

BBKA BASIC ASSESSMENT APIARY REQUIREMENTS

It is the responsibility of the Apiary Manager and the candidate to ensure that the colonies and associated equipment meet the following criteria:

Before conducting the Assessment the Assessor should determine, as far as reasonably practical, that the following equipment is to hand:

- a queen-right colony of bees having brood in all stages, with honey and pollen stores, and covering at least eight brood combs and at least one honey super. Colonies affected by foulbrood or seriously affected by any other disease are unacceptable;
- the component parts of a brood frame and a sheet of wired foundation together with the necessary nails and tools ready for assembly in front of the Assessor;
- a suitable container to hold a sample of bees;
- a working smoker with spare fuel, hive tool(s) and any other items required to enable colony inspection;
- clean protective clothing and equipment;
- **a container with a solution suitable for cleaning equipment.**

Ideally the Assessment should be conducted at an apiary not belonging to the candidate because the Assessment should not take into account the condition of the colonies presented. Local association apiaries or apiaries belonging to the Assessor are best because the quality of the bees is known before the Assessment.

Normally a group of candidates (up to 4 or 5) should be instructed to attend a common venue at about hourly intervals. When there is only one candidate to be assessed then the candidate should travel to the Assessor. This is highly desirable on economic grounds as well as quality of bees.

On the occasions that the Assessor travels to the candidate then if the Assessor considers that the colony offered by the Candidate is unfit for inspection for the purposes of the Assessment, then the Assessor is entitled to ask the Candidate to propose a second colony explaining the reasons why. In a situation where the Assessor is offered a substitute colony by the Candidate and this colony is also unsuitable the Assessor cannot proceed with the Assessment.

Where assessors travel to an apiary, it is essential that an apiary manager or other responsible person should be present for the duration of the assessment(s). **This is for health & safety and safeguarding reasons.** Details of how to contact emergency services must **also** be available and should include a map reference and postcode (where applicable).

If these requirements are not met the assessment will not proceed and fees will not be refunded.



BBKA BASIC ASSESSMENT SYLLABUS

Applicable from January 2024

AIM

To provide new beekeepers with a goal which will give them a measure of their achievement in the basic skills and knowledge of the craft. It is hoped that it will be a springboard from which to launch into the more demanding assessments.

A pass in the Basic Assessment is a prerequisite for entry into all other assessments.

The BBKA does not support any specific third-party training providers.

1. Conditions of Entry

- 1.1 The Candidate shall have managed at least one colony of bees for a minimum of 12 months.
- 1.2 The entry form and fee shall have been received by the BBKA, or the Secretary of the BBKA Examinations Board.
- 1.3 The candidate must be a member of the BBKA.

2. The Assessment

- 2.1 An Assessor, approved by the Board, is required to conduct the Assessment at any suitable apiary. Normally only the Assessor and Candidate shall be present at the Assessment. The Board may wish a trainee Assessor or member of the Board to be present as an observer.
- 2.2 The Assessment shall consist of four parts and the Candidate must achieve the pass mark in all four parts individually in order to pass the Assessment as a whole. The pass mark is 50% in each part. A credit will be awarded if the total mark is 75% or greater **and a distinction if the mark is 90% or greater.** The parts are:
 - 2.2.1 Manipulation and Equipment. Practical Assessment of the Candidate's ability to handle bees and beekeeping equipment and the ability to interpret what is observed.
 - 2.2.2 Oral questioning and Assessment of the Candidate's knowledge of Natural History and Beekeeping.
 - 2.2.3 Oral questioning on Swarming, Swarm Control and effects.
 - 2.2.4 Oral questioning on Diseases and Pests,
- 2.3 Scientific names, although useful and show a greater depth of knowledge, are not required.

The length of the Assessment should not normally exceed one hour. The final date for an assessment is 31st August.

BBKA BASIC ASSESSMENT

SYLLABUS

1.0 MANIPULATION AND EQUIPMENT - PRACTICAL

The Candidate will be aware of:

- 1.1 the care needed when handling a colony of honey bees;
- 1.2 the reactions of honey bees to smoke;
- 1.3 the equipment needed to open a colony of honey bees and the importance of its cleanliness;
- 1.4 the reasons for opening a colony;
- 1.5 the need for stores.
- 1.6 the importance of record keeping.

