

ANNUAL QUALITY IMPROVEMENT REPORT 18/19

Appendix 2: External Examiners' report

Cert AVP

This appendix contains Course Director's/Year Leader's responses to 2018/19 External Examiners' comments and updates to actions from previous years' External Examiners' report (if applicable).

As Course Director/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 – not applicable
b.	2018/19 Collaborative Annual Report with responses from Course Director

a. Updates to actions from previous years' reports

Report Question	External Examiners' comments & suggested actions	Course Director/Year Leader's response & Action	Update in 2018/19
Ed Hall October 2018			
2.2 Quality of candidates' knowledge and skills, with particular reference to those at the top, middle or bottom of the range	<p>There is slight concern that students in the bottom range, although successfully completing the CertAVP, may not have developed the academic knowledge to pass the synoptic examination, but this CertAVP is focussed on reflective practice and not acquisition of facts.</p> <p>Response from college requested: It would be informative if the College could obtain data from the RCVS as to the success rate at the synoptic exam, and correlate it with the average grade of the candidate in their C modules</p>	<p>Course Director Response:</p> <p>Thank you for this useful suggestion. We have informally tracked the progress of our candidates in relation to their RVC grades vs success at the synoptic exam but now that there are sufficient candidates who have sat the SAM and SAS exams, a more formal comparison can be meaningfully made. We will progress this and report and the next exam board.</p> <p>Action Required:</p> <p>Seek from RCVS full list of RVC candidates who have sat the synoptic examination and the outcome and compare to grades obtained for their CertAVP work</p> <p>Action Deadline:</p> <p>01-Oct-2019</p> <p>Action assigned to:</p> <p>Joanne Jarvis</p>	<p>The data from RCVS on the success of RVC students in the synoptic examinations was received mid November 2018. The data was shared within the CertAVP team and analysis was performed to see if there is a correlation between pass/fail module results, number of re-submissions and pass/fail synoptic results. There was found to be no obvious correlations or assumptions to be made.</p>
3.1 Assessment methods (relevance to learning objectives and curriculum)	<p>Confirmation that assessors have been reminded to mark at the appropriate level, recognising the limitations of cases in first opinion practice</p>	<p>Course Director Response:</p> <p>Thank you for this insightful comment and reminder. We reminded assessors of the standard expected at the Exam board and asked module leaders who were present to convey this to their assessors. However, we will follow up with a reminder to all assessors.</p> <p>Action Required:</p> <p>Reminder to all assessors about the standard of work expected for the CertAP, recognition of the challenges that candidates face in first opinion practice and to reward candidates for reflections on perceived deficiencies and how they might improve</p> <p>Action Deadline:</p> <p>07-Jan-2019</p> <p>Action assigned to:</p>	<p>At the February 2019 annual module leaders meeting, all were reminded that when giving feedback, if candidates exceed the word count or are advised to include additional information, the assessor needs to also advise what passages/words can be removed.</p>

