

External Examiner Report Template (ONLINE)

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 Elizabeth Branscombe and Andrea Jeffery
- Programme Title and Award Graduate Diploma in Professional and Clinical Veterinary Nursing
- Collaborative partner and location (if applicable)
- Year of Examination 2013
- Examination (only applicable to BVetMed)
- Date(s) of attendance at the RVC 5TH and 6TH August 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		[]	Response: Action (if any) date & name:
1.2. Learning objectives		[]	Response: Action (if any) date & name:
1.3. Teaching methods	The programme continues to use innovative teaching methods (assessed forum discussions) to embrace the more traditional students who are clinical nurses in practice, this is to be commended.	[]	Response: Action (if any) date & name:
1.4. Resources (in so far as they affected the assessment)	There is evidence of good academic support for students from the Contemporary Study Skills module leaders which has been reflected in the fact that all students have passed the module this year.	[]	Response: Action (if any) date & name:
Please provide any additional comments and recommendations regarding the Programme:		[]	Response: Action (if any) date & name:

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		[]	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	<p>Contemporary Study Skills module-All students passed this module (23) A cross section of work was sampled one distinction, one merit and 3 students who achieved borderline passes. Generally students demonstrated adequate skills in academic writing expected at this stage in the programme.</p> <p>Core modules- Applied clinical nursing, this cohort achieved a high range of marks in the written exam 65-90% however we were not sure whether this reflected a higher level of candidate knowledge or whether it was time to change the exam questions – see comments in section 3.2</p>	[]	<p>Response: Action (if any) date & name:</p> <p>We have a range of questions which are used for this exam paper. In recent years we have seen an improvement in the marks students are achieving in this examination. The Module Leader and tutor for this subject have worked hard to align the assessment and learning activities to ensure that students gain the skills during the module and are able to demonstrate achievement of these skills in the examination.</p>

	<p>Problem solving in veterinary physiology- this module was passed by 18 students but 4 were required to resit elements within the module. There were subject areas where multiple choice questions were answered poorly particularly fluid therapy and electrolytes this was highlighted at the exam board meeting where discussion took place regarding analysis of this and the teaching in these subject areas.</p>		<p>There is no doubt that many of our students find the fluid therapy (in particular electrolyte and acid base imbalances) learning materials challenging. As identified by the External Examiners, the students this year didn't answer these questions particularly well, but this hasn't been so obvious in previous years. Discussion has taken place with the Module Leader and it has been decided to monitor the results next year to see if a similar trend occurs. Discussion has also taken place with the tutor (who was on maternity leave last year) of this particular topic within the module to see if the teaching materials or learning activities need modifying.</p>
<p>Please provide any additional comments and recommendations regarding the students' performance:</p>	<p>Students completing the Contemporary Study Skills module produced work of a higher standard this year.</p> <p>Students are still writing in pencil on exam scripts.</p> <p>Some students are not anonymising their practices when writing reports and essays and their appears to be no feedback from markers regarding this.</p>	<p>[]</p>	<p>Response: Action (if any) date & name:</p> <p>It was identified during the Exam Board that within the one exam, students are required to use pencil for one part of the exam paper (MCQ and EMQs), and switch to pen for the second part (short answer questions). Whilst students are instructed at the start of the exam that they need to use pencil for MCQs and EMQs and pen for short answer, the team appreciate that in the middle of the exam, many students forget to switch writing implements. Further discussion on how to resolve this is to take place between the Course Director and Exams Office by March 2014, either in the form of further instructions to the invigilators or by penalising the students for writing in pencil in the written part of the examination.</p> <p>Students are given specific guidance within the learning materials that they should understand their professional responsibility and demonstrate sensitivity by not including any information that identifies people e.g. naming clients, colleagues or include information which could identify veterinary establishments. It is unfortunate that some students have not followed this instruction, however for summative work, feedback is generally not provided. The Course Director will remind students to further reinforce that work should be completely anonymous.</p>

