

The following details will continue to be captured via the online reporting process:

- Name(s) of External Examiner(s) contributing to a collaborative or individual report: Andrea Dineen, Elizabeth Mullineaux, Murry Welsh
- Programme Title and Award FdSc BSc Veterinary Nursing Cohort 8&9
- Collaborative partner and location (if applicable)
- Year of Examination 2012-13
- Examination (only applicable to BVetMed)
- Date(s) of attendance at the RVC 18th Sep 2013

The online system will capture agreed sign-off by each collaborating external examiner or individual where necessary.

Instructions for completion:

1. For sections 1 - 4 please type your comments in the spaces provided. You are asked to indicate if you expect to receive a response from the College.
2. For section 5, please delete as appropriate (Yes, No or N/A). You are asked to provide additional comments, particularly if you answered 'No'.
3. Names of all students and staff should be omitted from external examiners' reports, to maintain appropriate confidentiality.
4. Unless comments are returned within three weeks of completion of the Exam Board meeting, it may not be possible to act upon these comments in the forthcoming academic year.
5. Please return expense claims with receipts attached by post to the Academic Quality Manager, The Royal Veterinary College, Hawkshead Lane, North Mymms, Hatfield, AL9 7TA.

Thank you!

Please comment on the areas detailed below, highlighting the appropriateness and strengths and/or weaknesses.

1. Programme	External Examiner comments: For Publication	A response from the College is required, if yes, please check the box [✓]	College Response: (Where the response requires action(s), each action must be outlined, a completion date given and a responsible individual named)
1.1. Course content	<p><i>Course involves mostly a very thorough coverage and assessment of the various aspects of veterinary nursing.</i></p> <p><i>Externs raised concerns regarding the amount of Equine Nursing taught to fulfil previous RCVS "core" units in Year 2. In particular concerns related to ensuring adequate coverage of areas such as supporting anaesthesia, diagnostic techniques and operating theatre practices as appropriate for VNs caring for Equines.</i></p> <p><i>Externs raised concerns regarding the amount of Exotic Pets taught throughout the course. Species coverage needs to well-distributed between all small animal species. This was noted in particular in the exam for ECC which seemed very canine-focused.</i></p>	[]	<p>Response: The course has been approved by the RCVS and therefore there is no longer the requirement to meet the RCVS syllabus. The course does map to the National Occupational Standards and ensures students are equipped to cover the relevant Nursing Progress Log practical elements. The equine sessions in the second and third year are mainly comparative and interest. However as these aspects are taught and mentioned in the curriculum it would be appropriate to ensure there is some assessment of the learning objectives related to equine. There are MCQs in both the Diagnostic Techniques and ECC and Anaesthesia modules. We will look to review this in the Applied Nursing Care module.</p> <p>It is agreed that more assessment with regards to exotics (companion animals not cats or dogs) should be included when blueprinting the module examinations. With the appointment of a new lecturer in exotics it is planned that the teaching will increase regarding these species.</p> <p>Action (if any) To ensure the assessment is blueprinted and covers the range indicated in the learning outcomes. : Hilary Orpet Sept 2014</p>
1.2. Learning objectives	<p><i>Learning objectives are well –met by course content and the forms of assessment for the exams reviewed by externs in Sept 2013 - i.e. CNP I & II, Applied Science I & II, Diagnostic techniques, Anaesthesia & ECC.</i></p>	[]	<p>Response: The modules are constantly reviewed and we have recently had a change in module leaders which helps to ensure the content is appropriate.</p> <p>Action (if any) date & name:</p>
1.3. Teaching methods	<p><i>Having previously accessed the RVC Learn site online on campus, it was apparent that a diverse range of teaching methods are utilised across the BSc/Fd VN programmes.</i></p>	[]	<p>Response: The VN school utilises the virtual learning environment to ensure a range of teaching methods meet the requirements of the students</p> <p>Action (if any) date & name:</p>

