

ANNUAL QUALITY IMPROVEMENT REPORT 2022/23

Appendix 3: External Examiners' report

Accelerated BVetMed

This appendix contains Year Leaders' responses to 2022/23 External Examiners' comments and updates to actions from previous External Examiners' reports (if applicable).

As Year Leaders 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
b.	22/23 Collaborative Annual Report with responses from Year Leader

Report Question	External Examiners' comment in 2021/22	Year Leader's response and actions	Update in 2022/23
3.1 Assessment methods (relevance to learning objectives and curriculum)	The open book designed papers were particularly good, incorporating knowledge into good cases, testing assimilation of information given and learnt. The curriculum was closely mapped to the exams.	That is encouraging to hear, thank you. We have continued to improve our exam question design to test powers of interpretation, including analysis and application of knowledge, rather than simple factual recall. We will endeavour to continue and build on and apply what we have learned over the past few years of online assessment. Action Required: Continued development and scrutiny of exam questions for online, non-proctored format. Action Deadline: 31-May-2023 Action assigned to: Director of Assessment; Head of Exams; Year Leaders	Completed Exam format for Paper 2a & 2b (PSQs) is being phased back to in-person invigilated format (online) in 2022-23. Production of high-quality questions and scrutiny of the process remains unchanged in view of the change back to in-person invigilated exams.

<p>3.7...comments and recommendations regarding the procedures</p>	<p>I was also impressed that the graph with different colours had dashed and undashed lines for colour blind students and that male/female farm clients were used as examples which help teach in a very subtle way, these are highly inclusive and should be commended.</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment. We are committed to ensuring our teaching and assessment remain inclusive and accessible, to support and reflect our diverse community.</p> <p>Action Required:</p> <p>To ensure accessibility and inclusivity remains integral at exam writing stage.</p> <p>Action Deadline:</p> <p>31-May-2023</p> <p>Action assigned to:</p> <p>Director of Assessment; Head of Exams; Director of Learning & Wellbeing</p>	<p>Completed</p> <p>Production of high-quality exam questions that are accessible and inclusive, remain integral to the paper setting process.</p>
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Collaborative Report

Exam board meeting: 10-Jul-2023

Accelerated Bachelor of Veterinary Medicine, 2022/23

Lead examiner: Dr Catrin Rutland

Collaborating examiner(s): Dr Jorge Del-Pozo

The Programme

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

1.1 Course content

This is the first run through of the new curriculum. Having also been external examiner for the course previously we can see where tracking across has been done with great care and we are satisfied it covers the necessary information. We were able to blueprint across the entire course to compare contents of the course against assessed learning objectives. The course is comprehensive.

Dr J.D

I concur with the comments of the lead examiner. As this is the first run of the new curriculum, I have added some descriptive detail that may be useful.

In broad terms, this course aims to provide clinical integration of basic science concepts for students with a previous science based undergraduate degree. This is achieved through a modular structure that includes the following modules:

- Animal form and function
- Infectious and responses
- Animal husbandry (including animal handling)
- Principles of veterinary practice
- Integrated and applied anatomy

COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Emma Boardman

Course Director Response:

Thank you, it is gratifying to hear that the transition from the previous curriculum to the new curriculum has been smooth and that alignment of learning outcomes to course content continues to be mapped comprehensively and clearly.

In addition to several curriculum changes that have taken place at module and unit level, this year has seen the introduction of the Animal Handling DOPS assessments and a more fully expanded Principles of Veterinary Practice module (formerly Professional Studies) with compulsory formative reflective assets contributing to this cohort's assessment and progression requirements. Integrated and Applied Anatomy small group sessions (formerly ISF tutorials) continue to contribute a valuable element of applied teaching incorporating the use of our live animals. While not specifically considered a module, these sessions link neatly with several PAFF units and integrate basic sciences teaching and anatomy in the applied clinical and live animal context.

