
BVETMED YEAR 4 EXTERNAL EXAMINERS REPORTS

 Responses to 2016/17 External Examiners' Comments and an update to 2015/16 Actions

To be considered at the Academic Board Meeting on 5th April 2017

- a. Update to actions from 2015/16 - the full report available [here](#)

External Examiners' comments	Year Leader's response	Update
2.3.... Seeing the level of some of the questions (i.e. EMQ on clinical neurology) students have been taught well in the majority of topics. Some topics (EMQ equine nerve blocks and anatomy) were less well answered and it would be worthwhile to reflect on potential reasons for this.	Action Required: Feedback on EMQ question performance to be sent to question author/Strand Leader with item analyses for review. Action Deadline: 31-Mar-2016 Action assigned to: Dan Chan and Exam Office	Completed
3.1 Assessment methods... External Examiners complete comment available here	Action Required: Feedback on specific questions highlighted by External Examiners, along with item analyses and explanatory notes of item analyses to be sent to question authors and Strand Leaders. Call for new Long Answer questions to include a example model answer that matches what students are being asked to answer, and that it clearly states how students are to be marked as distinction/merit/pass/fail. Question markers to be informed that scripts that do not contain explanatory notes justifying mark assigned will be returned by the Exam Office to question marker for comments to be added to marked scripts Action Deadline: 31-Aug-2016 Action assigned to: Dan Chan and Exams Office	Completed
4.1 A possibility to review newly added questions that replaced questions after our first review, would be appreciated	Action Required: Submit to External Examiners revised questions or replacement questions following initial review Action Deadline: 01-Nov-2016 Action assigned to: Exams Office	Completed
4.6 ..process of evacuation of the building in the event of an emergency... External Examiners complete comment available here	Action Required: Examination instructions to include evacuation procedures. Student briefings to include reminder of required professional conduct during examinations. Action Deadline: 20-Jan-2016 Action assigned to: Exams Office	Completed

Collaborative Report

Exam board meeting: 14-Dec-2016

Bachelor of Veterinary Medicine, Year 4, 2016/17**Lead examiner: Dr Wendela Wapenaar****Collaborating examiner(s): Dr Clare Allen, Professor Robert Foale, Dr Mickey Tivers**

The Programme

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

1.1 Course content

Appropriate

Response from college requested: NO

1.2 Learning objectives, and the extent to which they were met

Appropriate

Response from college requested: NO

1.3 Teaching methods

Appropriate

Response from college requested: NO

1.4 Resources (in so far as they affected the assessment)

Appropriate

Response from college requested: NO

1.5 Please provide any additional comments and recommendations regarding the Programme

The level of clinical/integrated reasoning at this stage of the course may need further consideration, the discussion in the exam board meeting highlighted the level expected may not be reflected by the grades achieved in Paper 2 (integrated reasoning):

The key issue here is, are we looking to use the examination process to drive learning or are we looking to use the examination process to reflect learning? When we reviewed the integrated reasoning paper pre-examination, we were happy with its content, but the student's performance in this paper was notably less than in the MCQ and EMQ paper. Our main, subsequently arising, concerns are firstly that the expected level of clinical knowledge application was high for students mid-way through their fourth year and whilst we feel this is appropriate, the questions posed must be revisited on rotations if the aim of the examination is to drive learning and furthermore, that the students must be challenged again in very similar scenarios in final year to ensure that the learning has taken place; we are not aware whether this occurs or not. Secondly, it is clear that a student can elect to ignore the professionalism question almost totally and still pass overall and it became apparent in the exam board meeting that this knowledge is then not assessed again in final year. As this is an important area to ensure competency in for a professional qualification, we advice to consider making this question compulsory, or possibly demanding at least a 40% mark is attained in this question to be able to pass the paper, or separating the marks for paper 1 and paper 2 and look to demand students obtain at least 50% in each paper in order to pass overall.

