

ANNUAL QUALITY IMPROVEMENT REPORT 18/19

Appendix 3: External Examiners' report

MSc Veterinary Education

This appendix contains Course Director's/Year Leader's responses to 2018/19 External Examiners' comments and updates to actions from previous years' External Examiners' report (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 – not applicable
b.	2018/19 Collaborative Annual Report with responses from Course Director

Addendum: further comments resulting from AQIG Meeting 2020:

ACTION: Section 3.7 re: research proposal approval process – The research proposals now receive considerable scrutiny before approval, all through OCM, through formative and summative feedback in the Research Methods Module, and supervisor engagement at the start of the Research Projects Module. In addition, before being allowed to proceed, the proposals require final sign-off by the two allocated examiners.

ACTION: Section 3.7 and 5.1 comments re: ethical approval process – Ethics approval remains a subject of discussion, and may change with the new RVC Ethics Committee Chair and their review of this area. Currently, projects must undergo review but this can either be by RVC or the student's own institution (some institutions require this). If the process is outside the RVC, the RVC's Ethics Committee requires a copy of this external approval. This means that all can be confident that the projects will be eligible for publication in responsible peer reviewed journals. However, this leaves open the issue of projects that meet standards set in countries other than the UK that would not be approved in the UK. The Course Directors believe this is addressed by early scrutiny/feedback and examiner sign-off, at the same time as avoiding unnecessary duplication and bureaucracy.

ACTION: Section 5.2 re: additional academic support – The Course Directors are more concerned that support and feedback may be excessive, and this is the view of others involved in course management and resource allocation at the RVC. Complaints about support, though, do persist from a minority of participants. In part this seems to relate to the change from PGCert to PGDip, where more intensive tutor support around the development of reflective writing gives way to less scaffolded, in-depth study. The proportionate response of the team has been to appoint the PGDip Year Leader as the next point of call for matters that cannot be resolved within the Modules. In addition the Handbook clearly signposts the multiple avenues available at the RVC for support and counselling beyond the course.

a. Updates to actions from previous years' reports

Report Question	External Examiners' comments & suggested actions	Course Director/Year Leader's response & Action	Update in 2018/19
<p>1.1 Course content</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>Course Directors' response: <i>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</i></p>	<p>Completed as indicated</p>
<p>2.1 Students' performance in relation to those at a similar stage on comparable courses in other institutions, where this is known to you</p>	<p>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</p>	<p>Course Directors' response:</p> <p><i>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.</i></p> <p><i>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 trialed at the next opportunity (September 2019) to examine the students critical and reflective process, rather than the project content only.</i></p>	<p>More feedback before sign-off now included</p>
<p>3.7 Please provide any additional comments and recommendations regarding the procedures</p>	<p>We have some suggestions on assessment of the different modules:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 	<p>Course Directors' response:</p> <p><i>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.</i></p>	<p>Completed as indicated</p>

	<p>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.</p>		
<p>3.7 Please provide any additional comments and recommendations regarding the procedures</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>Course Directors' response:</p> <p><i>The assessment and teaching for this module is being reviewed and re-considered in 2018/19.</i></p>	<p>Under review for 2020-21 onwards. Two research modules to be produced to improve research literacy and better support the project.</p>
<p>3.7 Please provide any additional comments and recommendations regarding the procedures</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>Course Directors' response:</p> <p><i>This is being considered</i></p>	<p>New mandatory module within Diploma being proposed for all who do not already have a qualification at level 7 or above.</p>

Collaborative Report

Exam board meeting: 06-Sep-2019

MSc in Veterinary Education (Part-Time), 2018/19

Lead examiner: Dr Lynne Allery

Collaborating examiner(s): Professor Peter van Beukelen

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 topics appropriate for veterinary education

Professor P.v

The Lead Examiner and myself have composed the draft report together at the end of our meeting at RVC

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

Learning objectives are relevant and set at an appropriate level.

1.3 Teaching methods

We did not see any teaching but based on the discussion with staff suggest that these were appropriate.

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

Many resources are available on line and provide good access to students.

1.5 Please provide any additional comments and recommendations regarding the Programme

The programme, and the teachers and administrators running it is impressive. We commend the introduction of the MSc research proposal approval process.

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 have substantial evidence of reflection throughout the coursework.

We are positive about the piloting of a new marking scheme for the oral element of the MSc, and look forward to future development raised previously to fully evidence learning during and from the research process.

The introduction of a more rigorous research proposal review process, is to be commended. This will be strengthened with the introduction of a required re-submission. A team based review of the proposal is to be recommended. This will establish that the course team have confidence in the worth of the project and the capacity for this to be delivered in the students setting.

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 wide range of assignments we reviewed were adequate. The educational focus over the last year has been strengthened.

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

n/a

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.

3.2 Extent to which assessment procedures are rigorous

A moderation process has been introduced to the certificate and diploma stages in the last year and this is evident within the assessment data presented. The MSc stage continues the good practice of double blind marking.

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

The course learning objectives are aligned to the framework.

3.4 Standard of marking

The standard of marking and feedback is overall high. We experienced some constructive and specific feedback and recommend staff to strive to strengthen this further.

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. We commend the administrative team for the detailed and helpful support prior to and during the exam board.

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

Most recommendations have been taken on board. We commend the opportunity provided to MSc supervisors to feedback to the course director on the supervision process,

3.7 Please provide any additional comments and recommendations regarding the procedures

We note plans to strengthen the research proposal taking into account our recommendation in 2017/18 report, and we look forward to further developments. In particular, the need to ensure a rigorous research proposal process, including re-submission. One recommendation option is to introduce a team approach to review the quality of the research proposal prior to approval. We recommend the academic team clarify the involvement of others within the students research setting. The RVC will also wish to clarify the management of MSc student project ethical approval.

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:

The course team may wish to review the research ethic review processes in other institutions.

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)

The College will wish to consider additional academic support over the next year, to address recent staff issues.

