

WORSHIPFUL COMPANY OF FARRIERS
DIPLOMA, END POINT ASSESSMENT
AND ASSOCIATE QUALIFICATIONS
APPROVALS COMMITTEE VISIT

Farriers Registration Council



Established under the
Farriers (Registration) Act 1975

AUTUMN 2021

Report of the Approvals Committee appointed by the Farriers Registration Council
Established under the Farriers (Registration) Act 1975, as amended

FARRIERS REGISTRATION COUNCIL APPROVALS COMMITTEE VISIT TO THE WORSHIPFUL COMPANY OF FARRIERS DIPLOMA, END POINT ASSESSMENT AND ASSOCIATE EXAMINATIONS AUTUMN 2021

Background

1. The Farriers Registration Council (FRC) is charged under Section 11 (1) (a) and (b) of the Farriers (Registration) Act 1975 with approval of any course of training which it considers is designed to confer on persons completing it sufficient knowledge and skill for carrying out the shoeing of horses, and, any qualification which, as the result of an examination taken in conjunction with a course of training approved by the Council under this section, is granted to candidates reaching a standard at the examination indicating, in the opinion of Council, that they have sufficient knowledge and skill to carry out the shoeing of horses. The Approvals Committee (AC) – a delegated committee of the Council – has been established in order to provide assurance to the FRC of those matters set out in Section 11 of the Act.
2. The AC for this visit consisted of Martin Peaty, practising veterinary surgeon specialising in equines, Tom Smith, registered farrier and Sarah Hamlyn, educationalist. The AC visited the practical and oral examinations at Hereford, Ludlow and North Shropshire, Warwickshire Group and Myerscough Colleges respectively, and the WCF Training and Standardisation Day.
3. The DipWCF is currently the qualification which apprentices must pass in order to be admitted to the register, but from Spring 2023 the End Point Assessment (EPA) will be the entry level qualification at the end of the apprenticeship. The AC have therefore looked at progress with preparation for the latter as well as the former qualification.
4. Apprentices are employed by Approved Training Farriers (ATFs) and the majority of an apprentice's time will be spent with the employer whose role is key in providing education, training, development and mentoring. The Associate of the Worshipful Company of Farriers (AWCF) qualification is one of the qualifications required for entry to the ATF list. The AWCF is therefore a critical element in the course of training for farrier apprentices, and the FRC therefore requires assurance in relation to that qualification as a matter of policy. The AWCF has recently been accepted for entry to the OFQUAL register of occupational qualifications at level 5, which aligns with the AC's benchmarking work undertaken on behalf of the Council during 2019 and 2020. ATFs must also have the Training the Training Farrier Award (TTFA).
5. The previous visit to the DipWCF took place in Autumn 2018 and made the following recommendations:
 - a) The DipWCF continues to be approved by the FRC as a prescribed examination in Part 1 of the Register of Farriers and that, on receipt of written confirmation that the conditions outlined in b)-g) will be met, that approval is for a period of 3 years.
 - b) That all marks, including honours, should be obtainable from a knowledge of the published syllabus and not require knowledge that is not included in the syllabus.
 - c) The paper for the written examination and the associated papers such as continuation papers, candidate numbers, candidate declarations, envelopes and examination rules for candidates are sent in such a way that the latter can be opened and checked prior to the allotted time for opening the examination paper. Examination rules / briefing notes are included on each occasion that examination papers are sent out in order to ensure they are available in the event that the usual college administrator is not available.

- d) Candidates are allowed three minutes to study the questions before the written examination starts and this should be made clear to candidates before the start of each written examination.
- e) The DipWCF Examination Manual should be updated so that it reflects the WCF current practice on what is included in the Evaluation Report and Development Plan.
- f) The WCF Registrar notifies the colleges and the candidates of the names of the examiners with sufficient time allowed for adjustments should objections be raised.
- g) The WCF effectively communicate to the candidates, ideally face to face in the months prior to the examination, that during the practical examination they will be assessed on the WCF standard and that the assessment will be the same irrespective of which examiner or examination centre.
6. Currently The Worshipful Company of Farriers Diploma Examination (DipWCF), together with successful completion of other components of the framework for the apprenticeship in farriery, allows an applicant to apply for entry to the register of Farriers in Great Britain. The DipWCF constitutes the 'technical certificate' for the purposes of the framework for the apprenticeship in farriery. The other components of the modern apprenticeship are:
- Complete 23 weeks training at college
 - Complete functional skills in English and Mathematics
 - Complete 6 personal learning and thinking skills
 - Complete employee rights and responsibilities
 - Complete employer requirements, basic business
 - Complete Diploma in Farriery (work based)
7. The DipWCF examination format has two elements: 'knowledge' and 'skill'. Knowledge is assessed via a written examination paper reinforced by three 10-minute oral exams, one with each member of the examining panel. Skill is assessed by a practical test involving developing a shoeing plan, and then preparing and fitting shoes from straight bar stock for one side of a live horse. Candidates must also prepare a shoe board illustrating skills they have developed during their apprenticeship.
8. The standard for the DipWCF is laid down in the syllabus published on the WCF web site and by LANTRA National Occupational Standards for Farriery – NVQ/SVQ Level 3. The DipWCF is recognised as a Technical Certificate by OFQUAL at Level 3.
9. The WCF Examination Manual 2021, paragraph 30, deals with Monitoring of Standards. An internal quality assurance self-assessment document is drafted in October by the Registrar and presented to the November meeting of the Examination Board (EB) annually, and an action plan agreed for presentation to and discussion by the Examinations Executive Group at their December meeting and presented to the Court at its March meeting for approval. The areas monitored include:
- Recruitment of Examiners
 - Competence of Examiners
 - Examination Results in total and for individual examination centres
 - Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations
 - Complaints, Enquiries and Appeals
 - Customer Service Targets
 - Malpractice

