

ANNUAL QUALITY IMPROVEMENT REPORT 2016/17
Appendix 3: External Examiners' report

Gateway

This appendix contains Course Director's/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, 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 Gateway!</i>
b.	2016/17 Collaborative Annual Report with responses from Course Director/Year Leader

Collaborative Report

Veterinary Gateway Programme, 2016/17

Lead examiner: Dr Lynda Moore

Collaborating examiner(s): Professor William Holt

The Programme

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

1.1 Course content

The Gateway course has changed this year to bring it in line with the modular BSc programmes. The modules are exciting and appropriate, giving a good grounding in science alongside Animal Husbandry which is essential for entry to the BVetMed programme. The new structure ensures that the Gateway students are part of a much larger cohort studying the same material, thereby facilitating interaction and peer support. It also provides an exit strategy for those students who either fail to progress to BVetMed or who choose to change from a veterinary to a science pathway.

Response from college requested: **NO**

COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Lisa Thurston

Course Director Response:

Many thanks for your positive comments. We have strived to create a dynamic and exciting course for these widening participation students who aspire to the study of veterinary medicine and we are very proud of how this initial year has been received by students and staff alike.

Action Required:

Action Deadline:

Action assigned to:

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

Learning objectives for each module are included in the on-line (Learn) material and it is clear to see how the course content and assessments address these. The standard of the answers and the spread of marks in the module assessments show that students are meeting their learning objectives.

Response from college requested: **NO**

COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Lisa Thurston

Course Director Response:

We have mapped specific learning objectives to each question on the written examination papers for the first time this year, to ensure that assessments cover a wide range of teaching subject matter and skills sets. We are glad that this has been reflected in the students attainment levels.

Action Required:

Action Deadline:

Action assigned to:

1.3 Teaching methods

The programme incorporates a really nice spread of teaching methods, through lectures and tutorials to projects and hands-on practical work. This variety is important because it continues to support different learning styles.

Response from college requested: NO

COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Lisa Thurston

Course Director Response:

We are particularly proud of the variety of teaching strategies employed on the Gateway course and will continue to provide a broad spectrum of content delivery styles.

Action Required:

Action Deadline:

Action assigned to:

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

No problems recorded.

Response from college requested: NO

COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Lisa Thurston

Course Director Response:

None identified

Action Required:

Action Deadline:

Action assigned to:

1.5 Please provide any additional comments and recommendations regarding the Programme

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 students are certainly comparable with those at Bristol, Liverpool and Glasgow.

Response from college requested: **NO**

COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Lisa Thurston

Course Director Response:

We are reassured that our students are performing at a level comparable with partner institutions.

Action Required:

Action Deadline:

Action assigned to:

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

The range of marks within each module showed the expected distribution with most Gateway students showing a sound level of knowledge in the different topics. It was particularly pleasing to note that the Gateway students could not be differentiated from others on the BSc programmes based on their achievements; given the mixed academic background of the Gateway students, they are clearly highly motivated to succeed. The percentage of Gateway students receiving a distinction was approximately the same in 2017 and 2016. However, it is encouraging to see a considerable increase in the percentage of merit students in 2017 (28% compared with 11% in 2016).

Response from college requested: **NO**

COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Lisa Thurston

Course Director Response:

We are also delighted by the commitment and motivation of our Gateway students and we are encouraged to see their hard work is being reflected in an excellent set of examination results.

Action Required:

Action Deadline:

Action assigned to:

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

Response from college requested: **NO**

Please comment, as appropriate, on:

3.1 Assessment methods (relevance to learning objectives and curriculum)

The range of assessments is very good and can be easily mapped to the taught material and learning objectives. This provides all students with the chance to demonstrate their knowledge in a manner that suits them best.

Response from college requested: **NO**

COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Lisa Thurston

Course Director Response:

We have designed the examinations so they are comprised of a mix of multiple choice, problem solving and essay questions. In doing this, we hope that the students have been motivated to develop a diverse approach to their learning, being able to apply their knowledge in the form of data interpretation, clinical assessment and essay writing.

