

## Exams & Assessments

### **Theory modules**

When I receive a module application from a new candidate, I direct them to relevant study resources, including past papers. I thought it might be useful to publish an article covering these resources so that those who are just considering taking a module will know what is available to support their study.

The first thing to say about modules is that they are not compulsory but many find taking these both enjoyable and rewarding, as well as helping those of us for whom school and college days are a dim and distant memory, to exercise the grey matter! Quite apart from that, they can help you to broaden your beekeeping knowledge and therefore compliment your practical beekeeping.

Before I cover available study resources, here is some further information and advice.

### **Know what to expect**

New module candidates sometimes seem a bit surprised by the formality of the exam and this can put them off if they are unprepared. Make sure you know what to expect – talk to beekeepers who have already done modules, and/or your Association Education Officer and review past papers (which are essential for revision purposes). As Exam Secretary, I am happy to discuss approaches to study with prospective candidates and can be contacted by email at [education@wbka.com](mailto:education@wbka.com)

Exam technique is hugely important and can be practiced.

Section A is a confidence builder – 10 questions requiring short answers – one or two words or a short phrase – 1 mark each – maximum 10 marks

Section B – 4 out of 5 questions must be answered – bullet point style answers rather than an essay – 15 marks each – maximum of 60 marks.

Section C – 1 out of 2 questions must be answered – essay style – carries most marks – 30.

BBKA have published example answers for Modules 1, 2 & 3 and these will give you a good idea of the level of detail which is required – see separate links.

### **My other top tips**

Make sure you know what is in the current syllabus – the content can, and does, change.

Read the question – TWICE! It is very easy to answer the question you hoped for, not the one which has actually been asked!

Don't spend too much time on Section A. If you don't know an answer – move on. They are only worth 1 mark each.

Section B – REMEMBER – bullet point answers not essays. Or, you will run out of time for the Section C question which does require an essay!

Follow the candidate instructions – in particular, don't answer more questions than you need to. You can drop one in Section B and one in Section C. Drop the questions on topics you are least confident with.

DON'T PANIC – draw on your practical experience. For example, if asked how to move a colony, run through the steps you would take in practice and write these down. There is a good chance you will pick up marks even if you go completely blank when trying to recall what you read on the topic.

### **Study resources**

There are lots of resources to aid your study. It is not necessary to have every book on the BBKA book list (and it would cost a lot to try) but you do need to read widely and not rely on just one or two publications.

Think outside the box on study resources. They are not all in book form. There are lots of resources online, including BeeBase, and there are Facebook study groups for all the modules. YouTube has good and bad – as long as you can tell the difference it is a brilliant resource. I used this to tap into some great lectures which really helped me with M3.

Don't overlook things like the equipment supplier catalogues which can be a great resource for M1.

There are also correspondence courses available through BBKA. These can be used individually or by a group. There may be others in your association who would be interested in joining such a group so ask around. They can be a very sociable way of studying, perhaps during the winter months.

If you are thinking of setting up a study group based around a correspondence course, I'm happy to share a suggested approach to this.

### **Additional support**

We are committed to helping all beekeepers to undertake module study. If you have a disability or learning difficulty, or a health problem or injury, and think you will need additional support (which might include extra time or being able to use a laptop), please tick the box on the application form. You will be asked to provide details of the condition supported by appropriate evidence to enable us to consider what additional support measures are appropriate.

### **The practical route as an alternative to modules**

Written exams are not for everyone so there is an alternative in the form of practical assessments (also not compulsory though many beekeepers choose to do these as well as modules).

These begin with, then build on, the Basic Assessment. The General Husbandry certificate is open to those who have passed the Basic Assessment and have at least 5 years practical beekeeping experience. WBKA has provided a General Husbandry preparation course for Wales candidates and may be able to run similar events in future if there is sufficient demand.

There is also now a Bee Health Certificate. This is also a practical assessment and can be a great stepping stone between the Basic Assessment and General Husbandry.

Drop me an email if you would like further information on either.

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