Royal Veterinary College
University of London

Guidelines for Periodic Review of Programmes 2024/25

Version	Update and Reason	Author and Title	Date of Teaching Quality Committee Approval	Effective Date	Review date
1.0	New template in used By Academic Registry	Assistant Registrar for Accreditation and Validation	n/a	Dec-2024	Dec-2025

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1. Introduction and purpose

The objectives of Periodic Review are to confirm:

- the continuing validity and relevance of the programme.
- the continuing appropriateness of its academic standards.
- the continuing high quality of learning opportunities, and to consider the programme team's proposals and plans for the development of the programme and the further enhancement of its quality.

This procedure is designed to ensure that the RVC meets the Office for Students ongoing conditions for registration, and the UK Quality Code for Higher Education.

Periodic Review applies to all programmes including Professional Doctorates, except for the MPhil/PhD. Periodic Review also includes programmes which run under the auspices of the University of London Worldwide. Periodic Review applies to collaborative programmes, with the proviso that, where specified in the Memorandum of Agreement, the Periodic Review will follow the partner's procedures. Wherever it makes academic sense Periodic Reviews are combined, for example the review for MSc Wild Animal Biology and MSc Wild Animal Health.

2. Schedule of Periodic Reviews

The Periodic Review of a non-accredited programme normally takes place every six years, with an interim review* occurring three years after. PSRB accredited programmes undergo Periodic Review in the twenty-four months leading up to the next accreditation visit. PSRB accredited programmes do not have an interim review.

The following schedule of reviews is subject to change.

Programme:	**Next Periodic Review to be held:**	***Interim Review:**
BVetMed	February 2024	n/a
MSc Veterinary Epidemiology	April/July 2024	tbc
BSc/MSci Bio Sciences Programmes	March/April 2025	n/a
MVetMed	November 2024	2027
MSc Livestock Health and Production / MSc Veterinary Epidemiology and Public Health	September 2024	2027
MSc Wild Animal Biology / MSc Wild Animal Health	Feb/Mar 2025	tbc
MSc One Health	2025 or 2026 tbc	2023
Cert AVN and PG Cert AVN	Spring 2026	n/a
MRes	2027	2024
Cert AVP	2027	2024
MSc Veterinary Education	2028	2025
PG Dip Veterinary Clinical Practice	2028	2025
FdSc/BSc Veterinary Nursing	2029 tbc	n/a

*** Interim Review** – three years after Periodic Review (of non-accredited provision only) the Internal Panel Members meet with the Course Director and Chair of the Course Management Committee to review progress in the light of the Panel's recommendations and the plans for enhancement set out in the Self-Evaluation Document (SED). Secretaries are to invite representatives from collaborative partners as appropriate e.g. reps from the LSHTM for Vet Epi and One Health.

3. Terms of Reference

To review:

- The continuing validity, relevance and currency of the programmes aims, objectives, and content.
- The extent to which the aims and objectives are being achieved.
- The extent to which the programme continues to meet the needs of students and of prospective employers of graduates, and its continuing and likely future viability in the context of the student market.
- The cumulative effect of changes made in the last six years, including those made in response to the recommendations of the last Periodic Review (if applicable).
- The academic standards of the programme, with particular reference to changes in external reference points including the Framework for Higher Education

Qualifications, any relevant subject benchmarking statements, any relevant legislation or commitments to European or international processes and, where appropriate, the requirements of professional, statutory and regulatory bodies and employers.

- The quality of the programme, under the following headings:

    - teaching, learning, assessment and feedback methods - evaluation of the effectiveness of the educational strategies employed by the programme(s) for providing students with good learning opportunities to support achievement of the intended learning outcomes and academic standards, in the light of contemporary research and practice in the application of knowledge in the discipline, technological advances, developments in teaching and learning, and the College's Learning Teaching and Assessment Enhancement Strategy.

    - student admission, progression and achievement - evaluation of the ways in which students' progression through the programme is supported and monitored, from intake to completion.

    - learning resources - evaluation of effectiveness of the deployment of the resources, human and material, that support the learning of students, and of the effectiveness of their fit to the intended learning outcomes of the programme(s).

- To consider plans for future development of the programme and for further enhancement of its quality.

- To consider an assessment of risks to the quality, standards and viability of the programme, and proposed action to mitigate them.

- To make a report and recommendations to the Academic Board, via the Teaching Quality Committee, concerning the continuation of the programme, and proposed action, using the Teaching Quality template for periodic review reports, with dates by which it is recommended that action should be taken.

Note: Programmes due to undergo Periodic Review may be excused from submitting an Annual Quality Improvement Report for the preceding academic year. The timing for scheduling a Periodic Review is to be considered and agreed by the Academic Quality Manager and Chair of the Teaching Quality Committee.