Response from college requested: YES**COURSE DIRECTOR: Mr Dan Chan**

Course Director Response:

We thank the external examiner for these comments. The level of expectation of students at this stage on an examination such as this will be further considered as the BVetMed undergoes a Curriculum Review. The observation that the performance on the Integrated Reasoning questions was more disappointing than the performance on Paper 1 may be due to a number of factors. In recent years there have been more formative MCQ and EMQ questions provided during the course, there has been more instruction about how to approach such questions, a mock exam under exam conditions and feedback sessions. However, similar approaches with Integrated Reasoning questions or the Data Analysis question has not been undertaken. The plan going forward includes providing additional opportunities to have formative questions, including of Professional Studies and Data Analysis questions. In regards to the format and composition of the Year 4 exam and Finals, and in particular, to include Professional Studies in such examinations will most certainly feature in our discussions during our Curriculum Review. A working party on BVetMed Assessment has been formed and they are tasked to better define the assessment strategy of the course. The suggestion to make the Professional Studies mandatory or to require at least 40% mark is interesting and will be considered in our discussions.

Action Required:

- To instigate further formative opportunities in preparation for Integrated Reasoning questions, including the emphasis on Professional Studies for students before the Year 4 Exam
- To bring to the attention of the Working Party on BVetMed Assessment the comments and observations of external examiner on the Year 4 exam.

Action Deadline:

01-Jun-2017

Action assigned to:

Dan Chan

Student performance

Please comment, as appropriate, on:

2.1 Students' performance in relation to those at a similar stage on comparable courses in other institutions, where this is known to you

In our view students' performance was similar compared to courses in Bristol, Cambridge and Nottingham

Response from college requested: NO

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

The level of knowledge was acceptable to excellent for students at middle and top of range; the failing students had obvious gaps in knowledge which need addressing. Integrated reasoning skills (particularly regarding data analysis) were limited for many students, however the level of assessment in some of the clinical reasoning questions may be too advanced for the level and experience of students at this stage in the course.

Response from college requested: YES

COURSE DIRECTOR: Mr Dan Chan**Course Director Response:**

We thank the External Examiners for their comments. The expectations of Year 4 students before they enter clinical rotations and what the Year 4 Exam and Finals should look like will be explored as the BVetMed Course undergoes a Curriculum Review this year. A special working party on BVetMed Assessment is being formed and will be tasked with resolving these issues.

Action Required:

To bring to the attention of the BVetMed Curriculum Review committee and the BVetMed Assessment Working Party the concerns raised by the External Examiners on the Year 4 Exam

Action Deadline:

01-Jun-2017

Action assigned to:

Dan Chan

2.3 Please provide any additional comments and recommendations regarding the students' performance

Specifically for Paper 2 (integrated reasoning): Students seemed to struggle with organising their thoughts regarding the problem. Knowledge good but problem solving / putting information into context may not be at the same level? Students tended to approach the questions by giving as much information as possible without putting into context or specifically relating to the question. There appeared to be a lack of professionalism in answering the questions, the general structure of students' essay writing was poor. The students need to be taught that clinical questions are not best answered by just regurgitating everything they can think of; rather the aim of these questions is to show that they can apply their knowledge in the way that they will have to every day if they enter clinical practice. Working logically through the problem is essential, so structuring the questions in a logical way to ask the students to solve the problems in a logical order will help them understand what is being asked of them. We did discuss whether the format of the exam may be challenging for 4th year students with limited clinical experience and may be more suited to final year students that have been on rotations. We suggest considering making these questions more structured; by guiding the students' responses then hopefully this will help them to focus on the question being asked. This will also facilitate marking, which we recognise must be challenging.

Response from college requested: YES

COURSE DIRECTOR: Mr Dan Chan

Course Director Response:

We thank the External Examiners for these observations and suggestions. As we have done recently with MCQ and EMQ questions, a more concerted effort will be undertaken to provide more guidance and instructions about how to answer Integrated Reasoning and Data Analysis questions before the examination. The Year Leader has already held a Feedback session on the Year 4 exam (in January of 2017) which focused solely on Paper 2, highlighting what students tended to struggle with and the expectations of the examiners. Feedback was provided in all 6 parts of the Long Answer Paper. In preparation for next year, at least 3 questions used in the recent examinations will be released to the students to help them understand the expectations in terms of organisation, depth and scope of answers. As mentioned in previous responses, the format of the exam and expectations for Year 4 students will be explored during the Curriculum Review and by the working party on BVetMed Assessment

Action Required:

- Schedule a session on strategy for tackling Integrated Reasoning Questions for students taking the exam
- Release some of the questions used in the exam with the model answer to help students understand the expectations of the examination
- Bring to the attention of the BVetMed Curriculum Review Committee and the BVetMed Assessment Working Party the concerns raised by External Examiners

Action Deadline:

01-Jun-2017

Action assigned to:

Dan Chan

Assessment Procedures

Please comment, as appropriate, on:

3.1 Assessment methods (relevance to learning objectives and curriculum)

Appropriate

Response from college requested: **NO**

3.2 Extent to which assessment procedures are rigorous

The College provides all information required to review the assessment process internally and also for external examiners and we are impressed by their professional approach

Response from college requested: **NO**

3.3 Consistency of the level of assessment with the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ)

Consistent

Response from college requested: **NO**

3.4 Standard of marking

Sufficient; the external examiners note the high quality of the integrated reasoning questions, and a noticeable improvement in structure of model answers from previous years. The external examiners noted and appreciated the improvement in the detail of marker's comments, which helped us to review the questions, but still some inconsistency between different markers. One question had a good process for tracking marking consistency, in the form of a grid, but that was harder to interpret from a review perspective.

Response from college requested: **YES**

COURSE DIRECTOR: Mr Dan Chan

Course Director Response:

We thank the External Examiners for their comments, particularly as we have worked to improve the structure and detail of model answers to aid markers and external examiners understand how answers were marked. We continue to provide guidance for internal examiners in composing questions, model answers and annotation of scripts during INSET days and during the examination period. The use of marking grids has been used by some internal examiners and we will explore whether it should be more widely adopted, however, such issues will be explored by the Curriculum Review and Working Party of BVetMed Assessment.

Action Required:

- Bring to attention of Curriculum Review Committee and Working Party on BVetMed Assessment issues relating to marking consistency and possible use of marking grids

Action Deadline:

01-Jun-2017

Action assigned to:

Dan Chan

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)

In our view, the procedures for assessment and the determination of awards are sound and fairly conducted

Response from college requested: NO

3.6 Opinion on changes to the assessment procedures from previous years in which you have examined

The external examiners note the high quality of the integrated reasoning questions, and a noticeable improvement in structure of model answers from previous years and the improvement in the detail of marker's comments.

In addition to the professionalism-focused question, the external examiners noted the integration of professionalism elements into clinical integrated reasoning questions. The examiners are to be commended for this. However, it seemed that students struggled a little with how to answer those elements of the question, and may need more precise instructions on what is being required (e.g. "write discharge instructions" rather than "how would you communicate this to the client?"). We note that there is increasing collaboration between clinicians and professionalism teachers in the writing of these questions, and this should be continued and encouraged.

