Collaborative Report

BSc and FdSc in Veterinary Nursing, 2013/14

Mrs Andrea Dineen

The Programme

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

1.1 Course content

Course content is very satisfactory in that it reflects the full range of subject knowledge and skills that should be covered in this/these degree(s) at these levels.

The only issue the externs noted is that while there have been attempts made to diversify the species types utilised in exam questions, a more multi species approach could be further developed for examining. The course/s (and assessments) need to continue to focus in appropriate ratios on the following species: dogs, cats, exotics and horses (and ideally other species) at a 'core level', and dogs, cats and exotics equally at a more advanced level. Some of the exams at times appear very dog and cat centric. For example, the SAQs in the Applied Nursing Care (ANC) module (e.g. first and re-sit exams) had 6 dog Qs and 1 rabbit question. Externs feel there still could be more species variety. Internal examiners tend to use a 'dog' example when any species would sometimes work in a generic question (e.g. skin wound management). As a reflection of this, the students equally appear to largely default to dog and cat examples in the work they do, even when an approach across species is asked for in the assignment guidelines (e.g. the written assignment re: Nursing Models in the ANC module). The final year student projects however, showed a range of interests across species, including both rabbit and wildlife which is encouraging.

Response from college requested: **NO**

Dr Elizabeth Mullineaux

Agree with the comments above

COURSE DIRECTOR: Ms Hilary Orpet

Course Director Response:

Thank you for the comments – the questions are often fairly generic and therefore it is possible that any species may be substituted into many of the questions to ensure a variety of species is covered. This will be addressed with the Module Leaders when blueprinting the examinations.

Action Required:

Report at next CMC to inform module leaders

Action Deadline:

05-Nov-2014

Action assigned to:

HOrpet

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

The theoretical learning objectives of the course appear to have been well met. The examiners are unable to comment fully upon the practical learning objectives included at this time as they were not yet in attendance at practical exams in 2014.

Response from college requested: **NO**

Dr Elizabeth Mullineaux

Agree with the comments above

COURSE DIRECTOR: Ms Hilary Orpet

Course Director Response:

The practical aspects of the course are linked to the National Occupational Standards (NOS) and also therefore the Nursing Progress Log (NPL). The taught practical sessions are directly mapped to the NOS.

Action Required:

None

Action Deadline:

Action assigned to:

1.3 Teaching methods

A wide range of teaching methods appear to have been employed across the course as appropriate to veterinary nursing education.

Response from college requested: **NO**

Dr Elizabeth Mullineaux

Agree with the comments above

COURSE DIRECTOR: Ms Hilary Orpet

Course Director Response:

Thank you – we try to ensure a range of teaching methods are used to cater for the range of learning styles.

Action Required:

None

Action Deadline:

Action assigned to:

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

Resources appear appropriate and satisfactory for the running of the courses. Students appear to have access to a wide range of teaching resources, including electronic facilities. Formative assessments are well provided and student feedback throughout the course is evident. This must be very time- consuming for staff and they are to be commended for this work.

Response from college requested: NO

Dr Elizabeth Mullineaux

Agree with the comments above

COURSE DIRECTOR: Ms Hilary Orpet

Course Director Response:

Many thanks for your comments. As a college we continue to invest in resources for all students. In the VN school we are particularly keen to develop The Learn virtual learning environment as a teaching resource rather than a repository of lectures notes. We realise feedback is essential to the students development and are continuing to improve the methods we use. This includes moving towards using Turnitin for feedback on student's formative work and tutors continue to feedback back via the 'blog' system when the students are on placement.

Action Required:

None

Action Deadline:

Action assigned to:

1.5 Please provide any additional comments and recommendations regarding the Programme

Where possible & appropriate, the chief examiner needs to ensure that the paper is sufficiently "multi species" once all Qs have been submitted from individual examiners.

Response from college requested: NO

Dr Elizabeth Mullineaux

Agree with the comments above

COURSE DIRECTOR: Ms Hilary Orpet

Course Director Response:

Thank you. We have new systems in place to ensure a range of questions relating to the learning outcomes are used and include a variety of species.

Action Required:

Ensure all examinations in future are checked against a blue print

Action Deadline:

01-Sep-2014

Action assigned to:

HOrpet

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

Student performance standard is high. The quality of academic writing and presenting is good compared to other institutions that we are familiar with.

