

## External Examiner Report Template (ONLINE)

The following details will continue to be captured via the online reporting process:

- Name(s) of External Examiner(s) contributing to a collaborative or individual report: Anna Meredith, Oswin Perera, Ruth Cromie
- Programme Title and Award: MSc WAB/WAH
- Collaborative partner and location (if applicable)
- Year of Examination 2012-13
- Examination (only applicable to BVetMed)
- Date(s) of attendance at the RVC Sep 2013

The online system will capture agreed sign-off by each collaborating external examiner or individual where necessary.

### Instructions for completion:

1. For sections 1 - 4 please type your comments in the spaces provided. You are asked to indicate if you expect to receive a response from the College.
2. For section 5, please delete as appropriate (Yes, No or N/A). You are asked to provide additional comments, particularly if you answered 'No'.
3. Names of all students and staff should be omitted from external examiners' reports, to maintain appropriate confidentiality.
4. Unless comments are returned within three weeks of completion of the Exam Board meeting, it may not be possible to act upon these comments in the forthcoming academic year.
5. Please return expense claims with receipts attached by post to the Academic Quality Manager, The Royal Veterinary College, Hawkshead Lane, North Mymms, Hatfield, AL9 7TA.

Thank you!

Please comment on the areas detailed below, highlighting the appropriateness and strengths and/or weaknesses.

1. Programme	External Examiner comments: For Publication	A response from the College is required, if yes, please check the box [✓ ]	College Response: (Where the response requires action(s), each action must be outlined, a completion date given and a responsible individual named)
1.1.Course content	The course content is excellent and covers the field in very good depth and breadth. The diversity of research projects certainly reflects the wide ranging and multidisciplinary syllabus.	[ ]	Response: Action (if any) date & name:
1.2.Learning objectives	Excellent	[ ]	Response: Action (if any) date & name:
1.3.Teaching methods	Excellent - good variety of different teaching modalities.	[ ]	Response: Action (if any) date & name:
1.4.Resources (in so far as they affected the assessment)	Good	[ ]	Response: Action (if any) date & name:
Please provide any additional comments and recommendations regarding the Programme:	The new modular credit based system (Certificate/Diploma/Masters) is quite complex but well structured. It is unfortunate that there are some differences in assessment criteria between last year's retaking candidates and this year's candidates but this is not a major issue.	[ ]	Response: Action (if any) date & name:

Please comment on the areas detailed below, highlighting strengths and/or weaknesses.

2. Student performance	External Examiner comments: For Publication	A response from the College is required, if yes, please check the box [✓ ]	College Response: (Where the response requires action(s), each action must be outlined, a completion date given and a responsible individual named)
2.1. Students' performance in relation to those at a similar stage on comparable courses in other institutions, where this is known to you	Overall the students were of a high standard at a level or above those on other MSc courses known to the examiners. Written research projects were generally strong and of a high standard, with a good topic choice and some of a very high standard indeed. In general the students were highly motivated and innovative, and achieved a great deal in the short time allocated to these projects. However, there is a heavy reliance on analysis of retrospective data sets and, although the examiners fully appreciate the reasons for this, it did mean some projects were somewhat limited in scope and the degree of student involvement possible.	[ ]	Response: We concur and would welcome any input from External Examiners in addressing this issue
2.2. Quality of candidates' knowledge and skills, with particular reference to those at the top, middle or bottom of the range	There was a wide range in standard of students this year across the WAH and WAB courses. Candidates generally performed well, and some very well, in their oral exam, defended their projects solidly and passed comfortably. They demonstrated variable levels of critical understanding of their project's strengths and limitations and it was felt that some students would benefit from greater recognition and insight into the limitations and problems of their studies. In general the standard of the scientific paper was reflected in the standard of the oral examination.	[ ]	Response: Action (if any) date & name:
Please provide any additional	The examiners welcomed the opportunity to more easily attend the student presentations which were held the day	[✓]	Yes, the external examiners will continue to be given the

comments and recommendations regarding the students' performance:	before the oral exam, and this was a very valuable exercise in gaining a better appreciation of the students' performance and understanding of their project. It is recommended that this opportunity is continued in future years.		opportunity to attend student project presentations in future and this is place for 2013-14 (30 Sept 2013, Michael Waters and Tony Sainsbury).
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Please comment on the areas detailed below, highlighting appropriateness and strengths and/or weaknesses.

3. Assessment Process	External Examiner comments: For Publication	A response from the College is required, if yes, please check the box [✓ ]	College Response: (Where the response requires action(s), each action must be outlined, a completion date given and
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			<b>a responsible individual named)</b>
3.1. Assessment methods (relevance to learning objectives and curriculum)	The assessment methods are highly relevant and appropriate.	[ ]	Response: Action (if any) date & name:
3.2. Extent to which assessment processes are rigorous	The assessment process is suitably rigorous.	[ ]	Response: Action (if any) date & name:
3.3. Consistency of the level of assessment with the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ)	The level of assessment is consistent with the FHEQ.	[ ]	Response: Action (if any) date & name:
3.4. Standard of marking	For some research projects there was discrepancy between the two internal examiners mark but this was resolved in consultation with the external examiners without issue and agreed marks made.	[ ]	Response: Action (if any) date & name:
3.5. Opinion on changes to the assessment process from previous years in which you have examined	The 17 point scale is clear and easy to follow but we understand it is to be changed again next year to tighten some grade bands	[ ]	Response: The review has been completed. The revised 17 point scale will be forwarded to the External Examiners along with the papers. Action (if any) date & name:
Please provide any additional comments and recommendations regarding the assessment process:	It was not always clear to examiners which parts of the research projects had been the sole work of the student, for example, data gathered and analysed by others were often used, or samples were analysed by external laboratories rather than the student. It is suggested to have a section within the final scientific paper which outlines exactly which aspects the student conducted and which were conducted by others.	[✓]	The project declaration forms are already in use on other courses and will be adopted.