Response from college requested: YES

COURSE DIRECTOR: Mr Dan Chan

Course Director Response:

We thank the External Examiners for their comments. We believe that the performance of students on the professionalism elements of the Integrated Reasoning questions may be reflective of several issues, which may include how questions were worded. Many of the professional elements explored in this examination were modelled directly from directed learning sessions of the Professional Strand and therefore involved the faculty that taught the material examined. We plan to continue this practice

Action Required:

Feedback provided by External Examiners on wording of questions to be fed back to Internal Examiners

Action Deadline:

01-Jun-2017

Action assigned to:

Dan Chan

3.7 Please provide any additional comments and recommendations regarding the procedures

EMQ and MCQ papers: Passmarks for these papers were standard set at 44.60% (EMQ) and 47.33% (MCQ) respectively, which reflected some quite difficult questions. The EMQ standard set passmark was adjusted from 43.82% to this new level, due to moderation of questions as described below. The external examiners recommend that the question writers and examiners critically read the questions and review the examination statistics including those questions that have been used on previous occasions. This is because questions are occasionally not read/interpreted as expected and "errors" and misunderstandings still arise in questions that have been used previously without any problems.

Also, although it is appropriate to have some more difficult questions to discriminate between high performing and low performing students a little more, some of the more difficult questions also had low Point Biserial scores (<0.2) which tends to indicate that they were not discriminating according to students' ability as much as expected. In these cases, it may be worth querying if students have been taught the relevant material appropriately for the level of performance required, and/or if the more difficult questions were testing material appropriate for 4th year students.

Response from college requested: YES

COURSE DIRECTOR: Mr Dan Chan

Course Director Response:

We appreciate the comments by External Examiners. The item analysis of each question will be fed back to Strand Leaders to coincide with call of questions, allowing question authors and subject teachers to refine/improve previously used questions. Guidance notes on interpreting item analyses (e.g. facility score, point biserial) have been created to help internal examiners understand how questions performed.

Action Required:

- Item analyses of questions used in exam to be fed back to Strand Leaders to coincide with call for new questions
- Guidance notes on interpreting item analyses to be distributed with exam questions used to inform revision or creation of new questions

Action Deadline:

01-Apr-2017

Action assigned to:

Dan Chan

General Statements

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

Yes

Additional comments, particularly if your answer was no:

Response from college requested: NO

4.2 An acceptable response has been made

Yes

Additional comments, particularly if your answer was no:

Response from college requested: NO

4.3 I approved the papers for the Examination

Yes

Additional comments, particularly if your answer was no:

Response from college requested: NO

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

Yes

Additional comments, particularly if your answer was no:

Response from college requested: NO

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

Yes

Additional comments, particularly if your answer was no:

Response from college requested: NO

4.6 Candidates were considered impartially and fairly

Yes

Additional comments, particularly if your answer was no:

Response from college requested: NO

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:

There was a noticeable difference in performance between Paper 1 and 2; Paper 2 was not a good indicator for general performance. Average for Paper 2 was 50.8% compared to 69.1 (median 68.9%) in Paper 1. Distinction students are not performing well on integrating reasoning, which triggered a relevant discussion at exam board about what we expect students to know/be able to reason at this stage. It is worth investigating the underlying reason for this relative poor performance in reasoning; could the questions structure be improved, could attendance at teaching be a cause, could the amount of clinical reasoning teaching in earlier years be a factor? One suggestion to improve performance in Paper 2 could be to consider not being able to compensate this Paper with Paper 1, however, without knowing underlying issues this may not be appropriate. This poor performing integrated reasoning can go unnoticed as students currently go potentially up a category based on MCQ and EMQ performance. Giving students feedback on this performance is important.

Response from college requested: YES

COURSE DIRECTOR: Mr Dan Chan

Course Director Response:

We thank the External Examiners for their comments and observations. The issues relating to reasonable expectations of students at this stage of the course and how questions should be formatted will be explored by the BVetMed Curriculum Review and the Working Party on BVetMed Assessment. Feedback on each question of Paper 2 was provided to the students during a session in January 2017. As mentioned previously, 3 questions from the exam will be released to students along with the model answers which should inform the level of expectation as students prepare for their final examination.

