

ANNUAL QUALITY IMPROVEMENT REPORT 2015/16

Appendix 3: External Examiners' report

FdSc/BSc Veterinary Nursing

This appendix contains Course Directors' responses to 2015/16 External Examiners' comments and updates to actions from 2014/15 External Examiners' report (if applicable).

As Course Directors 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

Update to 2014/15 action:

External Examiners' comments	Course Director's response	Update in 2015/16
<p>Having attended the OSPVE resit in January 2015, the extern who attended noted that the same 'critical step' was given different weightings in related Laboratory based OSPVE tasks. This issue was discussed in January with relevant VN staff and again at the current (1st July) Exam Board to highlight the need for consistency in the weighting of critical task steps from station to station.</p>	<p>The OSPVES are to be reviewed during the next academic year to ensure consistency.</p> <p>Action Required: To review the OSPVEs to ensure consistency with weighting</p> <p>Action Deadline: 01-Sep-2016</p> <p>Action assigned to: VN team</p>	<p>A working party was formed in December 2015 to review the entire OSPVE bank of tasks and make these more standardised. One of the difficulties in determining the weighting of steps is the variety of experts involved in this process and their contrasting opinions. To enhance reliability, all OSPVE tasks are routinely piloted in formative exams and feedback on station performance is always requested from assessors. Briefing sessions are also held prior to exams to promote consistent assessment of stations.</p>

BSc in Veterinary Nursing 2015/16 (Cohort 9)

Lead examiner: Dr Elizabeth Mullineaux

Collaborating examiner(s): Miss Victoria Bowes

The Programme

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

1.1 Course content

The course content is very satisfactory reflecting the full range of subject knowledge and skills that should be covered in these degree(s) at these levels (Year 3 Fd & BSc and Year 4 BSc). Externs reviewed and sampled 3rd year 'Applied Nursing' and 'Professional Practice', as well as year 4 'Research methods', elective modules and projects (see 2.3) and found the content of all of these to be more than satisfactory. Externs had also been present for OSPVE exams in December and found these to be well organised and of a high standard. Externs also had the opportunity on this occasion to meet with 3 of the Yr 4 BSc students and discuss the course, overall these students expressed great satisfaction with the course structure and content describing it as 'exceptional'.

Response from college requested: **NO**

COURSE DIRECTOR: Miss Rachel Lumbis

Course Director Response:

Thank you for these comments which have been fed back to the VN team and module contributors.

Action Required:

Action Deadline:

Action assigned to:

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 in the work reviewed as above.

Response from college requested: **NO**

COURSE DIRECTOR: Miss Rachel Lumbis

Course Director Response:

Thank you for these comments.

Action Required:

Action Deadline:

Action assigned to:

1.3 Teaching methods

A wide range of teaching methods as appropriate to veterinary nursing education appear to have been employed across the course. Students seem less responsive to online teaching than face to face education and this should be considered moving forwards with the course.

Response from college requested: NO

COURSE DIRECTOR: Miss Rachel Lumbis

Course Director Response:

Thank you for these comments which will be considered in light of any future module and course-related changes.

Action Required:

Action Deadline:

Action assigned to:

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

Students appear to have access to a wide range of teaching resources, including electronic facilities. The BSc students suggested they have had some difficulties in accessing non veterinary resources such as human nursing publications. Student feedback is very well-provided in a written format (eg on exam scripts and assignments) although this can be variable between examiners.

Response from college requested: NO

COURSE DIRECTOR: Miss Rachel Lumbis

Course Director Response:

Thank you for these comments. Students are advised to contact the library and/or the relevant module leader if they experience difficulty accessing resources. Students can also request copies of publications via the Inter-library loan service. The RVC has guidance on recording marks and annotations on written scripts which is issued to examiners with copies of exam scripts and assignments. This is predicted to help reduce variability between examiners and the Exams Office will highlight any marking that is not annotated sufficiently.

