ANNUAL QUALITY IMPROVEMENT REPORT 2017/18

Appendix 3: External Examiners' report

MSc Veterinary Education

This appendix contains Course Director's/Year Leader's responses to 2017/18 External Examiners' comments and updates to actions from External Examiners' reports from previous years (if applicable).

As Course Director/Year Leader 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 – There were no actions from pervious years
b.	2017/18 Collaborative Annual Report with responses from Course Director

Collaborative Report

Exam board meeting: 07-Sep-2018

MSc in Veterinary Education 2017/18

Lead examiner: Professor Peter van Beukelen

Collaborating examiner(s): Dr Lynne Allery

The Programme

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

1.1 Course content

The course content for the certificate, diploma and masters is clearly described and covers a wide range of relevant topics appropriate for veterinary education.
It is recommended, as it was last year, to consider a harmonizing of the program design in the certificate program, in order to provide clarity. This concerns specifically a harmonisation of the two tracks in the certificate program: the 30/30 credits vs. the 20/20/20 credits track. The content of both tracks is identical, so the split up into two different tracks is inefficient and unclear for students as well as for staff.

Course Directors' response:
We will make this clearer in the online layout of the course and intend to simplify the pathways to one route with two 30 credit modules from the 2019 intake

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

The learning objectives were relevant for the various modules and set at an appropriate level

1.3 Teaching methods

We did not see any teaching but evidence emanating from our visit and talks with the staff would suggest these were appropriate.

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

The resources available were fine and not a problem. Many resources are available online, providing good access to students.

1.5 Please provide any additional comments and recommendations regarding the Programme

The programme, and the teachers and organization running it impressed us. All seems to work smoothly. Streamlining the course provision would benefit clarity, and aid transparency.

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 quality of the assignments on the Certificate and Diploma were comparable to other programmes and there was substantial evidence of reflection throughout the coursework.
The final MSc report would benefit from additional critical commentary and reflection on the study design, to fully evidence learning during and from the research process.

Course Directors' response:

1. The development of the project outline through submission of a project pro-forma to the tutor for formative feedback and then to an examiner for approval (with or without conditions) or non-approval, needs an additional step in circumstances where the examiner approves a project with conditions: the student will be requested to resubmit their project pro-forma, addressing the examiners conditions. 2. The mark scheme for the oral examination currently awards marks for parts of the written project that have already been marked: a new mark scheme has been developed will be trialled at the next opportunity (September 2019) to examine the students critical and reflective process, rather than the project content only.

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

The quality of the number of assignments was adequate. Through the wide variety of subjects, not always specific focused on veterinary education, comparison of the assignments was difficult. It is encouraging to hear from staff discussions that plans are in place to ensure the educational focus is maintained throughout.

We have clarified that all essays need to be written in the context of veterinary education and recommended that students select one of the suggested essay titles.

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

We were happy with students' performance, as far as we could see.

Assessment Procedures

Please comment, as appropriate, on:

3.1 Assessment methods (relevance to learning objectives and curriculum)

In general the assessment methods were valid and clearly described. Suggestions for adaptations of the assessment procedures are given under 3.7.

3.2 Extent to which assessment procedures are rigorous

Double marking of all the scripts is impressive. Supportive data were given to show that within and between rating pairs there was a high similarity. Double marking takes a lot of time from staff. Suggestions to adapt the double marking system are given under 3.7.

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

The assessment meets with the framework

3.4 Standard of marking

The standard of marking and feedback was high. It is recommended to strive for more specific feedback on the assignments and to diminish generic phrases.

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 – the procedures are clear and adhered to. A stronger monitoring of the student's progress or non-progress is recommended, since delay is quite common, due to the part-time programme simultaneously running to (clinical) work. Stronger monitoring benefits transparency and can avoid unnecessary work for students and staff.

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

Most recommendations made in previous years have been taken on board.

3.7 Please provide any additional comments and recommendations regarding the procedures

We have some suggestions on assessment of the different modules:
• The double marking system is impressive, as we stated in 3.2., and we commend this, but is also very time consuming, with relatively little additional worth as feedback for the student. We suggest considering double marking only borderline/fail students and a selection from across the grades, and assignments marked by new markers. Time that is spared by doing so can be given to write more specific feedback for the students, so any eventual resit and future submissions have more chance to be successful.

Course Directors' response:

This process is governed by the RVC examinations system for the whole college. However, we are introducing sample marking for the PGCert essays in 2019 which will have similar benefits in terms of workload.

- The content and assessment of the ERMQQ module may be reconsidered. Last year we recommended already a reweight of the three assessment parts: Proposal / Questionnaire / Communication. Now we would like to suggest reviewing this assessment as a whole, in order to strengthen attention to basics and methods of educational research.

Course Directors' response:

The assessment and teaching for this module is being reviewed and re-considered in 2018/19.

- We suggest strengthening research design/analysis to more fully support students. If possible to make the ERMQQ module mandatory in the Diploma programme, at least for those applicants who do not have an academic profile.

Course Directors' response:

This is being considered.

- The assessment of the Research proposal needs improvement. When there is substantial doubt on the content of the proposal and/or the feasibility of the proposal, we recommend not approving the proposal, but asking for a resubmission.
- Reconsider in the MSc the format of the oral part of the examination. We are pleased to see the oral is under review, and suggest:
  - make a list of reflective questions that you are going to use in the oral and give these questions to the candidate before the oral takes place;
  - ask the candidate to give a presentation of perhaps 20 minutes, in which the candidate reflect on their own work and evaluate what could be done better when doing the work again, and why;

Course Directors' response:
See comments in 2.1 above

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:

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 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:

There is full commitment of the academic staff with the programme and the students. The academic staff put a lot of hard work into this programme supported by administration.
The assessment procedures with standardized two markers and where necessary a third mediator is impressive, but also time consuming. Suggestions to adapt the system are given in 3.7. Data on reliability were shown.
No further suggestions.

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)

Course Directors' response:
Thank you for this valuable feedback!