Action Required:

- Bring to the attention of the BVetMed Curriculum Review and the Working Party on BVetMed Assessment the issues raised by External Examiners

Action Deadline:

01-Jun-2017

Action assigned to:

Dan Chan

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

Yes

Additional comments, particularly if your answer was no:

As is a challenge at other institutions with increasing student numbers we need to highlight the continued pressure of marking long answer questions consistently; the process at RVC is rigorous and fair but puts pressure on clinician with challenging timelines to complete marking. This will need even more careful considerations for future years. In particular, meetings between markers of the same question appear to be challenging due to their other commitments at this time; early calendar bookings for double marking may facilitate this process.

Response from college requested: YES

COURSE DIRECTOR: Mr Dan Chan

Course Director Response:

We thank the External Examiner for these comments. We are cognisant that as the Professional Studies, Integrated Reasoning questions and Data Analysis questions are quite complex, that ensuring marking consistency and allowing marking teams to meet during marking is difficult given the time constraints and number of scripts to mark. Changes to the format of exam and perhaps even the marking scheme used will be explored during Curriculum Review and by the Working Party on BVetMed Assessment.

Action Required:

Action Deadline:

Action assigned to:

4.9 I have received enough support to carry out my role

Yes

Additional comments, particularly if your answer was no:

Our sincere thanks go to the exams team and all question writers and markers for putting together this good set of exams.

Response from college requested: NO

4.10 I have received sufficient information to carry out my role (where information was insufficient, please give details)

Yes

Additional comments, particularly if your answer was no:

Response from college requested: NO

4.11 Appropriate procedures and processes have been followed

Yes

Additional comments, particularly if your answer was no:

Response from college requested: NO

4.12 The processes for assessment and the determination of awards are sound

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:

5.1 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 transparency, speed and clarity by which the exams team assists us during the external examiner process at RVC is to be commended. Below more detailed comments with regards to Paper 1 and Paper 2:

Paper 1

EMQ

Overall the paper was well balanced in terms of subject area when seen in context of the whole exam. There was also a good range of academic knowledge interrogated. However, there were some specific issues identified:

In question 1, the answer options contained a mixture of diagnostic tests and treatments as possible answers; we would prefer to see answers restricted to one area of knowledge if possible to reduce the opportunity for guesswork on an easily narrowed down answer selection

On review of question 4, we identified that four parts had performed poorly and on discussion with a member of the academic staff, it was clear that these four questions contained information that had not been taught yet and that these questions dealt with material that would be addressed on rotation, so we withdrew four of the six parts in this question

Question 11 relating the anaesthesia and analgesia used the term “most effective” in the question, but one of the questions (53) related to which drug was appropriate under the cascade system and one of the questions (52) clearly had two possible answers. We therefore elected to accept two possible answers for these two questions (a similar problem was identified for one MCQ question that also related to local anaesthesia)

MCQ

The MCQ paper covered a good range of subjects and included some questions that tested interpretation of information as well as factual recall. There was a good range of questions in terms of topics and difficulty. This was fair and inclusion of some questions that are challenging is appropriate and gave the good candidates a chance to demonstrate this.

Many questions were very well written, however, the external examiners noted a number of questions that did not meet the “cover-up” rule, which is not ideal. These kinds of questions can be confusing to interpret, and therefore may not be testing students’ knowledge and reasoning so much as their ability to interpret the question. Also, in general, questions that ask students to choose what is “most” or “least” appropriate/effective/correct are usually open to interpretation, and should be used sparingly.

The external examiners reviewed all questions that performed poorly and/or had a low discrimination according to the Point Biserial score. Based on review and discussion, we decided that it was not necessary to moderate any of the questions. However, there were several questions that the external examiners would recommend being reviewed by the question writers prior to future use, as detailed below:

Q1 – the majority of students answered C incorrectly. Although an experienced clinician would know that pyrexia would be due to haemolysis, this may be a difficult distinction for students at this level.

Q18 – an easy question, but this is acceptable, since it is core, day one knowledge. Could adapt this question to include the reason for the diagnosis to be notifiable.

Q19 – question is okay, but note that some distractors don’t make sense, which makes it too easy for students to rule them out as possible answers.

Q26 – this question does not meet the “cover-up rule” and also has a subjective qualifier (“most”) in the root, which makes it confusing. Also, the answer options are quite complex for an MCQ. This may explain why the question had a low discrimination score, which suggests that maybe better-performing students overthought the answer. Consider reviewing and rewriting this question prior to future use.

Q28 – there may be a typographical error in answer A – should this read “corneal”? Also, the descriptions in the answer options are not in a consistent order, which makes it a little confusing to compare them with each other.

Q32 – this question performed poorly, although the answer is clear. This may be due to confusion about the use of the subjective qualifier “most likely” but it is not clear how that could be adjusted without significantly changing

the question.

Q36 - this question performed poorly, although the answer is clear. This may be due to the difficulty of the question. Consider replacing “most” with a more objective qualifier.

Q47 – this question performed poorly, although the answer is clear. This may be due to the difficulty of the question.

Q49 - this question performed poorly, although the answer is clear. This may be due to the difficulty of the question, especially for the stage of student experience and development. There appears to be a typographical error in the stem – should read “which ONE of the following is recognised AS A potential side-effect...”

Q55 – a significant group of students answered C incorrectly. While ropivacaine may be clinically appropriate, it is not licensed in dogs, unlike lidocaine. We assumed that this was because the examiners were intending to include knowledge of the cascade in the question, which makes this an appropriately discriminating question.

Q57- this question performed poorly, and the answer is the only correct option. However, is it possible to judge if this condition is “improving,” “deteriorating,” or “progressive” at a single presentation? Consider rewriting this question for future use to avoid these descriptions in this context.

Paper 2 – Integrated Reasoning

We thought that the questions were well written and relevant. Parts a and b worked well. Students seemed to perform better in second parts. We assessed all papers of the students who failed along with six of the pass/merit students, six of the merit/distinction students and six other randomly chosen passing students. As only brief answers were needed to receive full marks, the length of the questions were appropriate for the time allocated. Insufficient time to complete the exam was unlikely due to breadth of information requested, and was appropriate at this stage of the course.

Question 1

This was a good question about an important topic, but students performed relatively poorly on this question and seemed to struggle with structuring their answers. We understand that the professionalism part of the course is often poorly attended, and that students did not use opportunities to practice these types of questions. This is a shame, although not a problem unique to RVC. As much as possible, students should be encouraged to engage more with the professionalism curriculum and opportunities to practise these types of exam questions.

How students performed on this question did not map well to how they did overall – this may be a reflection of the material, or an implicit perception amongst the students that it is possible to pass the exam despite not engaging with the professionalism curriculum. There was a good discussion of this problem at the Exam Board meeting, which we hope will continue amongst the examiners and teaching staff.

Finally, there seemed to be some inconsistency in the marking of this question. This is understandable with such a large number of students, and may be particularly understandable with a professionalism topic. But there was also some inconsistency between the instructions and the model answer (e.g. “describe” vs. “list”), so we recommend being more precise in the instructions so that they match the model answer better in the future. The external examiners recommend reminding students to read and answer the question, rather than just writing down everything they know about the general topic, and consider whether students need more help in learning to structure their answers through the structure of the question.

Question 2

Mark scheme (combination of model answer and CGS) worked well to award appropriate marks. Model answer was good, more structure and transparency compared previous years and it was easier to see how to award marks to receive merit/distinction.

Limited annotation on certain papers (red marker average, pencil marker provided good detailed feedback which will be useful for feedback to students)

When double marking (failing students and borderline students in all categories) it appeared one marker was more strict and the other marker more lenient in their marks compared to external examiner, however marks did not differ more than 2 grade boundaries.

