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# Certificate in Veterinary Practice Management

## Examination Guide

2019 Edition



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## **Introduction**

The Certificate in Veterinary Practice Management is a formal qualification which is held in very high regard within the veterinary industry. It shows prospective and current employers that you have achieved a measurable level of skill and knowledge in the following areas of business of veterinary practice: administration, strategic and financial management, personnel and marketing.

### **Experience**

Candidates need to be in current employment within the veterinary sector undertaking a range of management duties. Management experience gained outside the veterinary sector can also be used and is encouraged.

### **CPD**

Prospective candidates are advised to attend any CPD events relating to areas of the CVPM syllabus in order to supplement knowledge and skills obtained through both formal qualification and independent study. VMG Congress and VMG Regional Meetings provide an excellent source of relevant and up to date information on current issues affecting veterinary practice.

## **Application to sit the CVPM**

Forthcoming examination dates and locations can be found on the VMG website. A venue is chosen after applications are received. Ease of travel is a significant factor in the choice.

Exam applications must be made electronically include the following –

- Completed application form
- Report (in pdf format)
- Passport sized photo of candidate.
- Details of how the exam fee is being paid. Payment is accepted by card, cheque or via internet banking (details can be found on how to make payment on the [“Payments Page”](#) of the VMG website).

### Passport sized Photo

This should be a recent head and shoulder photo of the examination applicant.

### Examination Application Deadline

Applications must be received into the VMG office by the 1<sup>st</sup> August in the year the candidate wishes to sit the exam.

## **CVPM Examination Structure (summary)**

The CVPM examination consists of two parts, the construction and submission of a written report and an examination.

### **Report**

Candidates wishing to sit the CVPM must submit a written report of up to 3,000 words entitled 'How I have used my knowledge to benefit the Veterinary Environment in which I work'. This should demonstrate as many facets of the syllabus as possible to show the candidates practical ability to manage in their own place of work. The report must be submitted with the examination application.

### **The Examination**

This is split into three components; candidates must successfully pass all three components in one sitting to qualify for the CVPM

1. Candidates must give a 10 minute presentation prepared on a subject given by the Examination board four weeks before the examination. This will be followed by a 15 minute professional discussion based on the previously submitted report. This is designed to test the candidates presentation skills and gives the examiners an opportunity to discuss with the candidate their practical knowledge, understanding and competences in the given subject.
2. Undertake 30 minutes of questions and discussion based on a fictional practice. The details of the fictional practice will be sent to candidates two weeks before the examination. This allows the examiners the opportunity to clarify the candidate's theoretical knowledge on management practice regardless of the varied practices the candidates may be employed in.
3. Undertake a 30 minute CVPM oral examination. This comprises ten scenario-based questions which tests the candidate's ability to assess and respond to situations under pressure. These questions will be operational rather than strategic in nature.

**Submission of the Report is a pre-requisite for attendance to sit the Examination. To be awarded the CVPM a candidate must pass each component of the Examination at the same sitting. There are no limits on the number of re-sits a candidate may take in order to achieve the required standard.**

## **CVPM Examination Structure (details)**

### **The Report**

You are required to submit an electronic report (pdf) with your exam application. This will be used by the examiners for the following 15 minute professional discussion.

The title of the report should be –

**“How I have used my knowledge to benefit the veterinary environment in which I work”**

Within the essay candidates should provide evidence of the practical application of this knowledge in relation to the following areas:

- General Management
- Personnel
- Communication
- Financial Management
- Marketing
- Strategic Management

The word limit is 3000 words (including introduction, tables and graphs). Anything over 10% of the word limit will not be accepted.

### **Planning your Report**

When planning your report, you should aim to include information relating to personal experience and achievement against the six core areas of the syllabus you have undertaken in your veterinary work environment. Where possible include the following -

Your objectives (s)

Details of the task(s) required to achieve the objective

Resources necessary to achieve the task

The management skills you used to complete the task(s)

Time scales for completion

Identify lines of reporting and authority relating to the task.

Method of measuring progress.

Measurement of success/ failure of the project/activity.

How has the completion of the task benefitted the practice in terms of either financial gain or other quantifiable measure?

Critical analysis post task completion – what could be done differently/what have you learned?

### **Report Layout**

The report should be submitted in a professional format. It must include an introduction which gives an overview of the candidates work environment and gives context of the role of the candidate within this environment. Any illustrative material must be within the body of the report.

Appendices will not be accepted. Each page should have a footer including the page number and the candidate's name. A word count should appear at the end of the report.

### **Presenting your Report**

Submissions will be examined during the examination in conjunction with the assessment criteria:

- Subject Matter
- Clarity of Objectives
- Planning and Organisation
- Implementation
- Result
- Evaluation

### **Confidentiality**

Reports are kept confidential within the Examination Board. You must, where relevant, obtain permission to disclose confidential data and when sensitive personal details are included you should blank out identifying names to maintain confidentiality. If you identify an Examination Board member who you consider may have a clash of interest, the Chair of the Board should be approached in the first instance.

### **In summary**

Your report should be:

- On suitable subject matters
- Well presented and organised
- Easy to read and understand
- Comprehensive yet concise
- Up to date and complete
- Accurate and truthful
- Relevant and demonstrate your skills as a manager within the context of veterinary practice

**Please note** that one of the purposes of the report is to provide the examiners with subject matter for discussion on exam day. Whilst it is not marked, it should aim to cover the full range of the syllabus. For example, if you do not provide any financial information within your report, you will almost certainly be asked questions on aspects of financial management within your discussion. The examiners aim to find evidence of all aspects of your management skills over the course of the examination. By incorporating evidence of your management skill within your report, you lay the groundwork for a successful examination and ensures you are able to demonstrate skill in all areas of the syllabus.

