



## External / Intercollegiate Examiner's Annual Report

**2023-2024 (2024)**

**1. Name**

Alasdair Cook

**2. Home institution and/or professional affiliation**

University of Surrey

**3. Role**

External Examiner

**4. Year of service**

2nd

**5. Qualification(s) partially or wholly covered by this report**

*Only highest award per programme is displayed*

MSc Livestock Health & Production/Veterinary Epidemiology & Public Health

**6. Module(s)/ Course(s) covered**

*Please provide title of each individual module or course you have reviewed. You will be asked to confirm standard of each module further down in the questionnaire.*

Module 1: Animal Disease (Current Concepts) LHM001

Module 2: Principles of Livestock Production LHM002

Module 3: Research Design and Methods LVM014

Module 4: Animal Welfare LHM016

Module 5: Developing and Monitoring of Livestock Production Systems VPM018

Module 6: Economics for Livestock Development and Policy LVM019

**7. Date of Board of Examiners meeting**

04/12/2024

**8. Date of Board of Examiners meeting**

*Please provide date of second board meeting, if the report covers more than one board, for example dissertation or project boards, or a second assessment period.*

**9. Date of the report**

11/01/2025

## PART A Standards

### Summary

**10. Are the standards set for the award appropriate for qualification at this level and in this subject?**

Yes

**11. Are the standards set for the assessment of student performance comparable with similar programmes or subjects in other UK institutions with which you are familiar?**

Yes

**12. Are the processes for assessment, examination and the determination of qualifications sound and fairly conducted?**

Yes

**13. If you have answered 'NO' to any of the above questions, please insert a comment below.**

### Good practice and innovation

**14. Please comment on any particular strengths or distinctive or innovative features in relation to standards and assessment processes. Please highlight any items of good practice in programme arrangements and/or procedures for external examination.**

NA

### Programme & Assessment standards

**15. Please comment on the coherence and currency of the programme or its component parts.**

*Please provide comments on each individual module in separate paragraphs, highlighting in particular where differences between them occur.*

*You may want to take into account the alignment of the learning outcomes with the relevant qualification descriptor set out in the applicable qualifications framework.*

- Please refer to the [Sector Recognised Standards](#).
- For the International Foundation Programme please refer to the [Ofqual Handbook](#).
- Where applicable, please refer to the relevant [Subject Benchmark Statements](#).

Overall, these modules and those for which I am not the external examiner offer a coherent distance learning programme to PG Cert/ PG Dip/ MSc level. Although all modules for which I am responsible have a satisfactory quality, in my opinion, the principles of livestock production materials now appear somewhat dated and a refresh would be worthy of consideration.

**16. Is the standard of assessment in each module comparable to modules of the same level?**

*Please consider for each module.*

Yes - all of the modules I have reviewed are comparable

**17. If the standard of assessment is not comparable to modules or courses of the same level, please elaborate.**

*Please provide details for all modules that are not comparable.*

**18. The standard of assessment in each module is comparable to modules of the same level as for students at Federation member institutions.**

*Please consider for each module.*

*This question is aimed at External and Intercollegiate Examiners who are appointed to University of London online and distance learning Boards of Examiners and are also appointed as External or Intercollegiate Examiners to Boards of Examiners assessing students for the equivalent programme based at a member institution.*

N/A

**19. If the standard of assessment is not comparable to modules of the same level as for students at Federation member institutions, please elaborate.**

*Please provide details for all modules that are not comparable.*

**20. The standard of assessment is comparable to modules of the same level at your own Federation member institution.**

*Please consider for each module.*

*This question is aimed at Intercollegiate Examiners from one of the Federation member institutions of the University of London.*

**21. If the standard of assessment is not comparable to modules of the same level at your own Federation member institution, please elaborate.**

*Please provide details for all modules that are not comparable.*

**22. Is the assessment criteria, marking schemes and arrangements for classification set at the appropriate level?**

*Please consider for each module.*

Yes - all of the modules I have reviewed are set at the appropriate level

**23. If the assessment criteria, marking schemes and arrangements for classification are not set at the appropriate level, please elaborate.**

*Please provide details for all modules that are not set at the appropriate level.*

**24. Please comment on the standards of student performance.**

*Where relevant, please make reference to performance on individual modules.*

*You may want to include:*

- The relation to the specified learning outcomes*
- Candidates' performance in relation to their peers in comparable programmes.*

Student performance is varied - from excellent through adequate to relatively poor. A factor here is the varied engagement that is demonstrated by these distance learning students. The academics and support staff strive to optimise engagement and take considerable efforts to follow up with students, especially those who appear to be slipping out of contact.

