

ANNUAL QUALITY IMPROVEMENT REPORT 2019/20

Appendix 3: External Examiners' report

Certificate in Advance Veterinary Practice

This appendix contains Year Leader's responses to 2019/20 External Examiners' comments and updates to actions from previous External Examiners' reports (if applicable).

As Course Director 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, 01707666938

Appendix 3 consists of:

a.	Updates to actions from previous years' reports
b.	2019/20 Collaborative Annual Report with responses from Course Director

Update to actions from 2018/19			
Question	External Examiners comment	CD's response & Action	Update in 2019/20
1.5 Please provide any additional comments and recommendations regarding the Programme	Monitoring the impact of the new module on student, assessor and course team satisfaction and results will be important to ensure that it meets its objectives and evolves as needed	<p>Course Director Response:</p> <p>Thank you for this comment and we agree that monitoring the impact will be important.</p> <p>Action Required:</p> <p>Module A leader and CertAVP manager to report on student, assessor and course team satisfaction for the new A-FAVP module to the yearly Module leaders in Feb 2021 (interim) meeting as well as the Christmas term 2021 PGCMC meeting (year report)</p> <p>Action Deadline:</p> <p>01-Nov-2020</p>	Student, assessor and course team satisfaction for the new AFAVP module' will be ready and presented at the Feb 2021 annual CertAVP module leader meeting

Individual Report

Exam board meeting: 31-Oct-2020

RCVS Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Practice, 2019/20 (C Modules)

Professor Ed Hall

The Programme

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

1.1 Course content

The CertAVP is a postgraduate online assessment, modular programme consisting of three sections, each with 10 credit modules:

- A and B modules develop the students' professional, clinical and reflective skills;
 - C modules are discipline-based covering a number of clinical disciplines (e.g. small animal medicine, cardiology, surgery, anaesthesia, ECC, etc.) and require the student to advance their knowledge and reflect on their clinical practice in at least three areas of their choosing.
- A total of 60 credits is required for the award.

I am the External Examiner for the C modules.

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

The learning objectives and expected outcomes are stated on the programme website:

- 1) a thorough understanding of the knowledge base and a critical awareness of developments at the forefront of their area of professional practice;
- 2) a comprehensive understanding of techniques applicable to their own area of practice;
- 3) application of knowledge, together with a practical understanding of how established techniques of research and clinical enquiry are used to create and interpret knowledge in their professional area;
- 4) conceptual understanding that enables them to:
 - evaluate critically current literature and research in their professional area and
 - evaluate clinical methodologies and techniques, and develop critiques of them and, where appropriate to propose new approaches to professional practice.

Students successfully completing the CertAVP meet these objectives; not only is their knowledge and understanding of their relevant disciplines advanced, but they develop critical and reflective learning skills that are important for improving their clinical practice.

1.3 Teaching methods

This programme and assessment is delivered online but is basically self-taught, although with extensive support and feedback from the RVC staff. There is no formal teaching, although students are notified of relevant but optional CPD opportunities at the RVC. Each module requires at least 100 hours of self-study and requires submission of essays, case reports and reflective diaries. Formative feedback on one case report can be requested before final submission, and detailed feedback is given on every piece of work submitted. Failed submissions can be re-submitted after helpful feedback on how to improve is given, and results indicate that marks almost invariably improve with the second submission.

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

The most important resource available to students is the extensive and helpful feedback they receive on their written submission for both work that passes as well as any fails. Remote one-to one coaching is available if needed. Access to the RVCLearn website provides a large number of resources including information on how to improve learning and reflective skills through webinars, videos and written material. The site also allows a buddy system and peer-to-peer group learning groups to be established. Links to the RVC Library offers access to a vast number of relevant scientific publications.

1.5 Please provide any additional comments and recommendations regarding the Programme

The strength of this programme is the support and feedback for staff to enhance learning and the development of reflective practice.

COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Jill Maddison

Course Director Response:

Thank you for your very positive comments.

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

A CertAVP is offered by two other veterinary schools, but their approach to learning is not as focussed on self-direction and development of reflective practice. Feedback from graduating students is that they have developed professional and reflective skills that have helped them improve their clinical practice and will continue into the future.