4. Review Panel

Internal Members

Staff:

- 2 members of RVC academic staff, appointed by the Teaching Quality Committee, neither of whom shall be significantly involved in the programme under review, and one of whom shall serve as Review Panel Chair. If the programme being reviewed is large (e.g. BVetMed), more than two internal panel members may be appointed and if so, there should be as many external panel members as there are internal.

- Internal members should not be restricted to academic staff in cases where a member of non-academic staff might be more appropriate.

Student:

- 1 RVC student, appointed by the Teaching Quality Committee on the recommendation of the SU. They shall not be significantly involved in the programme under review. If an RVC student cannot be identified to join the panel, a student from another institution should be sought. Student panel members will be paid a fee for their attendance and input into the report. It is acceptable to appoint a recent RVC graduate, provided they graduated no more than one year ago.

External Members

- 2 external members, suggested by the Course Management of the programme to be reviewed.
- CVs should be provided for proposed external members, and they should be approved following scrutiny by the Chair and Deputy Chair of TQC and the Academic Quality Manager.
- One of the external members should normally be an academic, and the other from the relevant industry/profession.
- External members should both be specialists in the subject area under review, or a cognate area, and one should be experienced in delivery of programmes at the level being reviewed.
- External members should not have served as an External Examiner for the programme under review during the previous six years, however they may have or be serving as External Examiner on another programme at the College.
- An External member may be a graduate of the programme being reviewed if they graduated more than five years prior to the academic year in which the review is due to be held.
- They should not be retired members of RVC staff.
- External panel members will be paid a fee for their attendance and input into the report.
- If the programme being reviewed is large (e.g. BVetMed), more than two internal panel members may be appointed and if so, there should be as many external panel members as there are internal.

Secretary

The Academic Quality Manager (or their nominee) shall serve as Secretary to the Panel. Additional guidelines are available for periodic review panel secretaries to assist them with their duties. To assist staff who are about to undergo Periodic Review, the Secretary should invite the Course Directors to be observers in the preceding year.

5. Process

- The Academic Quality Manager appoints review panel secretaries for each programme due to undergo Periodic Review.

- The review panel secretary liaises with the relevant Course Management and Chair of Teaching Quality Committee to organise a Panel, programme (see examples included on pages 10-11) and date for the Periodic Review.

- Student panel members will be paid a flat rate fee of £120 per day/8 virtual hours.

- External panel members will be paid a flat rate fee of £500 for one day's attendance and their input into the writing of the report. £250 per day will be paid for attendance over one day/8 virtual hours.

- External Members will be asked to sign a Confidentiality statement to confirm they will access, process and store the data/work they are provided with to carry out their role in a secure manner.

- Before considering holding a review entirely online, the Secretary should agree with the Chair of the panel whether it is necessary for the panel members to see any physical resources in person or whether a 'virtual tour' is available and satisfactory. Course Management/Teaching teams could pre-record a live tour of facilities. Student Ambassadors could be asked to pre-record a live tour of facilities from a student perspective. The Multimedia Developer should be consulted with for planning purposes. If a review is being held online, it will usually take place over two to three half days maximum.

- The review panel secretary should invite the following people to attend the periodic review:

Course Management Team:
Course Director(s) & Year Leader(s) as applicable
To assist staff who are about to undergo Periodic Review, we should invite Course Directors to be observers in the preceding year
Academic Registry (representation from Registry is to be agreed by the Registrar and Academic Quality Manager)
Chair of Exam Board (or Deputy Chair of Exam Board if the former is unavailable)
Chair of Course Management Committee
Collaborative Partner(s) Senior Representative (if applicable)
Head of Academic Department (department with responsibility for programme to be reviewed)
Director of Learning and Wellbeing (or their nominee)
Vice Principal Learning, Teaching and Assessment (unless delegated to Associate Dean for Teaching and Learning UG/PG)
Vice Principal Students
Secretary (member of Academic Quality)
Teaching Team:
Module/Strand Leaders (core and elective) (deputy leaders only attend in

absence of main lead)
Collaborative Teaching Staff (if applicable/appropriate)
Students/Graduates:
Approximately eight, to include those enrolled/graduated since last periodic review

- Where a programme is accredited by a PSRB (e.g., RCVS, RSoB etc.) the Secretary will need to consider how the Periodic Review and re-accreditation will be linked if at all. Similarly, for collaborative programmes, the Periodic Review should be linked to the review of the collaborative agreement.

- The Secretary is to arrange for the Academic Quality Manager to hold a briefing meeting with the Panel Members to advise them of the review process. This should not be held too far in advance of the review.