## **PART C Programme and assessment design**

**25. Are the aims and learning outcomes for the programme and modules/courses are clearly defined and appropriate to the subject matter.**

*Please consider for the programme as a whole and for each module you have been asked to review.*

Yes - the aims and learning outcomes are set at an appropriate level for the programme and modules/courses

**26. If the aims and learning outcomes for the programme and modules/courses are not clearly defined and appropriate to subject matter, please elaborate.**

*Please provide details for the programme as a whole and any modules without clearly defined aims and learning outcomes.*

**27. Please comment on the appropriateness and balance of types of assessment (i.e. unseen written exams, coursework, dissertation, etc.).**

*Please consider for the programme as a whole and for each module you have been asked to review.*

*Please comment in relation to:*

- *The subject*
- *The students*
- *The respective level of study*
- *The expected learning outcomes*

The assessments offered are appropriate for a distance learning programme. Introduction of the Inspira platform should improve delivery in due course. Assessments were appropriate to the learning outcomes for the modules.

**28. Please comment on the usefulness of study materials and the Virtual Learning Environment in relation to the expected learning outcomes.**

*Where relevant, please comment on individual modules.*

Good quality, comprehensive study materials were provided through the VLE and their relationships to learning outcomes were clearly signposted

**29. Please comment on the overall quality of programme and assessment design and structure.**

The programme offers a comprehensive learning opportunity in Livestock Health and production and veterinary epidemiology. The quality is commensurate with that which would be anticipated for a taught postgraduate programme from the University of London as a prestigious UK institution. The assessment processes are rigorous and scrupulously fair.

## **PART D    Assessment Process**

### **Information**

**30. Did you receive all necessary information regarding your appointment?**

Yes

**31. Did you receive all necessary information on the programme and assessment (e.g., programme handbooks, programme regulations, module/course descriptions, assessment briefs/marketing criteria)?**

Yes

**32. Did you have sufficient time and necessary access to any additional material needed to make the required judgements?**

Yes

**33. Please comment on the usefulness and relevance of the information sent to you.**

I am very grateful to Jo and the team for their help and support; I was able to access learning materials and assessments in a straightforward manner

## Paper-setting

### 34. Did you receive all the draft papers that you wished to see?

Yes

### 35. Was the nature, spread and level of the assessment questions appropriate?

*Please consider for the programme as a whole and for each module you have been asked to review.*

Yes - the nature, spread and level of assessment questions/coursework is appropriate for the programme and modules/courses

### 36. Were suitable arrangements made to consider your comments in the paper-setting process?

Yes

### 37. If you answered 'NO' to any of the above questions, please elaborate further below.

*Where relevant, please comment on individual modules.*

## Marking and sampling

### 38. Did you receive the scripts or other assessed work in sufficient time to allow you to make a proper assessment?

Yes

### 39. Did you receive a sufficient number of scripts and other assessed work to be able to assess whether the internal marking and classifications were appropriate and consistent?

*Please consider for each module.*

Yes

### 40. Did you see a representative sample of scripts and other assessed work assessed as first class, borderline or fail?

Yes

### 41. Were you satisfied with the standard of marking?

*Please consider for each module you have been asked to review.*

Yes - the standard of marking was appropriate for all modules/courses

### 42. Were you satisfied that the scripts and other assessed work were double-marked or second-marked and moderated?

*Please consider for each module you have been asked to review.*

Assessed work for University of London Track C programmes is second marked on a sample basis as per the [Guidelines for Examinations](#).

Yes - assessment for all modules was marked in accordance with the guidelines

### 43. If you have answered 'NO' to any of the above questions, please elaborate further below.

*Please provide details for each module.*

## Dissertations / Project reports

### 44. Was the choice of subjects for dissertations / project reports appropriate?

*Please consider for all modules where appropriate.*

Yes

## Oral assessment

### 45. Were suitable arrangements made for you to conduct and/or moderate oral components of assessment?

*Please consider for all modules where appropriate.*

Yes

### 46. Please provide any comments on scripts and other assessed work.

The process was fully transparent and fair. Feedback for students ranged from adequate to excellent. Marks demonstrated the breadth of achievement amongst students and there was a thorough discussion of the outcome and of all issues that arose in the process.

## Board of Examiners meeting(s) and results

### 47. Were you invited to attend the meeting(s) of the Board of Examiners?

Yes

### 48. Were you given sufficient notice of the meeting(s) of the Board of Examiners?

Yes

### 49. Were you able to attend the final Board of Examiners' meeting?

*'Final Board of Examiners meeting' – a meeting where awards are confirmed.*

Yes

### 50. If you were not able to attend the final Board of Examiners' meeting, were suitable arrangements made to consider your comments on the decisions made by the Board?

### 51. Was the meeting of the Board of Examiners conducted to your satisfaction?

Yes

### 52. Were you satisfied with the recommendations of the Board of Examiners?

Yes

### 53. Please provide any comments on the Board of Examiners' meetings and decisions.

The BoE was conducted efficiently and professionally

## PART E Other Comments

### 54. Please provide comments relating to Professional and Statutory Body requirements, if applicable.

NA

### 55. How did this year's procedures/arrangements compare with those of previous years?

The high standards from the previous year were sustained in the present year.

### 56. Please comment on the extent to which suggestions made by you last year were taken into account.

NA

**57. If this is your last year of appointment, please provide an overview of your term of office as an External/Intercollegiate Examiner for the University of London distance and flexible learning programmes or the School of Advanced Study.**

**58. Please provide any other comments you may have.**

*Please use this box for responding to any specific questions the Programme Team may have asked you to consider.*



## External / Intercollegiate Examiner's Annual Report

**2023-2024 (2024)**

**1. Name**

Dr. Ed van Klink

**2. Home institution and/or professional affiliation**

Retired (previously: Bristol University)

**3. Role**

External Examiner

**4. Year of service**

4th

**5. Qualification(s) partially or wholly covered by this report**

*Only highest award per programme is displayed*

MSc Livestock Health & Production/Veterinary Epidemiology & Public Health

**6. Module(s)/ Course(s) covered**

*Please provide title of each individual module or course you have reviewed. You will be asked to confirm standard of each module further down in the questionnaire.*

Advanced Statistical Methods in Veterinary Epidemiology

Epidemiology and Animal Health Economics

Management of Infectious Disease Outbreaks in Animal Populations

Statistical Methods in Veterinary Epidemiology

Veterinary Public Health

Surveillance and Investigation of Animal Health

**7. Date of Board of Examiners meeting**

04/12/2024

**8. Date of Board of Examiners meeting**

*Please provide date of second board meeting, if the report covers more than one board, for example dissertation or project boards, or a second assessment period.*

**9. Date of the report**

23/12/2024



## PART A Standards

### Summary

**10. Are the standards set for the award appropriate for qualification at this level and in this subject?**

Yes

**11. Are the standards set for the assessment of student performance comparable with similar programmes or subjects in other UK institutions with which you are familiar?**

Yes

**12. Are the processes for assessment, examination and the determination of qualifications sound and fairly conducted?**

Yes

**13. If you have answered 'NO' to any of the above questions, please insert a comment below.**

### Good practice and innovation

**14. Please comment on any particular strengths or distinctive or innovative features in relation to standards and assessment processes. Please highlight any items of good practice in programme arrangements and/or procedures for external examination.**

As always, the communication with the team at RVC about the examination process, the exams and the results is excellent. The team highlighted students who required specific attention from me and was very good and quick in discussing any queries.