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

Students in the top range produce written work of outstanding quality, whilst students in the middle tier show clear evidence of improved knowledge and development of reflective clinical practice. Students at the bottom of the range may have poor problem-solving skills and/or have failed to understand the importance of reflection. They may be hampered by the caseload in their practice, although there is adequate time (2 years plus one year before the module) to fulfil the caseload requirement for each module. There is also evidence that they can improve when given helpful feedback. Third submissions are rare but may be allowed upon appeal.

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

Overall, the students' performance is generally very good. It is clear some of them underestimate the time and effort to achieve a pass, although the majority improve their performance as they progress through the modules.

Students who pass the programme with relevant modules can potentially sit a synoptic examination held by the RCVS. Passing this examination allows the awarding of a designated Certificate in a specific discipline, and the potential to apply for Advanced Practitioner status.

Assessment Procedures

Please comment, as appropriate, on:

3.1 Assessment methods (relevance to learning objectives and curriculum)

Understanding and critically appraising new, relevant information and reflecting on how to apply this to their clinical practice is the key objective of the programme and is achieved by the varied types of written assessment and the requirement for the candidate to demonstrate their ability to reflect.

3.2 Extent to which assessment procedures are rigorous

As External Examiner, I have been given access to a range of submissions and am impressed by the rigorous and fair nature of the assessment as well as both the detail of the feedback given and how it informs students on ways to improve. There is a broad-band marking scheme applied by the markers and available on RVCLearn for viewing by the students.

I review all failed submissions which are also double-marked.

COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Jill Maddison

Course Director Response:

Thank you for your positive comments

Action Required:

Action Deadline:

Action assigned to:

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

The assessment is rigorous and fair and matches the FHEQ Level 7.

COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Jill Maddison

Course Director Response:

Thank you

Action Required:

Action Deadline:

Action assigned to:

3.4 Standard of marking

The marking is of a high standard with the grading scheme consistently applied.

COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Jill Maddison

Course Director Response:

Thank you

Action Required:

Action Deadline:

Action assigned to:

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)

In my view, the procedures for assessment and the determination of awards are sound and fairly conducted.

COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Jill Maddison

Course Director Response:

Thank you

Action Required:

Action Deadline:

Action assigned to:

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

The two significant changes that have been made whilst I have been External Examiner are:

- 1) The requirement to pass the A and B modules before starting C modules ensures students have the necessary skills to complete the C modules.
- 2) The ability to fail submitted work because of critical clinical issues was welcomed as it safeguards the reputation of the qualification

There have also been changes in the time permitted to complete the programme

COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Jill Maddison**Course Director Response:**

Thank you for supporting these important changes to the programme.

Action Required:**Action Deadline:****Action assigned to:****3.7 Please provide any additional comments and recommendations regarding the procedures**

None

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:

4.2 An acceptable response has been made

Yes

Additional comments, particularly if your answer was no:

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:

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:

Due to COVID, the Board was held online but there was adequate time for discussion and agreement of marks.

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:

FHEQ Level 7

4.8 The standards of student performance are comparable with similar programmes or subjects in other UK institutions with which I am familiar

Yes

Additional comments, particularly if your answer was no:

4.9 I have received enough support to carry out my role

Yes

Additional comments, particularly if your answer was no:

I wish to thank the RVC staff for their support.

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:

I have been kept fully informed of issues surrounding failed students and appeals.

4.11 Appropriate procedures and processes have been followed**No****Additional comments, particularly if your answer was no:**

A case of suspected plagiarism was initially managed outwith the RVC's approved pathway for dealing with such academic issues. The particular instance was then dealt with satisfactorily, and the Programme now follows the approved process.

COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Jill Maddison**Course Director Response:**

Thank you. We will ensure that due process is strictly followed should we have any further concern in relation to potential academic misconduct.

Action Required:**Action Deadline:****Action assigned to:****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:

The programme is unique in using online assessment and feedback to develop students' reflective clinical practice. It relies on dedicated staff input but is to be commended.

COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Jill Maddison

Course Director Response:

Thank you. Your support for the programme and wisdom and insight when required is greatly appreciated.

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)

Although at the end of my appointed term, I have agreed to remain External Examiner for one further year because of the COVID situation.

The Programme needs to appoint a new External with some overlap to allow a seamless transition.

COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Jill Maddison

Course Director Response:

Thank you for agreeing to continue for a further year - it is very much appreciated.

Action Required:

Begin the process of identifying a replacement external examiner

Action Deadline:

01-Mar-2021

Action assigned to:

Jill Maddison

