

External Examiner Report Template (ONLINE)

The following details will continue to be captured via the online reporting process:

- Name(s) of External Examiner(s) contributing to a collaborative or individual report Stephen Hall and Ed Van Klink
- Programme Title and Award MSc LHP MSc VEPH 2012-13
- Collaborative partner and location (if applicable)
- Year of Examination
- Examination (only applicable to BVetMed)
- Date(s) of attendance at the RVC

The online system will capture agreed sign-off by each collaborating external examiner or individual where necessary.

Instructions for completion:

1. For sections 1 - 4 please type your comments in the spaces provided. You are asked to indicate if you expect to receive a response from the College.
2. For section 5, please delete as appropriate (Yes, No or N/A). You are asked to provide additional comments, particularly if you answered 'No'.
3. Names of all students and staff should be omitted from external examiners' reports, to maintain appropriate confidentiality.
4. Unless comments are returned within three weeks of completion of the Exam Board meeting, it may not be possible to act upon these comments in the forthcoming academic year.
5. Please return expense claims with receipts attached by post to the Academic Quality Manager, The Royal Veterinary College, Hawkshead Lane, North Mymms, Hatfield, AL9 7TA.

Thank you!

Please comment on the areas detailed below, highlighting the appropriateness and strengths and/or weaknesses.

1. Programme	External Examiner comments: For Publication	A response from the College is required, if yes, please check the box [✓]	College Response: (Where the response requires action(s), each action must be outlined, a completion date given and a responsible individual named)
1.1. Course content	MSc and PG Diplomas: Veterinary Epidemiology and Public Health Distance Learning course (VEPH): The content of the course is appropriate. The course is of a high level and quality. <i>Livestock Health and Production (LHP): The content of this course is appropriate, being balanced, topical and of high quality.</i>	[]	Response: Action (if any) date & name:
1.2. Learning objectives	VEPH: The learning objectives are well described and clear. They are appropriate for the course. <i>LHP: Learning objectives are clear and appropriate.</i>	[]	Response: Action (if any) date & name:
1.3. Teaching methods	VEPH: The teaching methods seem varied and well designed. <i>LPH: I have not examined the teaching methods recently but I infer from the student work I have seen, that they are satisfactory. A very important feature of a distance learning course is that the course administration and the interactions with students are well conducted, fair, and supportive and it is clear to me that this is indeed the case.</i>	[]	Response: Action (if any) date & name:
1.4. Resources (in so far as they affected the assessment)	VEPH: Resources are adequate. <i>LPH: Resources are adequate. My evidence for this is the strong administrative support in</i>	[]	Response: Action (if any) date & name:

	<i>operation.</i>		
Please provide any additional comments and recommendations regarding the Programme:	<p>VEPH: no additional comments. <i>LPH: My comments primarily relate to the questions asked in this form, which is not completely appropriate to courses of this kind. In previous years external examiners were not asked to comment on "Teaching methods" – the question was a much better one having regard to the programme being by distance learning, namely "The effectiveness of the programme, as reflected by the standards achieved by the candidates". I recommend a return to the previous form – the rubric was "University of London International Academy External/Intercollegiate Examiner Annual Report".</i></p>	[]	<p>Response: Action (if any) date & name:</p> <p>This form was sent to the external examiners in error and the correct and more appropriate form will be used for the next reporting period.</p>

Please comment on the areas detailed below, highlighting strengths and/or weaknesses.

2. Student performance	External Examiner comments: For Publication	A response from the College is required, if yes, please check the box [✓]	College Response: (Where the response requires action(s), each action must be outlined, a completion date given and a responsible individual named)
2.1. Students' performance in relation to those at a similar stage on comparable courses in other institutions, where this is known to you	<p>VEPH: the performance of students generally compares well with the performance of students elsewhere. The general level seems high. <i>LPH: Comparable.</i></p>	[]	<p>Response: Action (if any) date & name:</p>
2.2. Quality of candidates' knowledge and skills, with	<p>VEPH: generally the quality of the knowledge of the students is good. The</p>	[]	<p>Response: Action (if any) date & name:</p>

<p>particular reference to those at the top, middle or bottom of the range</p>	<p>weaker students seem to have the biggest problems with interpretation of results, or even understanding them. <i>LPH: This year more than usual we were beset by some dreadful handwriting which meant in some cases it was impossible to assess this quality. But in general the range of abilities was as one would expect.</i></p>		
<p>Please provide any additional comments and recommendations regarding the students' performance:</p>	<p>VEPH: In one of the exams, Statistical Methods in Veterinary Epidemiology, the average mark was below expectation and much lower than in the other exams. Looking at the statistics on the questions, it appeared that question 3 in particular seemed to have given the problem. The question was deemed appropriate by the External Examiner on review of the exam beforehand. It was different in nature to the other questions in that it appealed clearly to the students' abilities to come up with appropriate study designs by themselves. It may be useful for the course leader to have another look at the ways this aspect is being handled in the course. At the Exam Board meeting it was fairly clear that this is already an important aspect that is being made clear to the students. <i>LPH: Local supervision of research projects may have caused problems in some cases, though I am confident students were not disadvantaged through the marking scheme for this. But I feel that the quality of tutor support, which is demonstrably very good for the tutor-marked assignments, is less easily verified in the case of some projects.</i></p>	<p>[]</p>	<p>Response: Action (if any) date & name: 1) The new exam format requires students to answer questions in an integrated manner but the teaching has not changed to reflect this. The course material and the tutorial format for the module "Statistical Methods in Veterinary Epidemiology", both need to be reviewed to help students take a more integrated approach to the content. Date: 2014-15 academic year. Name: Christine Thuranira-McKeever</p> <p>2) Best practice for supervision of research projects for distance learners will be investigated and changes made where appropriate and possible. Date: 2014-15 academic year. Name: Christine Thuranira-McKeever</p>

Please comment on the areas detailed below, highlighting appropriateness and strengths and/or weaknesses.

