

## ANNUAL QUALITY IMPROVEMENT REPORT 17/18

### Appendix 3: External Examiners' report

#### Accelerated BVetMed

This appendix contains Course Director's/Year Leader's responses to 2017/18 External Examiners' comments and updates to actions from 2016/17 External Examiners' report (if applicable).

As Course Director/Year Leader 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 from Course Director/Year Leader to actions from previous years' reports – <i>G Year had no actions in 16/17</i>
b.	2017/18 Collaborative Annual Report with responses from Course Director/Year Leader

# Collaborative Report

Exam board meeting: 10-Jul-2018

## Accelerated Bachelor of Veterinary Medicine, 2017/18

Lead examiner: Professor Alan Baird

Collaborating examiner(s): Dr Emanuele Ricci

### The Programme

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

#### 1.1 Course content

The content appears entirely appropriate for this internationally accredited programme. Graduate entrants are expected to have a higher degree of autonomy in learning compared to entrants straight from secondary schools.

Response from college requested: **NO**

**COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Raymond Macharia**

#### Course Director Response:

The contents of the course are tailored to meet with the requirements of the BVetMed degree program whose entrants are holders of a first degree. Owing to their first degree qualifications, the graduate entrants exhibit autonomy and ownership of the learning process. It is important to note that the students receive adequate signposting in order to achieve the desired outcomes from their learning.

Action Required:

Action Deadline:

Action assigned to:

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

These are published and supported by assessment blue-printing efforts to achieve balanced coverage.

Response from college requested: **NO**

**COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Raymond Macharia**

#### Course Director Response:

Learning objectives are outlined in the course handbook and also directly on learning materials. In addition, assessments are blueprinted against the background of learning objectives.

Action Required:

Action Deadline:

Action assigned to:

### 1.3 Teaching methods

Teaching teams use a mix of didactic and informal educational strategies. Significant efforts are made to tailor learning opportunities for the Graduate (accelerated) entry programme.

**Response from college requested: NO**

**COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Raymond Macharia**

**Course Director Response:**

The teaching is a mix of didactic and practical based classes. A lot of integration of didactic teaching and practicals is experienced through Directed Learning (DLs) sessions, CALs and Integrated Structure and Function (ISF) tutorials. A lot of supplementary reading materials are provided on Learn as podcasts, Echo recordings of lectures and videos.

**Action Required:**

**Action Deadline:**

**Action assigned to:**

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

All paper assessments were produced and reviewed by internal and external examiners. Integrated Structure & Function orals were carefully planned and executed to a high standard of efficiency.

**Response from college requested: NO**

**COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Raymond Macharia**

**Course Director Response:**

All paper assessments (paper 1, 2 and 3) are carefully reviewed internally and blue-printed against the RVC's Assessment and Award criteria. Subsequently, the paper assessments are reviewed and where need-be, moderated by the external examiners. The external examiners do not participate in examining candidates during the ISF vivas but validate the process of the assessment by shadowing the internal examiners.

**Action Required:**

**Action Deadline:**

**Action assigned to:**

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

The Programme is internationally recognised as of the highest standard and this has been borne out by the recent assessment routine.

**Response from college requested: NO**

**COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Raymond Macharia**

### **Course Director Response:**

We are deeply appreciative of this external examiners view and commendation. It is the RVC's objective and desire to provide high quality learning and teaching throughout the course.

**Action Required:**

**Action Deadline:**

**Action assigned to:**

## 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

There is a reasonable spread of achievement in each of the assessments. This profile matches that of other Schools of Veterinary Medicine.

Response from college requested: **NO**

**COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Raymond Macharia**

#### Course Director Response:

The RVC does not possess or hold data from other Schools of Veterinary Medicine for comparisons purposes. However, it is gratifying to note the positive external examiners comments.

**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

There is inevitably a spread of achievement in the programme. Broadly speaking, students who do well in one type of assessment fare similarly in other components. Conversely, students who perform poorly tend to struggle in all areas of assessment.

Response from college requested: **NO**

**COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Raymond Macharia**

#### Course Director Response:

There is generally a normal distribution in performance with majority of students in the 'Pass' range and the minority in distinction and failure categories at the first sitting of exams. It is true that a student who performs well in one paper is a likely indication that he or she would do well in other papers and the converse is true. While most of the failing candidates pass the re-sit exams, very few perform extremely well.

**Action Required:**

**Action Deadline:**

**Action assigned to:**

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

**Response from college requested: NO**

**Course Director Response:**

**Action Required:**

**Action Deadline:**

**Action assigned to:**

Please comment, as appropriate, on:

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

The 'spot' test which was a feature of previous years has been removed. Consequently there is heavier reliance on MCQs in which students can guess answers without penalty or can rely on recognition rather than having to produce information. There are ways to hybridise testing modalities to enhance traditional MCQs

Response from college requested: **NO**

**COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Raymond Macharia**

**Course Director Response:**

The MCQs database has undergone massive review and blue-printing with the result that only questions that pass the 'cover-up' test and relate to specific learning objectives are utilised. MCQ incorporating image items are frequently used to incorporate some elements that were part of the 'spot test'.

**Action Required:**

**Action Deadline:**

**Action assigned to:**

### 3.2 Extent to which assessment procedures are rigorous

The range of assessments are carefully designed, deployed and marked using appropriate blueprinting. The ISF orals are well run and extensive.

More generally, item analysis and retrospective investigations of validity improve the rigour of the process.

In certain (rare) circumstances in which there is reason to remark a question then the time within which this could be done is very short. An alternative would be for the Programme to determine by which criteria a question or component might be remarked or alternatively disregarded from the summative assessment.

Response from college requested: **NO**

**COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Raymond Macharia**

**Course Director Response:**

The blue- printing of exams have brought in the desired rigour in the assessment process. There has been occasions albeit few cases where a remarking or a removal of a whole question has been necessary. I am happy to report that a Quality Assurance process is followed in deciding if a poorly performing question (s) can be removed from the examination when there are academic merit for doing so.

**Action Required:**

**Action Deadline:**

**Action assigned to:**

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

Very good.

**Response from college requested: NO**

**COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Raymond Macharia**

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

The examiners have been working extremely hard to make sure that the level of assessment is commensurate with FHEQ framework.

**Action Required:**

**Action Deadline:**

**Action assigned to:**

### 3.4 Standard of marking

Generally transparent and fair. Published policies such as those related to standard answers, marking rubrics, double marking and item analysis are helpful. Comments written on scripts by Examiners are not always in line with the College policy on annotation of scripts. This may be to avoid influencing second (or sample) markers. However, the benefit of clear annotations may outweigh the disadvantages

**Response from college requested: YES**

**COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Raymond Macharia**

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

The lack of consistency in annotations was addressed during the Examination board meeting. While it was observed that the grades were a reflection of performance even where annotations were not clearly made, it was felt that uniformity of annotation was needed from all examiners especially in Paper 3 (essay) and where sometimes more than one marker is involved in marking. We endeavour to encourage all examiners to provide marking rubrics for paper 2 and 3 questions.

**Action Required:**

All internal examiners to be requested to provide a succinct rubric of marking for every supplied examination question.

**Action Deadline:**

01-Apr-2019

**Action assigned to:**

Course Leader- Raymond Macharia



**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. Briefing (including INSET days) is comprehensive. Exam administration is efficient and helpful. Collation of marks in spreadsheets provides a comprehensive overview and access to individual scripts or results is made straightforward for External Examiners.

RVC administration, course leaders and individual academics are most helpful.

Item analysis and validity testing can highlight 'outliers' and act to diagnose specific issues which, with access to individual scripts, can be addressed - even in the tight turnaround between the exam and the actual board taking place.

Common grading scales are used generally although one question was discovered to have been marked using a different scale with no context regarding why this was done.

**Response from college requested: NO**

**COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Raymond Macharia**

**Course Director Response:**

The exams office has consistently provided documentation, information and support to both internal and external in order to deliver credible and quality assessment. In this regard, the external examiners receive comprehensive briefing on all the processes of assessment at the RVC. The internal examiners similarly work with the exams office to deliver assessment exercise with efficiency and on time. The grading schemes are provided together with the scripts during the marking exercise and the noted wrong marking scheme was inadvertent. The Examiner was brought to account and a similar situation will hopefully not occur in the future.

**Action Required:**

The exams office to remind all examiners to use the relevant exam grading schemes during the exam grading process.

**Action Deadline:**

01-Apr-2019

**Action assigned to:**

Exams office- John Sanger

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

In parts of the exam which have an element of choice (e.g. Paper 3) some questions are very popular and others unpopular. Consequently there is variability in numbers of students selecting individual questions. This is not necessarily a negative feature unless very small cohorts engage with a specific question which makes validity determination unrealistic.

**Response from college requested: NO**

**COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Raymond Macharia**

**Course Director Response:**

Paper 3 is divided into three parts (A,B and C) representing the three taught modules on GAB course with a fairly uniform coverage of all the modules. A candidate answers 4 questions from the three sections with a mandatory two questions from section A. The paper seeks to have a candidate demonstrate the depth of knowledge in a given topic and the choice of questions has not been shown to advantage or disadvantage any candidate.

**Action Required:**

**Action Deadline:**

**Action assigned to:**

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

Model answers are a guideline for the examiners and form part of the formulation of the exam questions. From time to time it can be helpful (or even necessary) to refine or modify a model answer. It may be useful to invite Internal Examiners to test their model answer by sampling and checking against the key. This can be particularly valuable when more than one individual is marking.

A simple checklist for Internal Examiners might record 1) changes (if any) to model answers, 2) departures from the Common Grading Scale and 3) alignment with the Policy on annotation of scripts.

**Response from college requested: YES**

**COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Raymond Macharia**

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

The suggestions above will be taken into consideration during the setting of exams for the academic year 2018/19. As mentioned earlier, internal examiners will be requested ( as in the past) to provide a succinct model answer(s) to all the questions supplied. Further to external examiners review and moderation, model answers will be counterchecked to confirm alignment with the key.

#### **Action Required:**

The exams office to include this item on the paper setting agenda.

#### **Action Deadline:**

01-Apr-2017

#### **Action assigned to:**

John Sanger- Exams office

## General Statements

4.1 Comments I have made in previous years have been addressed to my satisfaction

N/A

Additional comments, particularly if your answer was no:

Yes

Response from college requested: **NO**

**COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Raymond Macharia**

Course Director Response:

None

Action Required:

Action Deadline:

Action assigned to:

4.2 An acceptable response has been made

N/A

Additional comments, particularly if your answer was no:

Yes

Response from college requested: **NO**

**COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Raymond Macharia**

Course Director Response:

None

Action Required:

Action Deadline:

Action assigned to:

#### 4.3 I approved the papers for the Examination

N/A

Additional comments, particularly if your answer was no:

Yes.

Response from college requested: **NO**

**COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Raymond Macharia**

**Course Director Response:**

None

**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

N/A

Additional comments, particularly if your answer was no:

Yes

Response from college requested: **NO**

**COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Raymond Macharia**

**Course Director Response:**

None

**Action Required:**

**Action Deadline:**

**Action assigned to:**

#### 4.5 I attended the meeting of the Board of Examiners held to approve the results of the Examination

N/A

**Additional comments, particularly if your answer was no:**

Yes.

**Response from college requested:** NO

**COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Raymond Macharia**

**Course Director Response:**

None

**Action Required:**

**Action Deadline:**

**Action assigned to:**

#### 4.6 Candidates were considered impartially and fairly

N/A

**Additional comments, particularly if your answer was no:**

Yes. Proper and caring attention for candidates with extenuating circumstances was discussed at the Exam Board Meeting.

**Response from college requested:** NO

**COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Raymond Macharia**

**Course Director Response:**

Candidates are anonymised and are identified using their Index numbers only on their written exam papers. Candidates who have disabilities or extenuating circumstances or requiring more time are appropriately taken care off. The ISF oral is the only time the candidates comes face to face with two examiners for each examination station that is visited. The two internal examiners collate the grades to be awarded. External examiners float in the examination room and occasionally sit with the internal examiner during the examination process. This way the examination process is also validated for impartiality and fairness to the candidates.

**Action Required:**

**Action Deadline:**

**Action assigned to:**

**4.7 The standards set for the awards are appropriate for qualifications at this level, in this subject**

**N/A**

**Additional comments, particularly if your answer was no:**

Standard setting is carried out to a particularly high standard.

**Response from college requested: NO**

**COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Raymond Macharia**

**Course Director Response:**

Standard setting is done by the internal examiners and guided by an expert who is a member of academic staff at the RVC.

**Action Required:**

**Action Deadline:**

**Action assigned to:**

**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:**

Yes

**Response from college requested: NO**

**COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Raymond Macharia**

**Course Director Response:**

None

**Action Required:**

**Action Deadline:**

**Action assigned to:**

**4.9 I have received enough support to carry out my role**

**N/A**

**Additional comments, particularly if your answer was no:**

Yes.

**Response from college requested: NO**

**COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Raymond Macharia**

**Course Director Response:**

The exams office communicates with external examiners in a timely and systematic manner. Links to course materials on Learn are provided and important dates in the calendar are sent out in good time.

**Action Required:**

**Action Deadline:**

**Action assigned to:**

**4.10 I have received sufficient information to carry out my role (where information was insufficient, please give details)**

**N/A**

**Additional comments, particularly if your answer was no:**

Yes

**Response from college requested: NO**

**COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Raymond Macharia**

**Course Director Response:**

The exams office communicates with external examiners in a timely and systematic manner. The exams are sent in good time to review and moderate as are other guidance materials.

**Action Required:**

**Action Deadline:**

**Action assigned to:**

#### 4.11 Appropriate procedures and processes have been followed

N/A

Additional comments, particularly if your answer was no:

Yes

Response from college requested: **NO**

**COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Raymond Macharia**

**Course Director Response:**

None

**Action Required:**

**Action Deadline:**

**Action assigned to:**

#### 4.12 The processes for assessment and the determination of awards are sound

N/A

Additional comments, particularly if your answer was no:

Yes. Arrangements for de-briefing students who have failed are taken seriously and empathetically by the Board

Response from college requested: **NO**

**COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Raymond Macharia**

**Course Director Response:**

The dates for debriefing of failing candidates are set in the examination calendar and accessible to both students and staff. Staff are informed by the exams office of their respective tutees who have failed, in order to make arrangements to meet the tutees during two debriefing dates that are set in the calendar or at another agreed date and time.

**Action Required:**

**Action Deadline:**

**Action assigned to:**



## 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 range of assessments are carefully designed, deployed and marked using appropriate blueprinting to the learning objectives of the Programme. The ISF orals are well run and extensive.

Careful item analysis and retrospective investigations of validity improve the rigour of the process.

**Response from college requested: NO**

**COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Raymond Macharia**

**Course Director Response:**

The exam blueprinting process effectively aligns learning, teaching and assessment of the GAB course.

**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)**

**Response from college requested: NO**

**COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Raymond Macharia**

**Course Director Response:**

None

**Action Required:**

**Action Deadline:**

**Action assigned to:**

