

Australasian Veterinary Boards Council Ltd

Australasian Veterinary Examination (AVE) Committee Terms of Reference

1. Purpose of AVBC

The Australasian Veterinary Boards Council (AVBC) is the national standards-setting body for veterinary education, assessment, and professional recognition across Australia and New Zealand.

AVBC plays a critical role in safeguarding the quality and consistency of veterinary practice by:

- Accrediting veterinary schools
- Delivering the Australasian Veterinary Examination (AVE)
- Supporting specialist recognition frameworks
- Working collaboratively with jurisdictional veterinary boards, governments, and the profession
- assessment of veterinary skills, experience and qualifications for migration, as the assessing authority approved by the Australian Government for the occupation of Veterinarian

2. Purpose of the AVE Committee

The Australasian Veterinary Examination (AVE) is a non-award qualification which gives the holder eligibility to apply for registration as a veterinarian in Australia and New Zealand. The AVE Committee (The Committee) oversees the development, quality assurance, standard setting, and continuous improvement of the AVE to support a registration pathway that is:

- Aligned to the relevant Day One Competencies and contemporary veterinary practice
- Designed and governed according to principles of validity, reliability, fairness, and defensibility
- Informed by appropriate evidence, professional standards, and regulatory expectations
- Fit for purpose in assessing threshold entry-to-practice competence

In doing so, the Committee contributes to public confidence in the examination, supports appropriate professional standards, and promotes robust and defensible registration decision-making.

3. Scope and Functions

The Committee is responsible for oversight of all aspects of the AVE, including:

- Examination design, blueprint, development and structure
- Assessment methodologies and marking frameworks
- Examination delivery and post-examination review
- Standard setting, quality assurance, and continuous improvement.
- Quality assurance and continuous improvement processes
- Examiner appointment, training, calibration and performance oversight
- Policy oversight within AVEC delegated authority
- Examination specific risk management
- alignment with relevant competency frameworks, professional standards, and regulatory requirements.

4. Authority

The Committee operates under formal delegation from the AVBC Board and has authority to:

- Oversee and govern activities as outlined in Scope and Functions
- Approve operational examination decisions in Board-approved policy frameworks, including:
 - Examination formats and delivery models
 - Assessment methodologies and marking frameworks
 - Examiner appointments and performance oversight
- Endorse examination standards and competency alignment, including mapping to Day One Competencies
- Establish subcommittees or working groups to progress technical or operational matters
- Commission independent expert advice (psychometric, educational, clinical) within approved budgets
- Oversee risk management, including integrity, delivery and reputational risk
- Recommend policy, strategic or material changes relating to the AVE to the AVBC Board

Limitations of Authority

The Committee does **not** have authority to:

- Amend the AVBC Constitution or governance framework
- Approve unbudgeted expenditure outside delegated limits
- Enter into contracts or legally bind AVBC
- Make decisions that materially alter AVBC strategy without Board approval

5. Examination Charter

- The Committee operates under a Board-approved AVE Examination Charter [link]
- The Charter must be reviewed by AVEC at least every three years.

6. Key Responsibilities

The Committee is responsible for:

Examination Standards and Design

- Approving and reviewing the examination blueprint, structure, and assessment methods.
- Maintaining alignment with relevant AVBC Day One Competencies and entry-to-practice expectations
- Ensure Rubrics are independently reviewed and moderated prior to use in examinations.
- Ensure examination consistency across multiple venues.

Quality Assurance and Psychometrics

- Oversee the moderation, calibration and post-examination review
- Ensure appropriate psychometric analysis is undertaken post examination
- Undertake an independent psychometric review at least every three years
- Supporting data-driven decision-making

Policy Oversight

- Reviewing and recommending policies relating to candidate:
 - Eligibility and admission to sit the AVE
 - Appeals and review processes
 - Misconduct
 - Special consideration

Examiner Framework

- Oversee the appointment, induction, training, calibration, and ongoing performance review promoting consistency, fairness, and defensibility in examiner judgements and practices

Risk Management

- Maintaining an AVE-specific risk register
- Identifying and escalating material risks to the Board

Continuous Improvement

- Overseeing the ongoing review and improvement of the AVE
- considering relevant developments in veterinary practice, assessment, and regulatory expectations where these may affect the AVE

7. Composition

The Committee must ensure broad, balanced and expert representation across the veterinary sector and assessment disciplines which reflects the content of the AVE. The Committee shall be composed of, to a maximum of 10 members (including the Chair, Deputy Chair and Chief Examiner):

- Chair
- Deputy Chair
- Chief Examiner
- Veterinary practitioners
- Education and assessment experts (including psychometric expertise)
- At least one representative from Australia and one from New Zealand
- Recent AVE graduate representative

Mandatory Sector Representation

Membership must include representation from:

- Veterinary clinical practice (general practice – companion animal, large animal)
- Veterinary education

Ex-Officio and Support Roles

- CEO (or nominee) – ex-officio (non-voting unless determined by Board)
- AVEC Secretariat – administrative and governance support (non-voting).
- Head of Education (non-voting)
- External advisors – engaged as required

8. Membership Requirements and Capability Profile

All members must demonstrate:

- Expertise in one or more of:
 - Clinical veterinary practice
 - Veterinary education
 - Veterinary/healthcare simulation design
 - Assessment and examination design
 - Psychometrics and data analysis
 - Accreditation and standards development
- Understanding of:
 - Competency-based education frameworks
 - Assessment validity, reliability and fairness

- Standards-setting or regulatory-adjacent environments
- Commitment to:
 - Governance best practice
 - Continuous improvement
 - Cultural awareness and diversity

The Committee must:

- Reflect diversity of professional background, geography and gender
- Reflect a balance of technical assessment capability and real-world veterinary practice perspective
- Be from an AVBC member jurisdiction

Members appointed in a clinical capacity (including all veterinary practitioner members and clinical content matter experts) must:

- Hold current, unconditional registration with the relevant veterinary board
- Demonstrate active clinical practice, defined as a minimum average of 15 clinical hours per week in the preceding 12 months
- Maintain ongoing Continuing Professional Development (CPD) in accordance with their registration body's requirements, with preference for members whose CPD demonstrates engagement with contemporary clinical practice

Annual attestation against these criteria is required as a condition of continued appointment. The Committee Secretariat must maintain records of declarations.

9. Appointment and Tenure

- Chair is appointed by the AVBC Board
- Standard term: three (3) years, maximum two consecutive terms
- Extensions permitted in exceptional circumstances
- Staggered appointments encouraged to ensure continuity

10. Role Descriptions

Committee Members

Members are expected to:

- Act in the best interests of AVBC and the public
- Participate actively in meetings and working groups
- Prepare for meetings and support evidence-based decision-making
- Uphold integrity, confidentiality and data security
- Declare and manage conflicts of interest

Chair

- Provide independent leadership
- Ensure operation within delegated authority
- Facilitate effective meetings and decision-making
- Act as primary liaison with the Board
- Oversee Committee performance
- Escalate risks and issues

Deputy Chair

- Appointed by AVEC
- Support the Chair and act in the Chair's absence
- Provide leadership continuity

Chief Examiner

- Provides expert leadership on examination content
- Ensures the AVE content is contemporary and aligned with Day One Competencies
- Convenes and chairs content subcommittees, including those responsible for MCQ development and review, OSCE design and rubric review, in collaboration with subject matter experts

Head of Education (Staff Role)

The Head of Education is an AVBC staff member who provides operational, technical and administrative leadership in support of the AVE Committee. The Head of Education is not a voting member of the Committee but attends meetings in an advisory and support capacity.

11. Meetings

- Meetings aligned to AVE examination cycles
- Minimum frequency determined by operational requirements
- Quorum: majority of members
- Virtual participation permitted
- Secretariat support provided by AVBC

12. Conflicts of Interest and Confidentiality

Members must:

- Declare actual, potential or perceived conflicts
- Comply with AVBC conflict of interest policies
- Maintain strict confidentiality
- Adhere to data security requirements

13. Reporting

- Provide a written report to each AVBC Board meeting
- Provide an annual summary report
- Escalate material risks or integrity issues immediately

14. Review

- Terms of Reference to be reviewed annually and approved by the AVBC Board