<p>1.4. Resources (in so far as they affected the assessment)</p>	<p><i>As previously (June 2013), Externs noted the volume of marking to be completed by course teachers especially when sample/ double marking is factored in. Also the range of feedback reports provided following assignments (in all modules with assignments reviewed in Sept 2013) is wonderful for students and is to be commended (but naturally is quite labour-intensive for staff.)</i></p>	<p>[]</p>	<p>Response: Agreed Action (if any) date & name:</p>
<p>Please provide any additional comments and recommendations regarding the Programme:</p>	<p><i>In relation to the internal sample/ double marking, externs were especially impressed by the communication level between the 1st and 2nd internal markers and wish to compliment the RVC on the thoroughness of this system. This was noted esp. for Diagnostic Techniques where the 1st and 2nd markers were not originally in agreement on the sample they marked and this resulted in both markers communicating and reviewing ALL papers to ensure agreement and parity of marking.</i></p> <p><i>The range of MCQ questions across all the modules looked at this visit were impressive and seem to be well suited to differentiating between the various students in top, middle and bottom ranges. MCQ results tallied well with students' overall final marks in modules which is a very satisfactory finding for this method of assessment.</i></p> <p><i>In Diagnostic Techniques, there was a diagram of an X-ray machine which was a poorly-labelled diagram (i.e. unclear as to what the arrows exactly were pointing to). The quality of diagrams needs to be carefully scrutinised in advance of exam paper production. There was some concern that perhaps questions containing diagrams with parts to be named may not always be appropriate in the Short Answer Exam papers where students are meant to show</i></p>	<p>[]</p>	<p>Response: Unfortunately the Diagnostic Techniques paper had not been reviewed by the course director prior to publication. The systems involving the preparation and scrutinising by examiners Has been reviewed and best practice implemented across the College This should ensure examination papers produced are of a high quality and meet the requirements of the applied short answer questions – ie encourage the level of application required at this stage of the course To note; all MCQ papers are standard set by a team of examiners.</p> <p>Action (if any) To ensure assessment documents are appropriately reviewed prior to implementation. date & name: H Orpet with M Pead by Sept 2014</p>

	<i>deeper levels of understanding. Alternatives suggested where to re-phrase such questions asking the student to “draw a well-labelled diagram of....” rather than providing the diagram (as this may lower the question level to more of an MCQ level of questioning.)</i>		
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Please comment on the areas detailed below, highlighting strengths and/or weaknesses.

2. Student performance	External Examiner comments: For Publication	A response from the College is required, if yes, please check the box [✓]	College Response: (Where the response requires action(s), each action must be outlined, a completion date given and a responsible individual named)
2.1. Students' performance in relation to those at a similar stage on comparable courses in other institutions, where this is known to you	<i>It is the opinion of the externs that the majority of RVC students exhibit particular strengths in the area of academic writing and referencing. The range of ability is comparable to those seen in cohorts of students in other institutions with the high-end students showing deep insight & understanding of clinical veterinary nursing (see CNPI assignments especially).</i>	[]	Response: Action (if any) date & name:
2.2. Quality of candidates' knowledge and skills, with particular reference to those at the top, middle or bottom of the range	<i>Externs reviewed a range of candidates in the aforementioned ranges with particular emphasis on checking borderline pass/fail and borderline pass/ distinction students. Externs are largely satisfied that there are clear distinctions between marks awarded to students in the various ranges and that marking was fair and transparent. There is just one concern in relation to a Resit student for her assignment mark of 30% for her Literature Review in the CNP II module. This concern received extensive consideration in that the marking of this assignment was done by both the internal and both the external examiners (i.e. 4 people). Externs enquired as to the level of feedback given to this student and as to whether the student had availed of feedback/ support. Another aspect of this resit</i>	[✓]	Response: Students whose marks are concerning are often reviewed by additional members of the team and the external examiners. It is important that the marking is fair and appropriate. All students have the opportunity to gain feedback from their tutor on a draft of their assignment. Not all students take up this support. All students receive written feedback on their summative assignments. Students achieving low marks are encouraged to meet with the Learning Development team it is often the writing skills which are not at the level required by the course. As the assignments are marked anonymously it is not often easy to ensure the students access the help they have been advised to obtain. The Award and Assessment regulations state the requirements of resit. Please see below the excerpt from the regulations;

	<p><i>student's case discussed by the three externs was whether limiting the resit to just the one failed component was the fairest way of re-assessing a student trying to pass the module. Depending on the module's learning objectives, an option for the college here may be to allow the students choose which components to re-sit themselves (thereby possibly improving their overall chance of passing... if their strengths lie in areas other than written assignments). This seems fair given that it is possible for students to pass the module without achieving satisfactory grades in the assignment, -if they have done well enough in the more traditional exam components. This would be particularly important for students with learning difficulties many of whom can perform well in one assessment method / type over others.</i></p>		<p>8.1 Modules</p> <p>In order to pass a module a student must obtain an aggregated average of 50% from the assessment activities combined.</p> <p>Consequences of Failure or Failure to Complete</p> <p>10.1 A student is required to resit any module failed at the first attempt. In order to resit a student will retake any assessment activity failed at the first attempt.</p> <p>These regulations do not allow for students to choose which component or assessment activity they wish to resit. We feel that it is important that the students are not able to compensate to this extent and choose an activity they find easier to achieve.</p> <p>With respect to choosing the activities they wish to resit will be beneficial to those with learning differences. We would like to point out that any recommendations made by an educational psychologist are followed for those with declared learning differences who have had an assessment. As a professional course they are still required to meet the standards set and additional help and resources are available to help them achieve this.</p> <p>Action (if any) date & name:</p>
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Please provide any additional comments and recommendations regarding the students' performance:		[]	Response: Action (if any) date & name:
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Please comment on the areas detailed below, highlighting appropriateness and strengths and/or weaknesses.

3. Assessment Process	External Examiner comments: For Publication	A response from the College is required, if yes, please check the box [✓]	College Response: (Where the response requires action(s), each action must be outlined, a completion date given and a responsible individual named)
3.1. Assessment methods (relevance to learning objectives and curriculum)	<i>Learning objectives are well –met by the forms of assessment for the exams reviewed by externs in Sept 2013 - i.e. CNP I & II, Applied Science I & II, Diagnostic techniques, Anaesthesia & ECC.</i>	[]	Response: Action (if any) date & name:
3.2. Extent to which assessment processes are rigorous	<i>Assessment processes appear rigorous, fair and transparent with the use of comprehensive Common Grading Schemes. Exam papers are mostly carefully constructed. The use of double or sample marking as well as multiple externs is a commendable additional quality control check on the assessment processes. The externals raised a query as to how students that have a high OSI index as generated by Turnitin™ for assessments are managed which was explained in terms of resubmissions of student work during re-sits.</i>	[]	Response: The college has not set the level at which the OSI index as generated by Turnitin™ should cause concern. We try to use Turnitin™ to help the students understand what constitutes as plagiarism. High scores are have been appearing on resubmitted work as the system has compared this to their first submission. Action (if any) date & name:
3.3. Consistency of the level of assessment with the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ)	<i>The externals were generally satisfied with the level of assessment with the exception of the previous comments see 1.1</i>	[]	Response: Action (if any) date & name:
3.4. Standard of marking	<i>There was no cause for concern over the overall standard and distribution of marks which seemed in keeping with students' abilities.</i>	[]	Response: Action (if any) date & name:

3.5. Opinion on changes to the assessment process from previous years in which you have examined	<i>Murry Welsh (longest-standing extern) noted no significant changes from previous 1st and 2nd year cohorts.</i>	[]	Response: Action (if any) date & name:
Please provide any additional comments and recommendations regarding the assessment process:	<i>See concerns re re-sit options/ policy mentioned in 2.2. above.</i>	[✓]	<p>Response: We hopefully have addressed the concerns the externs have over the resit policy. I have included the excerpt from the Award and Assessment regulations for clarification.</p> <p>The Award and Assessment regulations state the requirements of resit. Please see below the excerpt from the regulations;</p> <p>8.1 Modules</p> <p>In order to pass a module a student must obtain an aggregated average of 50% from the assessment activities combined.</p> <p>Consequences of Failure or Failure to Complete</p> <p>10.1 A student is required to resit any module failed at the first attempt. In order to resit a student will retake any assessment activity failed at the first attempt.</p> <p>These regulations do not allow for students to choose which component or assessment activity they wish to resit. We feel that it is important that the students are not able to compensate to this extent and choose an activity they find easier to achieve.</p> <p>Action (if any) date & name:</p>

Please comment on the areas detailed below, highlighting strengths and/or weaknesses.

4. Procedures	External Examiner comments: For Publication	A response from the College is required, if yes, please check the box [✓]	College Response: (Where the response requires action(s), each action must be outlined, a completion date given and a responsible individual named)
4.1. In your view, are the processes 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)	<i>Yes but please note as previously concerns re re-sit policies/ options as mentioned in 2.2</i>	[]	Response: These concerns have been noted and addressed in the section response 2:2. Action (if any) date & name:
4.2. Opinion on changes to the procedures from previous years in which you have examined	<i>This was the first time that there were three externs which allowed for a fuller review of coursework and permitted better discussion and debate amongst the examiners.</i>	[]	Response: Action (if any) date & name:
Please provide any additional comments and recommendations regarding the procedures:		[]	Response: Action (if any) date & name:

5. General Statements	[YES] [NO] [N/A] check	Additional comments, particularly if your answer was no:	A response from the College is required, if yes, please check the box [✓]	College Response:
5.1. Comments I have made in previous years have been addressed to my satisfaction	[YES]		[]	Response: Action (if any) date & name:
5.2. An acceptable response has been made	[N/A]	<i>No response had been requested.</i>	[]	Response: Action (if any) date & name:
5.3. I approved the papers for the Examination	[YES]	<i>Murry & Andrea</i>	[]	Response: Action (if any) date & name:
5.4. I was able to scrutinise an adequate sample of students' work and marks to enable me to carry out my duties	[YES]		[]	Response: Action (if any) date & name:
5.5. I attended the meeting of the Board of Examiners held to approve the results of the Examination	[YES]		[]	Response: Action (if any) date & name:
5.6. Candidates were considered impartially and fairly	[YES]		[]	Response: Action (if any) date & name:
5.7. The standards set for the awards are appropriate for qualifications at this level, in this subject	[YES]	<i>Standards are appropriate but please note earlier comment re Equine & Exotics</i>	[]	Response: Action (if any) date & name:
5.8. The standards of student performance are comparable with similar programmes or subjects in other UK institutions with which I am familiar	[YES]		[]	Response: Action (if any) date & name:
5.9. I have received enough support to carry out my role	[YES]		[]	Response: Action (if any) date & name:
5.10. I have received sufficient information to carry out my role (where information was insufficient, please give details)	[YES]		[]	Response: Action (if any) date & name:
5.11. Appropriate procedures and processes have been followed	[YES]		[]	Response: Action (if any) date & name:
5.12. The processes for assessment and the determination of awards are sound	[YES]		[]	Response: Action (if any) date & name:

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:

See Section 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:

Consideration of Equine content of the course. Full inclusion of Exotics throughout the course.

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)

Thank you for completing this annual report!

All External Examiner reports will be responded to via the following process [<http://www.rvc.ac.uk/Examiners/documents/ExternalExaminerReports.pdf>] and in time for the annual RVC Inset Day on Assessment.