STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS

2024 No. 1326

VETERINARY SURGEONS

The Veterinary Surgeons (Examination of Commonwealth and Foreign Candidates) Regulations Order of Council 2024

Made - - - -	*11th December 2024*
Coming into force - -	*1st January 2025*

At the Council Chamber, Whitehall, the 11th day of December 2024

By the Lords of His Majesty's Most Honourable Privy Council

The Council of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons has made the Veterinary Surgeons (Examination of Commonwealth and Foreign Candidates) Regulations 2024 ("the Regulations"), which are set out in the Schedule to this Order, in exercise of the powers conferred by section 6(4) of the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966(**a**) ("the Act").

By virtue of section 25(1) of the Act, the Regulations do not have effect unless approved by order of the Privy Council.

Their Lordships make this Order in exercise of the powers conferred by section 25(1) and (2) of the Act.

Citation, commencement and extent

1.—(1) This Order may be cited as the Veterinary Surgeons (Examination of Commonwealth and Foreign Candidates) Regulations Order of Council 2024 and comes into force on 1st January 2025.

(2) This Order extends to England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Approval

2. The Regulations in the Schedule are approved.

Revocation

3. The Veterinary Surgeons (Examination of Commonwealth and Foreign Candidates) Regulations Order of Council 2005(**b**), the Veterinary Surgeons (Examination of Commonwealth and Foreign

(**a**) 1966 c. 36.
(**b**) S.I. 2005/3240.

Candidates) (Amendment) Regulations Order of Council 2008(**a**) and the Veterinary Surgeons (Examination of Commonwealth and Foreign Candidates) (Amendment) Regulations Order of Council 2018(**b**) are revoked.

Richard Tilbrook
Clerk of the Privy Council

(**a**) S.I. 2008/2501.
(**b**) S.I. 2018/976.

SCHEDULE

Article 2

The Veterinary Surgeons (Examination of Commonwealth and Foreign Candidates) Regulations 2024

The Council of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons makes the following Regulations in exercise of the powers conferred by section 6(4) of the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966.

1. These Regulations may be cited as the Veterinary Surgeons (Examination of Commonwealth and Foreign Candidates) Regulations 2024.

2.—(1) In these Regulations—

"Act" means the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966;

"candidate" means a person required by the Council under section 6(2) of the Act(**a**) to sit the statutory examination;

"College" means the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons;

"Consumer Prices Index" means the Consumer Prices Index (all items) including owner occupiers' housing costs published by the Office for National Statistics (or such other official measure of consumer price inflation which replaces it);

"Council" means the Council of the College;

"diet" means the period of time during which the statutory examination is held and for which an individual has been accepted as a candidate, commencing on 1st March in each calendar year and ending on the last day of February in the following calendar year;

"domain" means a component of the clinical, practical examination referred to in Regulation 4(3)(b);

"examination fees" means the statutory examination fees prescribed by Regulation 9, including any administrative charges referred to therein;

"examiners" means the examiners appointed by the Council;

"registrar" means the registrar of the College or the assistant registrar acting on their behalf;

"statutory examination" means the examination to be held for the purpose of section 6(2) of the Act, and a reference to any part of the statutory examination is to be interpreted in accordance with Regulation 4(3);

"subject", except in the phrase "subject to", means a component of the written examination referred to in Regulation 4(3)(a).

(2) References in these Regulations to a numbered Regulation mean the Regulation bearing that number in these Regulations.

3. Every person desirous of sitting for the statutory examination shall satisfy the registrar that they would be eligible to sit the examination in accordance with the provisions of section 6 of the Act. A candidate for the statutory examination shall normally before sitting the examination provide the evidence of good character required by section 6(1)(a) of the Act, and of their Commonwealth or foreign qualification in veterinary surgery as required by section 6(1)(b).

(**a**) Relevant amendments were made to section 6 of the Act by S.I. 2008/1824, S.I. 2015/2073 and S.I. 2019/454.

However, in exceptional cases the registrar may permit the candidate to sit the examination without having provided such evidence, provided that in the event of the candidate passing the whole of the statutory examination the evidence is produced before they are registered. A candidate shall also furnish such other information as the Council shall require and, in particular, information as to the courses of study which they have taken and the examinations which they have undergone, their competence in understanding, speaking and writing in the English language, the date on which their Commonwealth or foreign qualification was, or is likely to be, granted and the extent to which they have been permitted to practise, and have practised or have been prevented from practising, since that date.

