Individual Report

RCVS Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Practice, 2013/14

Ms Carole Clarke

The Programme

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

1.1 Course content

The course content is set by the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Practice modules A and B.

Response from college requested: **NO**

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

Set out in the Module descriptors for the RCVS CertAVP and in the RVC published module outlines. These are clear and comprehensive and relevant to general veterinary practice

Response from college requested: **NO**

1.3 Teaching methods

The modules are assessment only, although candidates can access information from the online resources available, an annual study day and particularly, from the detailed assessment given to each piece of submitted work. Candidates are encouraged not to submit too many essays at once in order to benefit from this feedback as they progress through the assessments.

Response from college requested: **NO**

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

Module outlines are clear. Candidates vary in their use of the current resources, with some finding the VLE very useful and others not engaged. The model answers and suggested reading seem useful. A significant number of candidates appear to need more directed support to produce referencing and reflective writing appropriate to Masters level (level 7) and more directed resources to help with this could be useful. There is good evidence of detailed feedback enabling candidates to improve their future submitted work to achieve the standards expected.

Response from college requested: **YES**

COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Jill Maddison

Course Director Response:

We have enhanced the guidance provided to candidates in relation to use of the library and referencing through documents on Learn and a planned webinar from Library staff. We are also planning a webinar on reflective writing. Both webinars will be recorded and available to all candidates through Learn. We have also produced a comprehensive “How do I get Started?” resource on LEARN which candidates are recommended to read when they first enroll.

Action Required:

Finalise arrangements for webinars

Action Deadline:

31-Dec-2014

Action assigned to:

Joanne Jarvis

1.5 Please provide any additional comments and recommendations regarding the Programme

The flexibility offered by this assessment route appears to be a positive factor with students, and the introduction of a two year time limit appears to have improved completion rates.
The reflective summary essay examples I have seen have been useful as additional evidence of suitability of the programme in achieving the learning objectives and in feeding back the student's experience of assessment.

Response from college requested: NO

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

I am not involved with assessment at other institutions, but have heard anecdotal evidence that alternative assessment providers may offer a less onerous or more structured option. However, some RVC students indicate preference for the less structured style of this award. This may reflect different learning styles, and the essay format of assessment for this award may be relevant. The possibility of formative assessment may help, particularly for students with learning differences and those with little or no recent experience of this style of assessment; as would emphasising advice to check spelling, grammar and meaning carefully before submission. The popularity of this programme and the standard of work I have seen across the modules A and B would indicate that this programme is suitable for the candidates enrolled.

Response from college requested: YES

We will be enhancing the formative feedback given for C module work prior to submission of work for assessment. Candidates who are identified as having learning differences have been offered support from the RVC's learning support team. The CertAVP Starter package on Learn has been developed which should also assist. Topics in the Getting Started site are: What is Learn? What is Athens? RVC Library, IT, Webmail, Top 10 tips to get you focused, Essay writing, Reflective writing, Referencing, Plagiarism, What feedback means, Frequently asked questions about the A-FAVP module, Anything you'd like to ask?

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

Candidates' work ranges from the exceptionally good to work that requires resubmission. Many pieces of work I reviewed were very well researched and written, and showed clear evidence of the candidate's ability to reflect on their own professional skills and direct their own development. Some were not sufficiently reflective or poorly referenced, and quality of English was variable in some. Work in the middle of the range indicated that candidates were developing the key skills set out in the intended learning outcomes and feedback clearly supported and directed further development.

Response from college requested: NO

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

There is a good range of essay titles for module A, which encourages students setting out on the assessements to get started. If possible, essay titles should be worded so that candidates are not restricted to reflection from only a negative standpoint (eg. essay 7), particularly with regard to their own development. Generally the number of candidates assessed for the A and B modules is sufficient for a good range of work to be reviewed by the external examiner. Where essay titles are less frequently attempted in Module A, the maintenance of choice to suit candidates working in different areas of practice should be balanced against any possible difficulty in maintaining consistency in assessment.

