

## ANNUAL QUALITY IMPROVEMENT REPORT 2016/17

### Appendix 3: External Examiners' report

#### Accelerated BVetMed

This appendix contains Year Leader's responses to 2016/17 External Examiners' comments and updates to actions from 2015/16 External Examiners' report (if applicable).

As 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 - <i>There were no action points from 2015/16 to be updated for Accelerated BVetMed (Graduate Year)</i>
b.	2016/17 Collaborative Annual Report with responses from Course Director/Year Leader

# Collaborative Report

Exam board meeting: 11-Jul-2017

## Accelerated Bachelor of Veterinary Medicine, 2016/17

Lead examiner: Professor Alan Baird

Collaborating examiner(s): Dr Gura Bergkvist

### The Programme

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

#### 1.1 Course content

The course content is appropriate for the graduate entry programme.

Response from college requested: **NO**

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

Learning objectives are normally well articulated on RVC LEARN. Their relationship to assessments is quite clear, particularly with regard to example answers for essay questions (Paper 3) and marks breakdown for the problem solving questions (Paper 2). Retrospective mapping of examined material to declared learning objectives of each module is insightful.

Response from college requested: **NO**

#### 1.3 Teaching methods

Access to all relevant learning material was available to External Examiners on RVC LEARN, which was very useful. A broad range of teaching modalities, with a heavy reliance on didactic styles, is employed. The modular construct is quite transparent and facilitates integrated teaching of structure and function.

Response from college requested: **NO**

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

The amount of staff time committed to assessment remains high. This includes a very well run set of ISF orals. Exam setting and marking is thorough. Administrative support for assessment including reviews of scripts and mark (component) spreadsheets is enormously useful.

Response from college requested: **NO**

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

Replacement of Spot tests with a revised MCQ design has retained much of the integrity of the previous system. Coupled with a careful and meaningful standard setting, results for Paper 1 are highly correlated with the final mark for each student. All other components map reasonably well to the final mark, consistent with the usefulness of a range of assessment styles.

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

This is commensurate with students enrolled in similar programmes in other Schools of Veterinary Medicine. Those students who failed to achieve the required standard were not very far from so doing and are likely to benefit from the opportunity of retaking the examinations

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

There is a range of outcomes with the students on the top of the class displayed a consistent high level of achievements in all of the components. At the other end of the scale discrimination of the students not prepared for the next stage is robust. The analytics that are being used for papers 1 and 2 adds insights into, and confidence upon, the assessment outcome.

Response from college requested: **NO**

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

There is a good spread of marks, and the range of assessments allow for the excellent students to excel and gives the majority of the students (the middle) a fair chance at demonstrating their level of knowledge according to their different strengths.

Response from college requested: **NO**

Please comment, as appropriate, on:

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

A broad range of assessment modalities remains a feature of this stage of the programme and is to be complimented. One of the externs (AB) attended the ISF orals and confirmed the integrity of process. Recent revision of assessment structures (including removal of 'Spot' exams) has taken place over the last academic year.

(i) Concerns previously raised regarding blueprinting guidelines to ensure that students retain an element of choice in essay questions but have thorough assessment over the entire course material to avoid strategic learning by students which was mentioned in our previous reports.

(ii) The high number of essays which achieved quite low marks is something the Programme Board might consider in terms of the entire philosophy of using this type of assessment - to allow students to display depth of understanding of selected topics.

Choice has been removed from Paper 2 (problem-solving) and the net outcome is that students have fared similarly to previous years.

(iii) Regarding subject coverage in Integrated Structure and Function Orals, item analysis of the Oral exam reports continue to show a marked bias in the subject areas which were selected by the Examiners.

Response from college requested: **NO**

Response from the Year leader:

(i) We blueprint all our examination papers in extensive detail to learning objectives, taught content and the relative contributions of content to the curriculum as a whole. Our papers are structured to have an element of choice while minimising any advantages that might be gained from strategic learning and revision.

(ii) There is ongoing consideration, change and refinement of our assessment formats to ensure that they remain appropriate. At present, we consider these essay papers an appropriate component of this course's assessment.

(iii) We are surprised by this comment. In the organisation of these structured vivas, we prescribe topics in order that students are examined across the breadth of the curriculum, and examiner pairings and their question allocations are decided to maximise this aspiration and to minimise subject bias. This course has three core modules encompassing its curriculum (Principles of Animal Form and Function, Infections and Responses, and Animal Husbandry), and in their viva students are examined on body systems or disciplines contained within at least two of these three modules.

### 3.2 Extent to which assessment procedures are rigorous

In general assessments are well run, well organised and comprehensive. Use of the Common Grading Scale continues and, broadly speaking, a broad range of marks is being used. Efforts to review assessment outcomes quantitatively are providing increasingly useful information which will assist future developments in teaching and assessment. Annotation of scripts has noticeably improved in alignment with College policy.

Response from college requested: **NO**

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

Same as previous year (2015-16). The programme stage appears to be consistent with Level 6 and the final outcomes of the degree meet the expectations of Level 7.

Response from college requested: **NO**

### 3.4 Standard of marking

Standard of marking remains on the whole appropriate to the programme. The broad range of assessments lends itself to a more complete analysis using, for example, the data being generated for example for standard setting on individual components.

**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)

Administrative support from assessment design through to Exam Board remains excellent. The actual exams, particularly the ISF orals, are very well run. Issues which arose (typical for any such complex activity) were competently managed.

Systematic item analysis of MCQs continues to reinforce the value of this assessment and long term development of a question bank.

Availability of summary spreadsheets and access to manuscripts and original materials is well coordinated. Procedures were discussed to identify and prevent potential (e.g. transcriptional) errors in spreadsheets.

**Response from college requested: NO**

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

The removal of choice in Paper 2 (Problem solving) has not negatively influenced the outcome as reflected by the distribution of marks. Positively, this change has resulted in each student having a broader engagement with subject material.

**Response from college requested: NO**

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

Analysis of subjects covered at ISF orals unveil a biased pattern of distribution of questions. Given the wealth of materials available and opportunities for questioning perhaps this element of the process could be improved with regard to content and coverage.

**Response from college requested: NO**

#### **Response from the Year Leader:**

We are surprised by this comment. In the organisation of these structured vivas, we prescribe topics in order that students are examined across the breadth of the curriculum, and examiner pairings and their question allocations are decided to maximise this aspiration and to minimise subject bias. This course has three core modules encompassing its curriculum (Principles of Animal Form and Function, Infections and Responses, and Animal Husbandry), and in their viva students are examined on body systems or disciplines contained within at least two of these three modules.

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

**Yes**

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

**Response from college requested: NO**

**4.2 An acceptable response has been made**

**Yes**

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

**Response from college requested: NO**

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

**Yes**

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

Model answers supplied are very helpful. In paper 2 (problem solving) mark distribution within each question was clear to examiners and students alike.

**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:**

Scripts were generally well annotated by markers, this is very helpful for externals and also for students that may wish to seek feedback.

**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:**

**Response from college requested: NO**

**4.6 Candidates were considered impartially and fairly**

**Yes**

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

**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:

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:

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:

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:

Response from college requested: NO

4.11 Appropriate procedures and processes have been followed

Yes

Additional comments, particularly if your answer was no:

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:

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:

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**

