

# Collaborative Report

Exam board meeting: 09-Jul-2024

## Accelerated Bachelor of Veterinary Medicine, 2023/24

Lead examiner: Dr Jorge Del-Pozo

Collaborating examiner(s): Dr David Kilroy

### The Programme

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

#### 1.1 Course content

In broad terms, this course aims to provide clinical integration of basic science concepts for students with a previous science based undergraduate degree. This is achieved through a modular structure that includes the following modules:

- Animal form and function
- Infectious and responses
- Animal husbandry (including animal handling)
- Principles of veterinary practice
- Integrated and applied anatomy

Each module is subdivided into units that address the major topics within, and each unit addresses learning objectives aligned with the module itself and the overarching aim of the GAB course. These learning objectives have been designed to provide students with a clear road map for their learning. They also address the major aspects of the topics at hand at a level of detail adequate for an undergraduate veterinary degree, and with a view to start preparing the students for the day 1 competencies of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons, as well as other relevant accreditation bodies (e.g. the American Veterinary Medical Association - AVMA).

### COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Emma Boardman

Course Director Response:

Action Required:

Action Deadline:

Action assigned to:

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

See above

Dr D.K

The objectives are clearly met by the various assessments.

#### 1.3 Teaching methods

See above

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

See above

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

N/A

**COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Emma Boardman**

**Course Director Response:**

**Action Required:**

**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 performance of this cohort is similar to that I have noted in similar modular courses. It is noteworthy that this year marks a transition from open book examination to closed book (an open book examination strategy was implemented during and after the covid pandemic), which may have had an effect in student performance, especially in the problem-solving questions paper (PSQ). Student support for this transition is well documented, and instructions for students sitting the exam are clear and comprehensive.

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

See above.

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

It will be of interest to discuss performance in PSQs in the subsequent June diet of this course, as the closed book examination format should be routine then accross the course (or to understand if the reason underpinning a relatively lower performance in PSQs this year may be due to another factor/s).

## **COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Emma Boardman**

### **Course Director Response:**

Thank you for your comments. We believe that the lower than usual performance in the PSQ paper is likely due to COVID and its resulting impact on Graduate Accelerated students' assessment and learning experiences on their previous degrees. We will monitor this trend in 2024-5 and emphasise the resources in place to support students with learning problem solving skills.

### **Action Required:**

Monitor performance trend in 2024-5

Emphasise the resources in place to support students with learning problem solving skills.

### **Action Deadline:**

### **Action assigned to:**

GAB Year Leaders

## Assessment Procedures

**Please comment, as appropriate, on:**

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

There is a clear strategy for Blueprinting, where questions are allocated to cover as many learning objectives as possible in both the MCQ and PSQ, avoiding replication. This process is transparent and easily assessed for the PSQs, where there is a summary document describing the allocation of the questions to the course section (PSQ topics), and relevant LO's are included in the question drafts alongside the model answer. This year this also includes a document for the MCQ paper, which is an excellent development.

#### **COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Emma Boardman**

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

Thank you for your comments.

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

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

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

### **3.2 Extent to which assessment procedures are rigorous**

The procedures in this assessment are very rigorous, and includes formative as well as a summative assessment.

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

This level of assessment is consistent with the FHEQ framework at level 6.

### 3.4 Standard of marking

This is very high, well designed and documented.

**Dr D.K**

The marking was consistent and fair. The time spent by examiners on assessment is substantial and a very significant commitment on their part. Ways of reducing the marking burden on staff should be seriously considered.

**COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Emma Boardman**

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

Thank you for your comments. We are aware of assessment load for staff. Changes are taking place on the 5 year programme to rationalise assessment load for those cohorts which will alleviate pressures for staff. With the accelerated nature of this year group, and need to blueprint across the whole, very dense, curriculum, there are no planned changes for the GAB year.

#### **Action Required:**

#### **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)**

Yes

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

See 3.1 above regarding MCQ blueprinting document.

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

N/A

**Dr D.K**

Several students failed on grades which were very close to the pass mark. While the outcome for these students was appropriate, it may be worth considering closer review of those students whose marks lie just below or just above the pass mark.

#### **COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Emma Boardman**

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

Your comments are noted and will be passed on to the Director of Assessment. Currently our policy is not to selectively moderate individual students' scripts. Our sample marking process is effective in ensuring quality of marking across the whole cohort. We invite external examiners to consider whether the marks of borderline students are appropriate and we note that in this case you feel that they were.

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

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

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

#### **General Statements**

#### **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:**

## **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:**

N/A

**Dr D.K**

The ISF orals were very professionally organised and ran smoothly. Students were treated fairly and performed impressively, thanks to the skilful examiners.

**COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Emma Boardman**

**Course Director Response:**

Thank you for your comments, which are appreciated

**Action Required:**

**Action Deadline:**

**Action assigned to:**



**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)**

Overall, this assessment is outstanding in terms of design, delivery, and procedure. It poses a fair and comprehensive challenge to the students of the GAB course, providing them with an opportunity to demonstrate their standard in the topics of this course. Student performance after standard setting is comparable to that of the previous year, and the tools used for assessment performance data collation are accurate and transparent. The administrative organization is excellent, and as external examiners we received papers with plenty of time, and our feedback was acted upon. We had access to all documentation, were well briefed, and the presentation of all the information was accurate and extensive. This assessment is conducted at the highest standards technically and professionally, and we would like to commend the team for this.

There was a procedural improvement from the previous year, in that overarching blueprinting information was available for paper 1 (MCQ), which adds to the excellence above mentioned, and will facilitate transparent assessment by external examiners moving forward.

As an important note, this year marks a transition from open book to closed book examination (an open book examination strategy was implemented during and after the covid pandemic). The students were well supported in preparing for this, but nonetheless this transition may have had an effect in student performance in the problem-solving questions paper (PSQ). There was a drop in performance in this cohort for Paper 2 this year which led to a pass mark of 40.8% after standard setting using the modified Hofstee method. It will be of interest to evaluate if this effect is transient or not at next year's GAB June diet.

A student that failed through not submitting the reflective assessment will pass after providing this, and this was clarified at the exam board meeting. Other clarifications provided included a fit to sit policy (i.e. when a student sits the exam is because they are stated they are fit to do so), and the criteria for peer review marking of PSQs (10% random sample).

There is excellent statistical evaluation of the papers composing this assessment, which assessed the robustness of the test performance and highlighted several questions as requiring further investigation, which was conducted by the team. Salient examples of this are:

- MCQ: (Paper 1 part 2 Question 4 - with low facility index and negative discriminative efficiency), which was factually accurate, but won't be used in future as a result of this.
- PSQ: Evaluation of the output for PSQ 3 revealed poorer student performance, which was interpreted as a result of this question being more challenging to the students.

As external examiner we were able to cover points 4.3 to point 4.13 in page 10 of the "Academic Quality Assurance and Enhancement Procedures for External Examiners" of the RVC, which was provided to us as part of this process.

**COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Emma Boardman**

**Course Director Response:**

Thank you for the care and attention you have provided as external examiners this year. We gratefully receive your comments around the quality and standards of the assessment and the performance of the students. We will in particular be monitoring the performance of students in problem solving assessments moving forwards. Thank you for your support and we look forwards to working with you again next year.

**Action Required:**

**Action Deadline:**

**Action assigned to:**