Action Required:

Action Deadline:

Action assigned to:

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

The learning objectives are covered appropriately and in appropriate sessions, for example via lectures or practicals or via other teaching and learning systems

Dr J.D

I concur with the comments of the lead examiner. As this is the first run of the new curriculum, I have added some descriptive detail that may be useful.

Each module is subdivided into units that address the major topics within, and each unit addresses learning objectives aligned with the module itself and the overarching aim of the GAB course. These learning objectives have been designed to provide students with a clear road map for their learning. They also address the major aspects of the topics at hand at a level of detail adequate for an undergraduate veterinary degree, and with a view to start preparing the students for the day 1 competencies of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons, as well as other relevant accreditation bodies (e.g. the American Veterinary Medical Association - AVMA).

COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Emma Boardman

Course Director Response:

We endeavour to continually reflect upon how our teaching sessions address key learning objectives, usually as part of module review process. The RVC's recent acquisition of new curriculum mapping programme, Sofia, will further enhance the administration of the GAB's programme within the BVetMed programme.

Action Required:

Action Deadline:

Action assigned to:

1.3 Teaching methods

A variety of teaching methods are use throughout this course, as applicable to modern learning. It is well funded, well staffed, and innovative. The staff are very knowledgeable, enthusiastic, care about student support and academic progress.

Dr J.D

I concur with the comments of the lead examiner.

COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Emma Boardman

Course Director Response:

Thank you for your comments. We are extremely invested in providing a supportive, enriching environment in which our students may thrive academically. To achieve this, we employ a range of pedagogically supported innovative teaching methods.

Action Required:

Action Deadline:

Action assigned to:

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

The resources were appropriate for the assessment methods used.

Dr J.D

I concur with the comments of the lead examiner.

COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Emma Boardman

Course Director Response:

Thank you, we are pleased to hear this.

Action Required:

Action Deadline:

Action assigned to:

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

The student rates in relation to distinction, merit, pass and fail are appropriate for this level and type of degree, in addition the low/absent numbers of drop out were also appropriate.

Dr J.D

I concur with the comments of the lead examiner.

COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Emma Boardman

Course Director Response:

Spread of student performance was not dissimilar to those achieved last year which given the transition to a new curriculum is to be welcomed.

Action Required:

Action Deadline:

Action assigned to:

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

The candidates' knowledge was appropriate for top, middle and bottom ranges and comparable to other similar degrees at other institutions.

Dr J.D

I concur with the comments of the lead examiner.

COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Emma Boardman

Course Director Response:

Thank you for your comments. We are pleased to hear that the quality of candidate knowledge and skill across the performance ranges are appropriate

Action Required:

Action Deadline:

Action assigned to:

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

Dr J.D

N/A

Assessment Procedures

Please comment, as appropriate, on:

3.1 Assessment methods (relevance to learning objectives and curriculum)

We were able to blueprint across the entire course and were given additional materials to enhance this. We were very satisfied that the learning objectives and curriculum were covered. Large amounts of time and expertise are devoted to assessment to ensure it is assessing the right objectives, using the appropriate assessment methods. The addition of DOPS was very good to see and really enhances the practical element and assessment.

Dr J.D

I concur with the comment above. I can also add that the assessment for the GAB course is designed to cover a range of skills through a variety of assessment tools, most of which are delivered in a formative and summative modalities throughout the course. This provides the students with an opportunity/opportunities to understand the assessment method in a formative modality before tackling the assessment in a summative modality, which is an excellent way to support the students to demonstrate the standards required for the course, so that the assessment method does not create undue challenges for them, and they can focus on relevant knowledge/skills. The students are informed of the details of this methodology at the beginning of their course, and they have access to this information throughout the course (via a Learn online platform).

COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Emma Boardman

Course Director Response:

That is encouraging to hear, thank you. We are glad we have been able to provide you with all the necessary materials to help oversee how our assessments align with learning outcomes and curriculum. With respect to our communication with our students, we aim to provide frequent signposting regarding assessment checkpoints, aims of assessment and format. Year leaders, exams office and head of exams liaise continuously to ensure communications are consistent and question-writing and paper setting process is carried out diligently and on time. In 2023-24 the intention is to move most assessment back to in-person invigilated, online exams. This change will not greatly impact our approach to writing problem-solving questions. New questions will continue to be mapped appropriately to course learning outcomes.

Action Required:

Action Deadline:

Action assigned to:

3.2 Extent to which assessment procedures are rigorous

Every aspect of assessment was rigorous. Exams were viewed by teachers/internal examiners, and then viewed by the external examiners, any changes were transparent and every suggestion by the external examiners was responded to.

Dr J.D

I concur with the lead examiner.

COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Emma Boardman

Course Director Response:

Thank you. We are thankful to have such a diligent, proactive exams team who work extremely hard to organise and guide us through this process. As ever, we value the feedback our external examiners provide during the exam setting phase. Scrutinising this process to ensure academic rigour and exam integrity is maintained, remain a priority.

Action Required:

Action Deadline:

Action assigned to:

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

The level of assessment complied with the FHEQ. The framework is clearly used when developing the course and the assessment of the course content.

Dr J.D

I concur with the lead examiner.

COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Emma Boardman

Course Director Response:

We are pleased to hear this. Thank you.

Action Required:

Action Deadline:

Action assigned to:

3.4 Standard of marking

The standard of marking was appropriate for this level and type of degree. It was consistent. There were intermarker comparisons conducted which was excellent to see.

Dr J.D

I concur with the lead examiner.

COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Emma Boardman

Course Director Response:

Thank you for your comment. We are very pleased to read your endorsements of our marking standards, a process throughout which we aim to maintain consistency, fairness and rigour.

Action Required:

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)

There were briefings prior to exam boards and plenty of opportunities to request extra meetings. Training and checks on the software and programmes used was extensive and help was available throughout. The information needed was provided well in advance to ensure that examiners, including external examiners could undertake appropriate scrutiny of papers and procedures. Therefore the exam administration and marking arrangements were of an extremely high standard. The Board of Examiners was representative of the RVC and included all external examiners, who were made to feel welcome and who could speak at any time about any subject. The procedures were sound and fair.

Dr J.D

I concur with the lead examiner.

COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Emma Boardman

Course Director Response:

We are pleased that all materials and processes were explained clearly and made available in a timely and efficient manner. It is gratifying to know you find our procedures continue to remain sound and fair. We thank Maria Johnson, BVetMed Exams Coordinator, and Ana Filipovic, Senior Academic Quality Officer (Standards) for facilitating these processes smoothly

Action Required:

Action Deadline:

Action assigned to:

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

The standard setting conducted at the RVC is outstanding, with world class research and comprehension leading the decision making. With world leaders in the area working on the setting it is a joy to see. They work tirelessly to ensure that standards are appropriate for the industry and that also no student is disadvantaged.

Dr J.D

I wholeheartedly concur with the lead examiner.

COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Emma Boardman

Course Director Response:

Thank you for such generous endorsement of our standard setting process.

Action Required:

Action Deadline:

Action assigned to:

3.7 Please provide any additional comments and recommendations regarding the procedures

Our commendations to the administrative staff and also to the academic staff who ensure such high levels of scrutiny and fairness for the assessments.

Dr J.D

Overall, the impression of this external examiner is that this assessment is outstanding in terms of design, delivery, and procedure, and I agree with the lead external examiner in that all the staff coordinating this effort should be commended.

This assessment poses a fair, excellent and comprehensive challenge to the students of the GAB course, providing them with an opportunity demonstrate their standard in the topics of this course. This has been my first examination diet as an external examiner for this course, and during this process I was able to cover points 4.3 to point 4.13 in page 10 of the "Academic Quality Assurance and Enhancement Procedures for External Examiners" of the RVC, which was provided to me as part of this process.

COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Emma Boardman

Course Director Response:

We are grateful for your encouraging words. That you find our assessment content appropriate while providing a comprehensive challenge to our GAB cohort, is gratifying.