Action Required:

Action Deadline:

Action assigned to:

3.2 Extent to which assessment procedures are rigorous

The procedures on the whole are rigorous. Only two minor issues arose:

(i) Where there was a choice, most questions attracted a reasonable number of candidates and a spread of results indicating that the process is discriminating between the students as it should. One essay question in the IGE written paper attracted only 4 students from the entire class cohort; this needs to be investigated by revisiting the teaching of that particular topic and/or the format of the question.

(ii) A piece of work is required to look at the MCQ examinations associated with the different modules. It is good to see that MCQs are individually analysed to ensure the assessment as a whole is discriminating between students. However, there appeared to be a difference between most of the MCQ assessments and that within the Animal Husbandry module; whereas most MCQ exam means were 47-55%, the Animal Husbandry module recorded an MCQ exam mean of 72%. This may be (as discussed at Exam Board) associated with the Gateway students' desire to learn animal/veterinary related material and/or with their prior knowledge acquired during preparation for a career in veterinary medicine. However, it is important to consider whether the MCQs used are sufficiently discriminating in this particular module or whether they need to be more stretching.

Response from college requested: **NO**

COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Lisa Thurston

Course Director Response:

Thank you for your comments and helpful discussions during the exam board meeting.

1. The IGE module review will reflect on the disparity of students choosing not to answer the essay in question and make recommendations for how the IGE module assessment can be designed to avoid this in future years.
2. We agree with the external examiners comments regarding the motivation of students to score highly on the animal husbandry module as they perceive it to be more 'relevant' to their aspirations in the long term. However, we also feel that the animal husbandry MCQ component needs to be reviewed in order for it to discriminate more successfully between students.

Action Required:

Action Deadline:

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

Entirely consistent

Response from college requested: **NO**

3.4 Standard of marking

Excellent. Really good use of annotation on the scripts providing excellent reference for the examiners and feedback for the students. Internal examiners are much better now at allocating marks to sections within questions, providing model answers and utilising the full range of the marking scales.

The use of sample marking marking is good practice, and little/no discrepancy was seen between first and second markers supporting the rigour and robustness of the assessment and marking procedures. Team marking, where the number of scripts is too great for any one marker, includes group marking of 10 scripts to ensure consistency of approach and interpretation of model answers; again, this is good practice and nice to see.

Response from college requested: **NO**

COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Lisa Thurston

Course Director Response:

We are also encouraged by the standard of feedback provided by all internal examiners this year and would like to thank all staff involved in this process. We are glad to see that marking procedures in general are consistent and of high quality.

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)

The procedures are absolutely sound and fair. All administration is highly efficient and the team should be congratulated, especially given the need to change procedures, spreadsheets and calculations this year to reflect the new modular approach. The Board of Examiners meeting gave all internal and external examiners a chance to voice opinion.

Response from college requested: **NO**

COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Lisa Thurston

Course Director Response:

We would also like to thank the RVC Exams Office staff, in particular Adam Osgood, for his efficiency and patience given the extensive changes required to implement the new modular assessments.

Action Required:

Action Deadline:

Action assigned to:

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

The modular approach has made a change to the Gateway Year; the overall pass mark of 50% now allows for up to 2 Qualified Fails (40-49%) in individual modules. This is a positive change because it allows for a greater degree of flexibility for the students. The fact that a student automatically fails the Year if they achieve <40% in any one module is also encouraging since it prevents a student from progressing if they are seriously weak in any one area. Overall I believe the changes to be positive for both the students and the standing of the Programme as a whole because it will uphold the standard of those progressing.

Response from college requested: NO

COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Lisa Thurston

Course Director Response:

Many thanks for your supportive comments. We also agree that these changes are very positive for students progressing onto the 5 year veterinary medicine course.

Action Required:

Action Deadline:

Action assigned to:

3.7 Please provide any additional comments and recommendations regarding the procedures

Response from college requested: NO

General Statements

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:

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:

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**