Response from college requested: NO

Dr Elizabeth Mullineaux

Agree with the comments above

COURSE DIRECTOR: Ms Hilary Orpet

Course Director Response:

None

Action Required:

None

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 knowledge and skills of the average candidate are good. The spread of marks in our opinion does appropriately reflect student ability. Those candidates at the top end of the BSc perform at an exceptionally high level. Some students attempting to move between the FdSc and BSc courses do struggle (half the prospective candidates failed to achieve progression between the courses) but this appears to be a reflection of academic ability rather than teaching.

Response from college requested: NO

Dr Elizabeth Mullineaux

Agree with the comments above

COURSE DIRECTOR: Ms Hilary Orpet

Course Director Response:

There are potential difficulties when teaching range of abilities in one cohort. We address this by additional assessments and seminars aimed at a higher level.

Action Required:

Continue to monitor progress of students

Action Deadline:

26-Aug-2014

Action assigned to:

HOrpet

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

The external examiners sampled a range of scripts and written assignments and are happy with the marks awarded and standards achieved.

The student blog appears to have been an issue for some students resulting in failing due to incomplete coursework. Consideration needs to be given as to how the students are reminded to complete the blog and of any new or additional time limits placed within the course for blog submission(e.g. before they can sit an exam) rather than the blogs becoming an issue at the end of the course.

In addition, it would be helpful if the NPL permitted students to log the number of actual hours the students complete in practice placement.

Response from college requested: NO

Dr Elizabeth Mullineaux

Agree with the comments above

COURSE DIRECTOR: Ms Hilary Orpet

Course Director Response:

With regards to the blogs, students are now advised to submit any outstanding blogs during the reassessment period in a hope that this will ensure students are not failing at examination boards from non-submission. The students are regularly reminded about their blogs by their tutors and the course team with messages going up on Learn.
It would be really useful if students could log their placement hours on NPL as this could be monitored by the College and also by the regulatory body (RCVS) who provide the NPL. The Course Director has been encouraging HE!s to support this.
As a team we have noticed improvement on the student's ability with regards to referencing, however some students still struggling with the concepts of researching and citing relevant evidence. The Learning Development team deliver various study skills lectures during the first term for the first years. Unfortunately the student feedback after the module indicated these were unnecessary as the students knew these concepts. It was not until after the assessment that some students realised they needed to have a better understanding of what is required at university level. However, modifications have been introduced to address this and the Learning Development Team continues to provide support in this area throughout the course and we continue to encourage engagement of the students to get the support they need.

Action Required:

Continue to provide support sessions and encourage the students to engage with these.

Action Deadline:

Action assigned to:

Assessment Process

Please comment, as appropriate, on:

3.1 Assessment methods (relevance to learning objectives and curriculum)

There are a good range of assessments for the theoretical components of the course. Externals are unable to comment on practical competencies based upon the material assessed on this occasion as practical exams not witnessed at this time.

Response from college requested: **NO**

Dr Elizabeth Mullineaux

Agree with the comments above

COURSE DIRECTOR: Ms Hilary Orpet

Course Director Response:

The externs are welcome to attend the practical assessments held at the beginning of year 2 and 3

Action Required:

None

Action Deadline:

Action assigned to:

3.2 Extent to which assessment processes are rigorous

Assessment across a range of methods (MCQs, SAQs, assignments and projects) is of a high quality and well marked (see below).

MCQs generally performed well, either testing key knowledge (large % correct) or differentiating between candidates. Occasional ambiguous questions had to be removed from an exam (e.g. in Applied Nursing Care) but these were an exception.

Response from college requested: **NO**

Dr Elizabeth Mullineaux

Agree with the comments above

COURSE DIRECTOR: Ms Hilary Orpet

Course Director Response:

We believe that new processes for managing examinations and assessment approved in June 2014 will improve this area ensuring the examination system is rigorous.
The module leader for Professional Practice is aware of the issue regarding duplication and has amended this.
We have made changes to the assessment of the GDip electives taken by the BSc students to ensure they align with the learning outcomes of these modules.

Action Required:

None - changes already in place.

Action Deadline:

Action assigned to:

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

Based upon the work seen and the external examiners' knowledge and prior experience, the level of assessment closely matches the FHEQ.

Response from college requested: **NO**

Dr Elizabeth Mullineaux

Agree with the comments above

COURSE DIRECTOR: Ms Hilary Orpet

Course Director Response:

None

Action Required:

None

Action Deadline:

Action assigned to:

3.4 Standard of marking

Marking is generally very consistent as illustrated in the double marking. This is aided by common grading scheme (CGS) and 10 point marking schemes. Use of sample marking is good and the double marking of re-sits is excellent.

Marking at the top end of the 10 point scale is sometimes a little generous –not many answers, however good are 'perfect' or 'almost perfect' even within the guidance provided with the CGS. This is perhaps one of the few negatives of using the same common grading schemes at all stages of the course. Differentiation between students however, remained fair and consistent at all times.

Response from college requested: **NO**

Dr Elizabeth Mullineaux

Agree with the comments above

COURSE DIRECTOR: Ms Hilary Orpet

Course Director Response:

The process of double marking (within BSc Year 4) and sample marking (FdSc) helps to ensure consistency between the internal examiners. The 0-10 point marking descriptors are a more holistic in nature depicting how well the student has answered a question rather than collating a number of marks per item of the question. The Common Grading Scheme is designed to be used at all levels of study with examiners interpreting the descriptors appropriately.

Action Required:

None

Action Deadline:

Action assigned to:

3.5 Opinion on changes to the assessment process from previous years in which you have examined

No significant changes are noted.

Response from college requested: **NO**

Dr Elizabeth Mullineaux

Agree with the comments above

COURSE DIRECTOR: Ms Hilary Orpet

Course Director Response:

None

Action Required:

None

Action Deadline:

Action assigned to:

3.6 Please provide any additional comments and recommendations regarding the assessment process

Care needs to be taken, when choosing the marking scheme to use (CGS vs 10 point scale) as it is important the exam format and the marking scheme 'match' adequately (for example at present in the Research Methods module examination which has 4 separate SAQ-style exam questions, students are being marked holistically by the 17-point CGS which is probably better suited to marking longer written answers or assignment/ project work).

Externals were particularly pleased with the standard of presentations for the final year BSc student projects. There was much evidence of good provision of student supervision and feedback being provided by staff members. Those providing such supervision are to be congratulated for doing so as the evidence is that such provision was of an excellent standard. The quality of presentation was very good overall with appropriate use of visual display. Students appeared competent and confident in presenting, which was lovely to see and a reflection of their obvious good relationships with staff members. The rapport and supportive questioning and comments from the staff in attendance could only have enhanced the student experience in this regard.

Response from college requested: **NO**

Dr Elizabeth Mullineaux

Agree with the comments above

COURSE DIRECTOR: Ms Hilary Orpet

Course Director Response:

Thank you for bringing the issue regarding use of marking schemes to my attention and I am aware that it was discussed with the module leader at the examination board and we will ensure this is amended for future marking.

Action Required:

Ensure module leaders are using correct marking scheme

Action Deadline:

31-Dec-2014

Action assigned to:

horpet

Assessment Procedures

Please comment, as appropriate, on:

4.1 In your view, are the processes for assessment and the determination of awards sound and fairly conducted?

Externs looked at a wide range of student work in the following modules (Year 3: Professional Practice and ANC; and for Year 4 BSc: ECC, PAVNP, Surgical Nursing, Pathology, Research Methods, Research Project) and are satisfied that the marking seems to be fair and transparent.

All processes appear to be of a very high standard. In addition, the externs wish to thank the RVC staff (especially John in Exams Office) for their help and support in carrying out their role & duties in a timely manner. Any queries raised by the externs were swiftly and efficiently addressed and any issues noted were thoroughly & discussed with the RVC team, leading hopefully to constructive suggestions for future years.

Response from college requested: **NO**

Dr Elizabeth Mullineaux

Agree with the comments above

COURSE DIRECTOR: Ms Hilary Orpet

Course Director Response:

Thank you. I really value the input from the external examiners to ensure we meet the standards required by the award.

Action Required:

None

Action Deadline:

Action assigned to:

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

No significant changes are noted.

Response from college requested: **NO**

Dr Elizabeth Mullineaux

Agree with the comments above

COURSE DIRECTOR: Ms Hilary Orpet

Course Director Response:

None

Action Required:

None

Action Deadline:

Action assigned to:

4.3 Please provide any additional comments and recommendations regarding the procedures

See only comments in other sections of this report. Thanks again to John and the VN teaching staff

Response from college requested: **NO**

Dr Elizabeth Mullineaux

Agree with the comments above

COURSE DIRECTOR: Ms Hilary Orpet

Course Director Response:

None

Action Required:

None

Action Deadline:

Action assigned to:

General Statements

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

Yes

Additional comments, particularly if your answer was no:

The aforementioned multi species issue is continuing to be addressed and to improve.
Externs were unable to comment at this time on changes to modules' practical learning objectives as they have not attended practical examinations as yet in 2014.

