

## ANNUAL QUALITY IMPROVEMENT REPORT 2022/23

### Appendix 3: External Examiners' report

#### BVetMed Year 5

This appendix contains Course Director's responses to 2022/23 External Examiners' comments and updates to actions from previous External Examiners' reports.

As 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.	2022/23 Collaborative Annual Report with responses from Course Director Report written by: Lead examiner: Dr Amanda Boag Collaborating examiners: Professor Gayle Hallowell, Professor Nicholas Jonsson, Miss Carolyn Morton



## The Programme

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

### 1.1 Course content

The details of the course content were not reviewed however the range of knowledge, problem solving and practical skills included within the assessment process were as expected for the course content

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

The overall objective of the course to prepare students to meet RCVS Day one competencies were met by the vast majority of students who were successful. The assessment methodology was appropriate for these competencies

### 1.3 Teaching methods

No comment

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

The people (staff) resource involved in the assessments across all sections of the examination was significant and to be commended albeit the impact on other ongoing activity must be considered by the School.

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

None

### Course Director's response:

We are very appreciative of this feedback which indicates overall satisfaction with the course content and methodology and that RCVS day one competencies were met by the vast majority of students.

We would agree that there is a substantial staff resource required in the assessments when all the components are considered. We work hard to even out the assessment load as much as possible, for example through oversight by departmental teaching coordinators, although some areas and individuals do carry a higher load than others. We continue to keep this under review. We believe that this year and next year will be particularly demanding due to the large size of the student cohort. We are also some issues with staff vacancies in some key areas which we believe are urgently being addressed. However staff recruitment takes time and it is not always possible to fill vacancies quickly. [John Fishwick, January 2024]

## 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

Students performance was considered to be good especially as regards the RP2 component. The assessment methodology for the written papers is different to that used in other institutions making comparison challenging, albeit our sense is that the students performed well

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

Overall quality was good with some exceptionally good performances at the top of the range in the written and research projects and a solid majority sitting in the middle-good range. At the bottom of the range, poor answers to written question were uncommon although the number of students struggling with the written farm question (which all external examiners agreed was a fair question) was worthy of note. In the OSCEs most student performed well albeit the externals were surprised at the fact some students did fail what were ostensibly quite basic stations.

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

Overall students were felt to perform well with the quality of some of the research projects being particularly noteworthy

### Course Director's response:

We are pleased to note that student performance was overall regarded to be good. A poor performance in production animal questions was a concern and this continues a trend we have seen in previous years. This and the poor performance of a small number of candidates in OSCES demonstrates that this continues to be a robust and rigorous assessment. We continue to review and update OSCE stations and have introduced new stations this year, including a calving dystocia station and a colostrum station [John Fishwick, January 2024]

Please comment, as appropriate, on:

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

A broad range of assessment methods suitable to the curriculum were employed. There was some discussion as to the relatively basic nature of the OSCEs and whether it was an appropriate stage of the programme for this assessment albeit the external examiners accept there is no perfect time to perform this.

The "open book" nature of the written papers is a very relevant assessment method for this group of students and provides good discrimination.

### 3.2 Extent to which assessment procedures are rigorous

The external examiners commend the RVC on the rigour of the assessment and appreciate the amount of staff time goes into doing this well

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

The level of assessment is consistent with relevant descriptors within the FHEQ with both the research project and the nature of the written paper assessment demonstrating this well

### 3.4 Standard of marking

The standard of marking and feedback to the students was exceptionally high. Where discrepancy in marks was identified, the system to resolve this with a fair outcome for the student was solid and well documented. Good communication within "teams" marking the written questions is particularly highlighted as good practice.

### 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

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

Changes from previous years are minimal. The introduction of a literature review option as an alternative to the research project is generally welcomed and the externals look forward to seeing how this performs in subsequent years.

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

The administration team is to be commended for the practical organization of the exams especially the OSCEs. As commented above the open book format of the written exam is valued, however the RVC will need to consider how best to implement this assessment methodology going forward as techniques for generative AI rapidly evolve.

#### **Course Director's response:**

We greatly appreciate the overall positive comments here, especially the positive comments about our examination team and standards of marking. We continue to keep the type and standard of OSCE stations under review and believe the fact that some otherwise competent students do fail this aspect of the assessment indicate that it is an appropriate assessment.

We are aware that the student performance in the production animal question was below that of others. This is a trend which is commonly reported across the sector. With review of the curriculum it is anticipated that there will be a reduced number of strands in year 4 teaching which may allow more focus to be put on production animal teaching. The appointment of a new external examiner with a production animal focus will be of great use here and their opinions will be valued.

We are pleased that recent changes to Research Project are felt to be positive. [John Fishwick, January 2024]

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

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

**4.2 An acceptable response has been made**

**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:**

**Course Director's response:**

We are very pleased with positive comments here [John Fishwick, January 2024]

## 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:**

Good practice includes the broad range of assessment methodologies, the level of feedback to students and the collaborative team marking for the written question.

From experience at other institutions, deepening the level of skills tested in OSCEs and/or extending the range of tools used for practical assessment should be considered

### **Course Director's response:**

We have made efforts to change some OSCE stations and we do take the feedback about the level of some stations onboard and will continue to gradually evolve the range and type of stations provided. One constraint is that all stations must be completed in the same time limit which is an additional constraint on introducing more involved stations. [John Fishwick, January 2024]

**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)**

