

**SUMMARY OF RESPONSES TO EXTERNAL EXAMINERS' COMMENTS, 2012/2013**

Course FdSc Veterinary Nursing Cohorts 6 & 7

June 2013

| Examiner Comment  | RVC Response | Actions  |
|---|--------------|--|
| <b>Murry Welsh &amp; Andrea Dineen</b>  |              |  |
| <p><i>There were some concerns raised by externs where learning objectives for specific modules contained details of practical learning outcomes and yet no practical assessment elements were present for these modules. This arose in particular in relation to the ECC and Surgical Nursing modules where it was noted that the written examination was linked to one scientific article and a written assignment. The external examiners' concern was that such limited examination of such broad topics may be insufficient and would certainly not assess practical skills in these key nursing areas. However, VN Course Director (Hilary Orpet) explained that the modules in question were actually Grad DipVN modules offered to final year BSc VN students as elective options (students have a choice of Pathology, ECC or Surgical Nursing) and hence the core knowledge and practical skills relating to these areas would have been previously formally assessed for these students in the earlier years of their programme. However, the externs would suggest that the learning objectives be re-considered in light of this and perhaps the learning objectives concerned with practical skills</i></p> |              | <p><b>RVC list of actions for 2013-14</b></p> <p><i>Insert Action: The module is for the Graduate Diploma in Professional and Clinical Veterinary Nursing but has been included in the list of elective modules available for the BScVN 4<sup>th</sup> year students. The module will be reviewed by the BSc VN course director and the Graduate Diploma Course director to ensure that the learning objectives are appropriate for the module delivered to the BScVN students</i></p> <p><i>Insert Deadline: Sept2014</i></p> <p><i>Individual Responsible: H Orpet and P Welsh</i></p> |

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|   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| <i>might be re-worded for clarity, along the lines of "Students undertaking this module are required to/ deemed to have former knowledge and practical skills in...."</i> |  |  |
|---|--|--|

**List of any particular strengths or distinctive or innovative features in relation to standards and assessment processes that would be worth drawing to the attention of external audiences:**

*The RVC staff seem very in tune with and sensitive to the progression of the VN students. Examination papers were sent to externs in a timely manner allowing sufficient time for externs to review and feedback regarding papers and the same is also true of the marked exam scripts and assignments*

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**FOR COMPLETION  
AFTER THE  
EXAMINATION**

**THE ROYAL VETERINARY COLLEGE**

***EXTERNAL EXAMINER'S REPORT***

**Name of Examiner/s:** Murry Welsh & Andrea Dineen

**Programme:** Veterinary Nursing (BSc/ Fd)

**Year/s of appointment :** Andrea Dineen: 2012-13  
Murry Welsh: 2009-10

**Year of Examination:** 2012-13

**Examination/s:** Cohort 6 BSc & Cohort 7 BSc/Fd

**Dates of attendance at the RVC:** 17,18 & 19 June 2013 (& scripts previewed before arrival)

Please comment on the areas detailed below. If you have no comments in a particular area, please state "Satisfactory", "Good" or "Excellent".

**1. The Programme**

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

- 1.1 course content
- 1.2 learning objectives, and the extent to which they were met
- 1.3 teaching methods
- 1.4 resources (in so far as they affected the assessment)
- 1.5 the overall quality of the Programme, as revealed by the student performance, with specific reference to particular strengths and weaknesses
- 1.6 the recommendations from this Examination for the curriculum, syllabuses, and teaching methods
- 1.7 the effects of any changes made to the Programme in the last 12 months

**1.1 Course Content:**

Prepared by: Ana Filipovic  
Date: 25<sup>th</sup> June 2013

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*Course involves very thorough coverage and assessment of the various aspects of veterinary nursing.*

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

*By and large learning objectives are well met by course content and the forms of assessment. There were some concerns raised by externs where learning objectives for specific modules contained details of practical learning outcomes and yet no practical assessment elements were present for these modules. This arose in particular in relation to the ECC and Surgical Nursing modules where it was noted that the written examination was linked to one scientific article and a written assignment. The external examiners' concern was that such limited examination of such broad topics may be insufficient and would certainly not assess practical skills in these key nursing areas. However, VN Course Director (Hilary Orpet) explained that the modules in question were actually Grad DipVN modules offered to final year BSc VN students as elective options (students have a choice of Pathology, ECC or Surgical Nursing) and hence the core knowledge and practical skills relating to these areas would have been previously formally assessed for these students in the earlier years of their programme. However, the externs would suggest that the learning objectives be re-considered in light of this and perhaps the learning objectives concerned with practical skills might be re-worded for clarity, along the lines of "Students undertaking this module are required to/ deemed to have former knowledge and practical skills in...."*

### 1.3 Teaching Methods

*Having accessed the RVC Learn site online over the two days on campus, it is apparent from reviewing the timetables that a diverse range of teaching methods are utilised across the BSc/Fd VN programmes.*

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

*Externs noted the volume of marking to be completed by course teachers especially when sample/ double marking is factored in. Also the range of*

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*feedback reports provided following assignments is wonderful for students and is to be commended but naturally is quite labour-intensive for staff.*

- 1.5 Overall quality of the Programme, as revealed by the student performance, with specific reference to particular strengths and weaknesses

*It is the opinion of the extern that the students exhibited particular strengths in the area of academic writing and staff are to be complimented on achieving such a high standard in undergraduate students. Andrea is unable to comment on the practical or presentation skills of the students (as did not attend these examinations) , however the comments from lead extern (Murry Welsh) and seen on NPL from clinical supervisors would suggest no concerning deficiencies in students performing practical tasks.*

- 1.6 Recommendations from this Examination for the curriculum, syllabuses, and teaching methods

*No recommendations other than the Learning Objectives matching to Assessments consideration mentioned in 1.2 above.*

- 1.7 Effects of any changes made to the Programme in the last 12 months.

*There has been no significant changes to Programme.*

### **Candidates**

Please comment, as appropriate, on:

- 2.1 Impressions of candidates' specific areas of strength and weakness, as revealed by the assessment process:

*See 1.5 above*

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

*Externs reviewed a range of candidates in the aforementioned ranges.*

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*For example, in Cohort 6, the following students' work was reviewed:*

|                                       |   |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| <i>Final year project:</i>            | <i>L2412, L2456, L2507, L2389.</i>        |
| <i>ECC elective:</i>                  | <i>L2412, L2468, L2507, L2388.</i>        |
| <i>Prep for Advanced VN Practice:</i> | <i>L2468, L2495, L2456, L2458, L2507.</i> |
| <i>Research methods:</i>              | <i>L2468, L2412, L2389.</i>               |

*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 (L2392) for her assignment mark of 45% for her Literature Review in the Professional Practice module. This concern received extensive consideration in that the marking of this assignment was done by both the internal and both the external examiners (ie 4 people) and the marks were justified and awarded blind by internal examiners for this candidate. The issue was discussed at length at Exam Board with the outcome that the Board is going to support/ encourage the student in the event of an appeal to repeat this assignment and proceed to Fd VN graduation. It is the opinion of the externs that this satisfactorily addresses this concern.*

- 2.3 Candidates' overall performance in relation to students at a similar stage on comparable courses in other institutions, where this is known to you

*Andrea feels that the marks are comparable to other institutions with the noteworthy exception being that these students have a very high level of academic writing as commented on previously.*

### **3. Assessment Process**

Please comment, as appropriate, on:

- 3.1 Appropriateness of the assessment methods to the subject matter and their relevance to the learning objectives

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*Please see 1.2 above*

- 3.2 The extent to which the assessment processes are rigorous

*Assessment processes appear rigorous, fair and transparent with the use of comprehensive Common Grading Schemes (10 and 17 point schemes in use). Exam papers are carefully constructed and detailed guidance made available to students in relation to assigned coursework. The use of double or sample marking as well as externs is an additional quality control check on the assessment processes.*

- 3.2 whether the assessments reflected the syllabus adequately

*Yes, this is satisfactory apart from learning outcomes issue raised in 1.2 above.*

- 3.3 the overall standard of marks

*There was no cause for concern over the overall standard and distribution of marks which seemed in keeping with students' abilities. Both Cohorts 6 & 7 seem to be high-performing students, with all Cohort 6 students achieving their Honours BSc.*

- 3.4 any changes from previous years in which you have examined

*Murry noted no significant changes from previous years.*

## 4. Assessment Procedures

Please comment, as appropriate, on:

- 4.1 the administration of the examinations, e.g. time available for marking and moderation
- 4.2 arrangements for marking
- 4.3 procedures followed by the Board of Examiners
- 4.4 the participation of External Examiners in the process
- 4.5 adequacy of External Examiners' briefing

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4.6 comparison with previous years in which you have examined

4.1 Administration of the examinations, e.g. time available for marking and moderation

*The Exam Board provided ample time for externs to review the marking of written papers and assignments. Internally the timelines are tighter but staff seem to be managing with the current deadlines.*

4.2 Arrangements for marking

*Full cooperation was provided for externs regarding any queries / issue in relation to marking.*

4.3 Procedures followed by the Board of Examiners

*Procedures of Exam Board are in keeping with those seen in other institutions (Dublin) and were fair and time allowed for discussion and comment from all attendees in relation to any issues.*

4.4 Participation of External Examiners in the process

Externs reviewed all exam papers prior to their finalisation and following internal marking, externs had ample opportunity to review a range of student work in all modules. Both VN staff and Exam Office staff supported the work of the externs and were readily available to answer queries and explain any areas of coursework as required.

4.5 Adequacy of External Examiners' briefing

Excellent- see 4.4 above

4.6 Comparison with previous years in which you have examined

This year saw the number of externs returning to two which not only allowed for a fuller review of coursework but also permitted discussion and agreement between the two externs. In relation to other years, Murry reports that assessment procedures continue to be robust and fair.

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**5. Please delete responses as appropriate**

- |     |   |     |
|-----|---|-----|
| 5.1 | Comments I have made in previous years have been acted upon   | YES |
| 5.2 | An acceptable response has been made  | YES |
| 5.3 | I approved the papers for the Examination   | YES |
| 5.4 | I was able to scrutinise an adequate sample of students' work and marks to enable me to carry out my duties                               | YES |
| 5.5 | I attended the meeting of the Board of Examiners held to approve the results of the Examination   | YES |
| 5.6 | Candidates were considered impartially and fairly   | YES |
| 5.7 | The standards set for the awards are appropriate for qualifications at this level, in this subject  | YES |
| 5.8 | The standards of student performance are comparable with similar programmes or subjects in other UK institutions with which I am familiar | YES |
| 5.9 | The processes for assessment, examination and the determination of awards are sound and fairly conducted                                  | YES |

If you have replied No to any of these questions, please comment more fully:

Type here

If you have identified any areas of good practice, please comment more fully:

*The RVC staff seem very in tune with and sensitive to the progression of the VN students. Examination papers were sent to externs in a timely manner allowing sufficient time for externs to review and feedback regarding papers and the same is also true of the marked exam scripts and assignments.*

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Signed Murry Welsh, Andrey Dineen

Date 21-06-13