be considered as an internationally recognised publication, the publication has to be published in a scientific journal included in the ISI list (<http://www.isinet.com>); and
- three (3), additional publications or other scientific contributions or equivalents (e.g., technical reports, reports to governments) as first or co-author, which demonstrate the applicant's experience in more than one selected topic of the subspecialty.
 - At least two publications must be published in peer-reviewed journals.

The responsibility for evaluating the quality of the publications rests with the Credentials Committee.

**Bylaw in accordance with Article 9 of the Constitution. This bylaw was passed by the ECVPH Council on its meeting of 08 October, 2010 and was edited on the 26th of September 2016 and 29th of January 2018.*

Article 2: Application procedure

All documents required for the application procedure must be in an electronic format and submitted by the candidate to the Documenting Secretariat on or before the deadlines of 01 December or 01 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 3rd 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. The Credentials Committee must verify the successful completion of a standard Residency or alternate training programme.

Responsibility for the accuracy and availability of all the required credentials documentation rests with the applicant. The following materials must be submitted (further details and the required forms can be found in the Bylaw on Residency Training):

- A complete application form.
- A copy of the candidate's *Curriculum Vitae*.
- Reference letter(s) from the Director and Advisor(s) at each institution involved in the Training Programme.
- Relevant documentation forms: activity log book, presentation list, 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 Executive Secretary via e-mail, within three months of the deadline for submission. The Executive 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 Examination Committee. The candidate will be informed of the date and venue at least 30 days 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 Executive 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 Documenting 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 Education Committee.

Within the ECVPH a Standing Examination Committee 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 checking the draft exams, assessing the written exams after completion, and carrying out the oral exams. The Standing Examination Committee 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 Standing Examination Committee 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 Standing Examination Committee.

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 web site, and will be notified to eligible candidates via e-mail.

Venues

The examination venue is determined by the Standing Examination Committee. It should have the necessary technical facilities available, as previously requested by the candidate to the Chair of the Standing Examination Committee.

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 Standing Examination Committee will request the topic for the first presentation to be chosen by the candidate, and this must be communicated to the Standing Examination Committee. Subsequently, the topic for the second presentation is proposed by the members of the Ad Hoc Examination committee. The examination timetable is then agreed, and the Chair 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 Ad Hoc Examination Committee 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). Students will select the correct answer by circling the associated number or letter. There will be at least fifty questions on the examination; this section should require 1.5 hours duration in total).

- 1) At least 25 questions on the core curriculum (carrying 2 points each).
- 2) At least 25 questions on the sub-specialty (carrying 2 points each).

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 (carrying 10 points each).
- 2) Two questions (out of three offered) on the sub-specialty (carrying 10 points each).

- 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 none native English speakers.

The completed examination papers are assessed independently by at least two members of the Examination Committee, as chosen by the Chair of the Examination Committee. Each examiner sums the points for section A, B and C. For each section, the final sum of points is determined as being the mean of the marks given by the two examiners.

The final sum of points for each section (A, B 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 three sections (i.e. achieve $\geq 50\%$ in each). A $\leq 49\%$ mark for either of the three sections (A, B or C) represents a failure at the written examination and precludes the candidate from proceeding to the oral presentations.

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

The Secretary communicates the examination results to the Standing Education Committee, the Documenting Secretary and 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 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 min period.
- The Chair thanks the candidate and invites the second examiner to ask questions.
- The second examiner asks one or more brief questions 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 invites the third examiner to ask questions.
- The third examiner asks one or more brief questions 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 min period.
- The Chair thanks, and invites the second examiner to ask questions.
- The second examiner asks one or more brief questions 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 invites the third examiner to ask questions.
- The third examiner asks one or more brief questions 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 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 10-15 minutes are allocated for this, including answers).

d) Examination – part III (approximately 30 minutes)

- The candidate is asked random questions throughout the whole curriculum
- The second examiner asks several questions on any aspects of the ECVPH curriculum (approximately 10 minutes are allocated for this, including answers).
- The Chair thanks, and invites the third examiner to ask questions.
- The third examiner asks several questions on any aspects 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 all present, and asks the candidate to wait outside the room, while the examiners consider the marks awarded.

e) Marking of the candidate (approximately 10 minutes)

- The Chair asks the examiners individually to announce their assessment as either “passed” or “failed”, along with a brief justification.
- If all three examiners agree on the assessment, it becomes the final mark.
- If the mark is not agreed unanimously, the assessment given by the majority of examiners (i.e. two out of three) who are in agreement, becomes the final mark.
- 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 an informal, oral, preliminary indication of the outcome of the examination, and informs the candidate that he/she will receive the formal mark in writing from the Executive Secretary following ratification by the ECVPH Council.
- The Chair closes the examination.
- Within one week following the examination, the Chair passes the signed Examination Note to the Executive Secretary.
- The Executive Secretary communicates the examination results to the Education Committee and to the Candidate.

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 Diplomate 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 Examinations Committee 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 Examination Committee.

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 Standing Examination Committee. In all cases a re-application is required to be made in full.

If the written part of the examination is passed successfully, but not the oral part, the Examination Committee will advise the applicant on the areas of remedial training/experience required. Reapplication will then only require admission to the second part of the examination. In this case, the candidate is required to 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 Diplomate(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 Examination Committee 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.