

## ANNUAL QUALITY IMPROVEMENT REPORT 2019/20

### Appendix 3: External Examiners' report

### Grad Dip Veterinary Nursing

This appendix contains Year Leader's responses to 2019/20 External Examiners' comments and updates to actions from previous External Examiners' reports (if applicable).

As Year Leader/Course Director 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](mailto:afilipovic@rvc.ac.uk), 01707666938.

Appendix 3 consists of:

a.	Updates to actions from previous years' reports
b.	Collaborative reports from July (Bridging & Core Modules) and October (Elective Modules) Exam Boards

Report Question	External Examiners' comment	Course Directors response and actions	Update in 2019/20
<p><b>2.2 Quality of candidates' knowledge and skills, with particular reference to those at the top, middle or bottom of the range (July 2019)</b></p>	<p>... it would be worth reviewing the weighting of the forum activity as there is less differentiation between students ability on this i.e. the marks are all in the top band. This does have the effect of pulling up the marks overall for some of the students that have a weaker piece of written work.</p>	<p>We thank the External Examiners' observation and comments regarding the allocation of the marks awarded to learners for the assessed discussion forums in Professional Studies. The module leaders have observed that learners' posts and writing style in the forum is often more concise, clear and critical than in the essays and we wonder if part of the difference seen in the learners' writing style between the two activities is because they feel less burdened or confused by some of the more formal conventions of academic writing. Additionally, we think the introduction of the new marking criteria rubric this year may have made it clearer to learners what was required of their forum posts, thus they provided responses that are better aligned to marking criteria. However, we also note that the rubric may need some adjustment over the next couple of uses to ensure that we are not inadvertently and unjustly pulling up marks of some learners.</p> <p><b>Action Required:</b></p> <p>We will monitor the spread of marks between the two assessment activities for the Professional Studies module to ensure we are not over-awarding marks in the assessed discussion forums.</p> <p><b>Action Deadline:</b></p> <p>03-Aug-2020</p> <p><b>Action assigned to:</b></p> <p>Maddy Campbell and Perdi Welsh</p>	<p><b>COMPLETED</b></p> <p>A small cohort of 4 students this year, plus the changes to the summative assessment activities, meant that robust evaluation of the performance of the discussion forum as a valid and fair assessment system was not possible. As this is the last run of the programme (being replaced by the Graduate Certificate and Postgraduate Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Nursing) and summative discussion forums will not be used in the new programmes in the same way, this action is now considered necessary.</p>
<p><b>2.1 Students' performance in relation to those at a similar stage on comparable courses in other institutions, where this is known to you (Oct 2019)</b></p>	<p>... it is not always apparent in some of the higher scoring pieces of work (the extended case reports) that they have evaluated the rigor and robustness of the evidence that they are presenting in support of their argument. Although we do appreciate it is difficult to critique clinical performance/actions and the literature given the relatively limited word count for these pieces of work.</p>	<p>Thank you for your observation and comment regarding learners being able to demonstrate their evaluation of the evidence within their EPCRs. As you have pointed out, this maybe difficult to incorporate within the word limit of these assignments. These learners have received training on critiquing literature and evidence in their year one Evidence-Based Veterinary Nursing module and have achieved a pass in the module's assessment activities, part of which (unseen exam) is to critique the research process presented in a peer-reviewed article. However, we feel it is a valid observation and we will remind learners that they are required and expected to only use evidence that they consider to be</p>	<p><b>COMPLETED</b></p> <p>Instructions (for all modules) have been provided within the relevant Learn assessment guidance areas to remind learners that they are required and expected to only use evidence that they consider to be robust and rigorous in their written assignment discussions and when presenting conflicting evidence, to provide justification to explain how and why they are applying each piece of evidence to their own report.</p>

		<p>robust and rigorous in their written assignment discussions. We will also remind them when presenting conflicting evidence, that they provide justification for applying each piece of evidence to their own report.</p> <p><b>Action Required:</b></p> <p>Within assignment instructions (for all modules) provide reminder to learners that they are required and expected to only use evidence that they consider to be robust and rigorous in their written assignment discussions and when presenting conflicting evidence, to provide justification to explain how and why they are applying each piece of evidence to their own report.</p> <p><b>Action Deadline:</b></p> <p>13-Jan-2020</p> <p><b>Action assigned to:</b></p> <p>Perdi Welsh</p>	
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# Collaborative Report

Exam board meeting: 24-Jul-2020

## Graduate Diploma in Professional and Clinical Veterinary Nursing, 2019/20

Lead examiner: Mr John Donaghy

Collaborating examiner(s): Mrs Susan Howarth

### The Programme

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

#### 1.1 Course content

No changes to course from previous years

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

The team have met all of the learning objectives for the course

#### 1.3 Teaching methods

A wide range of teaching and learning methods are used to ensure students engage fully with the programme. This is particularly important as students are predominantly working at a distance

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

No issues identified.

#### 1.5 Please provide any additional comments and recommendations regarding the Programme

The programme continues to be delivered by a dedicated course leader and enthusiastic and supportive team. This is particularly notable in these difficult times of lock-down due to Covid-19.

## 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 students on this course is similar to other post registration qualifications.

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

The candidates' work continues to cover the grade boundaries. However, due to the changes in academic processes throughout the Covid-19 lock-down period this year, has meant a reduction in scrutinising the students' work. On sampling work prior to lock-down, we concur with the marks awarded.

**College Response:** The RVC responded to the External Examiners' comments above to ask if there was anything further that could have been done differently in terms of its process. The External Examiner, John Donaghy responded to note:

*"For my part, these comments were just trying to officially record the challenges and difficulties that Covid-19 virus presented to the teaching and administration team of the Grad Dip VN programme . I personally do not believe anything could have, or should have changed, as these were unprecedented times which did not present any major concerns or difficulties to the external examiners, or scrutiny of student work".*

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

None at this time.

Please comment, as appropriate, on:

### 3.1 Assessment methods (relevance to learning objectives and curriculum)

An assortment of suitable and innovative methods are used throughout the programme to ensure students have opportunities in meeting the learning outcomes.

### 3.2 Extent to which assessment procedures are rigorous

Assessment procedures are fair, rigorous and valid. As external examiners we have commented in the past on the assessment procedures. It is notable over the past two years how the team have worked hard to take on board our comments and recommendations. These are reflected in the marks awarded.

**COURSE DIRECTOR: Ms Perdi Welsh**

#### Course Director Response:

Thank you. We appreciated the constructive feedback and suggestions for improvement that you have both provided us during your time as External Examiners.

**Action Required:**

**Action Deadline:**

**Action assigned to:**

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

Students are able to demonstrate the higher level academic skills of critical analysis, evaluation and self reflection through more detailed assessment strategies, which the course leader and team have introduced into the programme.

### 3.4 Standard of marking

The standard of marking is of good quality and consistent across the range of modules which we sampled earlier within the academic year. The use of marking rubric's, and inclusion of specific comments about students' performance continues to be a strength of the programme.

### 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.

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

No change this year.

**3.7 Please provide any additional comments and recommendations regarding the procedures**

None noted.

**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:

Yes, although due to the change in academic procedures owing to Covid-19, this was limited in the later part of the academic year.

**College Response:** The RVC responded to the External Examiners' comments above to ask if there was anything further that could have been done differently in terms of its process. The External Examiner, John Donaghy responded to note:

*"For my part, these comments were just trying to officially record the challenges and difficulties that Covid-19 virus presented to the teaching and administration team of the Grad Dip VN programme. I personally do not believe anything could have, or should have changed, as these were unprecedented times which did not present any major concerns or difficulties to the external examiners, or scrutiny of student work".*

**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:

Yes, although due to the change in academic procedures owing to Covid-19, this was limited in the later part of the academic year.

**College response:** The RVC responded to the External Examiners' comments above to ask if there was anything further that could have been done differently in terms of its process. The External Examiner, John Donaghy responded to note:

*"For my part, these comments were just trying to officially record the challenges and difficulties that Covid-19 virus presented to the teaching and administration team of the Grad Dip VN programme. I personally do not believe anything could have, or should have changed, as these were unprecedented times which did not present any major concerns or difficulties to the external examiners, or scrutiny of student work".*



**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:**

Yes, as external examiners we attended (virtually) the progression board in July 2020 due to the change in academic procedures owing to Covid-19.

**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:**

The wider RVC teaching and academic support team should be congratulated on the flow of information disseminated to us regarding changes in the academic processes due to Covid-19.

**COURSE DIRECTOR: Ms Perdi Welsh**

**Course Director Response:**

Thank you for your comments and feedback. Your recognition of the team's response to the changes brought on due to COVID-19 will be passed onto the appropriate members of staff.

**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:**

In conjunction to the new policies and procedures owing to Covid-19

**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:**

Students receive a high level of support in order to complete and achieve this programme. The course leader and subsequent teaching team, along with the academic support team should be congratulated on the work they have done to ensure students receive a positive teaching experience in these difficult times.

**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)**

# Collaborative Report

Exam board meeting: 07-Oct-2020

## Graduate Diploma in Professional and Clinical Veterinary Nursing, 2019/20

Lead examiner: Mr John Donaghy

Collaborating examiner(s): Mrs Susan Howarth

## The Programme

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

### 1.1 Course content

No changes to the course from previous years.

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

All of the learning objectives for the course have been met.

### 1.3 Teaching methods

A number of different teaching methods have been used to fully engage students. This is particularly important with students working at a distance and very encouraging in the current environment of virtual learning.

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

No issues identified.

## **1.5 Please provide any additional comments and recommendations regarding the Programme**

The course continues to be delivered by a dedicated and enthusiastic team. It is clear that the course leader, with the assistance of supportive tutors, has a good oversight of the course and student cohorts.

### **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**

Student performance continues to be consistent with similar post registration courses.

#### **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 candidates work covered the grade boundaries. Marks were comparable to that of other post registration courses and demonstrated a broad range of marks across the spectrum.

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

None identified.

Please comment, as appropriate, on:

### 3.1 Assessment methods (relevance to learning objectives and curriculum)

A broad range of suitable and innovative methods of assessments are used. This is of particular note, as electronic examinations were introduced into the course as a result of the current covid-19 pandemic. The evidence provided, illustrated a comprehensive and robust method was in place to ensure equity and validity of the process. Both the teaching and academic team should be congratulated on this process.

#### COURSE DIRECTOR: Ms Perdi Welsh

##### Course Director Response:

We are pleased to report that the online exams went smoothly and no technical glitches were reported. We had students overseas (US and Australia) and so had to incorporate a wide time-window for the exam to be available and all students appeared to have coped well with their own particular timings for their time-zones. The exam questions do not rely on, or test the recall of knowledge but more the application of knowledge, clinical reasoning and higher level 6 cognitive skills. Therefore, the Course Team and Exams Office considered these exams entirely suitable for conversion to online (non-proctored) exams. Students downloaded the question paper from LEARN and then submitted their answers to OCM, as they do with assignments and projects, thus providing familiar technology for them. Students were given a clear instruction of timeframes for them to download the paper and submit their answers (which included some additional time in case of technical issues). Plagiarism checking software was used, to allow detection of students who have colluded or used other sources to answer their questions and the use of the specific time-window to answer exams (as opposed to 24 hours), also served to deter students from discussing questions and colluding.

**Action Required:**

**Action Deadline:**

**Action assigned to:**

### 3.2 Extent to which assessment procedures are rigorous

Rigorous marking criteria and assessment decisions are evident with comprehensive feedback provided.

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

Students are now able to engage and demonstrate the higher level academic skills of critical analysis, evaluation and self reflection on their work.

### **3.4 Standard of marking**

The standard of marking and feedback is consistent and fair. Assessment scripts and examinations are internally moderated or second marked to ensure validity and compatibility amongst markers.

#### **COURSE DIRECTOR: Ms Perdi Welsh**

##### **Course Director Response:**

The move to the online examination made this process much more efficient and effective for primary and sample markers. It also provides an easier way by which external examiners and others can review the students' work and markers' annotations (avoids issues with reading handwriting).

##### **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)**

The standard of marking is of good quality and consistent across the range of modules sampled.

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

The changes to the submission of electronic examinations appear to be fair and robust.

### **3.7 Please provide any additional comments and recommendations regarding the procedures**

None

**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:**

This was undertaken remotely.

**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:**

This was undertaken remotely.

**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:**

Excellent support from the administrator in ensuring documentation was provided in a timely manor and procedures were clear and concise.

**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 transition of electronic examinations and student support due to the current pandemic is a credit to the course director and team in running an excellent programme.

**Mrs S.H**

I concur with the comment of the Lead Examiner

**COURSE DIRECTOR: Ms Perdi Welsh**

**Course Director Response:**

With thanks to both External Examiners for their continued constructive and helpful feedback in all of the assessment processes of this programme. The necessary transition to the online examinations is due in part to the suitability of the exam questions (testing clinical rationale, and higher level cognitive skills), which as discussed in previous reports, was brought about in response to the observations and suggestions of our External Examiners. We are pleased to report that the online exams went smoothly and no technical glitches were reported and thank the Exams Office team who made this process run smoothly and successfully for all stakeholders, but particularly, the students.

**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)**

None