

Academic Exchange in BSc Bioveterinary Sciences

Institutional Duties

Using exchange for our own students means that we will accept the value of study abroad for credits towards an RVC/University of London degree. This brings with it responsibilities associated with operating collaborative provision. Our previous experience with KCL is relatively light touch because it is another University of London College. Here, our choice of partners will be more varied.

The essence of assuring quality in these circumstances is to take a risk-based approach; otherwise the burden of assurance requirement will become overwhelming compared to the size of the offering. So if we minimise the risk at the outset through very careful choice of partner then the following bureaucracy can be commensurate with the size of the operation.

Choice of Partner Institution

We need to be assured that the partner HEI delivers and assesses its courses to the standards we expect for a UK honours degree. (Including security of assessment). Furthermore, we need to be assured of its financial soundness and the circumstances for legal liabilities. The suitability of the learning environment and infrastructure including student support services also need to be checked.

Thus, no agreement will be made with a partner as a destination for RVC students until it has been visited by a member of academic staff who will check all of the above matters. For this purpose a standard brief and report back pro forma will be developed.

For the first few partnerships we will restrict ourselves to HEIs recognised by NARIC (National Academic Recognition Information Centre) as having qualifications equivalent to UK. Furthermore we will seek HEIs who already have partnerships with UK Universities or other established and recognised North American or European HEIs.

Although what follows provides for study not in English, the first set of partnerships will be with Universities where the language of instruction is English, whilst RVC develops its experience in this area.

The model for export of study abroad students

1. Third year students would be able to take the equivalent of 1 unit (30 credits) from another university. This is smaller than the permitted 60 credits that a student can currently opt for at KCL.
2. Students would study this module in *one term* of the BSc Final Year so that two terms were available for typical final year study at RVC.
3. The subjects of study would be confined to those suitable for the degree title 'BSc Bioveterinary Sciences' as is the case with the KCL options.
4. Students would not be able to take any part of the final major project overseas unless a specific agreement had been reached and prior approval gained from the Course Management Committee.
5. Partners would exchange and approve draft publicity materials that mentioned the other HEI prior to its use.

Student Management

1. Each student's proposed programme would be signed off by the third year course leader. This will be to check the subject suitability of the modules taken and that the modules at the partner institution are not over similar to those at RVC – so avoiding the possibility of double-counting of work for academic credit.
2. Where the students has Learning Differences or other special needs checks will be made by the year leader and student support together that there is appropriate provision for learning and assessment in the partner HEI. The student will be asked to sign that they understand the nature of the provision offered before they take up study.
3. Appeals and Complaints would normally be expected to be the responsibility of the RVC in the agreements made. As such if a student is required to re-study following an unfortunate or inadequate partnership experience this study will be an RVC module.

Academic Governance

There would be a memorandum of understanding made with each partner university covering all student and academic matters including fees arrangements. The memorandum will be approved by the Chair of the Learning and Teaching Committee.

At the commencement of each partnership a document would be proposed to the Course Management Committee to agree the translation of grades from the partner university. This will follow international guidance from NARIC/Fulbright/WES as appropriate. An overall mark/grade for the 30 credits studied abroad would be imported into the student's classification calculation.

Where study at the partner university is not in the English language it will be for the importing university to stipulate their language entry requirements. RVC will check these requirements against expert advice in the UK.

The course management committee would regularly monitor outputs from the partners as it does with KCL modules, scrutinising module results and pass rates compared to RVC modules. It will also received qualitative feedback from students on their partnership experiences.

Financial Matters

An overarching financial plan will need to be drawn up for the programme against which individual agreements can be drawn up. It would be expected that RVC would send a pro rata amount of it student income to the partner institution. However the balance of cost between RVC and the students' contribution needs to be considered. Also the overall flow of students in each direction needs to be considered so that income to the course as a whole does contribute to supporting the critical mass of academic staff.

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Approved at Learning Teaching and Assessment Committee – 02/05/2012