Action Required:

Action Deadline:

Action assigned to:

1.5 Please provide any additional comments and recommendations regarding the Programme

Response from college requested: NO

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

Year 3 and 4 student performance standards meet the external examiners' expectations of students at these levels.

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 was a good distribution of marks with some students achieving a high standard. The variation in standard at BSc year 4 was perhaps less than in previous years, with most students achieving a 2.1/2.2 degree

Response from college requested: NO

COURSE DIRECTOR: Miss Rachel Lumbis

Course Director Response:

We have been very pleased by the quality of work produced by students. A number of students in BSc year 4 were juggling work commitments alongside their final year project work. Whilst this is not encouraged, it is acknowledged that final year students are keen to work as a RVN and earn money to support their studies. The resulting level of engagement and interaction with their studies is variable, with the marks awarded often a reflection of this.

Action Required:

Action Deadline:

Action assigned to:

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

In addition to the comments above, the standard of BSc projects and presentations was also very high.

Response from college requested: NO

Please comment, as appropriate, on:

3.1 Assessment methods (relevance to learning objectives and curriculum)

A wide range of assessment techniques are used (MCQs, SAQs, written assignments and projects with presentations and OSPVEs). Overall the externs believe that the combination of these assessment methods fully satisfies and examines the learning objectives and curricula.

Response from college requested: **NO**

COURSE DIRECTOR: Miss Rachel Lumbis

Course Director Response:

Thank you for this feedback.

Action Required:

Action Deadline:

Action assigned to:

3.2 Extent to which assessment procedures are rigorous

Assessment across a range of methods (MCQs, SAQs, assignments, projects and OSPVEs) is of a high quality and well marked but see 3.4.

Response from college requested: **NO**

COURSE DIRECTOR: Miss Rachel Lumbis

Course Director Response:

Thank you for this feedback which has been shared with module leaders.

Action Required:

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

COURSE DIRECTOR: Miss Rachel Lumbis

Course Director Response:

Thank you for this feedback.

Action Required:

Action Deadline:

Action assigned to:

3.4 Standard of marking

Marking is generally of a high standard. Feedback on some written assessments is very detailed and is to be commended. Occasionally however, feedback is variable and more consistency in this respect is required. Double marking and/ or sample marking is in place across all modules, but sometimes the quality of this varies between modules. Where there is discrepancy between first marker's and second marker's results discussion needs to be documented so that there is a full audit trail.

Response from college requested: NO

COURSE DIRECTOR: Miss Rachel Lumbis

Course Director Response:

Thank you for your comments. The RVC has guidance on recording marks on written scripts which is issued to examiners with copies of exam scripts and assignments. These clearly state that clear and legible annotation should be included, preferably using specific phrases linked to the model answer and the language in the grading scheme. In the event of any discrepancy, reasoned discussions take place between first and second markers to reach a fair outcome for students. It is acknowledged that a record of this is currently lacking and, in future, will be included in the marking guidance issued to examiners.

Action Required:

Exams Office to modify the marking guidance issued to examiners to reflect the requirement for reasoned discussions to be recorded in the event of a discrepancy between first and second markers.

Action Deadline:

22-Aug-2016

Action assigned to:

Exams Office

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)

Yes externs are very satisfied with these procedures.

Response from college requested: NO

COURSE DIRECTOR: Miss Rachel Lumbis

Course Director Response:

Thank you for this feedback.

Action Required:

Action Deadline:

Action assigned to:

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

Some changes have been made, but consistency between examiners in terms of the level of annotation of scripts is still required.

Response from college requested: NO

COURSE DIRECTOR: Miss Rachel Lumbis

Course Director Response:

As mentioned previously, the RVC has clear guidance on the provision of annotation on written scripts which is issued to examiners with copies of exam scripts and assignments. Following on from the introduction of an intermediary step in March 2016, External Examiners are asked to highlight any marking that is not annotated sufficiently. The Exam Board Chair will then this forward with the marker or pass on to the Head of Department.

Action Required:

External Examiners to highlight any marking that is not annotated sufficiently.

