

Collaborative Report

Exam board meeting: 12-Jul-2016

Veterinary Gateway Programme, 2015/16

Lead examiner: Dr James Moffat

Collaborating examiner(s): Dr Lynda Moore

The Programme

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

1.1 Course content

The course content does not appear to be different to previous years.

Response from college requested: **NO**

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

There was the usual good spread of marks in all assessments, indicating that the course continues to discriminate between different abilities of the cohort. As in previous years, students achieving distinctions appeared to be strong in all assessments, which cover the learning objectives for the course.

Response from college requested: **NO**

1.3 Teaching methods

The Gateway programme consists of an engaging mixture of traditional lectures, small group tutorials, and hands-on animal husbandry sessions. The assessments were of a high standard, and a good system for providing assistance prior to submission, and feedback afterwards remains in place. I have previously commented on the excellent support students at the RVC receive and am happy to see that nothing appears to have changed.

Please accept our thanks for your encouraging comments regarding the nature and content of the Gateway Programme. We will continue to monitor and improve the course in response to feedback from students, staff and examiners. We will continue to promote a wide range of teaching methods in order for our students to get the most out of their learning experience.

The student feedback survey has demonstrated that students certainly feel supported during their studies and are always able to find the help they need from teaching and administration staff involved with the course.

Response from college requested: **NO**

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

There were no obvious inadequacies in the teaching and learning resources. In course assessments and exams were marked in a timely manner.

Response from college requested: **NO**

1.5 Please provide any additional comments and recommendations regarding the Programme

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

The performance of the Gateway students is as comparable – or indeed, superior, to students enrolled on foundation year programmes at my own institution. I think that students achieving merits or distinctions on the Gateway programme would have no difficulty undertaking a B.Sc.-level degree at most institutions.

We have also been pleased with the high level of attainment achieved by many students on the Gateway Programme. We are confident that this will put them in a strong position to enter the first year of the BVetMed at the RVC and at alternative Veterinary Schools.

In addition, it is extremely encouraging to examine the employability statistics for our Gateway students upon graduation from the 6-year B.Vet.Med. degree, where they have proved to be as (and on occasion more) employable than those veterinary students graduating from our 5-year course.

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

As noted above, students achieving distinctions seem to perform equally well in most or all of the assessments, indicating that the best students are able to perform to a high standard in each of the diverse subjects taught. The marks of the remaining students fall into an unremarkable distribution, indicating the usual mixture of abilities of this cohort of students (or any cohort for that matter). Historically, students failing the exams fail only one or two papers and tend to pass the resit. The performance of students has been quite consistent in my time as an external examiner.

The analysis of the spread of marks on exam paper 1 (MCQ) reveals that a few of the questions (but fewer than last year) seem to disadvantage stronger students. There is no simple answer as to why this may be the case, and considerable time would need to be spent trying to establish the unique problems with each of the questions. It might be simpler to not use these questions in future.

Oddly, one question (Q6) on paper 2 was attempted by only a single student (who passed). Students may simply have found this material uninteresting or difficult, and have sufficient other choices on this paper.

We will continue to monitor the MCQ questions to eliminate inappropriate questions from the database.

Regarding Q.6 on Paper 2, students are able to make a choice of which question they answer from this section. Question 5 was a reproduction question. Historically the reproduction questions are always popular with the students and alternative questions in the same section are therefore answered on less occasions. To ensure a fair spread of questions we always vary the question pairings in the different exam papers and on different years.

Response from college requested: **NO**

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

Response from college requested: **NO**

Assessment Procedures

Please comment, as appropriate, on:

3.1 Assessment methods (relevance to learning objectives and curriculum)

There has been no obvious change to the assessment methods, which are as relevant as in previous years.

Response from college requested: **NO**

3.2 Extent to which assessment procedures are rigorous

The spread of marks for each of the exam papers suggests that these assessments are rigorous. The in course assessments generally had a mark higher than the exams, which is typical for this type of assessment and the quality of feedback and assistance that RVC students receive.

Response from college requested: **NO**

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

As in previous years, the level of assessment is entirely consistent with the FHEQ.

Response from college requested: **NO**

3.4 Standard of marking

With the possible exception of exam paper 2, the marking schemes seem appropriate and are adhered to. All examiners annotated the scripts, making work much easier for external examiners and second markers alike. Dr Imelda McGonnell, in particular, provided detailed annotations and should be congratulated. Minor discrepancies in marking appeared to be resolved on a case-by-case basis, and settled appropriately. It was agreed at exam board that the marking scheme for paper 2 was redundant and should be abandoned.

Response from college requested::
NO

It is correct to note, that on occasions, staff marking the paper 2 Problem Solving Questions seem to award marks out of 10 for correct content and spend only a limited amount of time giving marks for other qualities in the answer such as, writing style, conclusions etc., as described in detail on the Common Grading Scheme. We will assess the appropriateness of our common grading scheme for this type of examination and revise it if required. Once revised, we will encourage all staff to adhere to the common grading scheme when marking problem solving questions.

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)

All of the procedures were conducted in a timely and professional manner, as in previous years.

Response from college requested: **NO**

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

N/A

Response from college requested: **NO**

3.7 Please provide any additional comments and recommendations regarding the procedures

Response from college requested: NO

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

Yes

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:

Response from college requested: 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:

Response from college requested: 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:

Response from college requested: NO

4.6 Candidates were considered impartially and fairly

Yes

Additional comments, particularly if your answer was no:

Response from college requested: 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:

Response from college requested: 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:

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:

Response from college requested: NO

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:

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:

Response from college requested: **NO**

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)

Response from college requested: **NO**

