

Individual Report

Exam board meeting: 07-Oct-2021

RCVS Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Practice, 2021/22

Professor Ed Hall

The Programme

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

1.1 Course content

The Certificate in Advance Veterinary Practice (CertAVP) is a flexible, post-graduate modular course divided into three consecutive modules (A,B and C). Students must pass the A module plus (2 x B and 3 x C) or (1 x B and 4 x C) 10 credit modules. The C modules are discipline-based but students can choose any module, although if passing all C modules in a specific discipline (e.g. small animal medicine) they are eligible to sit an RCVS synoptic examination for a designated CertAVP.

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

Through extensive positive feedback on submitted work, students show improvement and meet the learning objectives as stated on CertAVP website, i.e.

"Holders of the qualification will be able to:

- deal with complex issues in an organised and creative manner, make sound judgements in the absence of complete data, and communicate their conclusions clearly to veterinary colleagues and to non-veterinary audiences, including clients;
- demonstrate self-direction and originality in tackling and solving problems, and act autonomously in planning and implementing tasks in their professional area of work;
- continue to advance their knowledge and understanding, and to develop new skills to a high level; and have the qualities and transferable skills necessary for professional veterinary work requiring:
 - the exercise of initiative and personal responsibility;
 - decision-making in complex and unpredictable situations; and
 - the independent learning ability required for continuing professional development."

1.3 Teaching methods

The CertAVP is run as a distance learning, assessment-only programme that emphasises self-reflection by the candidate on their own clinical practices in order to encourage life-long learning skills and to advance and enhance their clinical knowledge, skills and understanding. Detailed feedback is given on submitted assignments to help students develop and improve their performance and, ultimately, their own clinical practices.

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

The most valuable resource available to students is the extensive positive feedback they receive on their assignments, and the academic and pastoral support they receive from the CertAVP team. Struggling students are offered one-to-one mentoring sessions (currently online).

Unlike taught CertAVP courses elsewhere, students can choose their own CPD provider(s), although the RVC makes them aware of courses they host that may be applicable to their C modules

Students have access to an extensive online library of relevant textbooks and journals.

A dedicated website hosts many helpful resources and discussion forums. Students can contact other students to set up learning groups or a study-buddy system, and a Course Representative liaises with the CertAVP team. A

monthly newsletter keeps them informed.

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 CertAVP programme offered by the RVC differs from CertAVP programmes elsewhere which are taught programmes, whilst the RVC programme is a distance learning, assessment-only programme. Student performance, therefore, cannot be compared directly with other courses. However, students completing this programme clearly develop the ability to reflect and improve their clinical practice and the majority complete it within a reasonable time. Weaker students may lack all the knowledge necessary to pass the RCVS synoptic examination, but achieve something considered more valuable, i.e. the ability to reflect and practise life-long learning.

COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Jill Maddison

Course Director Response:

Thank you for this wise observation and insight.

Action Required:

Action Deadline:

Action assigned to:

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' performance in their assessments is generally of a high standard, and with many showing clear evidence of improvement as they progress.

Assessment Procedures

Please comment, as appropriate, on:

3.1 Assessment methods (relevance to learning objectives and curriculum)

For the A module, students are required to pass 3 essays, one reflective essay and a short online quiz.

For B modules they are required to pass 5 case reports plus one reflective essay.

The exact assessment requirements differ between C modules, but generally involve a caselog, a variable number of case reports, a reflective essay, synopses and, sometimes, an end-of-module written examination. Students are able to submit one report for formative assessment, and there is consistent evidence of improved marks after this feedback.

A second submission with no penalty is allowed for failed assignments, and again the feedback often results in significant improvement. A third submission may be allowed on appeal, but is rarely needed.

3.2 Extent to which assessment procedures are rigorous

Marks are assigned according to published descriptors for each grade which are rigorously applied.

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

The use of descriptors ensures consistent assessments across candidates. Failed submissions are double-marked, and marks ratified by the External Examiner.

3.4 Standard of marking

The standard of marking is high and, importantly, the quality of the feedback given is exceptional.

COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Jill Maddison

Course Director Response:

Thank you for the very positive feedback. We will ensure that our assessors are made aware of it.

Action Required:

Action Deadline:

01-Dec-2021

Action assigned to:

CertAVP Manager

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 External Examiner is kept apprised of all the procedures for assessment and determination of awards, and is consulted on all failed submissions and appeals. The assessments are conducted fairly and award decisions are sound.

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

Three years ago, the ability to compensate marks between case reports was changed; compensation was no longer possible if the student made a "critically important" error that did or potentially could have caused patient harm. As External Examiner, I supported this change.

COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Jill Maddison

Course Director Response:

Thank you

Action Required:

Action Deadline:

Action assigned to:

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:

The procedure for dealing with suspected plagiarism has been clarified.

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

No

Additional comments, particularly if your answer was no:

A draft of one written examination paper was not shared with me before the exam. I am assured this oversight will not be repeated.

COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Jill Maddison

Course Director Response:

We apologise for this oversight and have updated our procedures to ensure that it doesn't happen again.

Action Required:

Action Deadline:

Action assigned to:

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:

All failed assignments and a sample of other assignments were made available to me for scrutiny. No issues with the marks awarded were identified.

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:**

The Board allowed open discussion of student performance and enabled sound award decisions.

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:**

The CertAVP is standard set to Masters level 7, and therefore marked in relation to the generic criteria for this level laid down by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education within their 'Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland'. The awards made are appropriate for this level

4.8 The standards of student performance are comparable with similar programmes or subjects in other UK institutions with which I am familiar**N/A****Additional comments, particularly if your answer was no:**

As an assessment-only programme, it cannot be directly compared with taught CertAVP courses, but overall student performance is good.

4.9 I have received enough training and 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:

None.

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)

I wish to thank Joanne Jarvis and Jill Maddison for their helpful and open approach to my queries, and commend all the team members for the exceptional feedback given to students.

COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Jill Maddison

Course Director Response:

Thank you. In return we would like to thank you for your supportive approach to the role of external examiner and the guidance and wisdom you have provided when needed.

Action Required:

Action Deadline:

Action assigned to:

