

Collaborative Report

Bachelor of Veterinary Medicine, Year 3, 2013/14

Professor Chris Proudman

The Programme

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

1.1 Course content

This is considered to be entirely appropriate.

Response from college requested: **NO**

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

The very high pass rate in written exams and DOPS assessments indicates that the vast majority of students are meeting the learning objectives.

The examiners consider the tasks performed in the DOPS assessment to be very basic and not consistent with the higher level of theoretical skills being taught. Practical skills relating to farm animals were felt to be particularly basic. We recommend that more stretching objectives in practical skills are considered and that basic clinical examination skills are taught and tested. This level of practical skill is more consistent with the level of theoretical knowledge that the students are demonstrating.

Response from college requested: **YES**

COURSE DIRECTOR: Mr Dan Chan

Course Director Response:

The DOPS assessments were designed as checkpoints to ensure all students have a minimum competency in handling animals safely as they progress to clinical phase of their training (e.g., attend EMS placements). Its purpose is to identify students that require remedial instruction in order to handle all relevant species of animals safely. This is the reason to format this assessment as DOPS (Direct Observation of Practical Skills) where feedback on performance of skill is immediate given to student- this is distinct from OSCEs which are designed to test students at a higher level of demonstrating specific skills. DOPS are scheduled very early at the start of term because early identification of students requiring remedial instruction in handling animals safety is of utmost importance. Higher level skills are assessed more appropriately in the latter part of course in preparation for clinical rotations.

Action Required:

External examiners should be briefed on the purpose of the DOPS, particularly as it is designed to ensure the safety of the students in handling various species. To "stretch" the learning objectives and assess higher level skills would be distracting to the core purpose of these DOPS which is the identification of students that need remedial instruction in animal handling

Action Deadline:

11-May-2015

Action assigned to:

Assessment Director Matthew Pead

1.3 Teaching methods

Entirely appropriate.

**Response from college
requested:** **NO**

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

Assessment appears to be well resourced.

**Response from college
requested:** **NO**

1.5 Please provide any additional comments and recommendations regarding the Programme

None.

**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

Direct comparison with student cohorts at other Vet Schools is difficult because of differences in curriculum and the different stage at which each curriculum introduces clinical theory. However, the examiners are impressed by the level of clinical knowledge, particularly in companion animal subjects, that students demonstrate at this relatively early stage in their veterinary education.

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

The high number of distinctions and merits awarded indicates a high level of achievement in a large proportion of the cohort. The proportion of low-achieving students in this cohort is particularly low.

The vast majority of students achieved the required level of competence in the DOPS assessment although, as noted in the previous section, the bar is set very low. First-time failing students are given ample opportunity to practise further, this opportunity is sometimes ignored to the detriment of further assessment.

Response from college requested: **YES**

COURSE DIRECTOR: Mr Dan Chan

Course Director Response:

As explained previously, the DOPS are designed to identify students that require immediate remedial instruction in handling animals safely. We feel it would be inappropriate to progress students to more advanced highly level skills with live animals if they cannot demonstrate a minimal level of skill that would ensure their safety.

Action Required:

We do not feel DOPS should be modified as their vital purpose could be undermined and this could compromise student safety.

Action Deadline:

Action assigned to:

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

The examiners note the very high level of achievement by this cohort of students which compares favourably to last year's performance.

Response from college requested: **NO**

Assessment Process

Please comment, as appropriate, on:

3.1 Assessment methods (relevance to learning objectives and curriculum)

Entirely appropriate.

Response from college requested: **NO**

3.2 Extent to which assessment processes are rigorous

The evaluation of student performance for each question is good practice. However, the examiners seek re-assurance that these data are reviewed and that poorly performing questions are either modified or rejected for future use.

Response from college requested: **YES**

COURSE DIRECTOR: Mr Dan Chan

Course Director Response:

Reports on the performance of individual questions are sent to the authors of question. The INSET day for all internal examiner includes sessions on interpretation of question performance data and recommendations for improving the discrimination ability and optimising the facility score of questions. Questions that are deemed unsuitable by external examiners are flagged in the question bank, and where possible, modified for future use.

Action Required:

Examination Office in consultation with Exam Chair to identify questions to be reviewed by question author for adjustment of removal.

Action Deadline:

01-Mar-2015

Action assigned to:

Examination Office

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

We have no concerns.

Response from college requested: **NO**

3.4 Standard of marking

Mainly computer marked. DOPS written comments explain outcomes well.

Response from college requested: **NO**

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

The major change is removal of student project assessments. The two examiners who have examined Year 3 previously consider this to be appropriate. We are pleased to see the removal of the highly subjective assessment of project reports.

**Response from college
requested:**

NO

The project which is marked according to an objective marking scheme is now part of BVetMed Year 2 assessment.

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

No.

**Response from college
requested:**

NO

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?

Yes.

Response from college requested: **NO**

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

N/A

Response from college requested: **NO**

4.3 Please provide any additional comments and recommendations regarding the procedures

The need for examiners to attend the RVC for two days seems excessive in view of the revised workload (no project reports to read). We suggest that a one day visit would now be more appropriate.

The external examiners would also like to challenge the College to consider whether our input to the assessment process could be done remotely. Following evaluation of assessment data, perhaps the external examiners could confer and report to the exam board meeting via an on-line forum or teleconference? Perhaps the re-sit exam board in September is an opportunity to pilot this approach?

Response from college requested: **YES**

COURSE DIRECTOR: Mr Dan Chan

Course Director Response:

If it is the view by panel of external examiners that they are able to comprehensively assess the robustness of the examination process during a single day visit, then this request will be discussed with the Registrar and Assessment Director for approval. We envisage there will need to be some flexibility year on year to reflect student performance. Request for ability to report to the Exam Board via a teleconference will be discussed and considered by the appropriate committee. We will confirm the requirement for more than one external examiner to attend the re-sit examination immediately after the first sitting examination board.

Action Required:

Discuss with the year leader/course director and exam board chair the length of attendance required.

Action Deadline:

30-Oct-2014

Action assigned to:

Daniel Chan

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

No

Additional comments, particularly if your answer was no:

Questions that have been challenged in previous years are being re-used with little modification. Our impression is that questions queried by external examiners often prove to be poor discriminators or are badly answered.

Response from college requested: YES

COURSE DIRECTOR: Mr Dan Chan

Course Director Response:

All queries made by external examiners are sent by Exam Office to question author for consideration. Question authors revise questions to align with how material is taught. The responses by question authors to queries made by external examiners should be available to external examiners.

Action Required:

Exam office to ensure response to question from the author to queries raised by external examiners are sent to back to external examiners

Action Deadline:

06-Apr-2015

Action assigned to:

Exam Office

5.2 An acceptable response has been made

N/A

Additional comments, particularly if your answer was no:

The examiners note that the vast majority of questions are well thought-out and relevant. However, we urge the board to ensure that all questions are consistent with day 1 skills and knowledge and that they are appropriate to first-opinion practice in the UK.

Response from college requested: YES

COURSE DIRECTOR: Mr Dan Chan

Course Director Response:

Day 1 skills are designed to comprise of basic skills - the entirety of the examination cannot be all consistent with day 1 skills as this would not allow to the most outstanding students to demonstrate their ability at distinction level. In order to differentiate between students below the desired standards of a practicing veterinary surgeon to those who are exceeding these standards, the examination must include questions that assess higher level reasoning that are not basic in nature.

Action Required:

None

Action Deadline:

Action assigned to:

5.3 I approved the papers for the Examination

Yes

Additional comments, particularly if your answer was no:

The majority of examiners responded positively to constructive feedback on draft questions. A few examiners chose to ignore or challenge our comments which we found disappointing. We draw to the attention of the board that questions queried by external examiners are frequently poorly answered by students. There are examples of this in the current exam.

Response from college requested: YES

COURSE DIRECTOR: Mr Dan Chan

Course Director Response:

The views of the external examiners and their insight is highly valued by internal examiners and the exam board. However, External Examiners are charged with assessing the validity of assessment methods, the process and execution of the examination to ensure a fair and robust process. The content of taught material and by extension, the questions used to assessed what is taught fall within the remit of the internal examiners. Nevertheless, every effort is made to feedback the queries made by the external examiners to the authors of the questions. A dialogue between external and internal examiners is a healthy process and we strongly value this process.

Action Required:

Examination Office to facilitate the exchange of comments made by external examiners and feedback from question authors

Action Deadline:

30-Mar-2015

Action assigned to:

Exam Office

5.4 I was able to scrutinise an adequate sample of students' work and marks to enable me to carry out my duties

Additional comments, particularly if your answer was no:

Response from college requested: NO

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

5.6 Candidates were considered impartially and fairly

Yes

Additional comments, particularly if your answer was no:

Response from college requested: NO

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

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:

Response from college requested: NO

5.9 I have received enough support to carry out my role

Yes

Additional comments, particularly if your answer was no:

Response from college requested: NO

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

5.11 Appropriate procedures and processes have been followed

Yes

Additional comments, particularly if your answer was no:

We seek clarification of the terms "process" and "procedure" used in this form. What is the difference?

Response from college requested: YES

COURSE DIRECTOR: Mr Dan Chan

Course Director Response:

In the context of the question, 'procedures' are specific set of instructions regarding the exam - for example, provision of examination papers to external examiners for comment in a timely fashion, availability of exam scripts submitted by students for review, whereas 'process' is a less defined action, for example feeding back exam question performance analyses report to internal examiners.

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

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:

We particularly liked the use of images in both MCQs and EMQs. We noted the relevance of image interpretation to day 1 skills, and questions using images were notably less wordy. The need to interpret the image is a relevant skill to test. We would welcome the further use of this approach in setting questions.

Response from college requested: **YES**

COURSE DIRECTOR: Mr Dan Chan

Course Director Response:

These comments are appreciated and will be fed back to Internal Examiners

Action Required:

Comments and recommendations by external examiners to be added to Year Leader Action Plan for 2014/15 and presented to BVetMed CMC meeting

Action Deadline:

15-Oct-2014

Action assigned to:

Dan Chan

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)

N/A

Response from college requested: **NO**