10. EB procedures allow Examiners to help candidates prepare for WCF examinations, but they cannot examine candidates who have paid the examiner for their assistance, thereby avoiding any identifiable conflict of interest.
11. From May 2023 the End Point Assessment (EPA) will replace the DipWCF and the current format. The WCF has stated that it will deliver resit opportunities for the current DipWCF format in May and November 2023 alongside the new EPA. The new EPA will run alone from May 2024 onwards.
12. The Standard is available on the Institute for Apprenticeships & Technical Education website with links from the WCF website.
<https://www.instituteforapprenticeships.org/apprenticeship-standards/farrier-v1-0>
13. The Assessment Plan is available on the Institute for Apprenticeships & Technical Education website with links from the WCF website.
https://www.instituteforapprenticeships.org/media/3269/st0172_farrier_13_ap_for_publication_03072019.pdf
14. Notable changes include the inclusion of behaviours as well as knowledge and skills. Tool making is no longer included in the standard, but business and IT skills and trimming for an unshod horse have been added.
15. The EPA must be delivered by an independent end-point assessment organisation with no affiliation to the employer or training provider involved in the apprenticeship. All end-point assessment providers must be approved before being added to the Register of Apprentice Assessment Organisations (RoAAO). The WCF have been registered and will be the end point assessment organisation (EPAO). No other EPAOs have been registered at this point.
16. Other requirements include that the EPAs should be graded and that the apprentice cannot achieve their apprenticeship without passing the end-point assessment. There is a gateway to be passed before the apprentice can take the EPA and this includes the completion of the shoe board for the farriery apprenticeship standard.

End Point Assessment (EPA) Development and Preparation

17. Apprentices due to sit the current DipWCF examination can access the syllabus on the WCF website. However, there is currently no detailed syllabus published for the EPA.
Secretariat note:
The WCF have advised that "Detailed syllabi have been published for the EPA for two out of the four components so far".
18. The Standard is available (as outlined in paragraph 12) above and outlines the areas of knowledge, skills and behaviours required, but not a detailed syllabus.
19. Enquiries of colleges of further education running other apprenticeships reveal that this situation is not unusual with colleges developing the syllabus from the published Standard.
20. In the context of the farriery apprenticeship standard this could lead to each of the three Colleges developing their own syllabus, and this may have already happened noting that apprentices started the new Standard from September 2019.
21. The WCF has indicated that the EPA syllabus / unit specifications will be completed by January 2022, and the FRC should have sight of those documents as soon as possible; those on the new Standard will be taking the EPA from May 2023.
Secretariat note:

The WCF have advised that "The syllabus remains work in progress until approval by the WCF Court at its meeting in March 2022."

22. Apprentices sitting the current DipWCF can apply for past papers. A question bank for the new EPA should be developed so that the same opportunity is available to those undertaking the new EPA as is currently available to those taking the current DipWCF.
23. At the Training and Standardisation Day a senior farriery examiner gave a presentation to the EB on the Business and IT skill module: S8 on the new Standard.
24. It was observed that most candidates pass within 10% of the pass mark and that S8 is worth 16% of the marks. It follows that if this new area is not taught accurately and effectively, then apprentices will be at risk of failing the EPA by dint of their performance in answering questions relating to S8
25. The WCF are asked to clarify if S8 Business and IT skills, unshod trim and behaviours will be examined in the overseas DipWCF examinations/EPA.

Secretariat note:

The WCF have confirmed: "S8 Business and IT skills, unshod trim and behaviours must be examined in the overseas DipWCF examinations/EPA in order for those exams to retain their regulated qualification status. OFQUAL have confirmed that there can be no work-arounds with regards to this."

DipWCF Question Setting- Theory and Practical

26. The theory part of the examination includes the written paper and the oral assessment- each is worth 50% of the marks.
27. Five written papers from the last three years were provided by the WCF and considered. Blueprinting of the questions revealed that they fell into three broad categories although there was some overlap between them. Anatomy and physiology questions made up just under 2/5, farriery questions contributed just over 1/5 and lameness, disease and injury questions made up around 2/5 of the total.
28. There are five questions in each paper and in the five papers sampled three almost identical questions were repeated. One question, on hoof growth, was repeated three times in 2019, 2020 and 2021, and two, one on bone spavin and one on blood supply and drainage to the distal limb, occurred twice over the same period.
29. There were no questions in the written examinations sampled on some aspects of the syllabus including styles of shoeing for horses working in different disciplines; the Farrier, Approved Training Farrier and Apprentice Code of Professional Conduct; breeds or types of horses, or faults in foot preparation, forging, fitting and nailing on.
30. The questions in the written paper should cover the full 'bandwidth' of the DipWCF syllabus and in due course the EPA standard.
31. Most professional examinations include questions on the relevant code of professional conduct and some including the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons have a whole paper on their code as this is directly relevant to a registrant's working life and to ensuring they know what is expected of them.
32. Questions on the Farrier, Approved Training Farrier and Apprentice Code of Professional Conduct should be included in the theory examination.
33. A selection of the practical tasks set over the last three years was provided by WCF and reviewed.