		Jill Maddison and Joanne Jarvis	
Anna Judson Feb 2019			
2.3 Please provide any additional comments and recommendations regarding the students' performance	<p>For the students who have to resubmit essays consistent feedback is the lack of reflective writing. Follow up advice is detailed with good signposting to resources, however a small number of students still struggle to adopt reflection into their submissions.</p> <p>A bank of 'before and after' examples of short pieces of text rewritten into a reflective style might support students new to this style of writing early on with their studies.</p>	<p>Course Director Response:</p> <p>Thank you for this suggestion. We will definitely work toward supplying such examples for our candidates who are struggling with reflective writing.</p> <p>Action Required:</p> <p>Module A leader, Liz Chan to be asked to create some "before and after" examples of reflective writing.</p> <p>Action Deadline:</p> <p>01-Sep-2019</p> <p>Action assigned to:</p> <p>Liz Chan and Joanne Jarvis</p>	<p>We have added extensive support for reflective writing on the CertAVP site, and are working on providing examples.</p>
3.6 Opinion on changes to the assessment procedures from previous years in which you have examined	<p>Essays and assessment reports are now online. The time taken to mark essays has been reduced from 8 to 4 weeks which has addressed negative student feedback in the module survey report. Could the RVC note over time whether this improved marking turnaround has any impact on student motivation, length of time taken to complete modules and student retention for further modules?</p>	<p>Course Director Response:</p> <p>We will certainly endeavour to although the factors influencing student motivation and feedback for a totally "distant" course such as the CertAVP are multifactorial. We are instituting several initiatives to help with student engagement at a distance and to prepare candidates for this type of academic endeavour so if there is an improvement in completion rates it may be hard to tease out what elements have had the most impact.</p> <p>Action Required:</p> <p>Comparison of completion times and dropout rates for 2019/2020 academic year vs 2018/2019 academic year to be presented for consideration at the next A and B module exam board.</p> <p>Action Deadline:</p> <p>03-Feb-2020</p> <p>Action assigned to:</p> <p>Joanne Jarvis</p>	<p><i>Please note that in 2018, enrolment numbers vastly reduced as inactive candidates, who had reached their 10 year enrolment limit, were removed from our enrolment records. Therefore the requested statistics will be compared from 2019/2020 onwards.</i></p>
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)	<p>It is clear the RVC Cert AVP team wish candidates to succeed and the feedback, encouragement, support and advice provided is excellent.</p>	<p>Course Director Response:</p> <p>Thank you for this very positive comment about our CertAVP team which we will convey to them.</p> <p>Action Required:</p> <p>Comment to be shared with the CertAVP team of</p>	<p>Email sent to assessors 18/04/19.</p>

		assessors. Action Deadline: 01-Apr-2019 Action assigned to: Joanne Jarvis	
--	--	---	--

Individual Report

Exam board meeting: 17-Oct-2019

RCVS Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Practice, 2018/19

Professor Ed Hall

The Programme

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

1.1 Course content

The course consists of a wide range of C Modules in different subjects leading to the ultimate attainment of the Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Practice. Students are required to complete the A and B Modules before the C Modules. Successful completion of the A, B and three C Modules is required for completion of the programme. An optional synoptic examination organised by the RCVS can be taken. This is not offered directly by the RVC, although support for candidates is now provided.

Response from college requested: NO

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

The learning objectives for each Module are stated explicitly on the RVC Learn website and are available to all students.

They also inform the marking and feedback given by staff. The overall objective is to inculcate a philosophy of reflection and life-long learning, rather than shallow, discipline-based knowledge. Success is indicated by feedback from students after completion, indicating how this change in mindset has altered their way of working.

Response from college requested: NO

1.3 Teaching methods

This is not a taught course. The student progresses through self-directed study and learning, and this involves reading of associated literature and attendance at relevant CPD courses, and reflection on case material experienced in the workplace, underpinned by extensive and supportive feedback from the RVC assessors on submitted work.

Courses and participation in other activities (e.g. discussion fora), relevant to the subject area are advertised through RVC Learn. Students can have a learning buddy and are recommended to find a mentor. They can also contact the College online for help and advice, and one-to-one tutoring is available for students having difficulties.

Response from college requested: NO

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

There are extensive self-help tutorials available on RVC Learn, and students have online access to scientific journals in the College's library. One of the most important resources is the informative and supportive feedback students receive from assessors.

Response from college requested: NO

1.5 Please provide any additional comments and recommendations regarding the Programme

The perceived view amongst potential candidates discussing enrolment in online fora is that the RVC course is harder than that of other providers, and consequently numbers being enrolled are not increasing. However, the view of candidates who have completed the programme is that the RVC course is most valuable in enhancing the way they work.

COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Jill Maddison

Course Director Response:

Thank you for this comment and for appreciating the challenges and benefits of the RVC based CertAVP

Action Required:

Action Deadline:

Action assigned to:

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

Not known.

