

## ANNUAL QUALITY IMPROVEMENT REPORT 2019/20

### Appendix 3: External Examiners' report

### BVetMed Year 3

This appendix contains Year Leader's responses to 2019/20 External Examiners' comments and updates to actions from previous External Examiners' reports (if applicable).

As Year Leader/Course Director 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](mailto:afilipovic@rvc.ac.uk), 01707666938.

Appendix 3 consists of:

a.	Updates to actions from previous years' reports
b.	2019/20 Collaborative Annual Report with responses from Course Director/Year Leader

Report Question	External Examiners' comment	Course Directors response and actions	Update in 2019/20
<p>1.5 Please provide any additional comments and recommendations regarding the Programme</p>	<p>This year there was an introduction of Professional studies included in the exam assessment. Although we feel this is a very positive aspect, the marks for this were added to the written paper marks. This allowed student to compensate with poor marks in the written papers and advance to the fourth year. In addition, there were students who scored highly in the written papers with extremely poor Professional studies assessment marks that were also allowed to proceed. We would suggest that the Professional Studies assessment be separated from the written paper and both elements needed to be passed, i.e. no compensation, as is done for the DOPS.</p>	<p>Action Required:</p> <p>Discuss making the professional studies assignment in the BVetMed 3 year a 'stand-alone' compulsory component to the exam with a minimum pass mark. Once agreement is reached on the best way forward, submit a proposal for the 2019 autumn undergraduate course management committee (CMC) and learning, teaching &amp; assessment committee (LTAC) meetings.</p> <p>Action Deadline:</p> <p>30-Aug-2019</p> <p>Action assigned to:</p> <p>Michael Hewetson (BVetMed 3 leader) and Jill Maddison (Course director)</p>	<p>Action completed January 2020</p> <p>It was agreed that the college would continue to combine the marks for a total of 3 examination cycles in order to gather sufficient data for review. At this time, we will discuss the option of making the Professional Studies assignment a 'stand-alone' compulsory component to the BVetMed 3 exam with a minimum pass mark.</p>

# Collaborative Report

Exam board meeting: 15-Jun-2020

**Bachelor of Veterinary Medicine, Year 3, 2019/20**

**Lead examiner: Dr Bryan Markey**

**Collaborating examiner(s): Prof Sandy Love, Dr John Keen**

## The Programme

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

### 1.1 Course content

The course content is appropriate for students in the third year of their five year veterinary medicine course and is generally similar to that in other institutions.

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

The learning objectives are clearly laid out and appropriate for students at this stage of their course. The external examiners are satisfied that they have been fully met.

### 1.3 Teaching methods

The external examiners are satisfied with the variety and appropriateness of the teaching methods used.

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

The resources available on RVC Learn are extensive and considered to be highly satisfactory.

### 1.5 Please provide any additional comments and recommendations regarding the Programme

This is the second year that Professional Studies have been included in the exam assessment. The marks are added to the written paper marks and may allow students to compensate poor marks in the written papers and advance into the Fourth Year. Last year the external examiners suggested separating the Professional Studies from the written paper and requiring both elements to be passed. The response from the College that the current system of amalgamating marks should continue for three years to provide sufficient data for a considered review is noted by the external examiners.

## COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Michael Hewetson

### Course Director Response:

Following valid concerns from the external examiners in 2019 that combining the BVetMed 3 Professional Studies assignment mark with the marks from the written EMQ and MCQ papers will enable students to compensate for poor marks in the written papers, it was agreed at the 2019 autumn undergraduate course management committee (CMC) meeting that the college would continue to combine the marks for a total of 3 examination cycles in order to gather sufficient data for review. At this time, we will discuss the option of making the Professional Studies assignment a 'stand-alone' compulsory component to the BVetMed 3 exam with a minimum pass mark.

**Action Required:**

Discuss making the Professional Studies assignment in the BVetMed 3 year a 'stand-alone' compulsory component to the exam with a minimum pass mark at the 2021 examination board meeting. Once agreement is reached on the best way forward, a proposal will be submitted for the 2021 autumn undergraduate course management committee (CMC) and learning, teaching & assessment committee (LTAC) meetings.

**Action Deadline:**

01-May-2021

**Action assigned to:**

Michael Hewetson and Jill Maddison

## 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**

The students performance was considered comparable to previous years despite the unusual circumstances this year due to the Covid-19 pandemic and the resulting restrictions. The formative on-line system of examination applied this year for the written papers appears to have been largely successful.

**COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Michael Hewetson**

**Course Director Response:**

**Thank you for your comments!**

### **2.2 Quality of candidates' knowledge and skills, with particular reference to those at the top, middle or bottom of the range**

Student performance ranged from exceptional to poor and was normally distributed.

**COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Michael Hewetson**

**Course Director Response:**

**Thank you for your comments!**

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

Students appear to have coped extremely well with move to on-line, remote assessment.

**COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Michael Hewetson**

**Course Director Response:**

**Thank you for your comments!**

## Assessment Procedures

Please comment, as appropriate, on:

### 3.1 Assessment methods (relevance to learning objectives and curriculum)

The external examiners consider the assessment methods appropriate.

### 3.2 Extent to which assessment procedures are rigorous

The external examiners consider the assessment procedures to be suitably rigorous.

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

The level of assessment is consistent with FHEQ.

### 3.4 Standard of marking

The marking is automatic for MCQs and EMQs. There is extensive statistical analysis of question performance. The questions had been used previously in 2018 and performed similarly this year despite the open book nature of the exam and lack of invigilation.

The Professional Skills assessment marking involved a proportion of double marking to check for consistency. The marking was fair and robust.

### 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 Examinations Office communicated effectively and efficiently with the external examiners, keeping them abreast of all changes required for the examination process this year involving a change to a mandatory, formative, remote on-line written exam. The Board of Examiners met virtually. The external examiners were satisfied with the arrangements and considered the assessment procedures to have been conducted very fairly. It is a strength of the assessment procedures that there is oversight by three experienced external examiners from different institutions and different academic backgrounds.

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

The move to a mandatory, formative, non-invigilated remote examination was reasonable given the restrictions imposed on third level institutions during the Covid-19 pandemic.

### 3.7 Please provide any additional comments and recommendations regarding the procedures

Following the Exam Board it was brought to the attention of the external examiners that erroneous results had been presented. The marks on the scripts and the spreadsheet line did not correspond. It appears that there was an error within the formula of both the EMQ and MCQ columns. The results had to be re-calculated by the Head of Exams. The error impacted 30 out of 290 Year 3 students. The external examiners recommend that an SOP be developed to ensure that there is adequate checking of: a) the transcription of marks, b) individual formulas within the spreadsheet, c) final marks awarded as well as cross checking amongst specific members of the exam admin team.

#### **COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Michael Hewetson**

##### **Course Director Response:**

The head of examinations, John Sanger, will construct an SOP as you have suggested

##### **Action Required:**

Construct an SOP to ensure that there is a fail-safe mechanism in place to check a) the transcription of marks, b) individual formulas within the spreadsheet and c) the final marks awarded. This should include a system of cross checking amongst specific members of the exam admin team.

##### **Action Deadline:**

01-Mar-2021

##### **Action assigned to:**

John Sanger (Head of examinations, Academic registry)

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

**Yes**

**Additional comments, particularly if your answer was no:**

**4.2 An acceptable response has been made**

**Yes**

**Additional comments, particularly if your answer was no:**

**4.3 I approved the papers for the Examination**

**Yes**

**Additional comments, particularly if your answer was 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:**

**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:**

**4.6 Candidates were considered impartially and fairly**

**Yes**

**Additional comments, particularly if your answer was 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:**

**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:**

**4.9 I have received enough support to carry out my role**

**Yes**

**Additional comments, particularly if your answer was 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:**

**4.11 Appropriate procedures and processes have been followed**

**Yes**

**Additional comments, particularly if your answer was no:**

**4.12 The processes for assessment and the determination of awards are sound**

**Yes**

**Additional comments, particularly if your answer was 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:**

**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)**