BVA Official Veterinarians revalidation survey report - August 2018

In response to member concerns around the revalidation requirements for OCQ(V)s, and the potential for a detrimental impact on the UK’s ability to respond to disease outbreak and service export certification needs both now and post-Brexit, we invited members to tell us which qualifications they hold, which they have dropped, and which they are not planning to revalidate, and why.

What are Official Controls Qualifications (Veterinary) (OCQ(V)s)

Official Veterinarian (OV) is the term used to describe private practice veterinary surgeons who perform work on behalf of an EU member state. The work performed by Official Veterinarians is normally of a statutory nature (i.e. is required by law) and is often undertaken at public expense. To become an OV, it is necessary to be a full member of the RCVS; hold the appropriate Official Controls Qualification (Veterinary); and be appointed to act as an OV by APHA.

There is no requirement to be a vet to undertake OCQ(V) training or to hold an OCQ(V) qualification, but only vets holding an OCQ(V) qualification and who are full members of the RCVS and are working in GB can be authorised as APHA Official Veterinarians (OVs). OVs holding OCQ(V)s and working in other jurisdictions which recognise the qualifications, such as Jersey, will receive OV authorisation through their own Government department. There is no limit to the number of OCQ(V)s that an individual can hold.

Improve International was appointed in 2015 by the Animal & Plant Health Agency (APHA) to manage the registration and training of OVs in England, Scotland and Wales.
The validation period for each OCQ(V) is listed on the Improve International website. To retain the qualification, it is necessary to successfully complete revalidation training before the end of the revalidation period appropriate to the specific OCQ(V).

There is now the option to complete the revalidation module in a face-to-face environment for those OVs who prefer this style of learning. This option is instead of the online learning module and delegates will still be required to pass the online exam and upload CPD and case logs.

As it is a requirement to hold the relevant current OCQ(V) in order to operate as an OV, the OV status of a vet will expire with the expiration of the related OCQ(V), meaning they will be unable to continue to carry out OV work. The expiry date is determined from the date on which an individual passed either the original OCQ(V), from 1st April 2015 if granted the OCQ(V) by grandfather rights or the date of previous revalidation training.

Improve International will send reminders to OVs prior to the expiry date of each OCQ(V). If revalidation is not completed, OV status is withdrawn for the relevant OCQ(V).

Each OCQ(V) costs £99 +VAT to revalidate.

BVA survey questions

Respondents were asked to indicate:

1. Their main area of veterinary work from a range of options, including ‘Other’
2. Which of the OV qualifications, as listed on the Improve International website, they currently hold or have held in the past.
3. Respondents were invited to select reason(s) from the following list, for choosing not to revalidate, and/or for dropping a previously held qualification (respondents could tick all that apply):
   - No longer relevant to my area of work
   - Too expensive to revalidate
   - Revalidation requirements are too onerous
   - Expiry of grandfather rights
   - OV work is insufficiently rewarding
4. Respondents were also given the choice to include further comments in a free text box at the end of the survey.

**Respondents**

The survey attracted an unprecedented number of responses for a single issue BVA survey—1298 in total.

The highest proportion of respondents were from small animal practice (42%), with a further 18% from predominantly production animal practice, and 18% from mixed practice. Equine practice represented 10% of respondents.

The remainder was comprised of vets working in government, industry, public health, academic institutes, or with laboratory or zoo animals.

**Qualifications**

- **OCQ(V) - ES Essential Skills (Prerequisite for all the other OCQ(V)s with the exception of the OCQ(V) – CA)**

957 respondents hold, or have held, this qualification.

Of the respondents who currently hold this qualification (880), the majority of respondents (657 individuals = 74.7%) are planning to revalidate when required. 223 individuals (25.3%) are not planning to revalidate.

The primary reasons for choosing not to revalidate were expiry of grandfather rights (67%) and revalidation requirements being too onerous (66%).

- **OCQ(V) - TT Tuberculin Testing - Tuberculin testing of cattle and other species**

712 respondents hold, or have held, this qualification.

Of the respondents who currently hold this qualification (411), the majority (337 individuals = 82%) are planning to revalidate when required. 74 individuals (18%) are not planning to revalidate.
The primary reason for choosing not to revalidate was the revalidation requirements being too onerous (58%) although cost of revalidating (42%) and OV work being insufficiently rewarding (42%) were also cited.

A total of 301 respondents have already dropped this qualification, with half of those dropping the qualification over three years ago. Of those who dropped the qualification over three years ago, 79% did so because it was no longer relevant to their area of work.

- **OCQ(V) - SS Statutory Surveillance - Currently Brucellosis, Anthrax and Sheep Scab**

657 respondents hold, or have held, this qualification

Of the respondents who currently hold this qualification (295), 192 individuals (65.1%) are planning to revalidate when required, with 103 (34.9%) not planning to revalidate. The primary reason for choosing not to revalidate is the requirements being too onerous (51%)

362 respondents had already dropped this qualification (55% of all those who hold or have held it). 201 individuals (30.6%) had dropped it in the last year. Of these, 62% cited expiry of grandfather rights as the reason, with 57% saying the revalidation requirements were too onerous, and 56% saying they were too costly.

- **OCQ(V) - EX Exports, General - Prerequisite for the other export courses and may be sufficient some cases (eg for the export of insects or live fish)**

641 respondents hold, or have held, this qualification

Of the respondents who currently hold this qualification (523), 322 individuals (61.6%) are planning to revalidate when required, with 201 not planning to revalidate, representing a loss of 38.4%

The primary reasons given for choosing not to revalidate were the requirements being too onerous (58%), and revalidation being too expensive (56%)

For the species bolt-ons the drop offs at the point of revalidation are anticipated to be:

- **OCQ(V) - SX Small Animal Exports - Export of companion animals, including pet birds and the Pet Travel Scheme, and commercial, including small zoo and lab animals**
45.5% (249 individuals out of 548)
Main reason: expiry of grandfather rights (64%)

• OCQ(V) - UXUngulate Exports - Export of ungulates, including equidae and large zoo and laboratory animals

51% (166 individuals out of 326)
Main reason: revalidation requirements too onerous (59%)

• OCQ(V) - EQ Equine Exports - Export of equidae

66% (160 individuals out of 244)
Main reason: expiry of grandfather rights (59%)

• OCQ(V) - AX Avian Exports - Export of poultry, including the Poultry Health Scheme and captive birds which are not pets

72.5% (111 individuals out of 153)
Main reason: expiry of grandfather rights (59%)

• OCQ(V) - PXProduct Exports - Export of products of animal origin, including food for human consumption and animal by-products

47.1% (94 individuals out of 200)
Main reason: too expensive to revalidate (53%)

• OCQ(V) - GXGerminal Products Exports - Export of germinal products, including the supervision of AI centres

68.4% (67 individuals out of 98)
Main reason: expiry of grandfather rights (52%)

• OCQ(V) - CACompanion Animals - Self-contained course for companion animal vets – Pet Travel Scheme and Pet Passports.

32% (184 individuals out of 573)
Main reason: expiry of grandfather rights (64%)