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 quality of the majority of the students' work that I reviewed was excellent and, at a minimum, was at Masters standard. Indeed some students were working at a level I would expect from someone with Specialist status, but all students who passed were at the level expected of an Advanced Practitioner.

Response from college requested: NO

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

The support available to students who fail their first submission almost always results in a significant improvement on second submission.

Response from college requested: NO

Please comment, as appropriate, on:

3.1 Assessment methods (relevance to learning objectives and curriculum)

The requirements of each module vary but, in general, students are required to submit a number of case reports, a case log with a critical analysis, with a synopsis expressing their reflective thoughts. The RVC's Common Grading scheme (posted on the RVC website with a link from RVC Learn) is applied to marked work. The descriptors were relevant to the stated learning outcomes.

Students may request formative feedback on one of their case reports. Failed reports can be re-submitted once; a further failure requires an appeal to be permitted to re-submit.

Thus the assessment process and extensive formative feedback allow students to improve through reflection, one of the key aims of the programme. The synopsis and critical appraisal of their work allow for self-reflection on their knowledge and practice, and insight into where they have already improved or where they can improve in the future.

Response from college requested: NO

3.2 Extent to which assessment procedures are rigorous

I was sent examples from the Small Animal Medicine, Emergency and Critical Care, Small Animal Surgery, Veterinary Public Health and Veterinary Anaesthesia modules, as these were subjects where students had completed the programme. I concurred with the marks awarded. Resubmitted pieces of work were subject to double marking.

Response from college requested: NO

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

The level of assessment was consistent with Masters level as defined by the FHEQ. All candidates who passed were at the expected level.

Response from college requested: NO

3.4 Standard of marking

I found no significant discrepancies in the marking in relation to the Common Grading Scheme, and consider the marking to be fair.

Response from college requested: NO

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 for assessment were conducted fairly and the awards made by the Board of Examiners were appropriate.

During the year I was invited to comment on cases where students had appealed their mark. The discussion amongst relevant staff resulted in a fair outcome. Extra-ordinary Boards were called if a decision was needed before the main Exam Board in order to enable a few candidates to sit the synoptic examination.

Response from college requested: NO

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

There have been no significant changes to the assessment of the C Modules in the past year. The introduction the previous year of the requirement to pass "clinically critical" work at 50% aligns with the professional requirement for competency, and should be maintained.

Response from college requested: NO

COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Jill Maddison

Course Director Response:

Thank you for supporting this important change to the Award and Assessment Regulations

Action Required:

Action Deadline:

Action assigned to:

3.7 Please provide any additional comments and recommendations regarding the procedures

None

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:

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

N/A

Additional comments, particularly if your answer was no:

Not applicable

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:

Samples from the whole spectrum of standards for each module were made available.

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:

The unavoidable late arrival of the Chairman and the planned absence of his deputy delayed the start of the Exam Board. Consideration should be given to who else should be eligible to chair the Board in similar circumstances. What numbers are required for the Board to be quorate was unclear.

Response from college requested: YES

COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Jill Maddison

Course Director Response:

Thank you for this comment and we agree this is of concern. We will raise this issue with senior managers to seek advice about options. Details of the quorum can be found here, section 1.1: [Constitution and Function of Exam Boards](#).

Action Required:

Action Deadline:

02-Mar-2020

Action assigned to:

Jill Maddison and Joanne Jarvis

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

N/A

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:

None

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)

The Cert AVP programme delivered by the RVC encourages reflective, lifelong learning. Whilst a somewhat different approach to much undergraduate teaching and programmes from other Cert AVP providers, the ultimate gain for practitioners of this approach is quite clear from the testimony of those who have gone through the programme.

COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Jill Maddison

Course Director Response:

Thank you for your insight and support for the ethos of the RVC-based CertAVP. Thank you also for your support of the programme as a whole and the quality assurance your scrutiny brings to the programme.

Action Required:

Action Deadline:

Action assigned to:

