

EBKA AGM 2024

Exam Officer Report

2023 Exams Summary

Module Exams

In 2023, four people took, and passed, module exams – three taking module 1 and one person taking module 7.

In-person exams were held in both the March and November sessions with just one candidate at each. Although candidates should be encouraged to participate, and not everyone has the technical skills or ability to sit exams online, it is a relatively costly and time-consuming exercise to undertake for just one candidate.

Basic Assessments

In 2023, 32 beekeepers undertook the Basic Assessment. The results were: 7 passes, 19 credits and 4 people were awarded a distinction, and were presented with a Miss Avey Award. One person failed and one did not attend.

Some certificates were presented at the Conference in November, but the majority of recipients did not attend and their certificates were either presented at a local level or were sent on to them directly.

Junior Assessment

One candidate, from Braintree Division, took and passed the Junior Assessment.

Bee Health and Husbandry

There was one General Husbandry candidate, from Epping Forest, who passed the assessment, and there were no Bee Health applicants.

2023 Exams Summary (to date)

Spring Module Exams 2024

Key dates:

- 23rd March 2024 - Module exams. Two candidates, from Colchester and Braintree divisions, are sitting module exams (2, 3 and 6), one online and the other in-person.
- 30th April 2024 - closing date for Honey bee breeding (this date has been extended from previous years)

Bee Health and General Husbandry 2024

Three candidates from Epping Forest division have registered for the General Husbandry exam, which will be arranged directly by the BBKA.

To date, three candidates from Braintree have registered for the Bee Health exam.

Basic Assessments 2024

As yet, I have not been notified of any specific arrangements for this year's Basic Assessment, but please could members be mindful of our local deadline of 30 June for applications. This will be a great help for me to allocate assessors and avoid disappointment for potential candidates.

To date three candidates, from Epping Forest and Braintree divisions, have registered for the Basic Assessment.

BBKA Exam Secretary Survey

In the autumn, the BBKA surveyed assessors and local exams secretaries and the survey output is attached. A lack of Basic and Bee Health assessors was highlighted as a national problem and this is reflected in our own county.

Diane Brooker
5 March 2024

BBKA Assessors and Local Exams Secretaries survey

To better understand the availability of assessors across the country and their utilisation, the Exam Board conducted a survey with all local exam secretaries and all BBKA assessors. This was especially important for the Basic and Honeybee Health assessors, since some associations had reported shortage.

The survey was open from 3rd till 29th October 2023. Of the 78 local exam secretaries in the country, 37 took part, and of the 201 assessors, 106 participated, giving an overall engagement of 51%. Many thanks to all those who gave us their valuable feedback and for their time in completing the survey.

There were 17 local exam secretaries who reported that they have shortage of Basic and Honeybee Health assessors. At the same time, the assessors in these associations felt they are underutilised. Indeed, 50% of the assessors in the survey felt that they are underutilised, with only 4% of them stating that they are overutilised. The average time travelled by a Basic and Honeybee Health assessor currently is 1 hour, with over half (58%) of the assessors stating that they will be willing to travel further to conduct assessments. There were also some extremes reported, where assessors have had to make over 4 hours return journey, for assessments. The majority (78%) of the local exam secretaries stated that in the last two years, they have used assessors from neighbouring associations and almost all of them (92%) confirmed that they use eR2 to find and appoint assessors. In addition to the current systems, there is clearly further work we need to do, in helping local exam secretaries identify and make best use of available assessors, where needed.

When asked '*How many additional Basic and Honeybee health assessors your association will benefit from?*', those who reported shortage, requested between 1 and 3 extra assessors. Therefore, in 2024, the Exam Board will aim to have additional 25 Basic and 25 Honeybee Health assessors trained for those associations who indicated shortage. This is four times the number of assessors normally trained each year. There are certain requirements that need to be met before an assessor is trained. This is especially important for the Basic and Honeybee health assessors, who conduct the assessments 1:1 with the candidate, and there is no verification of the outcome by a second assessor.

Most (76%) of the local exam secretaries stated that they are either 'Very satisfied' or 'Satisfied' with the support they receive from the Exam Board. However, there were two associations (Yorkshire and Lancashire Northwest) who stated that they are either 'dissatisfied' or 'very dissatisfied'. We would like all areas to feel well supported in running the local exams. To that end, the Exam Board will reach out to those who are dissatisfied, with the aim to understand their challenges and how can their activities be supported better.

When asked '*How helpful and clear are the communications you receive by the BBKA Examinations Board?*', 82% of the local exam secretaries responded that they find them either 'extremely helpful' or 'very helpful'. Similar was the feedback given to us by our assessors, with 71% of them answering with 'good' and 'clear', when asked on the clarity and timeliness of the Exam Board communications.

The feedback received from both assessors and local exams secretaries was rich, and it gives us a lot to consider. Some of the points that were raised on more than one occasion from the assessors include:

- Hands on practical training
- Refresher events and regular standardisation exercises
- Annual summaries with general patterns of weaknesses to inform tutors delivering training
- Visibility of the final exam results after moderation

Common feedback from local examinations secretaries was:

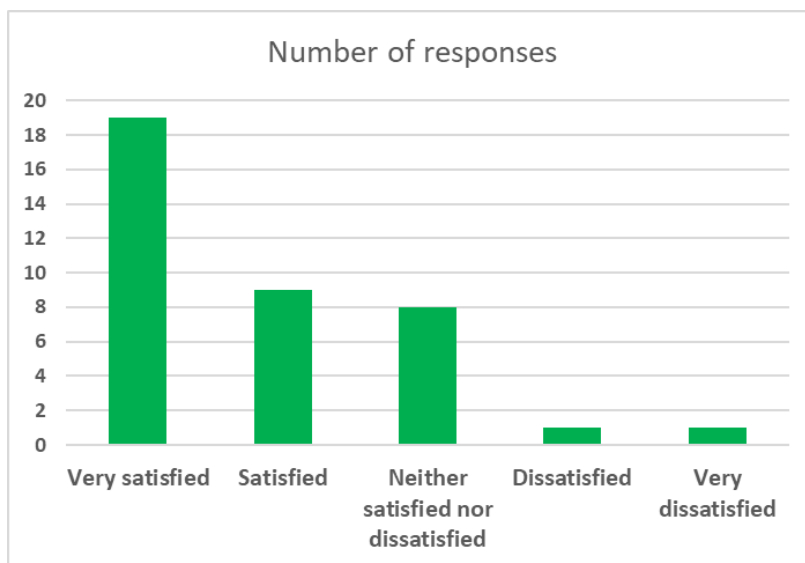
- List of candidates who have passed
- Better communication on candidates with special needs requiring support
- Better system for finding available local assessors

It is good to see that overall, the communications and support given by the Exam Board to assessors and local exams secretaries in the conduct of the local assessments is at the right level. There are some associations that require further support, and we will look at ways to correct this. The disparity in assessors who feel underutilised and local exam secretaries who feel they need more assessors is a challenge we also need to address, as it leads to inadequate use of resources and increased costs to the BBKA or to our members. While training of new Basic and Honeybee health assessors (also costly) follows an annual cycle, under the circumstances it appears it is only part of the solution. In addition to training of new assessors for the associations that indicated requirement, we also need to look at further systems and resources, to better facilitate the search, communications, and appointment of assessors by the local exams secretaries.

Marin Anastasov, NDB

Chairman BBKA Exam Board

As Local Exams Secretary, how satisfied are you with the support given to you by the BBKA Examinations Board, in managing the assessments in your association?



As an Assessor, how satisfied are you with the support given to you by the BBKA Examinations Board, in conducting assessments?

