

ANNUAL QUALITY IMPROVEMENT REPORT 2021/22

Appendix 3: External Examiners' report

BVetMed Year 3

This appendix contains Year Leader's responses to 2021/22 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, 01707666938.

Appendix 3 consists of:

a.	Updates to actions from previous years' reports
b.	2020/21 Collaborative Annual Report with responses from Course Director/Year Leader

Collaborative Report

Exam board meeting: 18-May-2022

Bachelor of Veterinary Medicine, Year 3, 2021/22

Lead examiner: Dr Dan Batchelor

Collaborating examiner(s): Dr Bryan Markey, Dr John Keen

The Programme

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

1.1 Course content

This is the 3rd year of the veterinary science course (BVetMed3).

Dr J.K

Appropriate for this undergraduate course

COURSE DIRECTOR: Mr John Fishwick

Course Director Response:

Yes agreed and we are pleased that you consider this appropriate for the course

Action Required: None

Action Deadline:

Action assigned to:

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

Dr B.M

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 met.

COURSE DIRECTOR: Mr John Fishwick

Course Director Response:

Thank you- we are pleased that you consider the LOs are properly set out and appropriate.

Action Required: None

Action Deadline:

Action assigned to:

1.3 Teaching methods

Dr B.M

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

COURSE DIRECTOR: Mr John Fishwick

Course Director Response:

Thank you- we are pleased that you are satisfied with teaching methods used.

Action Required: None

Action Deadline:

Action assigned to:

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

Dr B.M

The resources available on RVC Learn are extensive and considered by the external examiners to be highly satisfactory.

COURSE DIRECTOR: Mr John Fishwick

Course Director Response:

Thank you- we are pleased that you feel teaching resources are highly satisfactory.

Action Required: None

Action Deadline:

Action assigned to:

1.5 Please provide any additional comments and recommendations regarding the Programme

Dr B.M

A new curriculum is being rolled out at RVC and will impact this stage of the Programme from September 2023. It is planned to have end of stage factual MCQ exams with the main exams occurring in September (mixture of clinical reasoning MCQs and longer text style questions). There will be a professional studies portfolio that is compulsory for students to produce and which must be passed. There will be no longer be compensation between the Professional Studies/Portfolio and the written exams.

COURSE DIRECTOR: Mr John Fishwick

Course Director Response:

Thank you for your comments. A new curriculum is indeed being planned which will be rolled out to BVM3 in the academic year 2023-24. The new professional studies asset will be part of that.

There were recent internal discussions with the current BVetMed course director and BVetMed year 3 leader and we decided not to make passing of this asset a standalone qualifier for this exam. So, we will still allow compensation between the professional studies asset and the written papers, in effect as is currently allowed. The professional studies asset will still make a significant contribution to the overall mark. This year the compensation affected only affect 5 students.

Action Required:

None

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

The students' performance was as expected and comparable to the achievement of University of Liverpool veterinary undergraduates. The proportion of students failing the exam (just under 10%) was about as expected. Similarly, the proportion of passes, merits and distinctions is similar to my own institution.

Dr J.K

Likewise the spread of results and overall performance is in keeping with this level of course at this examiners institution.

Dr B.M

The students performance was considered comparable to students at a similar stage in University College Dublin.

COURSE DIRECTOR: Mr John Fishwick

Course Director Response:

Thank you – yes, we are pleased with the performance of the examination and pleased to have this confirmed by our external examiners.

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

A good spread of marks was seen. With good MCQ technique for the vast majority of questions, the questions generally discriminated well. This is compatible with a reliable exam. This year, there were fewer distinctions and more merits than last year. This is as expected though- the previous year seemed a little bit "top heavy".

Dr J.K

Spread broadly comparable with previous years but more balanced in terms of merits vs distinctions.

Dr B.M

COURSE DIRECTOR: Mr John Fishwick

Course Director Response:

Thank you we are pleased with the feedback from our external examiners

Action Required: None

Action Deadline:

Action assigned to:

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

Standard setting gave a raw mark to pass of 41% (factual MCQ paper) and 48% (clinical reasoning paper). With such a large cohort the standard setting method employed should be highly reliable. The 41% raw mark may suggest the paper was a little bit "too difficult" but it remains fair because of the standard setting process used.