4.—(1) The statutory examination shall, other than in exceptional circumstances beyond the control of the Council, be held at least once in every year, and shall be designed to test the candidate's general veterinary knowledge and skills across such subjects and species as the Council may from time to time determine. The examination shall cover the underpinning knowledge and understanding, and practical and professional competences required to practise as a veterinary surgeon in the United Kingdom including coverage of veterinary public health, and medicine, surgery and the husbandry associated with companion animals, production animals and horses.

(2) The statutory examination shall be held by the Council or under arrangements made by the Council.

(3) The statutory examination is in two parts—

(a) a written examination;

(b) a clinical, practical examination.

(4) A candidate must first satisfy the examiners in the written examination, before proceeding to take the clinical, practical examination.

(5) Except as permitted under Regulation 6, in order to pass the statutory examination overall the candidate must pass all subjects and domains within a single diet. The Council may, at its discretion, extend the period in which the candidate may pass the required subjects and domains to include the subsequent diet in the event of exceptional circumstances beyond the control of the Council which affect delivery of any part of the statutory examination by the Council.

5. If a candidate does not satisfy the examiners in one or more subjects, they may make a second attempt at those subjects within the same diet, subject to payment of the relevant examination fees as prescribed by Regulation 9.

6.—(1) If a candidate passes the written examination but fails the clinical, practical examination, they may enter the statutory examination in the following diet and proceed directly to sit the domains that they failed, or the whole of the clinical, practical examination if they failed all of its domains, without sitting the written examination or any domains that they passed, subject to payment of the relevant examination fees for the following diet as prescribed by Regulation 9. If they fail this subsequent sitting, any further attempts must include satisfying the statutory examination in full.

(2) At the discretion of the Council, if a candidate passes the written examination and pays the examination fee for the clinical, practical examination (or it is paid on their behalf), but the candidate is unable to sit the clinical, practical examination due to exceptional circumstances outside their control, they may enter the statutory examination in the following diet and proceed directly to sit the clinical, practical examination without sitting the written examination. If they fail to pass this subsequent sitting, any further attempts must include the statutory examination in full.

(3) A candidate who enters into the statutory examination in the following diet pursuant to paragraph (2) is to be treated as having paid their examination fee for the clinical, practical examination in that diet, save to the extent that any part (or the whole) of their examination fee

for the clinical, practical examination has been refunded by the Council pursuant to Regulation 10, in which case the candidate's entry into the statutory examination in the following diet is subject to repayment of the amount refunded.

7. Subject to any successful appeals, where a candidate fails the clinical, practical examination the examiners shall make a report to the Council. If the candidate has failed the clinical, practical examination on three or more occasions, the Council may withdraw that candidate's right to sit the statutory examination.

8. The standard of knowledge and skill required to be shown by candidates in order to satisfy the examiners in the statutory examination shall be not less than the standard required to qualify as a veterinary surgeon under section 3(1) of the Act(**a**).

9.—(1) For the diet of the statutory examination commencing on 1st March 2025, the examination fees payable to the Council are as follows—

(a) for sitting the whole of the written examination or resitting it pursuant to Regulation 5, £1,100 plus an administrative charge of £300;

(b) for sitting the whole of the clinical, practical examination, £1,100;

(c) for proceeding directly to sit the whole of the clinical, practical examination pursuant to Regulation 6(1) without sitting the written examination, £1,100 plus an administrative charge of £300;

(d) for resitting an individual clinical subject of the written examination pursuant to Regulation 5, or for proceeding directly to sit an individual domain of the clinical, practical examination pursuant to Regulation 6(1) without sitting the written examination, £450 plus an administrative charge of £50.

(2) The examination fees payable for each subsequent diet are the examination fees payable for the preceding diet increased by the lower of—

(a) the percentage of any relevant increase in the Consumer Prices Index; and

(b) 5%.

(3) For the purposes of this Regulation, there is a relevant increase in the Consumer Prices Index if the Consumer Prices Index for the month of June in the calendar year preceding the date on which the diet commences ("Year A") is higher than the Consumer Prices Index for the month of June in the calendar year preceding Year A.

