BOARD OF THE
NATIONAL DIPLOMA IN BEEKEEPING

THE NATIONAL DIPLOMA IN BEEKEEPING PROSPECTUS AND QUALIFICATION

INTRODUCTION

The National Diploma in Beekeeping (NDB) is a qualification awarded for meeting the criteria and standards set out in the specification for the diploma and detailed in the Syllabus

It is recognised to be the most detailed and comprehensive beekeeping qualification in the British Isles

It is independent of national beekeeping associations and governmental agencies.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

Beekeeping is not just a craft, a hobby or an industry; it is an activity which is important as an enabler of ecosystem services as well as providing honey bee hive products much valued by humans

The aim of the NDB qualification is to provide evidence of a broad-based competence in the knowledge and its practical application to beekeeping and closely related subjects and which will influence beekeeping practices

The assessment process allows the candidate to demonstrate their knowledge, competence and communication skills, and ability to disseminate this through training and education

The qualification is intended to offer a nationally recognised qualification at an advanced level to beekeepers throughout the British Isles

The NDB requires candidates to bring together advanced practical competence, current research, critical judgement, teaching, communication, and the application of evidence to beekeeping practice

As a group, those qualified to the NDB level aim to promote the understanding and development of beekeepers and help aspiring candidates to study specific subjects in the syllabus by offering study courses at an advanced level

Holders of the NDB also aim to foster a community of beekeepers committed to best practices, ethical standards and knowledge to help beekeepers meet future challenges.

SCOPE OF THE QUALIFICATION

The prospectus invites the student to become comfortable in researching the practical and scientific literature; to attend courses and lectures and develop associated advanced beekeeping skills through the study of a comprehensive range of subjects focussed on *Apis mellifera,* primarily as found in the British Isles.

THE USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI)

There are many applications for AI. Candidates can use AI which is appropriate for study, revision, literature searching and the development of ideas, but the Board deem it an inappropriate use where AI-generated material is submitted as the candidate's own work. All assessed work must be entirely the candidate's own, demonstrating their own knowledge, judgement and authorship.

KEY SUBJECT AREAS

These are as follows, with more detailed information provided in the syllabus:_

- Honey bee biology
- Honey bee health – the pests and diseases and other factors that pose a threat to honey bees in the British Isles
- Honey bee nutrition
- Beekeeping in the British Isles
- The diversity of approaches to honey bee husbandry in the 21st century
- Veterinary medicines chemical substances, treatments and practical beekeeping
- Beekeeping equipment
- Health and safety in beekeeping
- Primary honey bee products
- Honey bees and ecosystem services
- Climate change and weather
- Technology, literature and information.

COMMUNICATION

The demonstration of good communication skills is an important aspect of the NDB

The candidate is expected to demonstrate knowledge of and the ability to use readily accessible digital technologies for the acquisition of knowledge and information. Especially their use when in communication with a wide variety of audiences, for example beekeepers, the public, politicians and policy makers and all those whose activities and responsibilities might affect the health and well-being of the honey bee.

ELIGIBILITY

The NDB Board is committed to equality, diversity and inclusion and welcomes candidates from all backgrounds

An application form and further details are available on the NDB website at https//national-diploma-beekeeping.org

Applications to take the examination and assessments of the NDB are considered without discrimination on the grounds of age, disability, gender, marital status, pregnancy or maturity, race, religion, beliefs, sex or sexual orientation

Assessments and moderation are based solely on merit or competence, in accordance with the qualification's standards. Reasonable adjustments will be made for candidates with disabilities or specific access needs, where appropriate, and in line with the legislation, without compromising the integrity of the qualification

The Board reserves the right to decline a prospective candidate from formally taking the examination and assessments if they do not believe the candidate has any chance of being successful. Where appropriate helpful advice will be given on how to meet the eligibility criteria.

ROUTES TO QUALIFICATION

The NDB requires self-motivated study and extensive practical experience of beekeeping preferably gained with the husbandry of both the candidate's own honey bees and those of others

Candidates should already be demonstrably competent in managing numerous colonies before embarking on the qualification

The candidate should be prepared to demonstrate eligibility by listing the qualifications and experience already held in their application

Attendance at courses and practical events that will help the prospective candidate in their studies, knowledge acquisition and experience are highly encouraged. The candidate is recommended to keep a record of these events and insert them into a portfolio of beekeeping experience.

THE COMPOSITE PARTS OF THE DIPLOMA

They are:

- WRITTEN EXAMINATION
    - A single three-hour exam paper typically held in March of the examination year containing questions covering a range of topics inviting the candidate to consider, compose and respond, usually in an essay format
    - It consists of one compulsory question and a choice of three questions from a further five
    - The written examination is typically carried out and invigilated remotely on-line and requires the candidate to have access to a computer with the appropriate software and internet connection
    - The paper is blind marked independently by two examiners and the marks awarded are validated by the moderator.
- DISSERTATION
    - Candidates will be given a topic and asked to prepare a short dissertation
    - The candidate will be informed of the expected word count. The dissertation should be the candidate's original work and usually involves some fact finding, collation and interpretation of the data, drawing conclusions and making practical recommendations on how the conclusions could be applied to beekeeping
    - The dissertation should show powers of analysis, with arguments which are clear and structured. The presentation must be tidy and conform to the accepted conventions in connection with referencing, bibliography and footnotes

- The topics are generally issued in the January of the examination year, with the submission of the work agreed with the NDB Secretary
- The exact dates will be confirmed by the Board to candidates once the application for the NDB Examination and Assessments has been submitted
- The dissertation will be discussed during a *viva voce* in the later practical day.

- PORTFOLIO OF BEEKEEPING EXPERIENCE
  - Candidates are required to prepare and present a portfolio demonstrating their beekeeping activities including evidence of teaching beekeeping activities / honey bee related topics and other involvement in the craft of beekeeping. This will be assessed and discussed during the practical day.
- BOTANY AND ENTOMOLOGY PORTFOLIOS
  - Candidates are required to prepare and present two portfolios containing a presentation of correctly identified specimens of plants and insect species of importance to honey bees and beekeeping, or their contribution to ecosystem services, such as pollination
  - It is suggested that the candidate chooses and prepares materials selected from a guidance list of plant species which is available on the NDB website and specimens from the orders of insects (listed in the syllabus)
  - The portfolios are not limited to pinned insect specimens and pressed plants but can include materials in any format or media
  - The portfolios should ideally be given to the NDB Secretary (or nominated representative) on the practical day, unless other instructions are given in advance.

- PRACTICAL ASSESSMENT ELEMENTS
    - Laboratory and apiary-based assessments of several activities take place over one full day, usually in summer at a third-party location
    - 60-75 minutes will be allowed for each segment of the assessment

APIARY BASED ASSESSMENTS		
BEE HANDLING	**OBJECTIVE**	**ELEMENTS**
The candidate is expected to be able to work three or four colonies that they will be viewing for the first time	To enable the candidate to demonstrate their ability to diagnose the health, availability of food reserves and condition of the colonies and to recommend any action to be taken. The candidate should be able to demonstrate advisory skills	During manipulation of the colonies the candidate will be expected to give a verbal narrative on what is being seen and the decision-making process for each manipulation. Other scenarios could include assessing a colony for sale, or carry out a demonstration for different types of audiences

LABORATORY BASED ASSESSMENTS		
PESTS AND DISEASES	**OBJECTIVE**	**ELEMENTS**
The candidate is expected to demonstrate an ability to identify common abnormal conditions, pests and diseases within the colony, including brood and adult diseases	To enable the candidate to demonstrate their ability to identify common abnormal conditions in the hive The candidate will be expected to conduct a honey bee dissection in a manner that can be used to demonstrate and teach honey bee anatomy to students	The candidate is presented with a selection of combs with various conditions and asked to make an assessment and comment Adult bee diseases are also tested at this session as well as the requirement of the candidate to complete a honey bee dissection on organs or systems as specified by the assessors

BIOLOGY	OBJECTIVE	ELEMENTS
The candidate is assessed on their knowledge of plants and other insects of relevance to honey bees. During this session the candidate's botany and entomology portfolios are reviewed	To enable the candidate to demonstrate an understanding and identification of plants and insects relevant to honey bees The insect and plant portfolios are used by the candidate to demonstrate that they have had sufficient touchpoints with plants and insects relevant to honey bees	The candidate will be presented with plant specimens, pollen slides, slides of insect parts and insect specimens, some of which, may be photographs or digital images and be expected to identify and elaborate on their link and importance to honey bees

- *VIVA VOCE* / ORAL ASSESSMENT
    - Focussed discussions will be conducted in person with the candidate
    - These will include discussion of the candidate's portfolio of beekeeping experience and submitted dissertation
    - During the *viva* the candidate will be invited to make a short (10 minute) impromptu presentation (with a short time given to prepare) on a topic they will be given without the use of any visual aids other than a whiteboard / paper and marker pens, which will be provided.

THE NDB EXAMINERS AND ASSESSORS

The examiners and assessors are nominated at the Annual General Meeting of the Board for each set of examinations and assessments offered by the NDB Board. Examiners and assessors are holders of the NDB.

THE APPOINTMENT OF THE MODERATOR BY THE NDB BOARD

The moderator is appointed in open voting at each Annual General Meeting of the Board. The moderator is a holder of the NDB.

FREQUENCY OF THE EXAMINATION YEAR

The examination and assessments are usually held every two years or as required

The current timetable can be seen on the NDB website

The NDB Diploma is not modular in nature and candidates are expected to be successful in all parts of the assessment and examination in the same year

Candidates who have passed the written examination and failed one or more of the Practical day assessments would not be required to re-sit the written examination for two years post failure

Candidates who have passed the dissertation part but failed other parts of the practical assessments would not be required to produce a new dissertation for two years post failure

Unless the portfolios were considered inadequate a rework and resubmission of the portfolios is not required

The practical day assessments (apiary, laboratory and interview based) are not modular and a candidate failing one element of these would be expected to retake all sections of the practical assessment (note the comment above on the dissertation).

COMPLAINT PROCEDURES

Any candidate or stakeholder who wishes to make a complaint regarding the conduct of the written examination, assessments and related administrative processes should submit the complaint in writing to the Secretary of the Board within 4 weeks of the results being issued

Complaints will be acknowledged promptly and investigated impartially by an individual or panel not previously involved in the matter

The complainant will be informed of the outcome in writing, together with reasons for the decision, and any appropriate remedial action to be taken.

FINALLY

The work required by the candidate to study for the NDB Diploma requires good organisation and planning

The new horizons which open up for the beekeeper to study and develop skills means that the successful candidate can be proud of their achievement and look forward to further contributing to the craft of beekeeping.

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