Please comment on the areas detailed below, highlighting strengths and/or weaknesses.

4. Procedures	External Examiner comments: For Publication	A response from the College is required, if yes, please check the box [✓ ]	College Response: (Where the response requires action(s), each action must be outlined, a completion date given and
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			a responsible individual named)
4.1. In your view, are the processes 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)	<p>All processes are conducted fairly. The Course Co-ordinator communicated very efficiently and highlighted potential areas of difficulty or conflict for further discussion by the external examiners. The external examiners felt included in the process and comments and moderation of marks were acted on appropriately.</p> <p>The research project supervisor assessment forms are valuable to the external examiners and although these were chased quite vigorously by Katrina they were still not forthcoming from some supervisors. Supervisors should be reminded at the outset of this being one of their responsibilities.</p> <p>The conduct of the Board of Examiners meeting is very fair and comments of internal and external examiners were considered in making decisions.</p>	[✓]	<p>We will ensure that project supervisors are asked to return their assessment forms promptly This will be discussed at the next MSc WAB/WAH Course Management Committee (21<sup>st</sup> January 2014, Michael Waters &amp; Tony Sainsbury).</p>
4.2. Opinion on changes to the procedures from previous years in which you have examined	Very useful to have a variety of internal examiners with relevant subject expertise for the oral interviews, rather than a set pair of internal/external examiner for an entire group of candidates	[ ]	Response: Action (if any) date & name:
Please provide any additional comments and recommendations regarding the procedures:	Following a comment made to the examiners by a student, it is apparent that the exam results for the January exams were not given to students until after the next set of exams. It would be valuable to the students to have these results earlier so they can better understand their own progress and needs.	[✓]	The Course Directors intended to give the students their results within 3-4 weeks of the January exams and staffing problems (Course Director MW sick leave 3½ months) caused a delay in the release of results in 2012-13. There should be no repeat of this (30 Sept 2013, Michael

5. General Statements	[YES] [NO] [N/A] check as appropriate	Additional comments, particularly if your answer was no:	A response from the College is required, if	College Response: (All responses leading to an action must note an identified timeframe and
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	In the conduct of oral examinations we would recommend scheduling a 5 minute break between interviews, to allow time to discuss the performance of the previous candidate and to prepare for the next candidate.		Waters).  The suggested timing of the 30-minutes orals will be 5 minutes discussion before the oral, 20 minutes for the oral itself and 5 minutes post-oral discussion (10 <sup>th</sup> September 2014, Michael Waters).
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			yes, please check the box [✓ ]	responsible individual. Please outline the action and a date by which the action will be taken)
5.1. Comments we have made in previous years have been addressed to our satisfaction	N/A		[ ]	Response: Action (if any) date & name:
5.2. An acceptable response has been made	N/A		[ ]	Response: Action (if any) date & name:
5.3. We approved the papers for the Examination	NO	The Certificate exam 1 and 2 draft papers were circulated very late with insufficient time (1-2 days) for the externals to comment on them (January 16/17 2013). We were told this was due to exceptional circumstances and would not happen again.	[ ]	Response: In 2013-14 we will give the externals examiners adequate time for scrutiny for the draft exam papers. (Dec 2014, Michael Waters and Tony Sainsbury)
5.4. We were able to scrutinise an adequate sample of students' work and marks to enable us to carry out our duties	YES		[ ]	Response: Action (if any) date & name:
5.5. We attended the meeting of the Board of Examiners held to approve the results of the Examination	YES		[ ]	Response: Action (if any) date & name:
5.6. Candidates were considered impartially and fairly	YES		[ ]	Response: Action (if any) date & name:
5.7. The standards set for the awards are appropriate for qualifications at this level, in this subject	YES		[ ]	Response: Action (if any) date & name:

5.8. The standards of student performance are comparable with similar programmes or subjects in other UK institutions with which I am familiar	YES		[ ]	Response: Action (if any) date & name:
5.9. We have received enough support to carry out our role	YES		[ ]	Response: Action (if any) date & name:
5.10. We have received sufficient information to carry out our role (where information was insufficient, please give details)	NO	The research project supervisor assessment forms for some projects were not available	[✓]	Addressed by response to item 4.1 (above).
5.11. Appropriate procedures and processes have been followed	YES		[ ]	Response: Action (if any) date & name:
5.12. The processes for assessment and the determination of awards are sound	YES		[ ]	Response: Action (if any) date & name:

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:

No
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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)

None

**Thank you for completing this annual report!**

All External Examiner reports will be responded to via the following process [<http://www.rvc.ac.uk/Examiners/documents/ExternalExaminerReports.pdf>] and in time for the annual RVC Inset Day on Assessment.