Collaborative Report

Exam board meeting: 03-Jul-2015

Accelerated Bachelor of Veterinary Medicine, 2014/15

Lead examiner: Professor Alan Baird

Collaborating examiner(s): Dr Gura Bergkvist

The Programme

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

1.1 Course content

The content is appropriate for entrants with third level experience.

Response from college requested: NO

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

Total coverage, in terms of assessment, of such a broad programme is challenging to achieve. Generally the range of assessments is well suited and successful in this regard.

Response from college requested: NO

1.3 Teaching methods

A good range of methods and pedagogies are employed. RVC LEARN is a virtual learning environment which ensures all students (and staff) have access to learning materials and learning objectives.

Response from college requested: NO

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

Assessment design is carefully undertaken. Standard setting, where applied, is commended.

Response from college requested: NO

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1.5 Please provide any additional comments and recommendations regarding the Programme

The Graduate entry pathway is now quite mature and a review may be timely.

Response from college requested: NO

COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Stephen Frean

Course Director Response:

An internal review of the BVetMed course (including the GAB year) is currently underway.

Action Required:

Action Deadline:

Action assigned to:

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

There was a range of students' performance which was broadly commensurate with those enrolled in similar programmes in other Schools of Veterinary Medicine. Similarly the distribution of marks (across a broad range of assessment strategies) confirmed this.

Response from college requested: NO

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

The patterns of achievement were quite well conserved across the range of assessment styles. The marks difference between the highest and lowest achievers was not enormous and probably did not reflect the actual distribution since the very good students performed very well. Review of the common grading scale (which is non-linear and therefor less discriminatory)might be considered to increase the spread of marks.

Response from college requested: NO

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

Because of the narrow marking bandwidth (see comments in later sections), excellence is very difficult to achieve, although quite a high number of merits and distinctions were deserved and were recommended to the Board.

Response from college requested: NO

Assessment Procedures

Please comment, as appropriate, on:

3.1 Assessment methods (relevance to learning objectives and curriculum)

The broad range of assessment strategies and tools is to be complimented. Mapping of assessments to overall learning objectives is not done systematically. However, we recognize that blueprinting tools are often cumbersome to use and difficult to validate. One of the externs (GB) attended the ISF orals and confirmed their value and usefulness.

There is choice for students in Papers 2 and 3. Particularly for Paper 2 there are patterns of selection by students which favour certain questions over others. Similarly, certain questions generate quite different spreads of marks than others. This is evident from review of the spreadsheets and might be considered by RVC in order to consider whether 'strategic' engagement by some students is an issue.

Response from college requested: **NO**

COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Stephen Frean

Course Director Response:

Our intention are always to have our final assessments cover the entire taught curriculum with particular examined topics reflecting, proportionately, the teaching time ascribed to them. We also aspire, in the structure our written papers, to allow an element of choice whilst discouraging strategic, 'cherry-picking' revision strategies and question selection by students.

Action Required:

Action Deadline:

Action assigned to:

3.2 Extent to which assessment procedures are rigorous

Sample marking is an example of good practice, along with the narrative grade scales. However, the 17 point Common Grading Scale is non-linear and very high or very low marks tend not to be awarded.
The structured ISF orals seem to work well (and are very well organised) and the quite good correlation of marks between the 2 oral examinations is encouraging.
The INSET day is a good opportunity to support and train intern examiners.

Response from college requested: **NO**

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

The BVetMed (Accelerated) for graduate entry to veterinary medicine comprises an integrated programme of study and professional practice spanning several levels (including competencies). The early stage appears consistent with Level 6 and the final outcomes of the degree might be considered to meet the expectations of the descriptor for a higher education qualification at level 7,

Response from college requested: **NO**

3.4 Standard of marking

On the whole, marking is fair, good and broadly consistent with standard answers. Standard setting is good practice and might be systematically reviewed from time to time. Use of the Item Analysis Report is used effectively to examine validity of test elements (MCQ).

