

# Collaborative Report

Exam board meeting: 17-Jan-2022

## Graduate Diploma in Equine Locomotor Research, 2021/22

Lead examiner: Dr Lance Voute

Collaborating examiner(s): Dr Connie Wiskin

### The Programme

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

#### 1.1 Course content

This has not changed since the last intake (2018-19). The only students currently enrolled are nine remaining from the 2018-19 intake who deferred submission of their project reports. Four submitted the project reports, which were the main subject of the Examinations Board. The remaining six are due to submit their reports during 2022.

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

The learning objectives remain relevant and the performance of the four candidates demonstrated the objectives to be achievable.

#### 1.3 Teaching methods

Teaching for the 2018-19 intake had been completed in the previous academic year. There was no formal teaching during the current year in relation to project and thesis completion for the four candidates.

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

Resources, and support, continued to be available to the candidates during the period of deferment.

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

The previous comments relating to access to course feedback still apply (May 2021 report).

### **COURSE DIRECTOR'S RESPONSE AND NOTES BY THE SENIOR ACADEMIC QUALITY OFFICER 'STANDARDS'**

The response to May 2021 report has been provided [here](#) and the report published after the approval by AQIG in Feb 2022. The latest External Examiner's report was written and submitted by the External Examiners (January 2022) before them having an opportunity to review the RVC's responses to their previous report.

In the report from May 2021, external examiners were interested to see students feedback. They also wondered if there is a flexibility to enable projects to be modified or further extensions granted in relation to Covid-19 restrictions especially on field work.

The External Examiners have previously been explained that External Examiners for other subjects are not given access to course feedback and it is felt a precedent need not be set with this.

Of the remaining 6 students enrolled on the course, 4 are expected to resume in September 2022 (only need to complete their research thesis module) and 2 returned in February 2022 (needing to both the data processing and research thesis module). Those needing to complete the data processing module attended on site teaching yesterday and the day before. Given all these are yet to start their research thesis, and the widespread lifting of Covid restrictions, the need for extensions no longer exists.

## 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 standard of the four projects assessed was broadly comparable to the three considered at the May 2021 Examinations Board, ranging from “pass” to “distinction”. The higher levels reflect performance above what would be expected for a diploma and are a credit to the candidates, and the teaching team.

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

None of the candidates failed, with project marks ranging from “pass” to “distinction”, and even at the lower end, the reports demonstrated that the students had satisfied the course intended learning outcomes.

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

No comments in addition to those in the May 2021 External Examiners' report.

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In the report from May 2021, external examiners were interested to know whether students could be provided with more support with academic writing to remediate problems like plagiarism and poor quoting before formal work submission.

The External Examiners were thanked for the suggestion. The RVC has introduced 'Smart Thinking' online support for students. This is a 24/7 online support that allows student to submit a piece of writing and receive feedback about format and writing style but not about the topical content.

## Assessment Procedures

Please comment, as appropriate, on:

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

No changes since May 2021 to comment on.

### 3.2 Extent to which assessment procedures are rigorous

Assessment procedures, which included double marking of work and use of an established marking rubric, were rigorous and were followed consistently. The Examinations Board meeting was well run and facilitated open discussion.

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

The level of assessment was consistent with the FHEQ Level 7 descriptor for postgraduate diplomas.

### 3.4 Standard of marking

The grading scheme used for the project reports was the Common Grading Scheme, as previously. It was applied appropriately and consistently between students and between the two markers. There was no disagreement between markers.

The External Examiners agreed with grades awarded by the markers. Not all second markers provided comments, which made it impossible to appreciate how their marks were awarded.

### 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 were rigorous, robust, valid, and fair. The support for External Examiners remains very good and the Examinations Board was well run using the Microsoft Teams video conferencing platform.

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

There was no change from May 2021.

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

None.

## 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:**

Review of the weighting of the research project presentation and report assessments will be included in a more general review of the course.

#### **COURSE DIRECTOR'S RESPONSE:**

This was discussed at the recent CMC meeting and it was concluded that, whilst there was merit in increasing the presentation percentage to 30% (written reducing to 70%), it could be problematic changing this for cohorts who started in the same year as those who have already passed the diploma in the existing format.

### 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 training and 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:**

See May 2021 External Examiners' report.

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In the report from May 2021, external examiners were interested to know if there are student representatives for each cohort. They were further interested in the resilience planning to adapt to Covid-19.

In response to this, it was explained that there is a student representative for each cohort and the representative is feeding back concerns/questions from his/her peers to the course directors directly and student representatives are also invited to course management meetings. Admittedly in course with 'remote' students with cohorts between 8 and a maximum of 20 (that has never been reached), and where all students know each other and all staff are familiar with all students, the process may be a little more 'direct' but there is still the opportunity for student representatives to provide feedback in a more formal setting such as the course management meeting. The course with its blended format is reasonably well set up to deal with access restrictions etc but there are components such as practicals that need further planning as well as a strategy to deal with undertaking practical projects as part of the research work for the students' theses. We are working on these aspects

**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)**

No new suggestions.