(4) Where there is no relevant increase in the Consumer Prices Index, the percentage for the purposes of paragraph (2)(a) is to be treated as zero.

(5) A candidate who has not paid the relevant fee for any part of the statutory examination is not permitted to sit that part of the statutory examination unless the fee for that part has been paid in full on their behalf.

10.—(1) A candidate who gives notice in writing to the Council of the withdrawal of their application for entry into the statutory examination as a whole, the written examination, the clinical, practical examination (including a candidate who proceeds directly to sit the clinical, practical examination in the following diet under Regulation 6) or a resit of any subject shall be refunded the relevant examination fees minus the administration charge (if any), if the notice of withdrawal is received at the College on or before the last day for submission of such applications.

(2) A candidate whose notice of withdrawal is received at the College after the date referred to in paragraph (1) but not less than 28 days before the date on which the examination is due to

(**a**) Section 3(1) of the Act was amended by S.I. 2008/1824 and S.I. 2019/454.

be held shall be refunded one-half of the relevant examination fees, excluding the administration charge (if any).

(3) A candidate whose notice of withdrawal is received at the College less than 28 days before the examination is due to be held, or who fails to appear at the examination, shall not be entitled to the refund of any portion of the fee or charge.

(4) Paragraph (1) does not entitle candidates to a refund of examination fees for individual subjects or domains, except in the case of resits of subjects pursuant to Regulation 5.

(5) Notwithstanding paragraphs (1) to (4), in any case where a refund of the full amount of any fee or charge is not payable, the Council may, at its discretion, on the application of any candidate showing medical or other compassionate reasons for his withdrawal or failure to appear, grant such sum by way of refund as may to the Council appear just.

11. The Veterinary Surgeons (Examination of Commonwealth and Foreign Candidates) Regulations 2005, the Veterinary Surgeons (Examination of Commonwealth and Foreign Candidates) (Amendment) Regulations 2008 and the Veterinary Surgeons (Examination of Commonwealth and Foreign Candidates) (Amendment) Regulations 2018 are hereby revoked.

Pursuant to a resolution of the Council of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons on 19th November 2024, the Common Seal of the said Royal College was affixed on 22nd November 2024 in the presence of—

L.S.

Susan Paterson
Member of Council

Linda Ford
Member of Council

Linda Belton
Officer of the College

EXPLANATORY NOTE

(This note is not part of the Order)

This Order approves the Veterinary Surgeons (Examination of Commonwealth and Foreign Candidates) Regulations 2024 ("the Regulations") made by the Council of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons ("RCVS") under section 6(4) of the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966 (c. 36).

The Regulations revoke the Veterinary Surgeons (Examination of Commonwealth and Foreign Candidates) Regulations 2005, the Veterinary Surgeons (Examination of Commonwealth and Foreign Candidates) (Amendment) Regulations 2008 and the Veterinary Surgeons (Examination of Commonwealth and Foreign Candidates) (Amendment) Regulations 2018. Accordingly, this Order revokes the Veterinary Surgeons (Examination of Commonwealth and Foreign Candidates) Regulations Order of Council 2005 (S.I. 2005/3240), the Veterinary Surgeons (Examination of Commonwealth and Foreign Candidates) (Amendment) Regulations Order of Council 2008 (S.I. 2008/2501) and the Veterinary Surgeons (Examination of Commonwealth and Foreign Candidates) (Amendment) Regulations Order of Council 2018 (S.I. 2018/976).

The Regulations lay down the requirements for Commonwealth and foreign candidates wishing to be registered as veterinary surgeons in the United Kingdom. They divide the cost of the statutory examination into the cost of the written examination and the clinical, practical examination and allow candidates to pay for each part separately. They introduce resits of the written examination and allow candidates who fail the clinical, practical examination to proceed directly to sit that examination (or its components) again without sitting the written examination in certain circumstances. They also provide for an annual increase in examination fees for 2026 and subsequent years in line with the Consumer Prices Index (all items) including owner occupiers' housing costs, subject to a maximum increase of 5% each year.

A full impact assessment has not been produced for this instrument as no, or no significant, impact on the private, voluntary or public sector is foreseen.

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