

**17 September 2015**

## **Schedule of Terms between Ofcom and the Radio Society of Great Britain on the conduct of Amateur Radio Examinations**

### **Introduction**

A pass in an examination of an agreed standard is required before any radio amateur licence can be issued.

This Schedule sets out the terms under which the Radio Society of Great Britain (RSGB) agrees to conduct amateur radio examinations and under which Ofcom agrees to recognise a candidate's result in those examinations for the purpose of granting an amateur radio licence.

### **Background**

The RSGB provided a Foundation level examination from 2002 and that service was expanded in 2003 to include Intermediate level examinations and again in 2004 to include Full (Advanced) level examinations. These services were under contract to the Radiocommunications Agency and then Ofcom. That contract was terminated in December 2005 and the RSGB provided the same services to the amateur radio community on a voluntary basis, recovering costs directly from the examination candidates rather than from Ofcom.

The Radio Communications Foundation (RCF), assumed responsibility for managing the examination system under a Schedule of Terms between Ofcom and the RCF from January 2007 and the RSGB continued to perform the day to day administrative work under a Memorandum of Understanding between the RCF and the RSGB.

Following agreement between Ofcom, the RCF and the RSGB that it is no longer appropriate to pursue accreditation as an awarding body it has been agreed that the RSGB will resume responsibility for managing the examination system as well as performing the day to day administration from 1 September 2015.

### **Terms of Agreement**

#### **Licence and examination structure**

Ofcom has a three tier licensing system, Foundation, Intermediate and Full, to which the Foundation, Intermediate and Advanced Amateur Radio Examinations are aligned.

#### **Syllabus**

The Syllabus will be contained within an Examination Specification. The UK examinations must be compatible with the CEPT harmonised arrangements set out in Recommendations T/R 61-01 and T/R 61-02 and any other international recommendations applicable to the radio amateur service.

Under this agreement, control and maintenance of the examination specifications (syllabus) will be the responsibility of the RSGB and the examination specifications will be published on the RSGB website. Ofcom and the RSGB will agree the standards to be met for each licence class.

### **Overall Administrative Structure.**

The RSGB will appoint an Examinations Standards Committee (ESC) responsible for oversight of the management structure and policy of the examinations. An Examinations Group, responsible to the ESC, will be responsible for the academic and examination performance standards. The RSGB will appoint an Examination Quality Assurance Manager and Examination Standards Manager, both of whom will report directly to the chair of the ESC. Additionally, the RSGB will appoint an Examinations Audit Committee responsible for undertaking and publishing an annual independent audit of the examination system each year. The terms of reference and membership of the component parts of the structure are attached as Annex A.

### **Examination Question Banks**

The RSGB will hold and maintain a master copy of the current question bank in an electronic format separate from any 'live' question bank in use by any examination management system.

The current question bank will remain confidential to relevant RSGB staff and volunteers with official roles under this Schedule. Ofcom may request sight of the question bank as and when required.

The current question bank is copyright of the RSGB. For the avoidance of doubt, copyright of the original question bank transferred from Ofcom to the RSGB will remain with Ofcom.

### **Examination Papers**

The RSGB will produce examination papers as required by a published examination timetable, or on request, as the case may be.

### **Examination Conduct**

The RSGB will publish Rules of Conduct for the examinations that ensure that appropriate amateur radio examination standards are adhered to by RSGB staff, RSGB volunteers and examination candidates.

The RSGB will maintain a register of examination venues, examination secretaries, invigilators and registered assessors who will provide examination services. The RSGB will have the reasonable authority to decline to register, or to withdraw registration, from any person or venue as the circumstances dictate.

The RSGB will ensure that appropriate arrangements are made such that candidates with disability or situations that might inhibit their ability to attend a recognised examination venue are able to take examinations. The RSGB will ensure that disabled candidates are not disadvantaged by these arrangements.

The RSGB will publish procedures for examination question challenges, irregular examination conduct and appeals against decisions. In the event of a complaint against any RSGB staff member, or RSGB examination volunteer, standard RSGB disciplinary procedures will be used.

### **Reports**

The RSGB will publish an annual report covering all aspects of performance of examinations performed under this Schedule. The annual report will be published on the RSGB website and will be in the public domain.

### **Examination Fees**

The RSGB may charge each candidate such an examination fee as is determined appropriate for the proper maintenance of the examination system. Such fees will be set on an equitable and non-discriminatory basis, irrespective of RSGB or other membership.

The RSGB will not give less than three months' notice of examination fee changes.

### **Examination Results**

The RSGB will submit details of successful examination candidates to Ofcom in an electronic format and at a frequency set by mutual agreement.

The RSGB will post results to candidates at the same time as they transfer data to Ofcom.