The quality and detail of assessment feedback to the students is generally excellent. More consistency in level of detail of the feedback could be helpful and warrants further discussion, as well as the possibility of formative assessment to improve candidates' performance.. Maintaining motivation of the students by avoiding negative comments on grammar, referencing and spelling should be balanced against helping them achieve the quality of writing expected at this level, and could be assisted by more detailed support, advice and resources in these areas.

Response from college requested: YES

Following the CertAVP Examiners Board meeting we hosted a workshop for CertAVP examiners on providing feedback and this will be supported by a more college wide INSET day in July. Feedback from examiners will continue to be monitored and a positive and supportive approach strongly encouraged, if necessary by intervention from the module leader or course director to assist examiners in this regard. We will review the essay titles to ensure reflection is not restricted to a negative standpoint.

Assessment Process

Please comment, as appropriate, on:

3.1 Assessment methods (relevance to learning objectives and curriculum)

Assessment methods are appropriate.

Response from college requested: **NO**

3.2 Extent to which assessment processes are rigorous

The common grading scheme is adhered to.

Response from college requested: **NO**

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

Assessment is consistent with the framework

Response from college requested: **NO**

3.4 Standard of marking

Good.

Response from college requested: **NO**

3.5 Opinion on changes to the assessment process from previous years in which you have examined

N/A

Response from college requested: **NO**

3.6 Please provide any additional comments and recommendations regarding the assessment process

I have been impressed by the quality and detail of the feedback to candidates.

Response from college requested: **NO**

Assessment Procedures

Please comment, as appropriate, on:

4.1 In your view, are the processes for assessment and the determination of awards sound and fairly conducted?

Processes appear to be sound. Administration is efficient and deadlines clear. The Course Management Committee and Board of Examiners meetings were well attended and conducted with adequate data collation and discussion. Both external examiners attended.

Response from college requested: **NO**

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

N/A

Response from college requested: **NO**

4.3 Please provide any additional comments and recommendations regarding the procedures

Response from college requested: **NO**

General Statements

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

N/A

Additional comments, particularly if your answer was no:

This is my first year as external examiner for the A and B modules

Response from college requested: NO

5.2 An acceptable response has been made

Additional comments, particularly if your answer was no:

Response from college requested: NO

5.3 I approved the papers for the Examination

Additional comments, particularly if your answer was no:

Response from college requested: NO

5.4 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:

Response from college requested: NO

5.5 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:

Response from college requested: NO

5.6 Candidates were considered impartially and fairly

Yes

Additional comments, particularly if your answer was no:

Response from college requested: NO

5.7 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:

Response from college requested: NO

5.8 The standards of student performance are comparable with similar programmes or subjects in other UK institutions with which I am familiar

Additional comments, particularly if your answer was no:

Response from college requested: NO

5.9 I have received enough support to carry out my role

Yes

Additional comments, particularly if your answer was no:

The support I have received has been excellent and has included training and very prompt responses from the admin team to all requests for information. Thank you.

Response from college requested: NO

5.10 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:

Response from college requested: NO

5.11 Appropriate procedures and processes have been followed

Yes

Additional comments, particularly if your answer was no:

Response from college requested: NO

5.12 The processes for assessment and the determination of awards are sound

Yes

Additional comments, particularly if your answer was no:

Response from college requested: 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:

Do you have any suggestions for improvements based on experience at other institutes? We may use information provided in our annual external examining report:

The Course Management Committee is open to ideas and discussion leading to continual improvement and members are engaged with the processes. There are good processes in place to encourage and act on feedback from the students using surveys, and the information from the reflective essays is useful to inform continual improvement of the programme and communicate its benefits to prospective students.
Although assessments are not formative, the sequential nature of submissions for most candidates results in the assessment feedback being very useful to facilitate improved performance as the student progresses through the programme. Improving consistency of detailed feedback could benefit borderline candidates and help them improve their performance, particularly in the quality of writing appropriate for this level of award.

Response from college requested: **NO**

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)

Response from college requested: **NO**