

## ANNUAL QUALITY IMPROVEMENT REPORT 2016/17

### Appendix 3: External Examiners' report

#### MSc One Health

This appendix contains Course Director's/Year Leader's responses to 2016/17 External Examiners' comments and updates to actions from External Examiners' reports from previous years (if applicable).

As Course Director/Year Leader please ensure you reflect on External Examiners' comments in the Course Review section. Please ensure that any actions to be taken in response to these comments have been recorded in your Annual Quality Improvement Report.

For support or advice please contact Ana Filipovic, Academic Quality Officer 'Standards', [afilipovic@rvc.ac.uk](mailto:afilipovic@rvc.ac.uk), 01707666938

Appendix 3 consists of:

a.	Updates to actions from previous years' reports
b.	2016/17 Collaborative Annual Report with responses from Course Director

a. Update to actions from 2015/16:

Report Question	External Examiners' comments & suggested actions	Course Director's response/ update in 2015/16	Update in 2016/17
3.6 Opinion on changes to the assessment procedures from previous years in which you have examined	It would have been useful (as an external examiner) to see the student presentations.	This has been discussed with the Exams office and we will ensure that in the future the External Examiners are invited to observe the student presentations	COMPLETED

# Collaborative Report

Exam board meeting: 11-Sep-2017

MSc in One Health, 2016/17

Lead examiner: Dr Peter Mertens

Collaborating examiner(s): Professor Esther Schelling

## The Programme

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

### 1.1 Course content

As external examiners, we have had only limited direct contact with the taught components of the course. our involvement was primarily through access to the student exam papers, the reports on their research projects and the subsequent vivas, which were discussed at the exam board meeting that we attended. we were given access to the RVC website, sent exam questions (prior to the exams) along with ideal answers. This gave us time to identify any issues in time for them to be corrected

Overall the projects were of a high quality and suitable for the student to research.

Response from college requested: **NO**

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

The learning objectives were appropriate and appear to have been met during the course.

Response from college requested: **NO**

### 1.3 Teaching methods

As far as I can tell the teaching methods appear to be appropriate

Response from college requested: **NO**

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

The resources that were available were appropriate

Response from college requested: **NO**

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

The external; examiners were given an opportunity to talk to a student who had volunteered to provide feedback on the course.

Both examiners felt this was very helpful and could perhaps become a standard event before each exam board.

A number of suggestions came out in discussion that could be considered for the future of the course.

1 The student suggested that there was a greater emphasis on the veterinary rather than the medical components of the course. The elements provided by LSHTM were highly valued by the students but perhaps there could be more of them.

**COURSE DIRECTOR'S RESPONSE:** I would argue that this is simply not true and given this is One Health it is examining issues at the interface, every infectious disease agent considered is both veterinary and human in perspective and we put particular emphasis on the third pillar of one health, which is environment. This is not a course about medicine or medicalization of health problems, it is focused on preventive measures mostly outside of conventional medical approaches. The division of time spent in the LSHTM and RVC may be at the root of this comment, with students mostly embedded in RVC with the degree delivered by RVC and to some extent this

dilutes out the human health perspective. We try to balance the content and exposure within limitations of space and timetabling

2. The student reported that the taught course elements at RVC finish in March, while at LSHTM other courses have two additional modules in April, May. The student asked if these, or other modules, could be made available during the same period, to One Health students.

**COURSE DIRECTOR'S RESPONSE:** Issues about modules and courses fitting across two different timetabling systems has been a challenge since the beginning. LSHTM is a Post Grad institution whereas RVC is not so we orient to the undergrad year. It has excluded some courses from the mix and choice but we are trying to address this and increase choice so this should be less of a concern over next years.

3. The student asked if additional course content could be added concerning ethics, and environmental / ecological issues, like changes in farming practice or land use. For example their impacts on non-communicable diseases, biosafety in a wider community sense, the impact of natural disasters on health issues, etc.

**COURSE DIRECTOR'S RESPONSE:** See above and we are moving the course to NCDs through the new approach and title, One Health – Ecosystems, human and animal health. We have a complete session on disasters so unless the student missed these hard to know what they want here.

4. The input from LSHTM was particularly valued and could be increased. For example only a small number of the project assessors are from LSHTM.

**COURSE DIRECTOR'S RESPONSE:** This is a concern and we have repeatedly asked for more assessors from LSHTM as the burden is large on the RVC staff but there is resistance to this and it needs strong management from the LSHTM which course Directors have asked for repeatedly.