### **Data Protection**

The RSGB will take reasonable steps to ensure that examination documents and data, including those in electronic format, are protected from unauthorised access, forgery or misrepresentation.

### **Termination**

If either Ofcom or the RSGB consider that the examination system should be amended, that party will approach the other with its proposals and the parties will work together to agree acceptable change.

The RSGB will be free to cease providing examinations, and Ofcom will be free to cease recognising the examinations. It is anticipated that both parties will publicise such a decision on their websites and in any other manner they consider appropriate to ensure that prospective candidates are made aware, with sufficient notice, of the changing circumstances and any alternative arrangements for sitting amateur radio examinations.

## **Overall Management Structure**

The key elements of the examinations management structure are:

- RSGB Board
- RSGB Examinations Standards Committee
- RSGB Examinations Group
- RSGB Examinations Department
- RSGB Examinations Standards Manager
- RSGB Examinations Quality Manager
- RSGB Examinations Audit Committee

### **RSGB Board**

The RSGB Board will appoint:

- an Examination Standards Committee Chair
- an Examinations Audit Committee Chair

The RSGB Board will also provide, in accordance with RSGB Articles of Association and Bylaws, a route for examinations appeals and the resolution of disputes.

### **RSGB Examinations Standards Committee**

The Examination Standards Committee Chair will appoint an Examinations Standards Committee (ESC) responsible for the oversight of the management of the examination system. ESC Terms of Reference are set out in Appendix A.

ESC Chair will also appoint:

- an Examinations Group Chair
- an Examinations Standards Manager
- an Examinations Quality Assurance Manager

### **RSGB Examinations Group**

The Examinations Group Chair will appoint an Examinations Group (EG). The EG will report to the ESC and will be responsible for managing examination performance standards, the examination question bank and examination specifications. EG Terms of Reference are set out in Appendix B.

## **RSGB Examinations Department**

The Examination Department (ED) is employed by and reports to the General Manager. The Examination Department is responsible for the day-to-day administration of the UK amateur radio examinations in accordance with the defined procedures. ED Terms of Reference are set out in Appendix C.

## **RSGB Examinations Standards Manager**

The Examinations Standards Manager (ESM) is appointed by and reports to the ESC Chair. ESM is responsible for developing and documenting the internal and external procedures that govern the running of the UK amateur radio examinations. ESM Terms of Reference are set out in Appendix D.

## **RSGB Examinations Quality Assurance Manager**

The Examinations Quality Assurance Manager (EQAM) is appointed by and reports to the ESC Chair. EQAM is responsible for auditing the processes of the UK amateur radio examinations, for coordinating examination inspections and for investigating reports of non-compliance with the defined procedures. EQAM Terms of Reference are set out in Appendix E.

## **RSGB Examinations Audit Committee**

In order to satisfy the RSGB Board, Ofcom and other stakeholders of the integrity of the examinations system, the Board and Ofcom will jointly commission an independent Examinations Audit Committee (EAC) to conduct reviews annually. The committee will be chaired by a suitably independent person, nominated by the RSGB and agreed by Ofcom<sup>1</sup>. EAC Terms of Reference are set out in Appendix F.

## **Probity of the Examination System and Data Protection**

In order to ensure the probity of the examinations and data security, a 'Chinese wall' will exist between the Examination Department and the remainder of the RSGB to prevent information about individual candidates and exam questions leaking out, or improper interference on exam standards leaking in.

In order to ensure the exam system is not subject to undue interference from the rest of the RSGB the separation of duties is set out clearly in the Appendices. Anything that cannot be resolved at Committee level will be subject to Board level resolution, in consultation with Ofcom, as is appropriate.

---

<sup>1</sup> The suitably independent Chair will be well versed in matters of corporate governance and have no role in UK amateur radio training, assessment or examination.

## **Appendix A: Key Roles & Responsibilities: Examinations Standards Committee (ESC)**

The ESC Chair is appointed by and reports to the RSGB Board. ESC Chair appoints those Committee members who are not there ex-officio.

### **Composition**

1. Chair
2. Ofcom representative
3. EG Chair
4. EQAM
5. ESM
6. TEC Chair
7. Examinations Department representative
8. Air Cadet Organisation Radio Officer
9. ESC RSGB Board Liaison Member (non-voting member/observer)
10. A member from a learned society (non-voting member/observer)
11. A member from industry (non-voting member/observer)
12. A member from an academic body (non-voting member/observer)

### **Terms of Reference**

1. To ensure that the syllabi continue to meet Ofcom's requirements, remain relevant and continue to reflect the requirements of a modern amateur radio service whilst ensuring that the examinations continue to cover the internationally agreed Amateur Radio syllabus (HAREC).
2. To ensure that the examinations are run in accordance with the Schedule to the MOU agreed between Ofcom and the RSGB,
3. To ensure, so far as is practicable, that the examinations are consistent with CEPT T/R 61-02,
4. To hear appeals against an ESM decision.
5. To examine on a yearly basis the performance of the examination system.
6. To publish a report on the RSGB website.