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:

I have always had considered but quick responses to all of my comments. RVC make every effort to develop the curriculum and assessments based on our feedback.

Dr J.D

N/A

COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Emma Boardman

Course Director Response:

Thank you. Your valued feedback remains integral to the continued development and improvement of our assessment processes and standards.

Action Required:

Action Deadline:

Action assigned to:

4.2 An acceptable response has been made

Yes

Additional comments, particularly if your answer was no:

Yes, carefully considered and acceptable responses have always been provided.

Dr J.D

Agree

COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Emma Boardman

Course Director Response:

Thank you.

Action Required:

Action Deadline:

Action assigned to:

4.3 I approved the papers for the Examination

Yes

Additional comments, particularly if your answer was no:

Yes, examinations have always been sent in good time, enabling careful scrutiny.

Dr J.D

Agree.

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:

I had access to all assessments.

Dr J.D

Agree.

COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Emma Boardman

Course Director Response:

We are glad you were both able to inspect adequate samples of students' work and marks.

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:

I attended and participated and was made to feel welcome. I did not need to raise any comments of concern but I felt empowered to do so if I had needed to.

Dr J.D

Agree.

COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Emma Boardman

Course Director Response:

Thank you for your responses. We greatly value your contribution of feedback and in approving results at this meeting.

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 best outcome is ensured for every student in an unbiased and fair manner.

Dr J.D

Agree.

COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Emma Boardman

Course Director Response:

At each stage of the exam setting, marking and review process, we continually seek to maintain fair, unbiased standards so no student is disadvantaged.

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:

The standards are comparable and appropriate for the industry.

Dr J.D

Agree.

COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Emma Boardman

Course Director Response:

Thank you for your responses

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:

Yes, I feel that the standards of student performance are similar to those in other institutions in the UK.

Dr J.D

Agree.

COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Emma Boardman

Course Director Response:

Thank you for your responses.

Action Required:

Action Deadline:

Action assigned to:

4.9 I have received enough training and support to carry out my role

Yes

Additional comments, particularly if your answer was no:

Thank you to all the staff who offered assistance whenever required and who provided all of the information needed to carry out the role of external examiner.

Dr J.D

Agree.

COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Emma Boardman

Course Director Response:

We are pleased to know that you feel equipped and supported to carry out your external examiner roles.

Action Required:

Action Deadline:

Action assigned to:

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:

Thank you to everyone involved in providing the large amount of information we require.

Dr J.D

Agree.

COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Emma Boardman

Course Director Response:

We are pleased to know that you feel equipped and supported to carry out your external examiner roles

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:

The procedures and processes are transparent, available to all staff, students and others, and were followed on all occasions.

Dr J.D

Agree.

COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Emma Boardman

Course Director Response:

Thank you. This is encouraging to know

Action Required:

Action Deadline:

Action assigned to:

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

Yes

Additional comments, particularly if your answer was no:

The processes for teaching, assessment and determination of awards are very clear and fair and appropriate.

Dr J.D

Agree.

COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Emma Boardman

Course Director Response:

We aim to provide rigorous standards throughout our assessment and award processes, and your feedback is integral to us continuing to improve. Thank you.

Action Required:

Action Deadline:

Action assigned to:

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:

The RVC is providing a world class education, the staff are dedicated and enthusiastic, with sound teaching and assessment throughout the course. In addition, the team are very welcoming and always happy to provide any details requested in order for us to scrutinise the course. Thank you to everyone for their time, effort and for taking such care over the education and assessment of your students.

Dr J.D

I wholeheartedly concur with the lead examiner's comment. In addition, I would like to add that I was very impressed by the expertise and professionalism of the entire team, and the application of evidence based procedures for standard setting.

COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Emma Boardman

Course Director Response:

Dr Rutland and Dr Del-Pozo, thank you both for your comprehensive feedback and overall endorsements of our assessment standards and processes

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)

