

# Collaborative Report

Exam board meeting: 21-Jun-2024

**Master of Veterinary Medicine, 2023/24**

**Lead examiner: Dr Zoe Belshaw**

**Collaborating examiner(s): Miss April Lawson**

## The Programme

**Please comment, as appropriate, on the following aspects of the programme:**

### 1.1 Course content

From what we can determine from the assessments and course overview, the course content appears engaging, and relevant to candidates' progression towards their relevant specialist status

**COURSE DIRECTOR: Mr Dominic Barfield**

**Course Director Response:**

**Action Required:**

**Action Deadline:**

**Action assigned to:**

### 1.2 Learning objectives, and the extent to which they were met

The learning objectives we have seen were appropriate, and met

### 1.3 Teaching methods

Based on the assessment grading and feedback, the teaching appears to be appropriate, thorough and supportive.

#### **1.4 Resources (in so far as they affected the assessment)**

Many thanks for providing an External Examiner's area on Learn with all the MCQs. It would be useful to have access to the compiled student documents sooner, but we appreciate this might not be possible.

As discussed both in last year's feedback and in pre-board meeting this year, in future it would be helpful to have the course overview, Assessment and Award regulations, the College Common Grading Scheme for the projects and summary of students in each year uploaded to the External Examiner's area of Learn at the same time as these documents are made available. If an overall, or residency-specific curriculum exists, it would be useful to have access to it/those, as we are asked on our feedback relative to it.

Additionally, if possible, could we have a list of which students are enrolled in which residency course at the time the main sheaf of documents are released (or perhaps to have the students' individual work within folders labelled by discipline?); we currently rely on guesswork based on their MSF to work out which student is in which programme until the final marks spreadsheet is released. That would make it easier, for example, to compare project feedback by discipline.

#### **COURSE DIRECTOR: Mr Dominic Barfield**

##### **Course Director Response:**

Thank you for your feedback

##### **Action Required:**

Exams to provide information as requested by EE; course overview, Assessment and Award regulations, the College Common Grading Scheme for the projects and summary of students in each year uploaded to the External Examiner's area of Learn. Also to work out how to highlight which students are in which discipline without highlighting their name please.

Action Deadline:  
Prior to Exam board 2025

##### **Action Deadline:**

##### **Action assigned to:**

Examinations team

## 1.5 Please provide any additional comments and recommendations regarding the Programme

As discussed, it would be good to see the feedback loop closed for the MCQ papers between External Examiner feedback and MCQs being released to students. How this will happen (a tracked changes exam paper for all feedback and amendments versus the current system of feedback on a separate document) must be decided before we are asked to review the MCQs next year. We would advise that the response to feedback be assessed internally rather than by our team. The forthcoming five year review of the exam will provide a good time to review how this will work.

We also discussed in the pre-board meeting whether it might be sensible to make it mandatory for all students to perform at least one DOPS, MiniCEX and case based discussion per year, or at least per three years, and to review the wording in the relevant section of the Awards and Assessment document (section 5.2.1) for clarity, irrespective of whether a change is made. This is a suggestion, rather than a recommendation, as we understand the constraints associated with this.

### COURSE DIRECTOR: Mr Dominic Barfield

#### Course Director Response:

Thank you for your comments. Our exams team are working on a new system to work on the MCQs for review, prior to uploading. A benefit of the WPBA is that the students can choose when and how they would like to be assessed, putting constraints on this might work for some disciplines though not necessarily all. We do not want to put any restrictions on the authentic, real-world relevance of using workplace-based assessments (WPBA) in this course. It provides the learner with individualised, continuous feedback encouraging reflective practice, if we designated the types of assessment tools that the students needed to use, we would restrict this freedom to assess the broadest range of competencies.

Thank you for this suggestion, though we will not be changing this.

#### Action Required:

Exams team to make sure that EE are given enough time to review exams and provide feedback for that to be shared by the question writers and then any changes highlighted to EE so they can see what modifications were made.

#### Action Deadline:

This should have happened 2025, though there was a delay in requesting MCQ from subject matter experts and course director made changes where appropriate. This is likely due to restructure or examinations team and change in how all courses are managed, though represents the third change in those involved in managing this course in as many years.

#### Action Deadline:

#### Action assigned to:

Examinations team

## Student performance

Please comment, as appropriate, on:

### 2.1 Students' performance in relation to those at a similar stage on comparable courses in other institutions, where this is known to you

Students perform well, if not better than, those in other institutions.

### 2.2 Quality of candidates' knowledge and skills, with particular reference to those at the top, middle or bottom of the range

Candidates' knowledge appears broadly excellent. Students show a clear progression in a broad range of skills, and have multiple assessment points for those skills within and between years. As discussed in the pre-board meeting, a couple of residencies with sufficient students enrolled to be able to see any trends consistently appear to generate very high MCQ scores but this may reflect the calibre of the students and/or their teaching. Equally, it is challenging to determine the significance of relatively low scores where there is only a single candidate enrolled in their programme across the three years. As per last year, the project grades remain within a relatively tight range with few exceeding 75%, and with grades typically moderated down rather than up.

