

# **Collaborative Report**

**Exam board meeting: 15-Jul-2024**

**Bachelor of Veterinary Medicine, Year 3, 2023/24**

**Lead examiner: Dr John Keen**

**Collaborating examiner(s): Dr Dan Batchelor, Professor David Barrett**

## The Programme

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

### 1.1 Course content

This is the 3rd Year of the BVetMed course and the first year of a change in format. This comprises MCQ's over 5 papers, one in term 1 (basic factual only) and two in terms two and three (1 x basic factual and 1 x clinical reasoning each). There is a Principles of Veterinary Practice (PVP) reflective essay that is assessed. Finally a new student record of achievement (SRA: portfolio like) that involves continuous learning tasks assigned through the year; these are not formally assessed. Students do however have to complete over 80% of these SRA tasks as part of the requirements for progression. The content in general appears appropriate for this stage of the course, and the introduction of the SRA is welcomed as a way of engaging students with course content in an ongoing manner, preparing students for the future years and post graduation

### COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Michael Hewetson

#### Course Director Response:

Thank you for your comments. We are pleased you feel that the new assessment is appropriate.

#### Action Required:

#### Action Deadline:

#### Action assigned to:

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

Learning objective are clearly laid out within LEARN and appropriate for each of the components

### 1.3 Teaching methods

The external examiners are satisfied with the range of teaching methods used in this course

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

The information on LEARN available for the students to understand the examination process are clear and detailed for all components of the course

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

## 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

Student performance was as expected for this level and comparable to our Institutions, with a good range of scores in all components, and similar fail rate. The failed candidates comprised a mixture, mainly those that had failed one or more written papers, and fewer who had failed the PVP or to complete a sufficient percentage of the SRA

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

Spread of marks was consistent with the pattern in previous years with approximately 85-90% achieving a passmark or greater. Percentage of distinctions has risen this year which may reflect changes in either the MCQ component (split examinations) or the introduction of the SRA. Percentage fails has dropped, but of note there were several more deferrals this year compared to previously; again this may reflect changes in this assessment, and the options available. This pattern should be monitored as the new course continues.

## COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Michael Hewetson

### Course Director Response:

Thank you for your comments. We are monitoring the number of deferrals carefully and will address this if a clear pattern emerges.

### Action Required:

### Action Deadline:

### Action assigned to:

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

The PVP statistics show an overall nice spread of marks, for all students and those new into the programme

## Assessment Procedures

Please comment, as appropriate, on:

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

5 x MCQ papers: basic factual knowledge (x3) and clinical reasoning (x2). Both are of direct relevance to curriculum, with the clinical reasoning paper requiring the students to display higher levels of learning  
Some DOPS assessment retained due to deferrals/interruptions to study: The SRA is welcomed. Professional Studies Assessment: an assessment of students ability to reflect on their experiences as a veterinary student. This is directly relevant to their development as veterinary clinicians and this is at an appropriate stage in their training

### 3.2 Extent to which assessment procedures are rigorous

As noted previously MCQs in this examination are well managed before and after the process by the examination team. There is a blueprint for question inclusion, and scrutiny of questions both prior to use and after the examination. Some inconsistencies remain (abbreviations, terminology, overlong stems etc), some questions could be improved, but overall the standard of MCQs presented to the externals was much improved this year.

PVP: Process for examination of this assignment, where there is potential for some degree of subjectivity, is well managed, with a good percentage of sample (dual) marking. The examiners were again impressed by amount of feedback the examiners give students on their work. Graphical representation of the marks awarded by each examiner showed good consistency.

SRA: not directly assessed (students only need to complete a set percentage (80%)). This likely works well for well motivated students but some work probably needs to be done to ensure all students engage in a contemporaneous manner. Also worth making sure that students aren't cheating the system, especially if they are doing tasks retrospectively. Discussion with internal team suggested this was in hand for the following year.

#### COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Michael Hewetson

##### Course Director Response:

Thank you for your comments. We are pleased that you feel the quality of the MCQ questions has improved. We are working hard at improving our question bank and with each iteration of the exam, we feel the quality (and depth) of the questions in the bank is improving. This is in no small part due to your constructive input, for which we are very grateful.

##### Action Required:

##### Action Deadline:

##### Action assigned to:

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

Assessments appropriate for a level 7 FHEQ qualification

### 3.4 Standard of marking

MCQs: exams are well proctored, currently online remote, with a process in place to monitor for misconduct. Excellent QA process in place to scrutinise questions that have indices suggesting they are poorly performing/not discerning. Robust and defensible (composite) method for creating cuts-off/pass mark scores. Where questions are removed retrospectively, students are not unfairly disadvantaged.

PVP: as noted above, amount of feedback to students on their performance is excellent, and marking is backed up by sampling by other examiners

### 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)

The whole process is fair, robust and defensible. Administration of the process by the teaching administrative team is excellent and external examiners are kept well informed, with useful summaries provided.

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

Change to termly MCQ examinations appears to have worked well. This was more work during the year for internal team and externals, but hopefully beneficial to the course overall. There were some concerns voiced last year that, given the change in format to term exams that contributed to a total final examination result, students who did badly early in the year would then suffer as a result as the year progressed (feeling that they had no chance to pass overall for the year). We understand that marks were distributed after each exam, but that the standards (i.e. eventual pass marks) were not set until the end of the year. Considering results from this year, splitting the examination by terms may have been a benefit for many students. It would be prudent to monitor this situation and make sure there are good mechanisms in place to monitor and support students (which we are sure there will be).

There was some discussion at pre Board meetings about whether the online proctored examination will be maintained going forward, or whether this will be replaced by in person examination once more: likely a move towards invigilated computer based examinations rather than examinations in the students own home/computer. This would seem preferable and more robust in terms of invigilation.

No change in PVP. The SRA is new: comments above.

#### Professor D.B

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#### COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Michael Hewetson

##### Course Director Response:

Thank you for your comments. We will continue to provide students with their 'raw' grades at the end of each term, and flag any 'borderline' students so that we can take proactive measures to provide appropriate support through the tutoring system and if needed, student professional development (SPD). We can confirm that the termly written assessments in 2025/2026 will be invigilated in person computer exams.

##### Action Required:

##### Action Deadline:

##### Action assigned to:

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

Good amount of information on LEARN for students about the examination processes

## General Statements

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

Yes

Additional comments, particularly if your answer was no:

#### 4.2 An acceptable response has been made

Yes

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:

It would have been nice to have had more information about the SRA prior to the end of year Examination Board meeting. Also, given the PVP was complete much earlier in the year, being directed to this for assessment at an earlier timepoint would have been useful to reduce workload at Exam Board time

#### COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Michael Hewetson

##### Course Director Response:

We apologise that there was not more information about the SRA prior to the exam board meeting. This was very much a work in progress throughout the 2023/2024 academic year as it was a completely new assessment, and therefore we were not able to provide you with an overview until the the very last minute. We will ensure that you are provided with any updates on the SRA (or any other aspect of the assessment) in good time for 2024/2025, although we do not expect any changes to the format which was presented to you at the exam board meeting. With respect to the PVP assignment, we will be happy to provide you with access to the scripts to moderate earlier in the year so that there is less to do at the pre board meeting and will action this for the 2024/2025 academic year.

##### Action Required:

Examination office to provide PVP scripts external examiners prior to the pre-board meeting to reduce workload.

##### Action Deadline:

27-Mar-2025

##### Action assigned to:

Laura Aguirre De Carcer

#### 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:

Then meeting was well attended by internal examiners, exam teams and conducted efficiently. Special thanks to Simon Priestnall for running the meeting very proficiently

**4.6 Candidates were considered impartially and fairly**

**Yes**

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

All candidates were anonymised for this meeting. The process and discussion was fair

**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:**

As noted above: timely and useful information always provided

**4.10 I have received sufficient information to carry out my role (where information was insufficient, please give details)**

**N/A**

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

As noted above: timely and useful information always provided

**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:**

Lots of evidence of good practice around these examinations: excellent preparatory information on LEARN, formative examinations prior to the summative ones, extra time provided to account for any problems with online format, good support available

**COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Michael Hewetson**

**Course Director Response:**

Thank you for your comments

**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)**