Response from college requested: **NO**

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)

These seem to be mature, fit for purpose and working well. During the external examiners visit for examination of scripts and mark profiles some issues arose (as is inevitable) which were competently and professionally dealt with, confirming that the system is well regulated

Response from college requested: **NO**

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

Not relevant.

Response from college requested: **NO**

3.7 Please provide any additional comments and recommendations regarding the procedures

We would recommend that internal examiners could review certain elements before the externs visit (e.g. MCQ item analysis and marking overview which could help identify potential anomalies in good time).

Response from college requested: **NO**

COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Stephen Frean

Course Director Response:

We hope to use the MCQ item analysis in reviewing the performance of our MCQs before the External Examiners' visit..

Action Required:

Action Deadline:

Action assigned to:

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:

Response from college requested: NO

4.2 An acceptable response has been made

Additional comments, particularly if your answer was no:

Response from college requested: NO

4.3 I approved the papers for the Examination

Yes

Additional comments, particularly if your answer was no:

Some issues arose, particularly with the MCQ papers. These were addressed before the actual exam took place.

Response from college requested: NO

COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Stephen Frean

Course Director Response:

The comments of the external examiners on the draft examination papers are highly valued and most helpful in editing the papers.

Action Required:

Action Deadline:

Action assigned to:

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:

This was managed very well, although In Course Assessments did not feature. Access to scripts and to spreadsheets was excellently managed by administration.

Response from college requested: NO

COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Stephen Frean

Course Director Response:

If requested in the future, we can provide greater detail of summative in-course assessment results.

Action Required:

Action Deadline:

Action assigned to:

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:

It is encouraging to have such an engaged group of intern examiners.

Response from college requested: NO

COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Stephen Frean

Course Director Response:

Thank You

Action Required:

Action Deadline:

Action assigned to:

4.6 Candidates were considered impartially and fairly

Yes

Additional comments, particularly if your answer was no:

The internal examiners should be applauded for their sense of academic justice and fairness to students.

Response from college requested: NO

COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Stephen Frean

Course Director Response:

Thank You

Action Required:

Action Deadline:

Action assigned to:

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:

This is an early stage in a long programme which is professionally accredited. The potential for reviewing markers of performance in this stage as indicators for future needs of students as they progress should be considered (e.g. map course content between stages and reflect this in RVC LEARN). This may support vertical integration of course material.

Response from college requested: NO

COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Stephen Frean

Course Director Response:

This is likely to happen as a consequence of our various accrediting bodies' requirements that we map to our curriculum, more overtly, the professional competencies and confidences that we are required to instill in our veterinary graduates.

Action Required:

Action Deadline:

Action assigned to:

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:

Response from college requested: NO

4.9 I have received enough support to carry out my role

Yes

Additional comments, particularly if your answer was no:

Response from college requested: 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:

Access to learning objectives online is useful and would be enhanced by extending such access to subsequent stages in order to consider the broader context and also opportunities for vertical integration of material.

Response from college requested: NO

COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Stephen Frean

Course Director Response:

Agreed. We will give external examiners access to the learning objectives of other years of the BVetMed course.

Action Required:

Action Deadline:

Action assigned to:

4.11 Appropriate procedures and processes have been followed

Yes

Additional comments, particularly if your answer was no:

Response from college requested: NO

4.12 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:

Banking MCQs is under way. Significant value is afforded by using the Item Analysis Report to check for usefulness of questions and for exam design (blueprinting and selecting degree of difficulty) and could enhance (or even replace) long and complicated standard setting meetings.

Response from college requested: **NO**

COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Stephen Frean

Course Director Response:

We intend to use the Item Analysis Report in future editing of questions in the MCQ bank.

Action Required:

Action Deadline:

Action assigned to:

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)

This is a robust and challenging stage of a complex programme. It is well organised, delivered and assessed. Academics and administrators continuously seek to enhance their already substantial efforts.

Response from college requested: **NO**

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