COURSE DIRECTOR: Mr John Fishwick

Course Director Response:

Thank you- we are pleased to know that you considered the standard setting to be fair. there is of course no room for complacency. We do not propose any specific action but we will follow the RVC's policy on this.

Action Required: None

Action Deadline:

Action assigned to:

Assessment Procedures

Please comment, as appropriate, on:

3.1 Assessment methods (relevance to learning objectives and curriculum)

MCQ exams- one focusing on clinical reasoning and one on factual recall. These covered all species and a wide range of topics. I am happy these reflected correct blueprinting to the taught material and were also aligned with the learning objectives. The questions were fair for this stage of the veterinary course.

Also DOPS for practical skills, and a professional studies written assignment (with a % of the scripts double marked).

I especially liked the clinical reasoning exam, which is an example of authentic assessment.

Dr J.K

Good, well thought out process backed up by previous years experience. Once again I liked the formative practice examination: good to allow familiarisation with the process

Dr B.M

The external examiners considered the mix of assessment methods to be appropriate.

COURSE DIRECTOR: Mr John Fishwick

Course Director Response:

Thank you- we are very pleased that you are satisfied with our assessment method here.

Action Required: None

Action Deadline:

Action assigned to:

3.2 Extent to which assessment procedures are rigorous

Very rigorous.

I found the questions this year to be of higher quality than last year, with fewer technical errors in the MCQs. Three external examiners were invited to comment on the questions, turning up several comments and suggestions- mostly minor.

Quality assurance after the exams was exemplary, with careful scrutiny of the statistics, and referring questions back to the teachers and strand leaders involved. Staff clearly considered each question very carefully.

The external examiners unanimously agreed with the moderation after the exam.

Dr J.K

There is an excellent system in place. I am happy that after examination, all contentious or poorly performing questions were assessed and appropriate feedback from question makers sought. Good decisions made.

COURSE DIRECTOR: Mr John Fishwick

Course Director Response:

Thank you- we are very pleased with this endorsement of our methods.

Action Required: None

Action Deadline:

Action assigned to:

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

Assessments were appropriate for a level 7 qualification.

Dr J.K

Agree

COURSE DIRECTOR: Mr John Fishwick

Course Director Response:

Thank you.

Action Required: None

Action Deadline:

Action assigned to:

3.4 Standard of marking

very good- see comments above about quality assurance of the MCQ exams. Double marking of the written professional studies assignment showed a high degree of agreement.

Dr J.K

Professional Studies Component: Well-conducted part of the assessment for this course as previous years; nice spread of marks; good evidence of rigour to ensure consistency in marking with more experienced examiners double marking/sampling.

COURSE DIRECTOR: Mr John Fishwick

Course Director Response:

Thank you - we are pleased with this feedback

Action Required: None

Action Deadline:

Action assigned to:

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)

I found the assessments to be sound and fair. Administration was excellent.

Dr J.K

All excellent. As external examiners we are well informed and given all we need to scrutinise the process

Dr B.M

The Board of Examiners met virtually. The external examiners were very satisfied with all the arrangements and considered the assessment procedures to have been conducted very fairly. It would be very helpful to the external examiners to have historical data included with the draft MCQ exam questions with regard to previous performance. This information would be very helpful when questions are being considered for amendment or removal.

COURSE DIRECTOR: Mr John Fishwick

Course Director Response:

Thank you and we appreciate your comments about our exams administration team

Action Required: None

Action Deadline:

Action assigned to:

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

I liked the switch from EMIs to MCQs. This change in assessment practice allows the exams to contain questions on a wider range of learning points. Further, it is easier to write high quality MCQs the EMIs. This change therefore tends to lead to an exam that is more valid and more reliable.

Dr J.K

Agree, the change to Clinical Reasoning MCQs seems to have worked well

COURSE DIRECTOR: Mr John Fishwick

Course Director Response:

Thank you -we are very pleased that our externals supported our change to MCQs

Action Required: None

Action Deadline:

Action assigned to:

3.7 Please provide any additional comments and recommendations regarding the procedures

I would like to thank Laura and Christina for their help. Everything was well organised and communication was good, thank you.