The Candidate will be able to:

- 1.7 open a colony of honey bees and keep the colony under control;
- 1.8 demonstrate lighting and the use of the smoker;
- 1.9 demonstrate the use of the hive tool;
- 1.10 remove combs from the hive and identify worker, drone and queen cells or cups if present, and to comment on the state of the combs;
- 1.11 identify the female castes and the drone;
- 1.12 identify brood at all stages;
- 1.13 demonstrate the difference between drone, worker and honey cappings;
- 1.14 identify stored nectar, honey and pollen;
- 1.15 take a sample of worker bees in a suitable container;
- 1.16 state the number of worker bees required for an adult disease diagnosis sample;
- 1.17 demonstrate how to shake bees from a comb and how to look for signs of brood disease;
- 1.18 name and explain the function of the principal parts of a modern beehive;
- 1.19 discuss the concept of the bee space and its significance in the modern beehive;
- 1.20 assemble a brood frame and fit it with wired wax foundation;
- 1.21 discuss spacing of the combs in the brood chamber and super for both foundation and drawn comb and methods used to achieve this spacing.

2.0 NATURAL HISTORY AND BEEKEEPING – ORAL QUESTIONS

The Candidate will be:

- 2.1 able to give an elementary account of the development of queens, workers and drones in the honey bee colony ;
- 2.2 able to state the periods spent by the female castes and the drone in the four stages of their life (egg, larva, pupa and adult);
- 2.3 able to name the main local flora from which honey bees gather pollen and nectar;
- 2.4 able to give a simple definition of nectar and a simple description of how it is collected, brought back to the hive and is converted into honey;
- 2.5 able to give a simple description of the collection and use of pollen, water and propolis in the honey bee colony;
- 2.6 able to give an elementary description of the way in which the honey bee colony passes the winter.

- 2.7 able to give an elementary description of how to set up an apiary;
- 2.8 able to describe what precautions should be taken to avoid the honey bees being a nuisance to neighbours and livestock;
- 2.9 able to describe the possible effects of honey bee stings on humans and able to recommend suitable first aid treatment;
- 2.10 able to give an elementary description of the annual cycle of work in the apiary;
- 2.11 able to describe the preparation of sugar syrup and how and when to feed bees;
- 2.12 aware of the need to add supers and the timing of the operation;
- 2.13 aware of the dangers of robbing and how robbing can be avoided;
- 2.14 able to describe a method used to clear honey bees from supers;
- 2.15 able to describe the process of extracting honey from combs and a method of straining and bottling of honey suitable for a small scale beekeeper, including hygiene;
- 2.16 aware of the various web based resources relating to beekeeping such as BBKA and Beebase.

3.0 SWARMING, SWARM CONTROL AND EFFECTS – ORAL QUESTIONS

The Candidate will be:

- 3.1 able to give an elementary description of swarming in a honey bee colony;
- 3.2 able to give an elementary account of one method of swarm control;
- 3.3 able to describe how to take a honey bee swarm and how to hive it;
- 3.4 able to describe the signs of a queenless colony and how to test if a colony is queenless;
- 3.5 able to describe the signs of laying workers and of a drone laying queen;
- 3.6 able to describe a simple method of queen introduction;
- 3.7 able to describe one method of uniting colonies and precautions to be taken;

4.0 DISEASE AND PESTS – ORAL QUESTIONS

The Candidate will be:

- 4.1 able to describe the appearance of healthy brood, sealed and unsealed;
- 4.2 aware of the reasons for good apiary hygiene;
- 4.3 aware of the reasons for regular brood comb replacement.;
- 4.4 able to describe the signs of the bacterial diseases American Foul Brood (AFB) and European Foul Brood (EFB), the fungal disease Chalk Brood and the viral disease Sac brood;
- 4.5 able to describe methods for detecting and monitoring the presence of varroa (a mite) and describe its effect on the colony including awareness of the effect of associated viruses;
- 4.6 aware of acarine (a mite) and nosema (a fungus) and their effect upon the colony;
- 4.7 able to describe ways of controlling varroa using integrated pest management techniques;
- 4.8 aware of the current legislation regarding notifiable diseases and pests of honey bees;
- 4.9 aware of whom to contact to verify disease and advise on treatment;
- 4.10 able to describe how comb can be stored to prevent wax moth damage;
- 4.11 able to describe how mice and other pests can be excluded from the hives in winter;
- 4.12 **able to describe the procedures for cleaning poly and wooden hives.**