Response from college requested: NO

Dr Elizabeth Mullineaux

Agree with the responses above

COURSE DIRECTOR: Ms Hilary Orpet

Course Director Response:

None

Action Required:

None

Action Deadline:

Action assigned to:

5.2 An acceptable response has been made

N/A

Additional comments, particularly if your answer was no:

No response was requested

Response from college requested: NO

Dr Elizabeth Mullineaux

Agree with the responses above

COURSE DIRECTOR: Ms Hilary Orpet

Course Director Response:

N/A

Action Required:

Action Deadline:

Action assigned to:

5.3 I approved the papers for the Examination

Yes

Additional comments, particularly if your answer was no:

Response from college requested: NO

Dr Elizabeth Mullineaux

Agree with the responses above

COURSE DIRECTOR: Ms Hilary Orpet

Course Director Response:

None

Action Required:

None

Action Deadline:

Action assigned to:

5.4 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:

Externs were able to scrutinise a wide range of Year 3 & 4 work.

Response from college requested: NO

Dr Elizabeth Mullineaux

Agree with the responses above

COURSE DIRECTOR: Ms Hilary Orpet

Course Director Response:

None

Action Required:

None

Action Deadline:

Action assigned to:

5.5 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

Dr Elizabeth Mullineaux

Agree with the responses above

COURSE DIRECTOR: Ms Hilary Orpet

Course Director Response:

None

Action Required:

None

Action Deadline:

Action assigned to:

5.6 Candidates were considered impartially and fairly

Yes

Additional comments, particularly if your answer was no:

Response from college requested: NO

Dr Elizabeth Mullineaux

Agree with the responses above

COURSE DIRECTOR: Ms Hilary Orpet

Course Director Response:

None

Action Required:

None

Action Deadline:

Action assigned to:

5.7 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

Dr Elizabeth Mullineaux

Agree with the responses above

COURSE DIRECTOR: Ms Hilary Orpet

Course Director Response:

None

Action Required:

None

Action Deadline:

Action assigned to:

5.8 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:

The standard of academic writing is largely above that of other institutions. Please note earlier comment re multi-species vs dog-/cat-centric examination.

Response from college requested: NO

Dr Elizabeth Mullineaux

Agree with the responses above

COURSE DIRECTOR: Ms Hilary Orpet

Course Director Response:

Thank you for your comments and we will address the multispecies issue for future examinations

Action Required:

to ensure blueprint includes multispecies

Action Deadline:

01-Apr-2015

Action assigned to:

horpet

5.9 I have received enough support to carry out my role

Yes

Additional comments, particularly if your answer was no:

The support provided was superb as always. The team were well-organised and had all marks ready on our arrival.

Response from college requested: NO

Dr Elizabeth Mullineaux

Agree with the responses above

COURSE DIRECTOR: Ms Hilary Orpet

Course Director Response:

None

Action Required:

None

Action Deadline:

Action assigned to:

5.10 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

Dr Elizabeth Mullineaux

Agree with the responses above

COURSE DIRECTOR: Ms Hilary Orpet

Course Director Response:

None

Action Required:

None

Action Deadline:

Action assigned to:

5.11 Appropriate procedures and processes have been followed

Yes

Additional comments, particularly if your answer was no:

Response from college requested: NO

Dr Elizabeth Mullineaux

Agree with the responses above

COURSE DIRECTOR: Ms Hilary Orpet

Course Director Response:

None

Action Required:

None

Action Deadline:

Action assigned to:

5.12 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

Dr Elizabeth Mullineaux

Agree with the responses above

COURSE DIRECTOR: Ms Hilary Orpet

Course Director Response:

NOne

Action Required:

None

Action Deadline:

Action assigned to:

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:

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

Please see comments above in the rest of the report.

Response from college requested: **NO**

Dr Elizabeth Mullineaux

As above

COURSE DIRECTOR: Ms Hilary Orpet

Course Director Response:

We believe we have addressed your concerns both at the Examination board and from these responses to your report.
The main issues being;
Ensure exams cover multispecies pertinent to the pathway undertaken
Ensure correct marking schemes used
Improve on examination checking processes
Provide reassessment period for BLOGS
Monitor student progress with regards to range of abilities
Continue to request changes to NPL by the RCVS with regards to student logging time undertaken in practice

Action Required:

See individual responses

Action Deadline:

Action assigned to:

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**

Dr Elizabeth Mullineaux

No comments