3. Assessment Process	External Examiner comments: For Publication	A response from the College is required, if yes, please check the box [✓]	College Response: (Where the response requires action(s), each action must be outlined, a completion date given and a responsible individual named)
3.1. Assessment methods (relevance to learning objectives and curriculum)	VEPH: the assessment methods are appropriate <i>LPH: appropriate</i>	[]	Response: Action (if any) date & name:
3.2. Extent to which assessment processes are rigorous	VEPH: the assessment processes are sufficiently rigorous. <i>LPH: I am glad to see marking is taking more account of quality of referencing. I still feel that in some cases marks are a bit generous for tutor-marked assignments but the weightings applied (80% exam) tend to act as a corrective.</i>	[]	Response: Action (if any) date & name:
3.3. Consistency of the level of assessment with the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ)	VEPH: The level of assessment is consistent with FHEQ. <i>LPH: I have not consulted FHEQ recently but the level is comparable with that operational elsewhere.</i>	[]	Response: Action (if any) date & name:
3.4. Standard of marking	VEPH: there is good overall agreement between the first and second assessor. Borderline marks were given with sufficient argument. <i>LPH: Agreement is good, differences of opinion were resolved satisfactorily and in almost all cases feedback, and examiner comments on exam scripts, were excellent</i>	[]	Response: Action (if any) date & name:

	<i>and adequately justifying the mark awarded.</i>		
3.5. Opinion on changes to the assessment process from previous years in which you have examined	<p>VEPH: The only difference observed was that most exams now do no longer give the choice of three out of five questions. This was a justified choice to make. I do not have a particular preference either way. I think this system works equally fine.</p> <p><i>LPH: I agree this was a good change to have made.</i></p>	[]	<p>Response:</p> <p>Action (if any) date & name:</p>
Please provide any additional comments and recommendations regarding the assessment process:	<p><i>LPH: as noted in previous years there are some examples of excellent practice in relation to the provision of feedback. Turnround time for tutor-marked assessments was very good.</i></p>	[]	<p>Response:</p> <p>Action (if any) date & name:</p>

Please comment on the areas detailed below, highlighting strengths and/or weaknesses.

4. Procedures	External Examiner comments: For Publication	A response from the College is required, if yes, please check the box [✓]	College Response: (Where the response requires action(s), each action must be outlined, a completion date given and a responsible individual named)
4.1. In your view, are the processes 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)	VEPH: the processes for assessments and awards are fairly conducted. The whole process is very well organised and administratively very reliable. <i>LPH: I agree with my colleague's comments.</i>	[]	Response: Action (if any) date & name:
4.2. Opinion on changes to the procedures from previous years in which you have examined	VEPH: No major changes have been made in procedures compared to earlier years. <i>LPH: my only comment would be on the design of this form which I do not think is an improvement.</i>	[]	Response: Action (if any) date & name: Please see Section 1.4 above.
Please provide any additional comments and recommendations regarding the procedures:		[]	Response: Action (if any) date & name:

5. General Statements	[YES] [NO] [N/A] check as appropriate	Additional comments, particularly if your answer was no:	A response from the College is required, if yes, please check the box [✓]	College Response: (All responses leading to an action must note an identified timeframe and responsible individual. Please outline the action and a date by which the action will be taken)
5.1. Comments I have made in previous years have been addressed to my satisfaction	[YES]	VEPH: My main suggestion was to do some simple statistics on the results. This has been done in part. <i>LPH: Comments in previous years have been addressed and I am satisfied with the progress that has been made in addressing them.</i>	[]	Response: Action (if any) date & name: As much analysis is done within the time available and we will continue to make every effort to provide useful statistics.
5.2. An acceptable response has been made	[YES]		[]	Response: Action (if any) date & name:
5.3. I approved the papers for the Examination	[YES]		[]	Response: Action (if any) date & name:
5.4. I was able to scrutinise an adequate sample of students' work and marks to enable me to carry out my duties	[YES]		[]	Response: Action (if any) date & name:
5.5. I attended the meeting of the Board of Examiners held to approve the results of the Examination	[YES]		[]	Response: Action (if any) date & name:
5.6. Candidates were considered impartially and fairly	[YES]		[]	Response: Action (if any) date & name:
5.7. The standards set for the awards are appropriate for qualifications at this level,	[YES]		[]	Response: Action (if any) date & name:

in this subject				
5.8. The standards of student performance are comparable with similar programmes or subjects in other UK institutions with which I am familiar	[YES]		[]	Response: Action (if any) date & name:
5.9. I have received enough support to carry out my role	[YES]		[]	Response: Action (if any) date & name:
5.10. I have received sufficient information to carry out my role (where information was insufficient, please give details)	[YES]		[]	Response: Action (if any) date & name:
5.11. Appropriate procedures and processes have been followed	[YES]		[]	Response: Action (if any) date & name:
5.12. The processes for assessment and the determination of awards are sound	[YES]		[]	Response: Action (if any) date & name:

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:

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

I am sure I speak for Dr van Klink as well when I repeat, with pleasure, the commendation made in previous years of the conscientious and thorough approach that Dr. McKeever and her colleagues bring to the administration of the course.

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)

Thank you for completing this annual report!

All External Examiner reports will be responded to via the following process [<http://www.rvc.ac.uk/Examiners/documents/ExternalExaminerReports.pdf>] and in time for the annual RVC Inset Day on Assessment.