## COURSE DIRECTOR: Mr Dominic Barfield

### Course Director Response:

It is good to be able to see progression in the years. Although we might not be able to have sufficient numbers to see trend in the year, though we might be able to see over the years.

**Action Required:**

**Action Deadline:**

**Action assigned to:**

### 2.3 Please provide any additional comments and recommendations regarding the students' performance

## Assessment Procedures

Please comment, as appropriate, on:

### 3.1 Assessment methods (relevance to learning objectives and curriculum)

The variety and frequency of assessment methods remains excellent. The WPBAs continue to provide excellent bespoke feedback to the students.

Miss A.L

\* continue

**COURSE DIRECTOR: Mr Dominic Barfield**

**Course Director Response:**

We understand that WPBA are a strength and asset to the programme, thank you.

**Action Required:**

**Action Deadline:**

**Action assigned to:**

### 3.2 Extent to which assessment procedures are rigorous

Procedures appear rigorous. It was unfortunate that a wrong answer had been included on the dermatology MCQ paper, reducing the number of questions from which marks were derived for this assessment. Please continue to ensure new staff members understand how to write good quality MCQs.

**COURSE DIRECTOR: Mr Dominic Barfield**

**Course Director Response:**

Thank you for your comments. We are continuing to work on helping support our internal examiners with this.

**Action Required:**

**Action Deadline:**

**Action assigned to:**

### 3.3 Consistency of the level of assessment with the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ)

The credit level for this course remains appropriate.

### 3.4 Standard of marking

As per our feedback last year, it remains difficult to determine how the project mark has been decided upon, and all projects scoring 55-75%. However, there were notable exceptions and we saw a good improvement in the summary of how the candidate could improve, at least from Reviewer 1, in most projects. Where facilitation comments were included, the criteria used to defend or amend a score appeared somewhat inconsistent and on occasion the proposed scores were relatively far apart. We again suggest that perhaps it would be worth reviewing whether the College Common Grading Scheme is the most appropriate marking method for this assessment when compared to the feedback being generated, or whether further training on its use specific to this assessment would be worthwhile. We were pleased to see an improvement in the poster and oral feedback mark scheme usage this year.

Broadly across the WBPAs there has been an improvement in feedback but there remain occasions where forms are incomplete (typically assessor job description), or written feedback does not match the performance box ticked - typically that specific action points have been recommended but the written feedback is non-specific. Tightening this would benefit students. As discussed, consider including interns and junior nurses in training as to how to complete Multi-Source Feedback such that the student gains maximal benefit from it. Consider incorporating a "background knowledge" assessment or similar into the Case Based Discussion feedback form, as a recommendation for improvement in this is frequently a comment in free text even when all the score boxes are ticked as excellent.

#### Miss A.L

\* performance  
\* assessment

#### COURSE DIRECTOR: Mr Dominic Barfield

##### Course Director Response:

Thank you for your comments. The common grading system is used throughout the college and although the rubric can be amended the scores are not. As you mention there might be parts that are related to new internal examiners and lack of familiarity with using this system. This is being looked at overall at the College.

##### Action Required:

##### Action Deadline:

##### Action assigned to:

**3.5 In your view, are the procedures for assessment and the determination of awards sound and fairly conducted? (e.g. Briefing, Exam administration, marking arrangements, Board of Examiners, participation by External Examiners)**

Yes. As described in the Section 1 of our feedback it would be useful in future years to have all the relevant background, exam regs and marking documentation available in the External Examiner area on Learn, and to have this material sooner than the day before the Board meeting. If available, we would welcome a curriculum, or curricula, and clearer signposting of learning objectives. The pre-board meeting was very fruitfully used this year.

**COURSE DIRECTOR: Mr Dominic Barfield**

**Course Director Response:**

Thank you and we hope this is provided by our team in subsequent years.

**Action Required:**

Exams team to provide information as requested

**Action Deadline:**

**Action assigned to:**

**3.6 Opinion on changes to the assessment procedures from previous years in which you have examined**

It was good to see our recommendation to standardise MCQ referencing adopted, and we support the plan for a clear template for referencing for next year. The quality of MCQ questions has improved somewhat, and hopefully closing the feedback loop will progress this further next year. We were pleased to see the recommended change to exam regulations in relation to the number of MCQs has been made.

**COURSE DIRECTOR: Mr Dominic Barfield**

**Course Director Response:**

Thank you for your comments, we hope that this will continually improve.

**Action Required:**

**Action Deadline:**

**Action assigned to:**

### **3.7 Please provide any additional comments and recommendations regarding the procedures**

As per previous years, the team are commended on running such a complex yet well designed assessment.

Please ensure that next year the project cover sheet includes information for the students to record ethical approval, as recommended last year.

#### **COURSE DIRECTOR: Mr Dominic Barfield**

##### **Course Director Response:**

Thank you.

##### **Action Required:**

Exams to include ethical approval in cover sheet for project

##### **Action Deadline:**

##### **Action assigned to:**

#### **General Statements**

#### 4.1 Comments I have made in previous years have been addressed to my satisfaction

No

**Additional comments, particularly if your answer was no:**

It would be useful to have feedback on our comments on the project mark scheme, as those made this year mirror those from last year and it forms a substantial chunk of the final year grade. As per the previous section, please ensure that an ethical review statement is included on the project cover sheet next year. Otherwise feedback, and actions, are satisfactory.

#### COURSE DIRECTOR: Mr Dominic Barfield

##### Course Director Response:

I can appreciate that this leaves some ambiguity.

The common grading system is used throughout the College and although the rubric can be amended the scores align in those 17-point boundaries. Whilst the spread of marks is relatively narrow for this year (55-75%), these projects have at time of submission likely been submitted to peer review for a publication in a journal aligning to the requirements of their specialty college, and therefore unlikely to be of a poor quality. Regarding inconsistencies in grading where they infrequently occur, this is likely multifactorial; training and experience, in addition to some examiners might have their own idea of grading a project not only on what is written though acknowledging the amount of perceived effort behind it (for example do retrospective projects score lower than prospective?). There can always be discrepancies and difference in understanding between examiners – though for the most part they should reach a consensus that the external examiners can understand. Will highlight to the internal examiners the importance of that in their comments in the exam board meeting and on the exam marking page, especially where there has been a disagreement between independent internal examiners =3 grade boundaries, that once an agreed mark is made the internal examiners have written a note on how they reached that grade which can be shared with the external examiners if required.

With regard the WPBA we have moved to using Microsoft forms this year whilst we wait for an electronic submission platform. It is more efficient for the assessors and students additionally less administration (emailing/scanning of documents).

##### Action Required:

Ethical review statement has been added to the project cover sheet following this, although those who have submitted the project prior to this being implemented wont have it.

##### Action Deadline:

01-Jul-2024

##### Action assigned to:

Lisa Harber

#### 4.2 An acceptable response has been made

Yes

**Additional comments, particularly if your answer was no:**

#### 4.3 I approved the papers for the Examination

Yes

**Additional comments, particularly if your answer was no:**

See previous comments on closing the MCQ feedback loop

**4.4 I was able to scrutinise an adequate sample of students' work and marks to enable me to carry out my duties**

**Yes**

**Additional comments, particularly if your answer was no:**

**4.5 I attended the meeting of the Board of Examiners held to approve the results of the Examination**

**Yes**

**Additional comments, particularly if your answer was no:**

**4.6 Candidates were considered impartially and fairly**

**Yes**

**Additional comments, particularly if your answer was no:**

**4.7 The standards set for the awards are appropriate for qualifications at this level, in this subject**

**Yes**

**Additional comments, particularly if your answer was no:**

**4.8 The standards of student performance are comparable with similar programmes or subjects in other UK institutions with which I am familiar**

**Yes**

**Additional comments, particularly if your answer was no:**

**4.9 I have received enough training and support to carry out my role**

**Additional comments, particularly if your answer was no:**

**4.10 I have received sufficient information to carry out my role (where information was insufficient, please give details)**

**Yes**

**Additional comments, particularly if your answer was no:**

Please ensure the relevant supporting documentation is uploaded in good time next year

**4.11 Appropriate procedures and processes have been followed**

**Yes**

**Additional comments, particularly if your answer was no:**

**4.12 The processes for assessment and the determination of awards are sound**

**Yes**

**Additional comments, particularly if your answer was no:**

## Completion

If you have identified any areas of good practice, please comment more fully here. We may use information provided in our annual external examining report:

**5.1 Do you have any suggestions for improvements based on experience at other institutes? We may use information provided in our annual external examining report:**

No - this is a superb assessment. It would be interesting to hear student feedback about the course structure and assessments relative to how they feel this prepares them for boards, and their progression to working independently.

**COURSE DIRECTOR: Mr Dominic Barfield**

**Course Director Response:**

We hope that we can arrange for this prior to exam boards in the future.

**Action Required:**

Exam board to arrange opportunity for meeting with existing students to discuss the course.

**Action Deadline:**

01-Jun-2025

**Action assigned to:**

Secretary of examination board

**5.2 External Examiner comments: For College information only (Responses to External Examiners are published on the College's website. Please only use this box to add any comments that you wish to remain confidential, if any)**