



Instructors' Newsletter

May 2014 edition

2014-2015 Advanced Exam schedule

		Exam Time	Closing Date for Exam Entries
2014			
Tues	1 July	19.00hrs	9 June 2014
Wed	20 Aug	19.00hrs	29 July 2014
Sun	12 Oct	10.00 (Convention)	19 Sept 2014
Mon	8 Dec	19.00hrs	14 Nov 2014
2015			
Thur	29 Jan	19.00hrs	7 Jan 2015
Sat	7 Mar	14.00hrs	13 Feb 2015
Fri	1 May	19.00hrs	11 April 2015
Tues	30 June	19.00hrs	9 June 2015
Wed	19 Aug	19.00hrs	29 July 2015
Sun	11 Oct	10.00 (Convention)	18 Sept 2015
Mon	7 Dec	19.00hrs	16 Nov 2015

Please note that the October Sunday exams are planned to coincide with the RSGB Convention dates but are open to all exam centres that are able to open at the appropriate time.

Any queries? Please contact Exams Department on 01234 832717 or e-mail exams@rsgb.org.uk

Please also remember the lead time for Foundation and Intermediate examinations. It is two weeks (10 clear working days).

The aim is to get papers delivered in time for a non-delivery to be queried and resolved. If your papers have not arrived seven days before the exam please email exams@rsgb.org.uk or ring 01234 832 717.

Issue of formal results

Tutors are asked to please remind candidates not to chase their results until at least the same day two weeks after the exam. It takes time to post papers back and receive results in the post and there is a six day pause after receipt at HQ to allow time for any queries and challenges to arrive before the results are uploaded to Ofcom.

Each enquiry about results can only slow the process down and there are far too many enquiries. If there is a significant delay or problem tutors will be informed.



Conduct of Examinations booklet

The Conduct of Examinations booklet has been amended to incorporate optical marking and is identified as Second Edition 2013. Some copies of an early version dated 2012 were sent out before a change in local marking procedures was agreed. Those copies are out of date and must be destroyed.

The current booklet is available on the RCF/RCE/Exams website at www.commsfoundation.org/rce/exams/conduct.html

Paper copies are available from the RSGB Examination Department.

What if...?

Queries on examination questions have identified some candidates, and possibly tutors, are introducing 'what if...' thoughts into the question asked. That must be avoided. With a bit of imagination it is likely to be possible to devise an odd situation in which there can be dispute as to a correct answer. The question author cannot anticipate every unusual scenario and devising a narrative to counter them all would turn the question into an essay in English.

It is important to answer the question asked and not introduce extraneous circumstances.

When asked to compare the utility of two items, for example an oscilloscope and a frequency counter to measure a frequency one must take it that the two items are working as intended unless there is an explicit statement to the contrary. If one idly assumes the oscilloscope is brand new and the frequency counter is 25 years old and battered to bits then an answer that the 'scope will be more accurate is credible. That however is not the question asked.

It is also important to note that the 'assumed knowledge' is limited to the relevant syllabus. For example, the antenna system impedance is said to be 'about 50Ω ' at Intermediate level whereas at Advanced we expect candidates to know that different antennas have different feedpoint impedances. Questions should not allow those with a higher knowledge to select incorrect distractors.

Syllabus areas needing examination items

The number of items required is coming down and thanks are due for your sterling efforts.

Foundation

None required but nice to have one more each in 2c1 2c8 3b4 4b4 8a1 8a5 8a6 8d1 9a6 9b1

Intermediate

None required but nice to have one more each in 2c4 3d3 4d5 4h1 4i2 5a2 5a5 7b1 7b2 7c1 7c2 8e1

Advanced

Urgent: 2b1 2g1 2h1 3k1 4h1 4i1 4q1 7a1 7c1 7d1 9a1 9a2 9b1 9e1 10c1

Wanted: 2f1 3e3 4g3 4h2 7a2 7b1 7b5 7e1 9c1 9f1 10a1

Where items are shown as urgent then up to three items per syllabus topic will be acceptable from any one author. Otherwise two will be sufficient to allow a range of authors and styles.



Please do not simply change a distractor to make a different item; items on the same topic should seek to examine a different aspect of it.

All authors are warmly thanked for their inputs; it is very much appreciated.

Do please read the guidance notes first.

A £20 RSGB book token is offered for 10 accepted items in requested areas. It is appreciated that not everybody wants payment but the club would benefit from a small stock of books to give to those candidates less able to afford their own.

Accepted items become RSGB/RCF copyright and must not be used for local tutoring please.

Paying for exams online

The new system is in the process of being implemented and on-line payment will be notified in RadCom and on the tutors Yahoo Group as soon as it is available. Credit card payment remains an option, either using the appropriate form or over the phone.

Train the Trainers

A new project lead has taken on the task of rebuilding the Train the Trainers courses. He is applying his professional skills in this area and it is intended to offer the revised course before the end of this year. Details will be released as soon as they are known. In the meantime, new Trainers and Assessors are advised to use the Training and Assessment Guide on the RSGB website (see below).

Training guidance

A reminder that guidance on planning, recruiting and running training courses is available on the 'Guidance for Trainers' page of the RSGB website.

<http://rsgb.org/main/clubs-training/tutor-resources-2/training-guide/>

Many enquiries to the RSGB Examination Department or on the tutors' reflector can be answered by reading the guide!

Candidates with special needs

Reminder. Special needs candidates must provide a letter from their medical or educational professional adviser setting out what facilities are requested, not a statement of their circumstances. This may entail the candidate being properly assessed by their adviser and the overall process is likely to take several weeks. Only facilities professionally requested can be approved. The adviser must be qualified and practising in the discipline concerned.

At least 28 days' notice to the RSGB Examination Department is required and Exam Centres must not make unapproved arrangements as that will invalidate the examination and cause distress. Guidance letters to the Exam Centre and the GP or other professional are available from the Examination Department. You should read these guidance notes carefully. All too often we receive from the GP or other authorised person a statement of the candidate's difficulty but no information that helps us identify what to do about it.



Playing the game by The Rules

An inspector turned up at one exam venue to find a real possibility of introducing a number of young ladies into the hobby. Sadly it turned out to be a ballet class not an amateur examination. Investigation revealed that the exam, an Advanced exam, had been held a couple of days earlier yet the returned paperwork indicated all was in order and the exam had been held at the appointed time. Further investigation showed this had happened on a number of previous occasions and that there had been deliberate attempts to conceal that fact even when directly asked.

Both the examination centre concerned and those involved have now been removed from the list of registered centres and exam officials. It was possible to confirm the candidates had not, in that instance, had any unfair advantage and on that occasion their results were allowed.

This did happen a while ago and those involved will not be named, that is considered unfair. This is not the first time an exam centre has been de-registered. During 2013 a number of examination papers have been invalidated and other penalties applied. These are not always reported as there is no wish to embarrass innocent candidates (or tutors) who have the misfortune to be caught up in such activities.

Clubs should note that, unlike the Foundation and Intermediate examination, an Advanced exam is held at precisely the same time in every centre across the UK which has applied to hold the examination. For that reason it must be held on the booked date and at the stated time. No dispensation can be allowed and if it is found that an exam is not held as booked then not only is that exam invalidated at that centre but consideration must be given as to whether other exams across the country have been compromised to the extent that their safety cannot be assumed. Irregularities at the advanced level may therefore have serious consequences.

At any level the exam must be held as booked and in accordance with the rules in the Conduct of Examinations booklet (see above).

If an inspector turns up and cannot find the exam despite being sure he is at the correct premises then the exam is invalid. In cases of emergency, fire, flood etc., it is recognised that exceptional circumstances apply but the RSGB Examination Department **MUST** be advised before any changes are made, either by email or recorded phone call (if the office is closed) so it is clear the message was sent or left before the exam was held.

Failure to follow the rules can affect not only the admissibility of that exam but the status of the centre and persons involved.

Please play with a straight bat, not doing so is most unfair to those who have studied hard and can result in serious consequences. The candidates have paid good money for their exam, they deserve a fair one.