Good spread of marks (15-75%), although performance was disappointing as a whole, with a tendency towards a bimodal distribution (35%, 52%). Often there was a clear (but surprising) difference in performance between the 4 parts within the question. However, the performance of each question part varied between students, i.e. different parts were perceived as difficult. High marks for this question were generally from students that wrote succinct answers; including the CGS gives the opportunity to mark up for good structure which is helpful in these cases.

Question 3 a & b

This was a good question that perhaps wasn't answered well by most students. The examiners went to a lot of

effort to ensure a consistency of marking, which was great. Often students seemed to miss the point of the question or fail to deliver the pertinent points. Many students took the approach of putting as much information down as possible but failed to put the information into context.

Question 4 a & b

This question presents the clinical scenario of a male West Highland white terrier with a urethral obstruction caused by urolithiasis. The question was well constructed and very clear and required a significant degree of clinical knowledge and clinical interpretation ability to score well. I was somewhat concerned the note that many students did not recognise a heart rate of 40bpm to be bradycardic, especially in the context of a dehydrated patient, so would suggest the interpretation of clinical examination findings in the context of individual patients is always emphasized at every opportunity. This question would have also suited a finals examination question, so helping students to structure their answers to consider the interpretation of the clinical data may be helpful for future year 4 examination. Many students also used the term "renal system" when referring to the lower urinary tract, which coupled with some very poor handwriting and the use of vernacular terms to describe clinical findings, did lead me to wish that a more professional approach had been encouraged and adopted to what is a professional examination. There was also an emphasis placed by the examiners on the effect of oral prednisolone as the only explanation for the elevated circulating ALP concentration, whilst the effect of physiological stress was not recognised. However, this is a minor comment.

Part b was a clear and logical follow-on to part a and in general the students appeared to perform slightly better in this part compared to part a. The recognition of the severity of the azotaemia was lacking by many students, which is concerning and relates to my comment regarding the interpretation of clinical findings in the context of the individual patient above, but this should be addressed in their final year rotations. The progression of the case through to a complication of a urolith remaining in the patient having performed a cystotomy was an interesting "real life" scenario that was fair to ask and I welcome the inclusion of professionalism into a clinical scenario question.

The model answers for both parts were very well constructed and clear to follow. Likewise, the use of letters in the margin by one the markers ("P" for pass, "P-" for what I interpreted as a marginal pass, "M" for merit as examples) for each section made assessment of the continuity and consistency of marking easy to follow and I would recommend that this system is adopted more widely.

Response from college requested: YES

COURSE DIRECTOR: Mr Dan Chan

Course Director Response:

We thank the External Examiner for the very thorough and detailed comments on specific questions of the exam. We also appreciate the reasoning used in moderating a number of question in this exam. The feedback provided on these questions will be sent to the Strand Leader along with the item analysis of these questions which we hope prove useful in revising the question or composing new questions. We plan to address the poor performance on the Professional Study question and the professionalism aspect of the Integrated Reasoning questions by providing additional formative exercises, by releasing some of the questions and model answers and emphasising to the Third and Fourth Year classes how professional studies will feature in multiple parts of the exam and therefore will not be able to be avoided. As explained earlier, a feedback session on Paper 2 was already provided to the class in January. Continued efforts in providing guidance to internal examiners in the composition of question, model answers and annotating marked scripts should help improve the exam. The suggestion of annotating how different parts of question is performing in terms of "pass" "merit" will be shared with other examiners.

Action Required:

- Provide detailed feedback on individual questions back to Strand Leaders and question authors
- Release some of the questions used in exam along with model answers to students to guide level of expectation for answers
- Continue to provide internal examiners guidance on exam question composition, constructing model answers and annotating scripts.

Action Deadline:

01-Jun-2017

Action assigned to:

Dan Chan

5.2 External Examiner comments: For College information only (Responses to External Examiners are published on the College's website. Please only use this box to add any comments that you wish to remain confidential, if any)

Response from college requested: **NO**

