

Collaborative Report

Exam board meeting: 13-Sep-2023

MSc in Veterinary Education (Part-Time), 2022/23

Lead examiner: Dr Jenny Moffett

Collaborating examiner(s): Professor Susie Schofield

The Programme

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

1.1 Course content

The course content is appropriate to the professional development of veterinary educators with an offering that addresses key themes and practical topics.

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

Learning objectives for modules are clearly presented and assessments are aligned with these

1.3 Teaching methods

Teaching methods are appropriate and the team are to be commended on offering an intensive, supportive learning environment which can be difficult to achieve in distance learning. I have suggested before, but would also return to the idea of applying Universal Design for Learning (UDL) as a strategy in developing the teaching methods for the future. This approach may help the team to identify ways in which they can facilitate learning with increasingly diverse cohorts of participants

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

Resources are well presented, of good quality and updated as needed.

1.5 Please provide any additional comments and recommendations regarding the Programme

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

Participants continue to perform at a standard that is at a high level and comparable to others courses with which the external examiners are familiar. Indeed for 2023-24 we are pleased to see increased numbers of students excelling in their Masters coursework, which appear to be as a development that has been brought in by the programme team

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

There is a good "spread" of grades for most of the modules examined. The external examiners explored a representative sample of the candidates' submissions and the grades/feedback awarded to them. The marking teams' grading seemed appropriate and follow the relevant rubrics associated with each assessment.

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

Please comment, as appropriate, on:

3.1 Assessment methods (relevance to learning objectives and curriculum)

The assessment methods seem appropriate to the context and learning objectives. There is a good mix of assessment types including presentations, projects and practical demonstrations. In line with my suggestion to consider UDL above, one consideration would be to offer the Patch essays in a different format to support learners with English as a second language, or participants with learning differences such as dyslexia.

3.2 Extent to which assessment procedures are rigorous

The assessment procedures appear rigorous, and it is of particular note that course participants benefit from having two members of the team involved in their final grade decisions. The overall assessment approach is structured and the team engage with this as a shared process.

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

There is consistency of the relevant modules' assessments with the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ).

3.4 Standard of marking

There is an excellent standard of marking with the programme team working together and employing a shared approach to grading. Feedback to participants is of a high standard and consistent between markers.

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. In our role as external examiner we have been given full access to the virtual learning environment and provided with all of the documents needed to carry out my work. The Exam Board process overall works well and the team are to be commended on the systematic approach they employ. Members of the Board appear empowered to speak up and share challenges and solutions in the meeting environment.

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

One minor change in assessment procedures in recent years has been the conversion of a teaching presentation assignment from graded to a pass/fail award. The programme team were able to clearly explain their rationale behind this change and the impact this has for the cohort of participants, which is to be commended.

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:

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:

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:

As one suggestion for next year, it would be helpful for the external examiners to have access to participant feedback, including course evaluations. This may help identify areas for focus and programme development

Course Director response:

Thank you for your suggestion with respect to viewing student comments and course evaluations, so you could advise on program development. As a course team we feel we have a strong and collaborative relationship with our external examiners, and are always grateful for your advice which has undoubtedly strengthened the programme. We discussed this point during the course Annual Quality Improvement meeting, and while personally I would be happy for you to view this material, I was aware that this would potentially set a precedent for other RVC courses. It was the view of the committee, which falls under the RVC's Teaching Quality Committee, that student course evaluations and feedback are beyond the remit of the external examiner role, and so it would not be institutional policy that this is shared. Our external Course Management Committee members do see this material, which is where valuable external guidance and input is gained.

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)