- The Academic Quality Manager will hold two briefing meetings to advise the Course Management of the review process, the first well in advance of the review and the other closer to the date of the review.

- The Course Director(s) should be invited to attend an initial briefing regarding the process of periodic review and planning for it, ideally prior to the academic year in which the review takes place:

- The persons listed above under item four should be invited to attend a briefing by the Academic Quality Manager closer to the date of the periodic review.

- The Course Management write a Self-Evaluation Document (SED) (see separate template), the drafting of which is not a job solely for the Course Director. The supporting documentation is agreed by the Chair of the Review Panel; additional documentation might be requested. The SED is approved by the Chair and Secretary of the Periodic Review Panel, and by the relevant Course Management Committee prior to sending it to the Panel.

- The Periodic Review Panel receives the SED and supporting documentation at least four weeks prior to the review (see list of documentation). The documents are provided electronically via a password protected USB flash drive or via online transfer for download. The content is confidential and is only to be viewed by the individuals directly involved in the Periodic Review. The individuals due to meet the Periodic Review Panel are also sent or have access to the SED and supporting documentation.

- The task of reading the SED and supporting materials in detail should be divided between the Panel Members upon instruction from the Panel Chair.

- The Secretary is to ensure the Panel Members are aware they will request initial questions from them one week prior to the review and they will invite the Course Management/Teaching teams to respond to any queries in advance of the review. The Secretary will circulate any responses to queries from panel members in advance of the review.

- The Secretary is to ensure the Course Management/Teaching teams are aware that they will be asked to respond to any initial queries from the Panel one week prior to the review, and that they will feedback the responses to the Panel in advance of the review.

- At the first private meeting of the Panel on the first day of the review visit, the Secretary will finalise a list of questions for the panel to ask at the meetings with the course management/teaching teams, and students etc, and panel members agree who would like to lead certain lines of questioning. Wherever possible the questions should be grouped under the terms of reference items. Where time allows, the panel can review and edit these questions in between meetings.

- A review visit normally lasting one day is held, including some or all of the following:

    - meetings with staff, students, graduates and employers.
    - scrutiny of additional documentation, eg student work, graduate personal statements.
    - scrutiny of learning resources (virtual or in-person).
    - private meetings of the Panel (discussion at which is confidential).

- The review secretary produces a draft report (including any requirements and/or recommendations of the review panel with deadlines for responses). The report should also highlight any areas of good practice. The draft report should be approved by the Panel Chair within four weeks, by the full panel within a further two weeks, and be checked for factual accuracy by the Course Director within a further two weeks - total eight weeks.

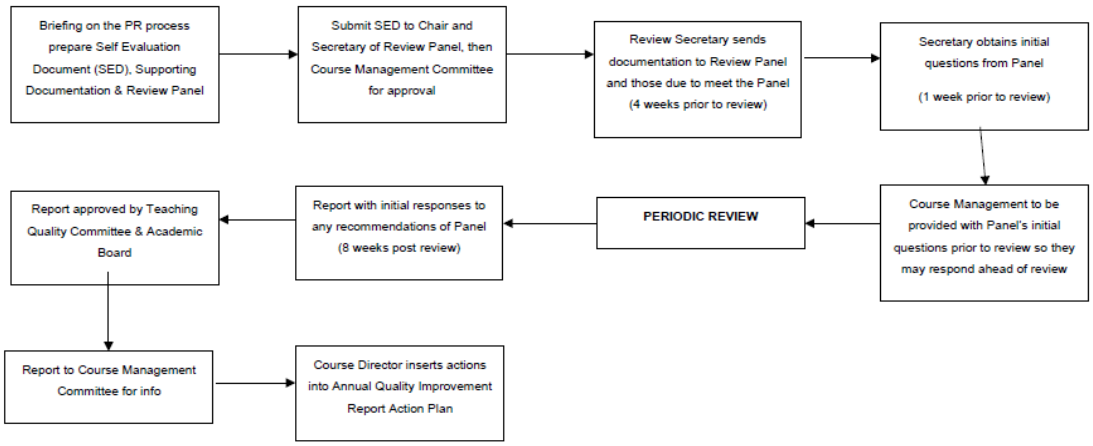
- The secretary seeks initial responses to any requirements/recommendations from the programme team.

- The secretary gathers feedback from review panel members and course management/teaching teams after each review to assess the effectiveness of the process.

- The report with initial responses from the Course Management is submitted by the Secretary to the Teaching Quality Committee and Academic Board for approval. The report should then be submitted to the relevant Course Management Committee for information. The SED and report with initial responses to any requirements/recommendations is published on the intranet.