34. A 6-week shoeing cycle was set for all of the practical tasks in the selection provided.

Associate of the Worshipful Company of Farriers (AWCF) Qualification Syllabus Changes

35. The AWCF is one of the qualifications accepted by the FRC in 2014 as one of the requirements to become an Approved Training Farrier (ATF).

36. The syllabus has since been changed since 2014 without the FRC being notified.

37. The WCF confirmed the following changes:

- The following line has been omitted: “Experience has shown that candidates sitting the AWCF Examination rarely pass both sections at one attempt, and therefore candidates are discouraged from sitting both modules during the same session”.
- The following lines have been added: “Candidates achieving 70% or more in either part of the practical module will be exempt that part for a further 2 years. Candidates who have passed the Knowledge Module and achieve 70% on their shoe board in the Practical are exempt from the requirement to bring a shoe board for a period of 2 years.”
- The term modern farriery has been changed to synthetic farriery.
- The live shoeing and shoemaking section was changed to be more challenging so that for this skills test, the candidate would make, fit, and nail on one front straight bar shoe and one hind straight bar shoe to one side of a horse, both from steel, with variations as instructed by the examiners.
- For the Live Horse and Diagnostic Imaging Assessment section of the examination 10 additional marks are now awarded for the Anatomy and/or surface anatomy, and farriery aspects.
- For the Candidates’ Exhibition of Shoes (marked as part of the Practical Module) this line has been added “The shoes must be made by him/herself prior to the examination. To achieve the pass mark the display board must include an example of all six of the shoes marked with an asterisk (*) in the List of Horseshoes on pages 3 and 4.”
- There is a new list of horseshoes for the candidates to make.

38. The AC do not consider that the changes affect the qualifications suitability for ATFs.

39. The WCF should notify candidates, examiners and the FRC of any changes to the AWCF syllabus.

Examiners Conflicts of Interest

40. The WCF have a Code of Conduct Policy (for conduct expectations and conflict of interest for Examination Board Members) and an Examiner Declaration of Interest Form.

41. These were provided to the FRC as documents 22 and 19 respectively in response to enquiries as to how conflicts of interest are managed.

42. The farriery profession is a relatively small profession and there is therefore a relatively high chance that examiners may know those delivering training, those being trained or be themselves involved with apprentice training.

43. Examiners are currently required to complete and return to the WCF Registrar an annual Examiner Declaration of Interest Form.

44. This is a thorough document and critically enquires specifically whether examiners have any relative or anyone with who they have a commercial relationship or have been involved with or will be involved with in preparing for the examination.
45. One weakness identified is that whilst at the time of declaration there may be no conflict this might change over the year.
46. The AC therefore recommend that either Examiners complete an Examiner Declaration Form prior to each examination, or the current Examiner Declaration Form is modified to include a declaration that examiners will notify the WCF Registrar if new conflict of interest arise during the year.
47. The WCF Code of Conduct Policy (for conduct expectations and conflict of interest for Examination Board Members) should refer clearly to Examiner Declaration of Interest Form as the documents are dependent on one another.
48. The AC recommends that the Examiner Declaration of Interest Form be attached to the Code of Conduct Policy, or a hyperlink provided in the policy. There are already links to the FRC Farrier, Approved Training Farrier and Apprentice Code of Professional Conduct and the RCVS Code of Professional Conduct for Veterinary Surgeons.

Secretariat note:

The WCF confirm this can be achieved.

The Structure, Role, Composition and Appointment of the Examinations Board

49. The DipWCF Examination Manual outlines the structure, role, composition and appointment to the WCF Examinations Board (EB) in paragraph 4. The Manual can be found by following the link:
<https://www.wcf.org.uk/files/pdfs/wcf%20examination%20manual%202021.pdf>
50. The Court of the WCF appoint members of the Board to form an Examinations Executive Group (EEG) to deal with administrative matters as they arise during the year.
51. The Examination Manual goes on to say that the terms of reference of the Examination Board and its Executive Group are:
 - to prepare syllabuses for each of the Company's examinations i.e. Diploma, Associateship and Fellowship.
 - to be responsible to the Court for the organisation and conduct of the examinations.
 - to set the standards required by those intending to present themselves for the Company's examinations.
 - to recommend to the Court for appointment suitably qualified persons as Examiners.
 - to ensure that the integrity of the examination is maintained through the quality assurance system.
 - to discuss policy matters and provide advice to the Court on examination related issues.
52. In order to better understand how the roles and responsibilities of the Examination Board and the Examinations Executive Group are divided, clarification on the terms of reference outlined in above is sought.
53. It would be useful for the examination manual to state whether the Examination Board or the Examination Executive Group is responsible for producing the written examination paper.

Secretariat note:

The WCF confirm this can be achieved. They further advise that an independent question writing team made up of three examiners from the Examination Board produce the written

paper based on the published syllabus and that they also create a prescriptive marking guide for all the examiners to follow for each exam question.

54. Examining teams are drawn by the WCF from the EB and comprise two farrier examiners and one veterinary examiner. There are currently 12 Farriery Examiners and 10 Veterinary Examiners and 1 Probationary Veterinary Examiner.
55. Farriery Examiners must hold the Fellowship of the WCF qualification (FWCF).
56. Veterinary Examiners are drawn from practices that have extensive equine experience in treating horses and working with farriers.
57. The criteria, other than FWCF for farrier examiners and equine experience and experience working with farriers for veterinary examiners, and the processes used by the Examination Board in recommending persons to be appointed as examiners to the Court should be set out in the Examination Manual in order to ensure that best practice is followed, that it is seen to be followed and that the best persons for the roles are appointed.

Secretariat note:

The WCF confirm this can be achieved. The WCF further advise that all assessors must be qualified to undertake assessments in line with the requirements laid out in the assessment plan. They must have expertise and experience in designing and developing assessment products and tools where this is a requirement of the assessment plan. As part of our commitment to diversity, we will seek examiners from a wide range of backgrounds who have achieved the FWCF qualification. The Worshipful Company of Farriers approves the appointment of all Examiners. Any examiner vacancies and the accompanying person specifications will be advertised via our Company magazine, website and Facebook page. Applicants will be invited to submit their CV and demonstrate their commitment to learning and assessment. Those shortlisted will be invited to observe an examination and attend a training and assessment day.

58. Examiners undergo a probationary period when they mark every aspect of the exams in parallel with experienced examiners. Their marks do not count towards the assessment of the candidate but are analysed to ensure that they meet the WCF standard.
59. Examiners attend an annual Training and Standardisation Day in order to train for and encourage good assessment practice during the Companies examinations.

Examiners Training and Standardisation Day

60. The Examiners Training and Standardisation Day took place on 2 and 3 November 2021 at the Horse Trust, Princes Risborough and was attended by AC members Martin Peaty and Tom Smith. AC member Stephen Newman was in attendance but in his role as a senior examiner of the WCF Examination Board (EB).
61. The Master of the WCF as head of profession welcomed everyone. He emphasised the importance of equality and diversity and examining to the required standard in order to protect equine welfare.
62. The Chairman of the EB, WCF Registrar and all other members of the EB were welcoming and answered all our questions and the AC would like to record our thanks to all concerned for their engagement and co-operation.

63. Five examiners were absent from the Training and Standardisation Day. The WCF Registrar confirmed that they would not be able to examine until they had attended in 2022: none were currently scheduled to act as examiners but this will leave a reduced pool of examiners available until the next Training and Standardisation Day.
64. The day was well organised with the location providing a shoeing area and lecture room. Excellent resources were available including horses for shoeing, shoe boards, written questions, marking schemes, anonymised completed question papers, apprentices nearing the end of their training and about to be Dip WCF candidates, and AWCF candidates were available to enable training and standardisation exercises to take place.
65. The Head of Assessment and Training at the Cambridge Assessment Network, which works with around 30,000 examiners in 160 countries, lectured on validity (accuracy) and reliability (consistency) of assessment. He outlined the necessity for a cycle of continual improvement in the examination / assessment process. It was noted that there is good evidence that the more grades used in an assessment the less reliable the assessment becomes and that the use of essays in assessment was less reliable than other methods.
66. DipWCF apprentices trimmed and shod a front foot and a hind foot under conditions similar to the examination process.
67. Each aspect of the work namely, foot preparation, shoe making, shoe fitting and nailing on and finishing, was marked and assessed as honours standard, above standard, required standard, below standard or fail.
68. Results and comments were entered on marking sheets with a marking rubric similar to that used in the software on the marking tablets used during the real examinations.
69. The apprentices' work was examined after each stage of the shoeing process had been completed. Examiners worked in teams consisting of a Senior Farrier Examiner and two Farriery Examiners. The work was marked and discussed in relation to the standard required back in the classroom. Good consistency between the assessors was observed.
70. Shoe boards were marked while the apprentices were shoeing and the individual examiners marks compared and discussed. Good consistency between assessors was observed.
71. Exercises on marking of the written examination for both the DipWCF and AWCF was also undertaken. Questions and a marking guide for each were provided to the examiners and marked and the results were compared and reasons for the marks awarded discussed to ensure a standard approach and result.
72. Examiners were instructed to ensure they read the marking scheme and to use the full range of marks where appropriate. They were told not to award marks for answering a question other than the one asked. Three examiners mark the written questions independently and conduct moderation where there is a significant divergence.
73. A broad band marking scheme out of 20 is used for each section with the computer software calculating an overall mark out of twenty for each question.
74. The allocation of marks was made clear to both the candidates in the question paper and the examiners in the marking guide for the sample questions provided for the marking exercises.
75. The pass mark is 12/20 or 60%. Examiners were asked to consider whether the candidate had demonstrated sufficient knowledge. Thereafter a comfortable pass was 13-14/20, a good pass (merit) 15/20, a distinction 16-17/20, exceptional 18-19/20 and perfect 20/20. For candidates who did not demonstrate sufficient knowledge 9-10/20 was just below, 8-9/20 significantly below and 7/20 or less far below.

76. The Chair of the Examination Board emphasised the need to justify reasons for marks awarded and especially when candidates did not achieve the required standard to pass.
 77. The importance of assessing to the published WCF standard and of individual examiners preferences being discarded was emphasised by the Chair of the Examination Board.
 78. Examiners are asked to feedback on the questions and marking scheme especially highlighting any issues so that the question bank can be continually be improved.
 79. Discussion of both the DipWCF and AWCF written paper standard setting was approached in an open and constructive manner which was a credit to the examiners present.
 80. The Autumn 2021 AWCF written theory paper (13 October 2021) asked about navicular bursa anatomy in question 2, an essay type question, and also in question 4b, a structured short answer type question. More of the syllabus could have been assessed if repetition on navicular bursa anatomy had been avoided by “blueprinting” of the areas of the syllabus covered by each of the questions.
 81. Strategies for putting candidates at their ease and for getting the best out of candidates during the oral assessments were outlined for both the oral DipWCF and oral AWCF examinations.
 82. The importance of not leading candidates or disclosing a candidate’s performance was emphasised.
 83. The opportunity to practice on oral examination of DipWCF and AWCF candidates was provided.
 84. The use of masks when using some synthetic materials which give off fumes, during the AWCF practical was discussed. Manufacturers’ data sheets should be checked but it was pointed out that candidates are sharing an air space and often using different materials. Most masks will not exclude fumes so ventilation or other strategies might need to be considered to ensure the health and safety of candidates and examiners.
- The AC recommends that the health and safety requirements relating to the use of synthetic materials during the AWCF practical are clearly established and communicated to the candidates and the examiners including the specification of any masks which may be required.

Secretariat note:

The WCF confirm this can be achieved.

The DipWCF Examination Manual 2021, Annexes and Appendices

85. The Manual including Annexes A, B, E, F, H and L and Appendices 1 (including Annexes A, B and C), 2, 3,4,5,6,7,8,9,13,15,16,17,18,21,22,23 and 24 can be found by following the link: <https://www.wcf.org.uk/dipwcfapprentices>
 86. The Manual, including its Annexes and Appendices, is comprehensive and a useful resource for the WCF Registrar and Examinations Board.
 87. Section 2 of the Dip Examination Manual 2021 should make it very clear that holders of the Dip WCF must be registered with the FRC in order to practise farriery in GB. GB and overseas candidates wishing to practise in GB should apply to the FRC upon notification of passing all elements of the apprenticeship (in GB) or passing the DipWCF (overseas).
- Secretariat note:*
- The WCF confirm this can be achieved.*
88. Section 3 iii) and iv) of the DipWCF Examination Manual 2021 should be amended to reflect that the United Kingdom has left the European Union and that mutual recognition of professional qualifications, EC Directive 99/42 and other EU directives no longer apply

Secretariat note:

The WCF confirm this can be achieved.

89. Section 3 of the Dip Examination Manual 2021 should be updated to include the 2017 amendment to the Farriers Registration Act as well as the updates already recorded.

Secretariat note:

The WCF confirm this can be achieved.

90. The paragraph of the DipWCF Syllabus (Appendix 1 of the DipWCF Examination Manual 2021) headed Marking Guide should be amended to remove reference to the National Farrier Training Agency which ceased to exist in November 2013.

Secretariat note:

The WCF confirm this can be achieved.

91. Section 30 of the WCF Examination Manual on the Monitoring of Standards should be updated to reflect the fact that an annual OFQUAL Statement of Compliance will be completed.

Secretariat note:

The WCF confirm this can be achieved. They further advised that the statement of compliance is a monitoring tool that supports the Diploma exam's regulation. OFQUAL use the information and evidence collected from our statements of compliance to monitor the Company's compliance with the OFQUAL Standard Conditions of Recognition.

92. The information on what anatomical knowledge is required for the DipWCF is inconsistent. (See below at paragraphs 94, 95 and 96).
93. Section 16 of the DipWCF Manual 2021 states that scope of the questions will be.....The anatomy of all the structures of the fore and hind limbs, with special attention to the lower limb from the carpus and the tarsus to the hoof, including its contents.”
94. Appendix 1 of the DipWCF Manual 2021, which outlines the syllabus, states under General, “j. A thorough understanding of equine anatomy, physiology, and conformation from below the distal radius and tibia. k. A good general knowledge of equine anatomy above and including the distal radius and tibia - with particular reference to the ‘stay’ apparatus,” and under Anatomy and Physiology, “a. Identify, name and explain the function of the following structures below the distal row of carpal & tarsal bones: (1) Bones. (2) Joints. (3) Muscles & tendons. (4) Ligaments & cartilage. (5) Major blood vessels and general circulation. (6) Nerves and lymphatic system. (7) Skin and its modifications (e.g. hoof wall, sole etc.).
95. Section 16 of the Manual and the General paragraph of the syllabus include the knee (carpus) and hock (tarsus) whilst the Anatomy and Physiology paragraph includes structures below the distal row of carpal and tarsal bones and therefore excludes the knee (carpus) and hock (tarsus)

The Written Examination

96. The written protocols for holding the written examinations of the DipWCF, including the instructions to the senior invigilator and the candidate instructions, and associated documents were found to be thorough and well drafted.
97. The question papers are sent by special, signed delivery in a plastic security envelope to the Examinations Department of each College. The question papers are secured within an independent envelope within the plastic envelope. Instructions are given not to open the question paper envelope until 15mins before the exam.

98. The Examinations Department of each College implement their own invigilation arrangements in relation to the number of candidates. After each written exam the WCF Registrar is provided with a signed candidate attendee list and the names of the invigilators who were present. Written instructions to the College invigilation teams are provided.
99. The candidates written examination answer papers are usually collected in person by the WCF Registrar or WCF Assistant Registrar from a College Invigilator. Occasionally, the papers are delivered to the examiner hotel and kept in a safe until the WCF Registrar or WCF Assistant Registrar arrives to collect them. The papers are made available to the examiners for marking once the WCF Registrar or WCF Assistant Registrar opens the package of papers at the marking site.
100. The written papers and marking guides were made available at the practical and oral examination; the papers having been marked the previous day by the examination team. The marking and moderation, when required, had been completed on the tablets provided by WCF Registrar so the marks awarded were made available on that system when requested.
101. The marks allocated for each part of a question should be clear to the candidates. Question 1 of this Autumn's written paper stated that 4 marks would be given for each of the five parts of the question. The marking guide outlined that 1 mark would be given for the diagram and 3 marks for the written answer; this information could have usefully been given to the candidates as well as the examiners.
102. The examiners held a post examination meeting with the WCF Registrar which covered the written, practical and oral parts of the examination. This was observed at each of the Colleges and variation was seen in the content and quality of the discussion. Feedback was provided for inclusion in the Registrar's Report, the Company's internal quality assurance self-assessment document. This included discussion of individual questions from the written paper but at one of the meetings moderation of borderline grades made up the bulk of the discussion. The AC recommends, that for all examination teams, moderation of the practical examination should be done in the forge at a time close to the original assessment whilst the horse and the shoes are still available for scrutiny.
- Secretariat note:*
The WCF agree this point and will include modifications going forward.
103. Clarification is required as to who receives the WCF Registrar's Reports and how this contributes to the cycle of continuous improvement.
- Secretariat note:*
The WCF confirms that Registrar Reports are produced and discussed after each exam session. These are formally reviewed at the next subsequent EEG meeting and then formally discussed at the next Court meeting. Minutes from meetings are made available to those on the Examination Board on a secure webpage. The EEG Chairman is responsible for ensuring that actions are complete.
104. The WCF Registrar's Report for May 2021 includes Appendix A, a candidate feedback survey. Responses were received from 15/50 candidates and there is no record of whether those responding had passed or failed which may be expected to influence the results. Question 4 asked whether all parts of the DipWCF examination were clearly explained: 100% answered yes. Question 7 was "In your opinion, would you support the idea of the written paper being completed on a computer rather with a pen and paper." 40% responded yes and 60% responded no.

Practical Examination

105. The WCF examining team at each of the three Colleges consisted of a senior farrier examiner, a farrier examiner and a veterinary examiner. At Myerscough a probationary veterinary examiner was also present. The WCF Registrar or her deputy was also in attendance at each of the Colleges.
106. The briefings of the candidates were carried out by the WCF Registrar or her deputy in accordance with the WCF Examination Manual. Health and safety aspects including the mandatory need for personal protective equipment and the timings, and the time checks which would be provided were outlined. The examiners were introduced, the location of the first aid kit identified to all present, and the role of the sweepers clarified. The horses were allocated by ballot.
107. Suitable resources were provided by the Colleges for the practical examination and included mainly well-behaved horses, one was unruly and substituted, with feet generally in good condition and reserves available. One horse was rejected by the veterinary examiner due to lameness and the reserve substituted.
108. The WCF Registrar's Report for the May 2021 examinations reveals that for the first day at one of the Colleges the horses were not suitable. The AC recommends that the WCF write to the colleges prior to each examination reminding them that sound, well-behaved horses with feet suitable for the examination should be provided for all examinations in order to give apprentices a fair and equal chance of success.
Secretariat note:
The WCF confirm this can be achieved.
109. Horse passport copies were provided at one college but not at the other two. Original passports should travel with the horse.
Secretariat note:
The WCF confirmed that Colleges will be reminded about this requirement and the consequences should this not be fulfilled.
110. Farriery consent forms, Appendix 21 to the WCF Examination Manual, were completed.
111. The instructions included the type of shoe, shoeing interval and type of work. The horses were trotted up and a shoeing plan made. Trimming, shoe making, fitting and finishing were assessed and the horse trotted up after shoeing.
112. The software and tablet marking system generally in use immediately highlighted any discrepancies in marking. Moderation was carried out swiftly and competently.
113. The AC observed both staggered starts and all candidates starting at the same time. At one of the Colleges several candidates were waiting to have shoes marked at the same time. It is noted that the preferred approach outlined in the Assessment Plan is that "two assessors observe up to a maximum of 4 apprentices at any one time, to allow for cost effective use of resources while maintaining quality and rigour," and that it is planned that both current DipWCF and EPA will run together from May 2023 until the current DipWCF is no longer available. The AC recommend that two examiners observe up to a maximum of 4 apprentices at any one time during the practical examination or when this is not possible staggered starts are utilised, as outlined in Section 21 of the WCF Examination Manual, to avoid delaying apprentices and ensure the fairness of the assessment

114. The examinations were generally well run by the Colleges, Examiners and WCF Registrar/Deputy Registrar. The examiners went to some effort to put the candidates at their ease.
115. The examination is a high stakes assessment which at the end of an apprenticeship of over 4 years had to be passed for an apprentice to register as a farrier. At one centre severe examination stress was evident in several of the candidates which resulted in scenes which were distressing for all concerned including the candidates, examiners, college staff and AC member.
116. Candidates that do not complete the practical assessment in time are asked to stop, which results in an automatic failure.
117. The final part of the practical examination is nailing on and finishing. The WCF Registrar's Report for May 2021 states that two horses were lame at one college on the post shoeing trot up having been sound pre-exam. Nail prick or nail bind whilst not being the only cause of post shoeing lameness are the most common causes.
118. The Assessment Plan outlines that for Assessment Method 4: Practical Assessment Shoeing Test a discretionary 10% extra time is allowed for the professional discussion but not currently for the 2-hour shoeing task. This could be looked at when the current Standard and Assessment Plan is reviewed.
119. The WCF Registrar's Report for May 2021 includes Appendix A, a candidate feedback survey. Responses were received from 15/50 candidates and there is no record of whether those responding had passed or failed which may be expected to influence the results. 100% of respondents (for the May 2021 examination) indicated that, overall, the DipWCF examination experience was positive.
120. High stakes assessments and final examinations are not uncommon at the end of training and prior to entry into other professions including Veterinary Nursing and other apprenticeships taught at the farriery colleges. However, the degree of stress appears to be higher and pass rates lower at the end of the farriery apprenticeship compared to some others.
121. Possible reasons for this may be: 1) Most apprentices spend the majority of their time during the apprenticeship re-shaping and fitting machine-made shoes whereas the DipWCF practical examination requires the making of shoes from bar stock to fit the horses' feet to a high standard: The examination tests something different from what many carry out day to day during their apprenticeships. 2) The examiners for the DipWCF are mandated to have to have the Fellowship of the Worshipful Company of Farriers (FWCF) and are the highest qualified and most respected members of the profession. In other apprenticeship examinations and many professional examinations, it is normal practice for those with entry level qualifications and practical experience to act as examiners.
122. The Standard states that practical skills include the ability to "make or reshape the shoe for the individual equine" and in the Assessment Plan Assessment method 4: Practical Assessment – Shoeing Test also states "make or reshape the shoe for the individual equine" so there is an opportunity for any End Point Assessment Organisation including the WCF to reflect the day to day shoeing practices, where the forging and fitting of shoes from bar stock is much less common than the re-shaping and fitting of machine made shoes. This might be seen as a matter of extent; to what extent do you examine for the 'most demanding circumstance', and to what extent for the 'most likely circumstance'. This subject could be

revisited when the standard and the assessment plan for this entry level qualification are reviewed.

Oral Examination

123. Sufficient resources were available. The Colleges provided a horse for the live anatomy assessment with the veterinary examiner, WCF examiners provided morbid specimens and the apprentices were required to bring their shoe boards to the oral examination.
124. Signed statements of authenticity for their shoe boards were required.
125. There was consistent questioning by the majority of the examiners during the oral assessment, with similar questions posed to the candidates on the shoe board, specimen anatomy and live anatomy.
126. One member of the AC witnessed overlap of the questions asked despite a brief discussion between the examiners beforehand.
127. There is no record kept of questions asked in the oral section of the theory part of the examination and no marking scheme despite this accounting for 50% for the theory marks.
128. Selection of questions was not always from the DipWCF syllabus published in Annex 1 of the DipWCF Examination Manual 2021.
129. In view of these findings and to ensure the validity, reliability and fairness of this part of the examination the AC recommends that the range of questions for the oral assessment are planned and agreed beforehand along with a marking scheme and the questions and marks are recorded as they are for the written and practical part of the examination.
130. The WCF should consider whether it is necessary, in order to maintain the security and fairness of the examination, to keep candidates under invigilation for the duration of the oral assessments.

Secretariat note:

The WCF confirm this can be difficult at all colleges due to logistics however further considerations will be made to address the issue.

Resits

131. Some candidates re-sit the current DipWCF on multiple occasions. Permission from the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education would be required before a limit on the number of attempts could be applied. Recruitment of apprentices likely to be able to successfully complete the DipWCF or identification of those unlikely to reach the required standard early in the course of the apprenticeship might save candidates failing after spending 4, 5 or 6 years of their lives as apprentices without obtaining a professional qualification. This suggests the need for a form of selection based on aptitude, and a willingness to remove from training those deemed to have no realistic prospect of completion of the apprenticeship; the current system may be said to facilitate, to some extent, unlawful practice.
132. The WCF's resit arrangements after the final DipWCF examination in November 2022 are that a failed candidate will have the opportunity of a resit in May 2023 and if necessary, in November 2023. Thereafter the current DipWCF examination will stop running and the new EPA will run along from May 2024 onwards.
133. The resit policy for the EPA is outlined in the AP as follows, "Re-sits and re-takes Apprentices who fail one or more assessment method will be offered the opportunity to take a re-sit or a re-take. A re-sit does not require further learning, whereas a re-take does. Apprentices should

have a supportive action plan to prepare for the re-sit or a re-take. The apprentice's employer will need to agree that either a re-sit or re-take is an appropriate course of action. An apprentice who fails an assessment method, and therefore the EPA in the first instance, will be required to re-sit the parts they have failed, if they fail a re-sit then they will be required to re-take the whole EPA. Any assessment method re-sit or re-take will take place at the next available EPA. Re-sits and re-takes are not offered to apprentices wishing to move from pass to distinction. Where any assessment method has to be re-sat or re-taken, the apprentice will be awarded a maximum EPA grade of pass, unless the EPAO determines there are exceptional circumstances requiring a re-sit or re-take.

Appeals

134. The WCF Complaint, Enquiry and Appeals Procedures are outlined on the WCF website and can be found at:
135. <https://www.wcf.org.uk/files/pdfs/App%2016%20Complaints%20and%20Appeals.pdf>
136. The WCF Registrar confirmed that no appeals had been received over the last two years.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The Farriers Registration Council (FRC) Approvals Committee (AC) visited the Diploma of the Worshipful Company of Farriers Diploma (DipWCF), End Point Assessment (EPA) and Associate of Worshipful Company of Farriers (AWCF) qualifications during Autumn 2021 to provide assurance to the FRC in relation to Section 11 of the Farriers (Registration) Act 1975 as amended.
2. The AC specifically addressed the recommendations made during the visit in Autumn 2021, took written submissions from WCF, visited the Examiners' Training and Standardisation Day and visited the practical and oral examinations at all three GB Colleges.
3. The AC recommends to the FRC that in relation to the EPA:
 - a) The WCF are asked to provide the End Point Assessment (EPA) syllabus / unit specifications to the FRC by March 2022.
 - b) A question bank for the new EPA should be developed so that the same opportunity is available to those undertaking the new EPA as is currently available to those taking the current DipWCF.
 - c) The WCF indicate whether the overseas DipWCF examination will be changed to mirror the EPA with trimming for an unshod finish, behaviours and business and IT skills included.

Secretariat note:

The WCF confirm the overseas DipWCF examination will mirror the EPA.

4. The AC recommends to the FRC that in relation to the current DipWCF:
 - a) The DipWCF continues to be approved by the FRC as a prescribed examination for entry to Part 1 of the Register of Farriers and that, on receipt of written confirmation that the conditions outlined in b)-p) will be met, that approval is for a period of 3 years.
 - b) The questions in the theory part of the examination will cover the full DipWCF syllabus over a rolling period of 3 years including questions on the Farrier, Approved Training Farrier and Apprentice Code of Professional Conduct.
 - c) The questions for the oral assessment are planned and agreed beforehand along with a marking scheme and the questions and marks are recorded as they are for the written and practical part of the examination.
 - d) Section 2 of the Dip Examination Manual 2021 should make it very clear that holders of the Dip WCF must be registered with the FRC in order to practise farriery in GB. GB and overseas candidates wishing to practise in GB should apply to the FRC upon notification of passing all elements of the apprenticeship (in GB) or passing the DipWCF (overseas).
 - e) Section 3 iii) and iv) of the DipWCF Examination Manual 2021 be amended to reflect that the United Kingdom has left the European Union and that mutual recognition of professional qualifications, EC Directive 99/42 and other EU Directives no longer apply
 - f) Section 3 of the Dip Examination Manual 2021 should be updated to include the 2017 amendment to the Farriers Registration Act as well as the updates already recorded.
 - g) The paragraph of the DipWCF Syllabus (Appendix 1 of the DipWCF Examination Manual 2021) headed Marking Guide should be amended to remove reference to the National Farrier Training Agency which ceased to exist in November 2013.
 - h) Section 30 of the WCF Examination Manual on the Monitoring of Standards should be updated to reflect the fact that an annual OFQUAL Statement of Compliance will be completed
 - i) Section 16 of the DipWCF Manual and the General paragraph of the syllabus at Appendix 1 OR the Anatomy and Physiology paragraph at Appendix 1 require amending to make it clear if detailed knowledge of the knee (carpus) and hock (tarsus) are required.

- j) The respective roles and responsibilities of the Examination Board and the Examinations Executive Group are clarified in the DipWCF Examination Manual 2021 as the terms of reference in that document do not currently differentiate between them. It would be useful for the examination manual to state who is responsible for producing the written examination paper.
- k) The criteria, other than FWCF for farrier examiners and equine experience and experience working with farriers for veterinary examiners, and processes used by the Examination Board in recommending persons to be appointed as examiners to the Court should be outlined in the Examination Manual in order to ensure that best practice is followed, that it is seen to be followed and that the best persons for the roles are appointed.
- l) The WCF informs candidates, examiners and the FRC of any change to the DipWCF syllabus as well as updating the WCF website.
- m) The WCF write to the colleges prior to each examination reminding them that sound, well-behaved horses with feet suitable for the examination should be provided for all examinations in order to give apprentices a fair and equal chance of success and that it is a legal requirement that the horses should normally travel with their original passports which should be available for inspection.
- n) Two examiners observe up to a maximum of 4 apprentices at any one time during the practical examination, as outlined in the Assessment Plan for the EPA, or when this is not possible staggered starts, as outlined in Section 21 of the WCF Examination Manual, are utilised to avoid delaying apprentices and ensure the fairness of the assessment.
- o) All examination teams carry out moderation of the practical examination in the forge at a time close to the original assessment whilst the horse and the shoes are still available for scrutiny.
- p) Clarification is required as to who receives the WCF Registrar's Reports and how this contributes to the cycle of continuous improvement.

5. The AC recommends to the FRC that in relation to the AWCF:

- a) The AWCF continues to be approved by the FRC as a qualification suitable for entry to the ATF list and that, on receipt of written confirmation that the conditions outlined in b) and c) will be met, that approval is for a period of 3 years.
- b) The WCF informs candidates, examiners and the FRC of any change to the AWCF syllabus as well as updating the WCF website.
- c) The health and safety requirements relating to the use of synthetic materials during the AWCF practical are clearly established and communicated to the candidates and the examiners including the specification of any masks which may be required.

Secretariat note:

The WCF confirm these recommendations will be completed.

6. The AC recommends to the FRC that in relation to Conflicts of Interest:

- a) In addition to completing an Examiner Declaration Form annually, either one is completed prior to each examination, or the current form is modified to include a declaration that examiners will notify the WCF Registrar if a new conflict of interest arise during the year.
- b) The Examiner Declaration of Interest Form be attached to the Code of Conduct Policy, or a hyperlink provided in the policy.

Secretariat note:

The WCF confirm these recommendations will be completed.

