

ANNUAL QUALITY IMPROVEMENT REPORT 2021/22**Appendix 3: External Examiners' report****Veterinary Education**

This appendix contains Year Leader's responses to 2021/22 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 – n/a
b.	21/22 Collaborative Annual Report with responses from Course Director

Collaborative Report

Exam board meeting: 04-Sep-2022

MSc in Veterinary Education (Part-Time), 2021/22

Lead examiner: Dr Jenny Moffett

Collaborating examiner(s): Prof Susie Schofield

The Programme

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

1.1 Course content

The MSc, PGDip and PGCert in Veterinary Education continue to address a wide range of practical and theoretical topics in this domain which will be helpful to individuals working in a diverse range of education contexts. The content for the module is supported by up-to-date and high quality resources such as peer-reviewed publications from well-recognised academic journals.

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

Learning objectives are clearly outlined and appear to be well-aligned with course content and teaching methodologies.

1.3 Teaching methods

Teaching is facilitated through a range of different and evidence-based methods and approaches. The programme facilitates learning across geographical barriers, and incorporates tutor-led and peer learning to good effect.

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

Learning resources offered to the student appear to be relevant, regularly updated and appropriate to the learners' levels of study.

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

Students' performance appears to be at a similar or higher level with respect to comparable courses in other institutions.

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

Inspection of a range of candidates' assessments indicated that a routine spread of grades exists and that marking of candidates is robust with reliability between individual markers.

COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Elizabeth Chan

Course Director Response:

Thank you for the time taken to review and comment on our course provision. Given our commitment to reflective and critical writing in our assessments, and the challenges this presents in terms of examiner reliability, it is particularly pleasing to see this comment, which will be passed on to the team.

Action Required:

Action Deadline:

Action assigned to:

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 are diverse and are appropriately aligned to the programme learning objectives.

COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Elizabeth Chan

Course Director Response:

Thank you. There were a couple of queries/ points for consideration raised at periodic review, firstly about the diversity of our assessment methods, and secondly about whether they are appropriately supporting the research-related learning outcomes. The course team have been developing ways to ensure an appropriate diversity of assessment methods that are aligned with learning outcomes, particularly those relating to research in the MSc and scaffolding this development at an early stage.

It is therefore again pleasing to this comment, and the tweaks that are under development this year (ensuring a research and critical literature focus during the Diploma) will hopefully ensure this area remains a strength.

Action Required:

Action Deadline:

Action assigned to:

3.2 Extent to which assessment procedures are rigorous

Observing the examination board, due process was followed throughout. Diligence was shown over the results spreadsheets. Assessment procedures continue to be robust and apply effective methods e.g. double-marking and moderation.

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

The level of assessment continues to be consistent with the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ)

3.4 Standard of marking

The standard of marking is very good. Students receive detailed and high quality feedback. Indeed, the feedback provided by staff is extensive and takes a lot of time – faculty are encouraged to consider how they monitor if / how the feedback is used.

COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Elizabeth Chan

Course Director Response:

We very much appreciated the discussion surrounding getting students to reflect on their feedback. We are going to add this to the MSc research project this year and will explore within the team how to embed this into the Certificate and Diploma

Action Required:

by the CMC

Action Deadline:

Action assigned to:

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 the view of the external examiners, the procedures for assessment and the determination of awards sound and fairly conducted.

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

N/A

3.7 Please provide any additional comments and recommendations regarding the procedures

During the examination board meeting, there was discussion around the inclusion of formatives – it was felt there was no time for students to draw breath from one reflective piece to the next. However removing them in response to workload during the pandemic had led to a drop in performance in the summatives. The team had reduced the patchwork essays to 3 from 4, spreading across the student time. There was a mix of peer and tutor feedback. Although a complicated process to develop the timetable the team were happy how this was working, helping students step back and reflect. The team is to be commended. It would be good in a year's time to reflect on this change both from a tutor and a student perspective.

At the board meeting, a student assignment showed almost 100% similarity score with respect to a plagiarism checker. This may have been due to a student erroneously loading to the wrong module then uploading in the correct module rather than duplication. There was some discussion on self-plagiarism and informing students about this. One potential area is self-plagiarism of parts of the proposal in the dissertation. This was not felt to be excessive. Staff are aware of potential issues with essay mills. Developing patchwork formatives will help guard against this, though it is always difficult with a non-exam submission. An area not explored was the information given to students, including opening self to blackmail, and whether there is a safe way for students to 'come clean'. This is an area faculty could usefully explore with the students, particularly as the students are themselves educators.

With respect to the MSc Research Project module, it appeared that, on occasion, students were not acting on feedback received on their initial research proposal. The board discussed ways students could be encouraged to reflect on feedback received. This could be at proposal stage or could be a reflexive piece at the end of the dissertation. It is recommended that faculty continues discussing this. The reflection could be structured as per peer review comments as this will also provide the student with a useful skill when engaging with submitting to peer review journals / conferences.

Finally, there was not much time between release of papers and the EEB. The window of opportunity is short due to needing to be after the vivas but before the next teaching starts. There was some discussion on the length of gap between submission and viva. A longer gap allows for more reflection whereas a shorter gap may be less stressful for the students. It is recommended that the team considers the current timetable to extend the time to read the papers for the EEB.

COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Elizabeth Chan

Course Director Response:

Relating to the change in formative assessments: Thank you for this comment. We will add a note to our CMC actions to review this change at the end of the 2022/23 academic year (and it will be noted on the PGCert AQI report)

Relating to self-plagiarism: Thank you, this is a useful point. We will discuss this recommendation at CMC but one suggestion would be to add plagiarism issues to Unit 4 (assessment) of the PGCert, or during the ACIVE module.

Relating to RP feedback: Thank you. As mentioned above, we found the discussion and recommendations very helpful and will incorporate this for this year.

The scheduling of the September board is being reviewed by the exam officer (CD) and the registrar. We will add this to our CMC actions

Action Required:

Action Deadline:

Action assigned to:

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

Yes

Additional comments, particularly if your answer was no:

In the interim report it was highlighted that a deputy chair be identified for placement. This has been resolved.

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:

Suggestions for monitoring and/or change have been made within "Assessment Procedures"

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)