Action Deadline:

14-Sep-2016

Action assigned to:

External Examiners

3.7 Please provide any additional comments and recommendations regarding the procedures

As above

Response from college requested: NO

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

Yes

Additional comments, particularly if your answer was no:

Comments previously made relating to OSPVE exams seemed to have been taken onboard when the exams were attended in December 2015.

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:

Comments on papers were generally taken onboard, the only exception was where a model answer had been requested this had not been added to the final paper, this may have just been an oversight.

Response from college requested: NO

COURSE DIRECTOR: Miss Rachel Lumbis

Course Director Response:

Apologies for this oversight. Care will be taken by Module Leaders and the Exams Office to avoid similar errors from occurring in the future.

Action Required:

Action Deadline:

Action assigned to:

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:

Very well provided for in an organised way by John Sanger

Response from college requested: NO

COURSE DIRECTOR: Miss Rachel Lumbis

Course Director Response:

Thank you for these comments which have been passed on to John Sanger and the Exams Team.

Action Required:

Action Deadline:

Action assigned to:

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:

Well organised and conducted.

Response from college requested: NO

COURSE DIRECTOR: Miss Rachel Lumbis

Course Director Response:

Thank you for these comments which have been passed on to John Sanger and the Exams Team.

Action Required:

Action Deadline:

Action assigned to:

4.6 Candidates were considered impartially and fairly

Yes

Additional comments, particularly if your answer was no:

Quality control is excellent.

Response from college requested: NO

COURSE DIRECTOR: Miss Rachel Lumbis

Course Director Response:

Thank you for these comments which have been passed on to John Sanger and the Exams Team.

Action Required:

Action Deadline:

Action assigned to:

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:

Excellent support from both the nursing department and John Sanger

Response from college requested: NO

COURSE DIRECTOR: Miss Rachel Lumbis

Course Director Response:

Thank you for this feedback which has been shared with the VN team and John Sanger.

Action Required:

Action Deadline:

Action assigned to:

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

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:

No

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

BSc in Veterinary Nursing (Middx), 2015/16 (Cohorts 10-12)

Lead examiner: Dr Elizabeth Mullineaux

Collaborating examiner(s): Miss Victoria Bowes

The Programme

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

1.1 Course content

The course content is very good, reflecting the full range of subject knowledge and skills that should be covered in these degree(s) at these levels (Years 1 and 2 Fd & BSc). Externs reviewed and sampled scripts from cohort 11 (diagnostics, anaesthesia and ECC) and cohort 12 (VNAS 1 & 2, CNP 1 & 2) and found the content of all of these to be more than satisfactory.

Response from college requested: **NO**

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 in the work reviewed as above.

Response from college requested: **NO**

1.3 Teaching methods

A wide range of teaching methods as appropriate to veterinary nursing education appear to have been employed across the course, although in this instance only scripts were reviewed.

Response from college requested: **NO**

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

Students appear to have access to a wide range of teaching resources made available to them, including electronic facilities.

Response from college requested: **NO**

1.5 Please provide any additional comments and recommendations regarding the Programme

Response from college requested: **NO**

COURSE DIRECTOR: Miss Rachel Lumbis

Course Director Response:

Thank you for these helpful and positive comments.

Action Required:

Action Deadline:

Action assigned to:

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

Year 1 and 2 student performance standards meet the external examiners' expectations of students at these levels, although cohort 12 appears perhaps to be of a lower standard than in previous years.

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 was a good distribution of marks with some students achieving a high standard. As mentioned above, the overall standard, especially in cohort 12 was perhaps lower than in previous years.

Response from college requested: NO

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

The following scripts were reviewed by the externals over two days in order to gain a clear understanding of students' performance:

Response from college requested: NO

Please comment, as appropriate, on:

3.1 Assessment methods (relevance to learning objectives and curriculum)

On this occasion only written assessments were reviewed (MCQs, SAQs, written assignments), although practical skills and presentations have been observed in the higher years on other occasions. Overall the externs believe that the combination of these assessment methods fully satisfy and examine the learning objectives and curricula.