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)	In the CSS module students are required to complete a literature review/report which was marked using the 'Common Grading Scheme', we felt that some of the descriptors within the grading scheme may not be achievable for this piece of work due to its nature- it is a review of literature therefore 'original and innovative thought' may be difficult to achieve.	[]	Response: Action (if any) date & name: The RVC Common Grading Scheme provides markers with a framework by which to award their marks for longer pieces of work, however, this does not necessarily mean that all descriptors and criteria listed in the CGS need to be covered in every piece of work.
3.2. Extent to which assessment processes are rigorous	Applied Clinical nursing module- written exam- Q1 although we feel the format of the question is still appropriate the same paper has been used for this question for the last 2 cohorts, it may be time to use a different more recent paper next year.	[]	Response: Action (if any) date & name: We have a 'bank' of articles which are used for Q1, the same articles are not used for two consecutive exam sittings.
3.3. Consistency of the level of assessment with the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ) 3.4.		[]	Response: Action (if any) date & name:

3.5. Standard of marking	As mentioned in previous years it was difficult to see where marks had been allocated on exam scripts as internal markers are still not following the guidance regarding this in their 'notes for internal markers'- this was highlighted at the exam board meeting. Where submitted work was marked against the common grading scheme by two markers and a feedback grid completed for students it was not always clear who the first or second markers were and only an agreed mark was given.	[]	Response: Action (if any) date & name: All markers will be reminded that marking practice within the RVC has changed in recent years and they will be reminded to show their marks on the examination scripts. From September 2013, sample marking has been implemented in line with RVC policy, in which the first markers mark stands unless sample marking triggers a remark.
3.6. Opinion on changes to the assessment process from previous years in which you have examined		[]	Response: Action (if any) date & name:
Please provide any additional comments and recommendations regarding the assessment process:	It was noted that the word count in the Extended Patient Care Report in the Veterinary Physiology module was only 1500 words, we feel that students were being penalised in the marking for not adequately reflecting on nursing practice when the word count made this difficult to achieve.	[]	Response: Action (if any) date & name: The word limit has been modified to allow a range from 1,500 to 2,000 words for this piece of work. This will be in effect for the 2013 Intake.

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)	Yes	[]	Response: Action (if any) date & name:
4.2. Opinion on changes to the procedures from previous years in which you have examined		[]	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 as appropriate	Additional comments, particularly if your answer was no:	A response from the College is required, if yes, please check the box [✓]	College Response: (All responses leading to an action must note an identified timeframe and responsible individual. Please outline the action and a date by which the action will be taken)
5.1 Comments I have made in previous years have been addressed to my satisfaction	[NO]	Not all comments addressed eg allocation of marks on to scripts by internal examiners and writing in pencil are points that have been raised before and still not rectified, this was discussed at the exam board meeting.		Response: Action (if any) date & name: In collaboration with the Exams Office, the Course Director will remind markers to show their allocation of marks on each student's examination scripts. It was identified during the Exam Board that within the one exam, students are required to use pencil for one part of the exam paper (MCQ and EMQs), and switch to pen for the second part (short answer questions). Whilst students are instructed at the start of the exam that they need to use pencil for MCQs and EMQs and pen for short answer, the team appreciate that in the middle of the exam, many students forget to switch writing implements. Further discussion on how to resolve this to take place in collaboration with Exams Office.
5.2 An acceptable response has been made	[YES]			Response: Action (if any) date & name:

5.3 I approved the papers for the Examination	[YES]	Yes but some comments made when reviewing draft exam paper had not been addressed, for example a SAQ in the Veterinary Physiology paper referred to 'patients' and the model answer was feline specific		Response: Action (if any) date & name: All External Examiner comments on the examination papers are reviewed by each Module Leader and those comments which the ML is in agreement with are actioned and the paper adjusted accordingly. The particular comment regarding patients and feline patients in the model answer was provided by the External Examiner in an email <i>after</i> the student (re-sit candidate) sat the exam. This question has subsequently been modified for any future use.
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]		[]	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	[YES]	AJ has had experience of other programmes, LB has not	[]	Response: Action (if any) date & name:

which I am familiar				
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]	Where queries were raised the Academic Registry staff were very helpful in providing further information.	[]	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]	See comments regarding compensation within modules	[]	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:

Do you have any suggestions for improvements based on experience at other institutes? We may use information provided in our annual external examining report:

In similar programmes compensation between elements within a module would not be permitted.

RVC Response: We feel it is appropriate to allow compensation within modules because there is no compensation between modules.

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.