



Examinations and Syllabus Review Group

Meeting Held on 1st February 2020 at The Barnes Hotel, Cardington.

1 ATTENDEES

1.1 ESRG Members

Donard de Cogan M0KRK (Chairman), Alan Betts, G0HIQ, Tony Jones, G7ETW, Greg Fenton, M0ODZ, Mike Bruce, M0ITI

1.2 Observers

Dave Wilson, M0OBW. (EQAM)

Nigel Barker, M0HZR, (ESM)

Steve Thomas, M1ACB, (GM)

Willem Bijl

1.3 Apologies for Absence

Roger Bleaney, M0RBK

Scott Larson, GM4CLQ

2 Chairman's remarks

3 RSGB Tutors Group (groups.io)

3.1 Moderation

This has been brought under control by Steve Thomas Arrangements need to be made for longer term management. Greg M0ODZ, Alan G0HIQ and Tony G7ETW proposed as moderators. AGREED

Steve M1ACB asked "will there be enough 'Training Cover' in the group". After discussion the group felt that now, under new membership, we consider 'yes'.

4 Membership of ESRG.

The question was raised whether it necessary for members to have been Full Licence tutors? **Agreed** modify rules to include that "that they may be a tutor but must hold a full licence". Being a full licence holder is still required however since members of the group have access to the question bank as well as adjudicate on question challenges.

Action – Steve M1ACB to change advert. Mike M0ITI to draft announcement of change.

5 Review of the Implementation of new syllabus

5.1 Exam Pass rates

- Foundation - 429 candidates, 90 failed 79% pass rate
- Intermediate – 73 candidates, 15 failed 58% pass rate
- Full – 80 candidates, 36 failed. 55% pass rate

The above figures include 'no-shows' by candidates.

It should be noted that the new syllabus has been running since September 2019 and a more accurate picture will emerge after more exams have been taken.

5.2 Defects in the question bank.

It is acknowledged that there have been a very few instances of defective questions, but overall, the number of challenges has considerably reduced compared to the pre-syllabus 2019 question bank.

6 Electrical Safety section of Syllabus

This relates to the complexities relating to Protective Multiple Earth (PME) installations following an observation from Ian Hope.

Wording to be revised for at all levels for syllabus item (8A2)

Action – Alan GOHIQ to circulate revised wording to ESC and chair of EMC copy to Ian Hope and then update syllabus and question bank accordingly when approved.

7 Perpetual Syllabus Review

7.1 RFC style review process

Mike M0ITI outlined process for RFC implementation using groups.io

Nigel M0HZR suggested a formal RFC system. **Action** Nigel M0HZR to demo a formal RFC system.

Process to be agreed in principle by ESC prior to implementation.

7.2 Textbooks

It was noted that with more frequent, albeit minor, changes to the syllabus, textbooks editions would become out of date.

Actions: Textbooks will need to be updated as required, stores management already ensures that we do not over order specific revision. Textbooks to bear version reference number of the updated syllabus. Website URL of errata to be included in documentation. <https://rsgb.org/main/publications-archives/books-extra>

8 Single Step to Full Licence

8.1 Consultation Process

The consultation needs to be done. ESC meeting at end of March. A list of potential items for inclusion was discussed to be sent to the Chairman of the ESC, Tony Kent who is to drive the consultation.

8.2 Composition of the syllabus for single step exam.

Alan Betts has prepared a draft syllabus for the single step exam for consideration by the ESRG

9 Publishing the Question Banks.

Should we investigate whether we are permitted to publish the question bank?. If possible, do we want to do this?

9.1 Opinions

9.1.1 For

- Could work for “Recall” questions.
- Possibly for Foundation and Intermediate.
- The USA and some other countries already do this.

9.2 Against

- Requirement is to test understanding; therefore, element of surprise is needed – i.e. student has not seen question before.
- The main exam boards do not publish questions.
- Publication could create spurious challenges to questions.
- Ofcom own the copyright of the original questions. We would need Ofcom’s permission.
- Are there enough questions in the bank if we were to publish them all?

Actions. Report to ESC that discussion has taken place and pros and cons considered. For ESC to then advise further action.

10 Target demography for Amateur Radio promotion

Paper from Tony G7ETW regarding demography at which amateur radio should be promoted to be referred to the ARD.

11 Errors in Textbooks

A paper regarding some potential errors and observations of the Textbooks was presented to the meeting by Willem Bijl. **Agreed** : This paper to be referred to the authors of the textbooks.

The chairman placed on record his thanks to Willem for this carefully considered paper.

12 Email groups.

Nigel M0HZR and Greg M0ODZ to be added to ESRG email group

Tony G7ETW and Greg M0ODZ to be added to Exam Challenges email group. *(Noted that Tony G7ETW is already in ESRG email group.)*

Members were reminded to use the group names in the 'To:' field of the recipient email address rather than use individual email addresses. This ensures that everyone in the relevant group is kept fully aware of proceedings.

Actions: Steve M1ACB to notify IT Support, Mike M0ITI to prepare draft announcement of new member (Greg M0ODZ)

13 Level of English skills required for exams.

What is the 'reading level' that should be expected of candidates. The group discussed at length the question of the level of English that is expected of candidates sitting an amateur radio exam

Proposed wording for guidance: "The level of English and phrasing used should be as straightforward as possible and, in any event, not exceeding the level of English required to understand the Amateur Radio Licence". Candidates are reminded that foreign students who have been in the UK for less than 2 years may take a language translation dictionary into the examination. Preparation for exams by referring to mock exams and sample questions will also help in preparing candidates for the style and level of English used in the qualifying exam. This principle has been adopted in the development and migration of questions into the new question banks.

14 Examinations Challenges

Under the new procedures the chairman reports on challenges since the previous meeting and copies the replies sent to the challenger.

It was noted that, since the implementation of the new guidelines for evaluating challenges and notifying challengers, the feedback to the chairman has been positive.



15 Status of Question Banks

Further questions to be written for the new question banks at all levels.

Action Alan Betts, Roger Bleaney, Mike Bruce, Tony Jones

16 Documentation

On Individual level syllabus documents, append relevant schedules and preamble for level.

Action Mike Bruce

17 Transparency

Minutes of ESRG meeting to be published to Board & RSGB Tutors Group after checking by ESC Chairman and RSGB Communications Manager

18 Tutors Newsletter.

Future ESRG meetings to consider items for publication in a Tutors Newsletter as appropriate. All teams within Learning Delivery to be invited to contribute material. Tony Jones to edit.

19 Next Meeting

To be largely devoted to review and approval of questions and question setting.