Response from college requested: NO

3.2 Extent to which assessment procedures are rigorous

Assessment across a range of methods is of a high quality and well marked (see 3.4).

Response from college requested: NO

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

3.4 Standard of marking

Marking is generally of a high standard. Feedback on written assessments is usually very detailed, with clear marking, and is to be commended. Sample marking is in place across all modules, but sometimes the quality of this varies between modules. Where there is discrepancy between first marker's and second marker's results discussion needs to be documented so that there is a full audit trail. This issue was raised in June 2016 and still does not seem to have been fully addressed.

Response from college requested: NO

COURSE DIRECTOR: Miss Rachel Lumbis

Course Director Response:

Thank you for your comments. In the event of any discrepancy when double marking, reasoned discussions take place between first and second markers to reach a fair outcome for students. It is acknowledged that a record of this is currently lacking and, in future, will be included in the marking guidance issued to examiners. Both the exam board meetings in June and September have involved the review of work from assessments carried out in the same academic year, hence why you have not seen an improvement between the two boards. The marking guidance will be updated for the academic year 2016/17, with the effect evident in the quality of marking reviewed at the exam boards in 2017.

It is also important to note the difference between blind double marking (used for 4th year BSc assessments) and sample marking (used for years 1 – 3). Work reviewed at the September exam board will have been subject to sampling marking. The role of the sample marker is to review the marks awarded for the question/s and the record of marking that the primary markers have made. In contrast to blind double marking, the sampler is asked to determine only whether they agree or disagree with the mark for each piece of work. It is considered reasonable for a sampler to agree with the first mark if it is adjacent and in the same classification category. If a sufficient proportion (typically 10% or more) of the pieces of work give the sampler concern, or the sampler has other concerns about the consistency or standard of marking (e.g. about the marks from a particular marker, question or marking range) s/he will inform the examinations officer. The examinations officer will alert the chairman of the examinations board and the Course Director. They will devise, and put in place, an action plan appropriate to address the concerns expressed.

Action Required:

Exams Office to modify the marking guidance issued to examiners to reflect the outcome for the reasoned discussions to be recorded in the event of a discrepancy between first and second markers.

Action Deadline:

01-Jun-2017

Action assigned to:

Exams Office

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)

Yes externs are very satisfied with these procedures.

Response from college requested: NO

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

Some changes have been made, but consistency between examiners in terms of the level of annotation of scripts and sample marking (as 3.4) are still required.

Response from college requested: NO

COURSE DIRECTOR: Miss Rachel Lumbis

Course Director Response:

Please refer to the comments provided in relation to 3.4.

Action Required:

Action Deadline:

Action assigned to:

3.7 Please provide any additional comments and recommendations regarding the procedures

Response from college requested: NO

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

Yes

Additional comments, particularly if your answer was no:

Improvements have been made but consistency is still occasionally lacking, see section 3

Response from college requested: NO

COURSE DIRECTOR: Miss Rachel Lumbis

Course Director Response:

Please see comments provided in relation to section 3.

Action Required:

Action Deadline:

Action assigned to:

4.2 An acceptable response has been made

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:

Papers were reviewed by the externals and in most cases any comments made were incorporated into the final exams.

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:

Extremely well organised by John Sanger and the nursing staff

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:

We were surprised than on both this occasion and the previous occasion (in June) that the exam board was chaired by Prof. Gregory who is directly involved in the course rather than by a more independent staff member.

Response from college requested: NO

Course Director Response:

These appointments are made by Academic Board and therefore outside of the Course Director's control. However the limitations of this arrangement have been recognised and a new Deputy Chair of Exam Board will be appointed.

Action Required:

To appoint a new Deputy Chair of Exam Board

Action Deadline:

June 2017

Action assigned to:

Academic Board

4.6 Candidates were considered impartially and fairly

Yes

Additional comments, particularly if your answer was no:

Excellent efforts to ensure fairness and consistency

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

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