Dr J.K

Exam admin have as previously been really helpful guiding us through the examination pocess and results

COURSE DIRECTOR: Mr John Fishwick

Course Director Response:

Thank you- your comments are very much appreciated

Action Required: None

Action Deadline:

Action assigned to:

General Statements

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

Yes

Additional comments, particularly if your answer was no:

MCQs were overall of higher standard this year.

Dr J.K

Agree.

COURSE DIRECTOR: Mr John Fishwick

Course Director Response:

Thank you

Action Required: None

Action Deadline:

Action assigned to:

4.2 An acceptable response has been made

Yes

Additional comments, particularly if your answer was no:

Dr J.K

Agree

COURSE DIRECTOR: Mr John Fishwick

Course Director Response:

Thank you

Action Required: None

Action Deadline:

Action assigned to:

4.3 I approved the papers for the Examination

Yes

Additional comments, particularly if your answer was no:

Dr J.K

Yes, and sufficient time was given for feedback to be considered.

COURSE DIRECTOR: Mr John Fishwick

Course Director Response:

Thank you

Action Required: None

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:

Dr J.K

Yes. Access to Professional Studies papers was in particular very useful

COURSE DIRECTOR: Mr John Fishwick

Course Director Response:

Thank you

Action Required: None

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:

Dr J.K

Yes

COURSE DIRECTOR: Mr John Fishwick

Course Director Response:

Thank you

Action Required: None

Action Deadline:

Action assigned to:

4.6 Candidates were considered impartially and fairly

Yes

Additional comments, particularly if your answer was no:

Dr J.K

Agree

COURSE DIRECTOR: Mr John Fishwick

Course Director Response:

Thank you for that reassurance in our methods

Action Required: None

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:

Dr J.K

Agree

COURSE DIRECTOR: Mr John Fishwick

Course Director Response:

Thank you

Action Required: None

Action Deadline:

Action assigned to:

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:

Dr J.K

Agree

COURSE DIRECTOR: Mr John Fishwick

Course Director Response:

Thank you

Action Required: None

Action Deadline:

Action assigned to:

4.9 I have received enough training and support to carry out my role

Yes

Additional comments, particularly if your answer was no:

Dr J.K

Yes

COURSE DIRECTOR: Mr John Fishwick

Course Director Response:

Thank you

Action Required: None

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:

COURSE DIRECTOR: Mr John Fishwick

Course Director Response:

Thank you

Action Required: None

Action Deadline:

Action assigned to:

4.11 Appropriate procedures and processes have been followed

Yes

Additional comments, particularly if your answer was no:

Dr J.K

Agree

COURSE DIRECTOR: Mr John Fishwick

Course Director Response:

Thank you

Action Required: None

Action Deadline:

Action assigned to:

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

Yes

Additional comments, particularly if your answer was no:

Dr J.K

Agree

COURSE DIRECTOR: Mr John Fishwick

Course Director Response:

Thank you- we are very pleased to learn that you are satisfied with the examination process and administration

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:

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:

I would continue the general improvement in technical quality of items where needed (e.g remove or reduce unnecessary reading, keep options homogeneous and short, remove cues that can be picked up by test-wise candidates).

Please carry on the high quality post-exam processes including question scrutiny.

Dr J.K

I think the information for students on LEARN was long (possibly unavoidably so) but generally very clear and comprehensive. Good practice noted in examinations: there was extra time for problems. Support clearly available: live chat and from teaching office/exams team

Dr B.M

It would be helpful to have historical data provided regarding the performance of questions that have been used in previous years. This could be very helpful when decisions are required regarding the removal of questions which appear to have performed badly in a particular year.

COURSE DIRECTOR: Mr John Fishwick

Course Director Response:

We will indeed keep working to improve and maintain the standard of this exam. a call has gone out for new questions, with clear instructions and advice on question writing.

We are pleased that you feel there was good information and support available, even if this was rather long in places on learn. We will look to see if we can get hold of historical data about questions.

Action Required:

Discussion with exams convener and exams team about analysis of historical data on questions.

Action Deadline:

01-Mar-2023

Action assigned to:

Examination convener - Mike Hewetson

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)

COURSE DIRECTOR: Mr John Fishwick

Course Director Response:

no comment to respond to.

Action Required: None

Action Deadline:

Action assigned to:

