

ANNUAL QUALITY IMPROVEMENT REPORT 2019/20

Appendix 3: External Examiners' report

Veterinary Education

This appendix contains Year Leader's responses to 2019/20 External Examiners' comments and updates to actions from previous External Examiners' reports (if applicable).

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, 01707666938

Appendix 3 consists of:

a.	Updates to actions from previous years' reports (<i>n/a as there were no actions in previous years</i>)
b.	2019/20 Collaborative Annual Report with responses from Course Director

Collaborative Report

Exam board meeting: 27-Aug-2020

MSc in Veterinary Education (Part-Time), 2019/20

Lead examiner: Dr Lynne Allery

Collaborating examiner(s): Dr Jenny Moffett

The Programme

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

1.1 Course content

Course content is wide-ranging, detailed and incorporates contemporary approaches to teaching and learning within the veterinary education domain. In light of the 2020 pandemic, there may be an opportunity to offer more teaching around technology-enhanced learning. Two other topics areas that may useful additions are: simulation-based learning and coaching/mentoring skills.

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

The programme learning outcomes are robust, diverse, and well laid out in easily accessible language.

1.3 Teaching methods

Teaching methods have been practical, creative and with well-described opportunities for participant feedback.

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

Good quality readings, regularly updated links.

1.5 Please provide any additional comments and recommendations regarding the Programme

The design of the programme means that participants have been able to continue their learning despite a worldwide health crisis. The flexible learning environment and confident use of technology by teaching staff have contributed to this success. On the whole, the programme is well-structured with a good balance of attention to theory and practice. There are clearly defined policies that affect student progress e.g. extensions, deferrals, assessments etc. leading to a flexible working environment that is amenable to this environment but also well-structured.

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

This students' performance are at a standard in relation to other comparable courses at this level.

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

The quality of responses in assessments is good and participants make good use of the literature, even in lower ranking scripts.

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

It is noted that the average module mark for the Assessment, Feedback and Learning module was lower compared to other modules but this is in line with other comparable courses; traditionally, participants can find assessment one of the most challenging subject areas.

Course Director's response:

Thank you for highlighting this, and we agree that often assessment is a challenging area and as in comparable courses, the marks may therefore be lower. In addition, many of our participants elect to take the Diploma over a single year (rather than the two years in which the full suite of modules is offered), which limits their module selection. In an effort to finish quickly, they may therefore be taking modules that are less directly relevant to them and their work and experience, making it harder to score well. We will respond to this observation in two ways:

- Providing an opportunity for feedback on a draft plan of the practical assignment (50% of the module grade) - complete; we have been working on implementing this across the Diploma;
- Working to set appropriate expectations of the course workload, as it challenging to complete the Diploma in a year, as well as compromising module choices. Partially complete: we have amended the information available to prospective students in the programme specifications, to make it clear that a 2-year, less intense programme is recommended. We will reinforce this message to new students (although their modules are selected at the time of application, prior to our contact with them, so if this is a recurrent issue we may need to revisit this policy).

Assessment Procedures

Please comment, as appropriate, on:

3.1 Assessment methods (relevance to learning objectives and curriculum)

These are appropriate. The course team report plans to remove Bring Back Activities as a formative activity within FIVE. This is an important change to ensure parity and to strengthen alignment with the learning outcomes.

3.2 Extent to which assessment procedures are rigorous

Procedures seem methodical and robust.

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

Appropriate to levels and consistent.

3.4 Standard of marking

We would commend the marking standards overall; and have made some suggestions for development below (3.7).

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, the procedures for assessment are sound and approached with a professional manner. We would strongly recommend that student names are provided on the exam board documentation to provide clarity around decisions relating to student progress.

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

3.7 Please provide any additional comments and recommendations regarding the procedures

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

Yes

Additional comments, particularly if your answer was no:

I received a helpful summary of comments and responses up and including 2018/19 external examiner reports (2019/20 outstanding)

4.2 An acceptable response has been made

No

Additional comments, particularly if your answer was no:

There is reassurance that the team have taken on board previous comments, although the formal response relating to the 2019/20 report seems to be outstanding.

4.3 I approved the papers for the Examination

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:

In light of the events of 2020 and the widespread changes made to the postgraduate learning environment it becomes more important than ever to attend to monitoring and review of the content/process of educational programmes. The RVC veterinary education team are to be commended for their student continuation rates during this unprecedented period.

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)