### **Frequency of Meetings**

As much of the Committee's work as possible will be completed via e-mail or teleconference.

The Committee will meet at least once a year.

### **Reporting**

The Committee will produce an annual report which shall contain:

1. An assessment of the overall examination performance,
2. Details of any syllabus changes,
3. Key points from the Examination Standards Manager's Report
4. Key points from the Examination Group report,
5. Key points from the Examinations Department Report
6. Key points from the Examination Quality Assurance Manager's Report
7. Recommendations for any changes/future work.

## **Appendix B: Key Roles & Responsibilities: Examinations Department**

The Examination Department is employed by and reports to the General Manager.

The Examination Department is responsible for the day-to-day administration of the UK amateur radio examinations in accordance with the defined procedures.

### **Composition**

1. Examinations Secretary (full time)
2. General Manager's Personal Assistant (part-time)
3. RadCom Technical Editor (part-time)

### **Terms of Reference**

1. Processing applications for Exam Centres and Registered Assessors, issue relevant paperwork and maintain records.
2. Processing requests for examination papers.
3. Processing completed examination papers, including checking that appropriate practical assessments have been completed, optical marking, issuing of results, notifying Ofcom of successful candidate details.
4. Liaising with ESM on matters pertaining to procedures, forms and the Examination Management Administration System software.
5. Liaising with Training & Education Committee on matters pertaining to training and assessments.
6. Liaising with the Examinations Group on matters relating to examination questions and results.
7. Providing the EQAM with details of all examinations that have been booked.
8. Processing any reports of irregularity in accordance with the Handling of Irregularities and Appeals document.
9. Preparing an Annual report to the Standards Committee.

### **Reporting**

The RSGB Examinations Department will produce an annual report for the annual meeting of the Examinations Standards Committee which shall contain:

1. Details of the numbers of 'live' Exam Centres and Registered Assessors.
2. Details on the numbers of examination papers processed.
3. Details of any specific issues arising during the year.
4. An assessment of the Examinations Management Administration System software.
5. Recommendations for changes and further work.

## **Appendix C: Key Roles & Responsibilities: Examinations Group (EG)**

The EG Chair is appointed by and reports to the ESC Chair. EG Chair appoints the Committee members who are not there ex-officio.

### **Composition**

1. Chair
2. 2 or 3 members with educational background who hold a Full UK Amateur Radio Licence
3. 2 or 3 members with radio engineering background who hold a Full UK Amateur Radio Licence
4. Air Cadet Organisation Radio Officer
5. RSGB Examinations Department Secretary
6. Chair may invite ESM, EQAM, RSGB General Manager and/or Training & Education Committee Chair as non-voting observers.

### **Terms of Reference**

1. To maintain the examination standards according to the requirements for the granting of an amateur radio licence as set out in the Schedule agreed between Ofcom and the RSGB,
2. To set and review the examination pass marks
3. To ensure that the Examination Question Banks are fully populated
4. To solicit, review and vet all examination questions from others
5. To consult with the RSGB Training & Education Committee on any proposed changes to the syllabi before presenting to the Examinations Standards Committee
6. Investigate and rule on any complaints by candidates on the contents of the examinations papers.
7. Produce an annual report for the RSGB Examinations Standards Committee.

### **Frequency of Meeting**

As much of the Group's work as possible will be completed via e-mail or teleconference.

The Group will typically meet 3 or 4 times a year.

### **Reporting**

The Group will produce an annual report for the annual meeting of the Examinations Standards Committee which shall contain:

1. An assessment of the overall examination performance,
2. Outline of examination questions added to and/or removed from the question banks,
3. Details of any syllabus changes,
4. Summary of any complaints received by the Group and the outcome of those complaints,
5. Recommendations for any changes/future work.

## **Appendix D: Key Roles & Responsibilities: Examination Standards Manager (ESM)**

The ESM is appointed by and reports to the ESC Chair.

ESM is responsible for developing and documenting the internal and external procedures that govern the running of the UK amateur radio examinations.

