
CERT AVP EXTERNAL EXAMINERS REPORT (Modules A and B)

Responses to 2019/20 External Examiners' Comments

To be considered at the Summer TQC Meeting 19.05.2020

RCVS Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Practice, 2019/20 (Modules A & B)

Mrs Anna Judson

The Programme

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

1.1 Course content

Course content is set by the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons for the Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Practice A and B modules.

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

These are set out in the module descriptors for the RCVS Cert AVP and in the RVC published module outlines. The objectives are clear and relevant to veterinary practice.

Taking into account extensive feedback received from teachers, assessors and examiners, course organisers and candidates, the RVC Cert AVP team undertook a review of the A-FAVP.1 Foundations of Advanced Veterinary Practice module outline in 2018-19. The objectives were to make the A-FAVP more attractive to candidates, improve student learning experience and outcomes and better prepare candidates for success in B/C modules and synoptic exams, thereby developing better Advanced Practitioners. Launched in August 2019, the new course module has 65 enrolled candidates to date.

Detailed monitoring of candidate performance and feedback from all involved will be essential to ensure that the new module structure delivers on its intentions.

1.3 Teaching methods

The modules are assessment only.

Candidates have access to a wide range of resources including an online induction day, webinars, podcasts, specific course articles, extensive links to further reading, a regular newsletter, course forums and one to one verbal reviews and support.

Every candidate on the new module is allocated a tutor who will support, review and assess written course submissions. Past monitoring has shown clear evidence of improved performance where essays have been resubmitted following feedback. It is now a requirement that the first essay submitted has to have a written and verbal review to ensure that from an early stage candidates expectations are managed regarding the quality and level of work required and methods available for them to continually improve.

The verbal review and consistency of essay assessor is designed to provide a greater human element to the course teaching and support candidates through what can be discomfiting feedback.

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

See 1.3

Module outlines are clear. Not all candidates fully utilise the resources provided despite extensive efforts by the Cert AVP team to increase engagement. There is a recognised link between resource use and candidate performance. The new A-FAVP module tutor structure has the potential to increase candidates uptake of the resources.

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.

COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Jill Maddison

Course Director Response:

Thank you for this comment and we agree that monitoring the impact will be important.

Action Required:

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)

Action Deadline:

01-Nov-2020

Action assigned to:

Liz Chan and Joanne Jarvis

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

I have no data for student performance on comparable courses in other institutions.

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

The quality of candidate knowledge and reflection is excellent at the top of the range. Whilst the majority of students show improvement in their essay marks with ~~with~~ the detailed guided feedback and experience, there is a small cohort that seem unable to progress with their learning and struggle to meet the required standards particularly with respect to reflective learning. The new A-FAVP module structure is designed to add to the measures already in place to identify these lower performing candidates and help all involved understand what the barriers are to their learning progression and how to raise these.

COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Jill Maddison

Course Director Response:

Thank you. We are ~~helpful~~ hopeful that the new system will allow candidates to come to grips with reflective academic writing more quickly with greater support.

Action Required:

Action Deadline:

Action assigned to:

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

I am looking forward to seeing how the new module structure helps develop all candidates and in particular those who initially struggle to achieve the required standard.

COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Jill Maddison

Course Director Response:

Thank you. We too look forward to this.

Action Required:

Action Deadline:

Action assigned to:

Please comment, as appropriate, on:

3.1 Assessment methods (relevance to learning objectives and curriculum)

Assessment methods are appropriate and assessment is fair at all levels.

Detailed high quality feedback is given with every essay submitted to enable candidates to progress their learning. A template is used that ensures consistency of content and style of feedback reporting making it easier for candidates to evaluate the information and use it appropriately to develop their work.

Continual professional development takes place regularly for all the assessors regarding how to give feedback. The latest training focused on how assessors can be mindful of the ways recipients perceive and respond to feedback and the effect this can have on candidates learning from that feedback.

Not all students had used the opportunity to submit a draft essay for feedback despite this showing measurable benefits in the quality of future submissions. The new module seeks to address this by making a written and verbal review of the first essay compulsory.

COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Jill Maddison

Course Director Response:

Thank you for your very positive comments which will be conveyed to the assessors.

Action Required:

A Module assessors to be congratulated on their consistently high-quality feedback.

Action Deadline:

01-Jun-2020

Action assigned to:

Joanne Jarvis

3.2 Extent to which assessment procedures are rigorous

Assessment procedures are rigorous.

COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Jill Maddison

Course Director Response:

Thank you. The RVC works hard to ensure that every assessment is rigorous but fair and relevant to clinical practice.

Action Required:

Action Deadline:

Action assigned to:

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

Assessment is consistent with the framework for postgraduate level 7

3.4 Standard of marking

Good and consistent with the common grading descriptors

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)

Yes, Candidates are considered fairly and administration is conducted efficiently with adequate data to inform discussion at exam board level. The Cert AVP team and assessors have responded sensitively to individual candidate needs regarding appeals and re-submissions.

COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Jill Maddison

Course Director Response:

Thank you. This very positive feedback will be conveyed to the CertAVP team and assessors

Action Required:

Action Deadline:

01-Jun-2020

Action assigned to:

Joanne Jarvis

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

Changes to the assessment procedure started in August 2019. It is too soon to fully evaluate the effects of these changes.

Whilst the same tutor in the new module will assess all their allocated candidate's essays, a sample will be double marked by a single examiner to ensure that individual tutors are neither too strict or too generous in their grades, and to ensure that feedback is consistent.

Monitoring Cert AVP course outcomes including feedback from candidates, assessors and the Cert AVP team is well established at the RVC. I look forward to seeing the results of future monitoring of the recently adopted new A-FAVP course.

COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Jill Maddison

Course Director Response:

Thank you

Action Required:

Action Deadline:

Action assigned to:

3.7 Please provide any additional comments and recommendations regarding the procedures

Since becoming an External Examiner the assessment system has developed with more consistent and detailed feedback and tighter marking turnaround times. Appeals have all been conducted with appropriate rigor yet with sensitivity to individual candidate situations. The student experience is good.

COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Jill Maddison

Course Director Response:

Thank you for these very positive comments. The CertAVP team and assessors have worked hard to improve the candidate experience while providing rigorous and fair feedback on submitted work.

Action Required:

Action Deadline:

Action assigned to:

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:

4.3 I approved the papers for the Examination

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:

I reviewed module work from across the range of ability levels and in different subject areas.

COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Jill Maddison

Course Director Response:

Thank you for your commitment to the quality assurance process and consistently sound advice and guidance.

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

Yes

Additional comments, particularly if your answer was no:

4.6 Candidates were considered impartially and fairly

Yes

Additional comments, particularly if your answer was no:

Appeals are dealt with fairly with due sensitivity to individual candidate's circumstances.

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:

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:

Any information I have needed has been readily supplied by the helpful Cert AVP team.

COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Jill Maddison

Course Director Response:

Thank you. Your thanks will be conveyed to the team.

Action Required:

Action Deadline:

01-Jun-2020

Action assigned to:

Jill Maddison

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 supplied with all necessary information to carry out my role.

4.11 Appropriate procedures and processes have been followed

Yes

Additional comments, particularly if your answer was no:

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:

None

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)

The recent introduction of the new A-FAVP module is an important development for the RVC. The key element of reflective learning has been retained, whilst allowing for greater flexibility with essay titles to ensure that candidates can learn with reference to their particular fields of work. Greater support for candidates at the start of the module is now in place with the new tutor system and compulsory initial feedback. Monitoring outcomes and candidate satisfaction and comparing this to the old module will be important and I shall look forward to this with considerable interest.

Many candidates in their reflective essays comment on how their reflective and critical thinking processes have developed as a result of taking the A module and I congratulate the Cert AVP team for their hard work in developing these skills in the next generation of Advanced Practitioners.

COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Jill Maddison

Course Director Response:

Thank you. Your very positive comments will be conveyed to the CertAVP team and A module assessors.

Action Required:

Action Deadline:

01-Jun-2020

Action assigned to:

Joanne Jarvis