- The Course Director should incorporate responses to any requirements and/or recommendations into the Annual Quality Improvement Report action plan for quality monitoring purposes.

Process overview



6. Documentation

The central documentation informing the Periodic Review will be a Self-Evaluation Document (SED), containing a description of how the programme has changed in the last six years; a critique written under the headings of the terms of reference (above) and proposals for future development.

Supporting documents – Secretary to agree list with the Chair of the Panel:

- Programme for Periodic Review
- Expense and Fee Claim Forms for External and Student Panel Members
- Reading list / initial questions table for Panel Members
- Guidance for Periodic Review of Programmes
- Course Prospectus (current)
- Course Timetable (current)
- *Programme Specification (current)
- **Assessment and Award Regulations (current)
- General Regulations for Study and Award
- Access to programme information on the Virtual Learning Environment
- Examples of Examination Question Papers
- Examples of student work (including examiner annotations and anonymised)
- Any reports from accrediting or other external bodies
- Annual Quality Improvement Reports (AQIR) plus appendices for the previous six years. AQIR Appendices includes:
    - Course Statistics – contextual data, application and offer data, progression and achievement data, graduate outcomes data;
    - Student evaluation survey reports for the previous six years if not already included in AQIR appendices e.g. Module/Strand surveys, RVC Satisfaction/Graduate/Employer surveys including external surveys where relevant e.g. National Student Survey, Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey, Postgraduate Research Experience Survey, Barometer;
    - External Examiners' Reports for the previous six years, with the College's responses to these
- Minutes of Course Management Committee meetings for the previous six years

- The report and requirements/recommendations of the previous Periodic Review
- RVC LTA Enhancement Strategy
- RVC Strategic Plan
- QAA Degree Characteristics (e.g. for Masters, Professional Doctorates etc.)
- QAA Subject Benchmark Statement(s) (National Occupational Standards for VNs)
- QAA FHEQ
- OfS Sector-Recognised Standards
- Collaborative Agreement (excluding Financial details)

All documentation is confidential and is only to be viewed by the Panel and RVC staff directly involved in the Periodic Review.

**All members of the Panel should consider the Programme Specification.*
***At least one Internal and one External member of the Panel should consider the Assessment and Award Regulations alongside the General Regulations for Study and Award.*

Prior to the visit the Review Panel will have access to the Virtual Learning Environment - RVC Learn. Members of the Review Panel may request additional evidence if they wish.

7. Review of the Periodic Review process

Feedback is gathered from review panel members and programme management teams after each review to assess the effectiveness of the process. The Periodic Review procedure is reviewed on a continual basis and more formally at least every six years.

8. Appendices

Table 1 Example programme for Periodic Review held face-to-face over one day

08:45 - 09.00	Panel	Panel arrival
09.00 – 10.00	Panel	Private Panel meeting for agenda setting
10.00 – 10.15	Short break	
10.15 – 11.30	Panel & Course Director	Tour of Facilities
11:30 – 11:45	Short break	
11.45 – 13.15	Panel & Course Management/Teaching teams	Scene setting meeting, introduction & overview of programme, queries relating to the student journey, teaching, learning and assessment etc.
13.15 – 13.30	Short break	
13:30 – 14:30	Panel, Students, Graduates & Employers	Working lunch
14:30 – 14.45	Short break	
14:45 – 16.15	Panel	Panel meeting to discuss conclusions, make recommendations
16:15 – 16:30	Short break	
16.30 – 17.00	Panel & Management Team	Panel to Feedback conclusions, any

Table 2 Example programme for Periodic Review held online over two to three full/half days

Virtual Tour of Teaching, Learning and Student Support Facilities to be provided to Panel in advance

DAY ONE

Time	Attendees	Purpose
09:00 – 10:30	Panel	Private Panel meeting for agenda setting
10:30 – 11:00	Panel Chair + Secretary	Panel Chair and Secretary to confirm and circulate questions to Panel
11:00 – 13:00	Panel + Course Management/Teaching teams	Discuss teaching, learning and assessment methods and future developments etc.
13:00 – 14:00	Lunch break	
14:00 – 15:00	Panel + Current Students + Graduates + Employers Breakout rooms could be used to separate Employers from Graduates/Current Students	Panel to seek insight into the student experience

Table 3 DAY TWO

Time	Attendees	Purpose
09:00 - 10:30	Panel	Private Panel meeting to consider conclusions and any required/recommended actions for the Course Management/Teaching teams
10:30 - 11:00	Break	
11:00 – 11:30	Panel Chair + Secretary	Chair and Secretary to draft a list of conclusions including praise/good practice and any required/recommended actions.
11:30 – 12:00	Panel + Course Management Team	Panel to Feedback conclusions to the Course Management Team