### **Terms of Reference**

1. Develop and maintain written procedures that define the work of the RSGB Examination Department, the Examinations Group (EG), the Examination Quality Assurance Manager (EQAM) and the examination inspectors; those procedures will cover all aspects of the administration of the UK amateur radio examinations.
2. From time to time conduct reviews of examination documentation and associated administrative documents, to ensure that procedures are at all times appropriate, properly documented and are of a standard to ensure that the examination system operates to a high level of integrity and consistency.
3. Maintain a list of documents and ensures that the latest versions are available from the RSGB Examination Department, on the RSGB websites and other outlets.
4. Adjudicate on appeals against decisions made by the Examination Group and/or the Examination Quality Assurance Manager.
5. Assist the EQAM in the inspections of examinations and acts as the deputy to the EQAM when required.
6. Prepare an Annual report to the Standards Committee.

### **Reporting**

The Examination Standards Manager will produce an annual report for the annual meeting of the Examinations Standards Committee which shall contain:

1. An assessment of the administrative procedures.
2. Details of any changes to procedures made during the year.
3. A summary of appeals against EG/EQAM decisions.
4. Recommendations for changes and further work.

## **Appendix E: Key Roles & Responsibilities: Examination Quality Assurance Manager (EQAM)**

The EQAM is appointed by and reports to the ESC Chair.

EQAM is responsible for auditing the processes of the UK amateur radio examinations, for coordinating examination inspections and for investigating reports of non-compliance with the defined procedures.

### **Terms of Reference**

1. From time to time assesses the operation of the Examination Department, to check consistency with documented processes.
2. Undertakes, or arranges, unannounced inspections of examination centres, in accordance with agreed procedures (target is 10% of all examination sittings).
3. Creates and maintains an organisational capability to inspect examination venues on a sampling basis and/or in cases of concern. This will include enrolling others in the task and providing appropriate guidance and training.
4. Investigates non-compliance with examination procedures or other irregularities and provides reports to the Examination Standards Manager, who will consider the matter in accordance with the document "Handling of Irregularities and Appeals".
5. Assists the Examination Standards Manager in the development of procedures. The Examination Standards Manager may act as deputy to the EQAM, if required.
6. Prepares an Annual report to the Standards Committee.

### **Reporting**

The Examination Quality Assurance Manager will produce an annual report for the annual meeting of the Examinations Standards Committee which shall contain:

1. An assessment of the operations within the Examinations Department
2. An inspection report, containing the numbers and results of inspections
3. Details of the numbers of inspectors in place, recruited, trained.
4. A summary of any investigations into possible irregularities.
5. Recommendations for changes and further work.

## **Appendix F: Key Roles & Responsibilities: Examinations Audit Committee (EAC)**

The EAC is appointed by and reports to the RSGB Board.

EAC is responsible for carrying out an independent audit of the Examination system annually.

### **Composition**

The committee is chaired by the RSGB Honorary Treasurer and will comprise the independent members of the ESC who will use attendance at the Committee meetings to gather evidence for their audit:

1. Chair (mutually agreed by RSGB Board and Ofcom<sup>2</sup>)
2. Ofcom
3. A member of a learned society
4. A member of an industry body
5. A member of an academic body

### **Terms of Reference**

1. To review syllabi and procedures for the UK amateur radio examinations and their implementation
2. To provide an opinion on whether the syllabi and procedures are suitable and sufficient and being implemented
3. To provide an overall opinion on whether the examination system remains 'fit for purpose'.
4. To report the audit findings to the RSGB Board and Ofcom.
5. To ensure that the RSGB Board put in place an action plan to address any shortfalls or recommendations made by the EAC.
6. To publish a summary audit report together with the Board's Action Plan to resolve any issues raised by the EAC.

### **Frequency of Meetings**

As much of the Committee's work as possible will be completed via e-mail and/or teleconference.

It is envisaged that the bulk of the audit field work will be carried out through attendance at the Standards Committee meeting where the relevant reports are presented and discussed. However, it is recognised that further inspection of documents/records and/or interviews with key players may be required.

The Committee is likely to meet twice or three times each year:

1. Prior to the Standards Committee meeting to plan the audit
2. As part of the Standards Committee meeting to receive reports and question the authors
3. After the Standards Committee meeting to cover any outstanding issues and to agree the report findings.

---

<sup>2</sup> A suitably independent Chair will be well versed in matters of corporate governance and have no role in UK amateur radio training, assessment or examination.

## Reporting

The RSGB Examinations Audit Committee will produce an audit report for the RSGB Board and Ofcom which shall contain:

1. Details of what evidence has been taken into account.
  2. An opinion on whether published procedures are suitable and sufficient
  3. An opinion on how well published procedures are being implemented.
  4. An overall opinion on whether the examination system is fit for purpose.
  5. Recommendations on any shortfalls identified.
  6. Recommendations on any changes/future work.
- 

Signed:

John Gould

Signed:

P. Jarvis

Date:

17 September 2015

Date:

17 September 2015

Name:

Dr John Gould, G3WKL

Name:

Paul Jarvis

for Radio Society of Great Britain

for Ofcom