### Programme & Assessment standards

**15. Please comment on the coherence and currency of the programme or its component parts.**

*Please provide comments on each individual module in separate paragraphs, highlighting in particular where differences between them occur.*

*You may want to take into account the alignment of the learning outcomes with the relevant qualification descriptor set out in the applicable qualifications framework.*

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- Where applicable, please refer to the relevant [Subject Benchmark Statements](#).

The Veterinary Epidemiology and Public Health MSc still provides probably the most complete coverage of the subject and to a high standard. All modules together form a logical and coherent set of modules. The alignment of the learning outcomes with the qualification descriptors is good for all modules.

**16. Is the standard of assessment in each module comparable to modules of the same level?**

*Please consider for each module.*

Yes - all of the modules I have reviewed are comparable

**17. If the standard of assessment is not comparable to modules or courses of the same level, please elaborate.**

*Please provide details for all modules that are not comparable.*

**18. The standard of assessment in each module is comparable to modules of the same level as for students at Federation member institutions.**

*Please consider for each module.*

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N/A

**19. If the standard of assessment is not comparable to modules of the same level as for students at Federation member institutions, please elaborate.**

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**23. If the assessment criteria, marking schemes and arrangements for classification are not set at the appropriate level, please elaborate.**

*Please provide details for all modules that are not set at the appropriate level.*

**24. Please comment on the standards of student performance.**

*Where relevant, please make reference to performance on individual modules.*

*You may want to include:*

- *The relation to the specified learning outcomes*
- *Candidates' performance in relation to their peers in comparable programmes.*

Through the years, performance of the students varies a bit. Some modules are clearly considered more difficult by students than others. Overall, the performance of the students is satisfactory.

## **PART C Programme and assessment design**

**25. Are the aims and learning outcomes for the programme and modules/courses are clearly defined and appropriate to the subject matter.**

*Please consider for the programme as a whole and for each module you have been asked to review.*

Yes - the aims and learning outcomes are set at an appropriate level for the programme and modules/courses

**26. If the aims and learning outcomes for the programme and modules/courses are not clearly defined and appropriate to subject matter, please elaborate.**

*Please provide details for the programme as a whole and any modules without clearly defined aims and learning outcomes.*

**27. Please comment on the appropriateness and balance of types of assessment (i.e. unseen written exams, coursework, dissertation, etc.).**

*Please consider for the programme as a whole and for each module you have been asked to review.*

*Please comment in relation to:*

- *The subject*
- *The students*
- *The respective level of study*
- *The expected learning outcomes*

There are several types of assessment applicable: the exam, course work, and a dissertation. Students can choose to either take an exam for all modules, or write a dissertation for one of the modules while taking an exam for the others. For all modules, course work has to be done as well. In my opinion, this provides a good balance of assessment options within the course as a whole. It provides students with sufficient possibilities to attain the required level to pass the respective modules.

This year I sat in on one dissertation defence. The two examiners did their best to sort out the strengths and weaknesses of the dissertation and the knowledge of the student. Where apparent weaknesses were present, the examiners tried to nudge the candidate to provide more information strengthening the weak points in the dissertation. In this particular case not always successfully. In my opinion, the examiners went out of their way to give the candidate ample chance to explain himself and improve on the dissertation. This shows that discussing the dissertation with the candidate can work well as an added examination option.

The performance in the written exams varies from year to year and also between subjects, with some subjects generally being experienced as more difficult by the students. Overall though the performance generally shows a considerable number of candidates passing and attaining higher awards. In my opinion, the written exams give a very good impression of the performance of the students.

The coursework gives candidates an opportunity to excel and provide them with a bit of a buffer going into the exams. It is a welcome part of the assessment process and fits in well in the overall assessment package. It provides the students often with an opportunity to think where they stand in relation to the learning outcomes of the modules. This can help them in preparations for the rest of the programme.

**28. Please comment on the usefulness of study materials and the Virtual Learning Environment in relation to the expected learning outcomes.**

*Where relevant, please comment on individual modules.*

The study materials and the Virtual Learning Environment provide the students with ample material to learn. The study materials are well aligned with the learning outcomes.

**29. Please comment on the overall quality of programme and assessment design and structure.**

The programme and assessment design and structure provides a good combination of options to assess progress of students and their level of knowledge at the end of each module.

## PART D Assessment Process

### Information

**30. Did you receive all necessary information regarding your appointment?**

Yes

**31. Did you receive all necessary information on the programme and assessment (e.g., programme handbooks, programme regulations, module/course descriptions, assessment briefs/marketing criteria)?**

Yes

**32. Did you have sufficient time and necessary access to any additional material needed to make the required judgements?**

Yes

**33. Please comment on the usefulness and relevance of the information sent to you.**

As always, the materials sent to us was very useful and relevant for the modules we needed to look into. I was able to get me a good overview of what the course expects of the candidate and how the candidates performed in relation to that.

### Paper-setting

**34. Did you receive all the draft papers that you wished to see?**

Yes

**35. Was the nature, spread and level of the assessment questions appropriate?**

*Please consider for the programme as a whole and for each module you have been asked to review.*

Yes - the nature, spread and level of assessment questions/coursework is appropriate for the programme and modules/courses

**36. Were suitable arrangements made to consider your comments in the paper-setting process?**

Yes

**37. If you answered 'NO' to any of the above questions, please elaborate further below.**

*Where relevant, please comment on individual modules.*

### Marking and sampling

**38. Did you receive the scripts or other assessed work in sufficient time to allow you to make a proper assessment?**

Yes

**39. Did you receive a sufficient number of scripts and other assessed work to be able to assess whether the internal marking and classifications were appropriate and consistent?**

*Please consider for each module.*

Yes

**40. Did you see a representative sample of scripts and other assessed work assessed as first class, borderline or fail?**

Yes

**41. Were you satisfied with the standard of marking?**

*Please consider for each module you have been asked to review.*

Yes - the standard of marking was appropriate for all modules/courses

**42. Were you satisfied that the scripts and other assessed work were double-marked or second-marked and moderated?**

*Please consider for each module you have been asked to review.*

Assessed work for University of London Track C programmes is second marked on a sample basis as per the [Guidelines for Examinations](#).

Yes - assessment for all modules was marked in accordance with the guidelines

**43. If you have answered 'NO' to any of the above questions, please elaborate further below.**

*Please provide details for each module.*

## Dissertations / Project reports

**44. Was the choice of subjects for dissertations / project reports appropriate?**

*Please consider for all modules where appropriate.*

Yes

## Oral assessment

**45. Were suitable arrangements made for you to conduct and/or moderate oral components of assessment?**

*Please consider for all modules where appropriate.*

Yes

**46. Please provide any comments on scripts and other assessed work.**

## Board of Examiners meeting(s) and results

**47. Were you invited to attend the meeting(s) of the Board of Examiners?**

Yes

**48. Were you given sufficient notice of the meeting(s) of the Board of Examiners?**

Yes

**49. Were you able to attend the final Board of Examiners' meeting?**

*'Final Board of Examiners meeting' – a meeting where awards are confirmed.*

Yes

**50. If you were not able to attend the final Board of Examiners' meeting, were suitable arrangements made to consider your comments on the decisions made by the Board?**

**51. Was the meeting of the Board of Examiners conducted to your satisfaction?**

Yes

**52. Were you satisfied with the recommendations of the Board of Examiners?**

Yes

**53. Please provide any comments on the Board of Examiners' meetings and decisions.**

## **PART E    Other Comments**

**54. Please provide comments relating to Professional and Statutory Body requirements, if applicable.**

**55. How did this year's procedures/arrangements compare with those of previous years?**

This year's procedures and arrangements were similar to previous years.

**56. Please comment on the extent to which suggestions made by you last year were taken into account.**

Suggestions I have provides are generally followed up, if necessary after being discussed in the Board Meeting.

**57. If this is your last year of appointment, please provide an overview of your term of office as an External/Intercollegiate Examiner for the University of London distance and flexible learning programmes or the School of Advanced Study.**

**58. Please provide any other comments you may have.**

*Please use this box for responding to any specific questions the Programme Team may have asked you to consider.*