DVM Program
Guidelines for Examination Procedures
And Grading Standards

A. Introduction
This document provides guidelines for examination and grading procedures in the Doctor of Veterinary Medicine (DVM) curriculum. It is intended to serve as a guide to DVM course coordinators to enable them to perform their responsibilities with the support of their colleagues and administration. This document is intended to be a guideline and does not supersede the document, DVM Program Scholastic Standards and Grading Policies and Procedures, which is the primary scholastic standards document of the college. Any apparent conflict in other documents shall defer to the Scholastic Standards document and future amendments.

B. Evaluation Procedures
1. Methods for Evaluating Student Learning
   Instructional efforts should assist students with development of value systems, expression of desired behaviors, acquisition of new skills and accumulation of knowledge. Therefore, evaluations of students’ academic performance should include a balanced attempt to assess these attributes. Expression and application of ethical values should be encouraged. Desirable behavioral characteristics, such as thoroughness, responsibility, reliability, efficiency, collegiality, cooperation and active participation, should be encouraged. Competitiveness should be de-emphasized by encouraging group responses and consultation. Required use of skills such as problem solving, critical thinking, information management and communication (written and/or oral) should be an essential part of academic performance. Knowledge must be interpreted and applied to be useful rather than just recalled from memory.

   Therefore, written multiple-choice examinations should not be relied upon as the only means of assessing student performance. Examinations should be designed to sample performance in a variety of ways.

2. Time and Place of Examinations
Examinations must take place within regularly schedule class hours as described in the outline of the DVM program published annually by the CVMBS Office. Exceptions to this policy must be approved by the CVMBS Office and must include student notification at the beginning of the semester. Take-home
examinations constitute an exception to this rule but are not to be used as a means of extending the time available for lectures in a course, and should constitute a different form of learning/examination experience from that available in the classroom setting. Open book, practical, library or laboratory examinations constitute forms of testing which may be appropriately given outside of the classroom. These alternate methods of evaluation are encouraged. All examinations must be conveyed to the examinations coordinator for the semester, appointed by the Dean’s Office (See part B.4.)

All students are expected to take in-class examinations in the classroom regularly scheduled for the course. First-year students may take examinations in the anatomy cubicles. Any exceptions to this policy must be approved by the course coordinator or by the CVMBS Office.

Courses should not schedule a lecture-based examination during the week preceding the final examination period. For courses that include laboratories, a laboratory examination may be given during the week preceding final examinations in addition to a lecture/recitation final examination.

Final examinations, when appropriate, are usually given during the final week of each semester. During this week, classes are rescheduled (See part B.4.). This final examination week is part of the regular semester and students should be in attendance even when final examinations are not given.

3. **Frequency and Weighting of Examinations**

Faculty should avoid either ‘over-testing’ or ‘under-testing’ students. The following recommendations should be used for scheduling examinations:

a) The evaluation of student performance in the laboratory portion of a course should be factored into the overall course grade in proportion to the credit distribution of the course. For example, the laboratory portion of a four (4) credit (3-2-0) course should account for approximately 25% of the course grade.

b) In one (1) and (2) credit courses, student performance may be examined with a midterm examination, a final examination or both, or assessed by alternative methods as deemed appropriate by the instructors.

c) The assessment of student performance in the lecture portion of a course can be performed using one-hour examinations, a comprehensive final examination, non-examination assignments (short quizzes, homework assignments, problem-solving exercises) and/or classroom performance
in activities that require active student participation. Although the grade for some courses may be derived entirely from one-hour examinations, it is highly desirable to diversify approaches to assessment. As a general rule, the number of one-hour examinations (or equivalent assessments) should be approximately equal to the semester credit value of the course.

4. **Examination Schedule Coordination**
   The Dean’s Office shall appoint an examinations coordinator for each semester of the first three years of the DVM curriculum.

   Tentative examination schedules should be submitted to the examinations coordinator by the course coordinators one month prior to the first day of classes each semester. Whenever possible, the examinations coordinator should attempt to ensure that one-hour examinations are not administered on consecutive days. Appropriate exceptions include (1) midterm examinations in the third year, (2) integrated examinations from more than one course, and (3) examinations separated by weekend, holiday or other non-instructional days.

   The examinations coordinator is responsible for arranging the finals week examination schedule in a reasonable and fair manner and for reserving appropriate classrooms. The limitations of final exam week frequently requires scheduling of examinations on consecutive days but rarely justifies multiple examinations on the same day.

5. **Examination Administration**
   Coordinators should be present at the beginning of the examination period to provide special instructions. Modifications in the examination should be written on the whiteboards in the classroom and/or in the anatomy cubicles. Coordinators are not required to remain in the classroom during the examination, which is conducted according to the Honor Code. However, they may do so if they wish.

   The length of the examination should be designed so that most students will be able to complete the test within the allotted time.

6. **Post-Examination Procedures**
   An answer key should be posted by the course coordinator upon completion of the examination in order to maximize the learning value of the test. Grades must be posted in a manner that ensures confidentiality and complies with University
policy and federal regulations. Rank in the class must NOT be posted. Procedures which permit students to have unmonitored access to their peers’ test papers and grades are not permitted. In the case of student absences (see Part B.9.), coordinators are advised to remove the key after students taking the examination have had the opportunity to view it.

Students occasionally request the opportunity to review their test papers, and this privilege should be provided by the coordinator until the University grade appeal deadline has passed. Examinations are not required to be returned to the student. Coordinators should retain examinations until the University grade appeal deadline has passed, currently 30 calendar days into the next academic semester following the course in question.

Students occasionally make errors when recording answers on computer graded answer sheets that can be evaluated by examining the original examination document. Coordinators should give credit for errors when it is clear that a transcription error has resulted in a sequence of three (3) or more incorrect answers being entered on the answer sheet. This does not apply to a single incorrect answer or several incorrect answers that are not sequential.

7. Review of Examinations
Students may request the opportunity to review examinations from earlier in the semester as a study aid prior to final examinations. The decision to provide access to examinations for review rests with the course coordinator. Copies of examinations from the current semester may be posted with clear instructions that they are not to be copied. Copying of examination questions in any form constitutes a violation of the Honor Code.

8. Adjustment of Examination Scores
After completion of the examination the coordinator should review the grades for the examination and the performance on individual test items. In instances where it becomes obvious that a question was faulty, deletion of the question is the prerogative of the course coordinator. The coordinator may consult with the faculty member submitting the question, and may also consult other instructors in the course prior to reaching a decision regarding the test item in question. Students should appeal their concerns regarding questions to the coordinator.
9. **Student Absences From Examinations**

Absences from an examination are permitted only in circumstances that are officially recognized as meriting such action. Illness requiring medical attention and personal family crisis, including severe illness, are examples of excusable absences. The course coordinator prior to the examination must approve absences unless extenuating circumstances prevent the student from contacting the coordinator. When emergencies arise and the coordinator cannot be contacted before the examination, notification of absence from the examination must be given to the CVMBS Office by the student. The CVMBS Office will communicate notice of absences to the coordinator but does not excuse absences from examinations. The CVMBS Office will also notify coordinators when it is apparent that a student will be absent from campus for a protracted period.

Students who fail to appear for an examination without prior permission from the coordinator, or who fail to notify the coordinator or the CVMBS Office for emergency absences, should be given a score of zero for the examination. At the beginning of the examination, coordinators should write the names of students absent from the examination on the whiteboard so students can avoid inadvertent transmittal of examination information to absent students.

10. **Make-up Assignments and Adjustment of Student Scores**

Section E.1.b. of the DVM Scholastic Standards Policy states that a U/D grade may be converted to a(n) S/C either by additional scholastic work, successful completion of a re-examination, or both as determined by the course coordinator in consultation with course instructors. The remediation may be an isolated exercise (i.e. successful remediation does not require integration of the remediation score into the overall course grade). Regardless of the performance on the remediation exercise, the highest grade that may replace the U/D grade is a(n) S/C (69.5%). Successful remediation will terminate probationary status. Re-examinations and make-up assignments to correct performance deficiencies should be coordinated by the Associate Dean for Veterinary Academic and Student Affairs and the course coordinator for review of the basis for a U or D grade and approval of the prescribed corrective plan. Regarding make-up or remediation exercises in general:

a. An instructor or course coordinator should not award points of any kind to an individual student unless that same opportunity is afforded to all students in the class under similar circumstances.

b. Make-up assignments, particularly examinations, should not be composed of verbatim repeat questions from earlier assignments or examinations.
c. Except as noted above (a U/D grade may be replaced by a(n) S/C grade with successful remediation), grades for individual assignments or composite scores for a course should not be improved by make-up assignments, particularly examinations, unless all students in the class are given the same opportunity to improve their standing in the course.

d. If the course coordinator(s) have adopted the College RamCT assignment deadline policy (refer to Associate Dean memorandum dated 24 April 2003), or a similar policy is stated in the course syllabus as provided to the students at the beginning of a semester, there should be no deviation from this policy to affect the course standing of an individual student.

e. When in doubt about the proper procedure to follow when amending a student’s assignment grade or composite course score, consult with the Associate Dean for Veterinary Academic and Student Affairs prior to offering a solution to the student in question.