5. The provision of personal tutors for individual students is valued by the student(s), but it was suggested that a more formal schedule of regular meeting would potential increase contact between Tutors and Tutees.

**COURSE DIRECTOR'S RESPONSE:** We are finalizing a proposal to provide mixed group tutorials, across multiple postgraduate taught courses, such that students will be assigned a personal tutor and be part of a tutor group that consists of 5 to 6 other students. These academic tutors are another point of contact for students during their study at the RVC.

6 The intense nature of the course was complemented by the student, particularly the multidisciplinary nature and networking elements. .

**Response from college requested: NO**

## 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

The examiners felt that the students and their reports were of a high standard overall. We applaud the significant number of merits for the final marks.

Response from college requested: **NO**

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

Overall the students had a good level of knowledge, particularly in relationship to the subject matter of their research projects. However, at the bottom end of the scale at least one student had difficulties with communication results and written elements of the course.

Response from college requested: **NO**

All students are advised of learning support and other measures where disabilities are declared by the student requiring appropriate interventions and exam/assessment conditions.

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

The examiners recognize that support is made available for writing and presentation skills. This is clearly valuable support for the students.

Response from college requested: **NO**

## Assessment Procedures

Please comment, as appropriate, on:

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

The assessment methods were appropriate

Response from college requested: **NO**

### 3.2 Extent to which assessment procedures are rigorous

The assessment procedures were (in examiners opinion) rigorous but fair.

Response from college requested: **NO**

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

As far as I could tell for the projects and papers that I saw were consistently and fairly marked.

Response from college requested: **NO**

### 3.4 Standard of marking

The marking was of a high standard with suitable back up and dual marking, to ensure a fair outcome for the students.

The College also provides clear guidance and training on the marking scheme. At the exam board, there was discussion concerning the development of marking guidance for projects. This is seen as a very positive development .

Response from college requested: **NO**

### 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)

The procedures for assessment and determination of awards are sound and fairly conducted. In feedback discussion with the student, it was suggested that procedures for releasing exam marks might be different at LSHTM and RVC, with the suggestion that greater consistency for the course as a whole would be helpful. As examiners we do not know if this is a valid criticism.

Response from college requested: **NO**

**COURSE DIRECTOR'S RESPONSE:** There are different procedures in place between the institutions on timing of assessment, marking and release of results and some variation between modules, leading to inconsistencies apparent to students and these will wherever possible be addressed or justified to students, within the inevitable timetable and administrative constraints.

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

It would have been useful (as an external examiner) to see the student presentations.

**COURSE DIRECTOR'S RESPONSE:** External Examiners are allowed to observe oral exams and the College has no objection to this possible, To clarify, External Examiners are not allowed to participate in oral exams.

**Response from college requested: NO**

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

see previous comments

**Response from college requested: NO**

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

Yes

Additional comments, particularly if your answer was no:

Yes

Response from college requested: **NO**

**4.2 An acceptable response has been made**

Yes

Additional comments, particularly if your answer was no:

At the exam board, a lot of time was spent discussing the options for students who had failed or qualified fails for specific course elements. This was motivated by a desire to ensure all options open to the students, were considered and communicated to them. The discussion was both supportive and directed towards helping the students. The examiners think that this is a very positive aspect and reflects well on the organization, quality, and support provided by course tutors

Response from college requested: **NO**

**COURSE DIRECTOR'S RESPONSE:** It is very good to hear that these discussions are a positive aspect. This is the intention to enable us to support the student in making the appropriate decisions on the way forward.

**4.3 I approved the papers for the Examination**

Yes

Additional comments, particularly if your answer was no:

Yes

Response from college requested: **NO**

**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:

yes

Response from college requested: **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:

Yes

Response from college requested: **NO**



**4.6 Candidates were considered impartially and fairly**

**Yes**

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

Yes

**Response from college requested: 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:**

Yes

**Response from college requested: 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:**

Yes

**Response from college requested: NO**

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

**Yes**

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

Yes

**Response from college requested: 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:**

Yes, sufficient information and support was available

**Response from college requested: NO**

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

**Yes**

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

Yes

**Response from college requested: NO**

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

**Yes**

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

Yes

**Response from college requested: 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:**

see previous comments

It was suggested by students that more involvement by LSHT and additional modules before the dissertation studies, would both be valued by students

**COURSE DIRECTOR'S RESPONSE:** This is a repetition on earlier comments. We agree that LSHTM is a bespoke PG environment and has an atmosphere that is different to the RVC and I encourage a balanced use of facilities and more academic content being delivered by LSHTM.

**Response from college requested: NO**

**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)**

**Response from college requested: NO**