## **Examination Component 1 - Presentation and Professional Discussion**

You will give a timed PowerPoint presentation of no more than 10 minutes based on a subject given by the examination board four weeks before the exam itself. The number of slides to use is entirely at your discretion; the examiners hope to get a feel for how you present to your managers/colleagues/staff so we advise that you practice presenting to small groups of your peers prior to this examination. A laptop and data projector will be provided for this part of the examination. A flipchart and pens will also be available in the room should you need them at any point within this component of the exam. You should ensure that you can still deliver your presentation in the event of any technical hitch; so you might like to have your presentation saved on both a memory stick and disc, and even have slides as hand-outs or overhead acetates. Whilst the examiners will ensure all equipment is suitable and functioning prior to the exam, it is your responsibility to be able to continue in the event of technical problems.

Following the presentation, you will undertake a professional discussion with two examiners based on the content of your submitted report. Examiners will seek to determine your level of ability and depth of knowledge based on the CVPM syllabus. The professional discussion may take up to 15 minutes.

## **Examination Component 2 – Fictitious Practice**

The part of the examination is set to test candidates ability to understand and manage a veterinary practice regardless of the candidates own experiences and place of work. The exam consists of a series of pre-determined questions about a fictitious veterinary practice. The details of the practice will be sent to candidates two weeks before the examination. Details will include all of the basic information the candidate will need to have an understanding of the workings of the practice and may include information such as - human resources information, marketing strategies, key financial information, strategic and general business plans, meeting minutes, and project plans. Candidates will need to ensure they are familiar with the practice and have the associated knowledge, based on the CVPM syllabus, to allow them to competently answer the questions on the veterinary practice posed by the examiners. Candidates can prepare for this examination by ensuring they are fully conversant with current practices with regard to the six core area of the CVPM syllabus –

- General Management
- Personnel
- Communication
- Financial Management
- Marketing
- Strategic Management

If there are areas of the syllabus in which candidates do not undertake or have responsibility for in their own place of work e.g. strategic or financial management, this is an opportunity to showcase the theoretical knowledge of these areas.

Candidates are permitted to take pre written notes (one side of A4 paper, hand written) into the examination and there will be copies of the fictitious practices details available to the candidate during the examination.

### **Examination Component 3 – Scenario Questions**

The oral examination consists of a number of questions that reflect subjects and situations which can occur in every day veterinary management. They cover the areas of finance, marketing, human relations; law, ethics and organisational issues and the questions can be about any or all of these subjects. This element is designed to enable you to demonstrate your practical capabilities as a manager.

You have to answer 10 questions in 30 minutes and you will be asked to read the written question out loud and then give your answer. The time management of these questions will be up to you so if you wish to spend longer on some questions than others, you can do so and you can also go back to any question at any time. Just be sure to answer all 10 questions. It is important to remember that you are not being tested on how things are done at your particular practice but on your overall knowledge and awareness of commonly accepted management principles and practices or statutory requirements and legislation.

Once the oral examination begins you will not be able to communicate with the examiners as they must be impartial and are not allowed to interpret or clarify the actual questions for you.

In your answers, you should start with the most basic information. You may think that something is obvious or understood, but the examiners can only give you credit for the information you say, not what they think you might know. As a guide, most questions cover one or more areas of the syllabus, so try and answer in a way which demonstrates as broad a range of knowledge as possible; for example, a question primarily about a personnel issue may have financial and strategic management aspects to it. Remember to include any relevant health and safety or employment legislation, also what you would do and what you would delegate to others. Do not be afraid to take a bit of time to plan your answer if that is how to prefer to do it. Some people use the full 30 minutes in order to answer whilst others answer more concisely and have time left over at the end. It is a good idea to become familiar with how much you can say in three minutes and the best way to do this is to practice at home or at work with a timer and a set of made up scenarios.

Candidates can be awarded a maximum of 10 marks for each question. In order to pass this section of the examination must achieve a combined total of 70 out of 100.

### **Examination Results**

Each section of the exam must be successfully met for the candidate to achieve a pass. Throughout the whole exam, successful candidates must demonstrate sufficient knowledge in each of the 6 areas of the syllabus.

All sessions are recorded and in the case of a borderline result these recordings are reviewed by the whole examination panel. The examiners may use the recordings in order to ensure that a) all relevant comments have been awarded a mark and b) the examiners present agree on the mark

awarded. The recording is erased as soon as the results of the examination are announced and no one, except members of the certification board, has access to it during this time.

Candidates will be informed in writing of their examination result. This is usually within one week of the exam taking place. Successful candidates will be invited to attend an award ceremony which is held during the annual VMG congress. They are also entitled to use the post-nominal 'CVPM' and will join an exclusive list of CVPM holders.

Candidates who are unsuccessful in the examination will receive written feedback on the reasons why they did not meet the standard expected. The feedback will be general, but constructive. It is not possible for the examiners to enter into in-depth discussion with unsuccessful candidates over their performance during the examination. However, in almost all cases where the standard wasn't met this was due to lack of knowledge shown by the candidate. It is very important to note that success in other management qualifications does not guarantee success in the CVPM. Prospective candidates should check their level of knowledge against the CVPM syllabus to ensure that they have the depth and breadth of knowledge required before applying for the CVPM.

## **Appeals**

There is a formal Appeals Procedure. However, appeals will only be considered against the process or conduct of the examination and not the marks awarded. A copy of the Appeals Procedure is available in the CVPM download section of the VMG website.

## **Further advice**

To help you with your preparation, a reading list is available from the VMG.

Application forms and CVPM syllabus are both available to download from the CVPM section of the VMG website.

If you require any further advice, please contact the CVPM Board through the VMG Office.