

ANNUAL QUALITY IMPROVEMENT REPORT 2021/22

Appendix 3: External Examiners' report

Accelerated BVetMed

This appendix contains Year Leader's responses to 2021/22 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 – n/a
b.	21/22 Collaborative Annual Report with responses from Course Director

b. Collaborative Report

Exam board meeting: 12-Jul-2022

Accelerated Bachelor of Veterinary Medicine, 2021/22

Lead examiner: Dr Catrin Rutland

Collaborating examiner(s): Dr Emanuele Ricci

The Programme

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

1.1 Course content

The course content was appropriate throughout and carefully monitored to ensure RCVS compliance.

COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Emma Boardman

Course Director Response:

The academic standards of the Graduate Accelerated BVetMed Program are monitored diligently by the RVC's Quality Assurance office.

Action Required:

Action Deadline:

Action assigned to:

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

Learning objectives were clearly presented to students, staff and examiners. They were all delivered and all could be assessed.

COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Emma Boardman

Course Director Response:

Thank you. Learning objectives (LOs) are central to the student learning and assessment experience. Their importance is highlighted routinely and consistently throughout the course, with alignment of key LOs made visible in lectures, course handbooks and on Learn. Our learning and wellbeing team are also fully apprised of how they map learning with assessment so that appropriate support can be provided to students seeking study skills support.

Action Required:

Action Deadline:

Action assigned to:

1.3 Teaching methods

Teaching methods were varied and complimented not only the different learning requirements needed but also the differing needs of the students. In addition, COVID appropriate adaptations were made where required. The teaching and administrative staff have put in a great deal of effort regarding quality of teaching and learning.

COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Emma Boardman

Course Director Response:

Thank you for your comments. The challenges of Covid-19 moved into a third academic year with online lectures delivered until the end of January 2022, after which students were encouraged to attend live, on-campus lectures. To mitigate disruption to students' established learning routines, online lectures were continued to be made available for the remainder of the academic year. While in-person teaching for practicals was largely protected throughout the pandemic, format of delivery inevitably had to be adapted to ensure learning outcomes continued to be met, while keeping staff and students safe. Covid-restrictions pertaining to social distancing in practicals were softened during the middle of the year, with both staff and students enjoying the return of groups of four students around a dissection table. It is worth mentioning that where changes to practical teaching (e.g., conversion of a dissection to a point-to-point practical, for example) were necessary, there was considered effort on the part of anatomy teaching staff to design future-proof sessions that were pedagogically sound, and which would be fit for adopting into the 2022_23 new curriculum.

Action Required:

Action Deadline:

Action assigned to:

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

Resources for assessment were provided as required throughout.

COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Emma Boardman

Course Director Response:

All assessments apart from the ISF Orals exam were held online. At each stage throughout the exam calendar year, students were provided with the necessary resources to help them prepare for, and execute their assessments, well in advance. This was carried out via several fora – learning and wellbeing support sessions, year leader debriefs and feedback sessions. Staff have been supported superbly by the exams team, with particular credit and thanks extended to Lauren Christian.

Action Required:

Action Deadline:

Action assigned to:

1.5 Please provide any additional comments and recommendations regarding the Programme

The entire team have put in huge amounts of effort to provide a quality programme, which is also transparent and fair whilst vigorous regarding assessment, as is expected in this professional degree.

COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Emma Boardman

Course Director Response:

Thank you – it is gratifying to read that the collective efforts of all contributing teams are recognised for maintaining continued quality and high standards in our programme, despite the continued challenges of the year.

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

Student performance was comparable to previous years and other institutions.

COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Emma Boardman

Course Director Response:

It is good to hear that performance is comparable to other institutions. Thank-you.

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

Candidate knowledge and skills acquired, for those that passed the examination points, were of a high standard. The spread and range of grades, including fails, were as expected within the profession. All failing students were given excellent support, guidance regarding their educational needs and also welfare support where required.

COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Emma Boardman

Course Director Response:

The spread of attainment in each grade bracket was similar to previous years. The distribution of students in the distinction, merit, pass and fail categories were a percentage point difference compared to the previous year.

Action Required:

Action Deadline:

Action assigned to:

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

Please comment, as appropriate, on:

3.1 Assessment methods (relevance to learning objectives and curriculum)

The open book designed papers were particularly good, incorporating knowledge into good cases, testing assimilation of information given and learnt. The curriculum was closely mapped to the exams.

COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Emma Boardman

Course Director Response:

That is encouraging to hear, thank you.

We have continued to improve our exam question design to test powers of interpretation, including analysis and application of knowledge, rather than simple factual recall. We will endeavour to continue and build on and apply what we have learned over the past few years of online assessment.

Action Required:

Continued development and scrutiny of exam questions for online, non-proctored format.

Action Deadline:

31-May-2023

Action assigned to:

Director of Assessment; Head of Exams; Year Leaders

3.2 Extent to which assessment procedures are rigorous

The exams were conducted in a fair, transparent manner, with careful consideration given to anonymity.

COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Emma Boardman

Course Director Response:

Thank-you for your comment.

Action Required:

Action Deadline:

Action assigned to:

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

The exams met the standards required within the framework for higher education qualifications (FHEQ).

COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Emma Boardman

Course Director Response:

Thank-you.

Action Required:

Action Deadline:

Action assigned to:

3.4 Standard of marking

The standard and consistency of marking was excellent and transparent throughout.

COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Emma Boardman

Course Director Response:

Thank you for your comments. It is with particular thanks to Stephen Freaan for coordinating marking allocations, and Lauren Christian, our outgoing head of exams, for ensuring the digital organisation and procedures for marking were set out clearly.

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, the assessment and determination of awards were conducted in a sound and fair manner. The processes were made clear to students, staff and external examiners well in advance and were adhered to. The papers were all shared with external examiners, both prior to exams, with any suggestions responded to, and after the exams with marking made available. The board of examiners was well organised and every person was able to express any views.

COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Emma Boardman

Course Director Response:

Thank you. We value the feedback our external examiners provide at each stage of the examination process. Internal and external examiner oversight of all stages, from paper setting through to policy compliance has ensured that academic rigour, exam integrity, fairness and transparency continues to be successfully delivered, and remains a priority for us.

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 exams were designed so they could be open book exams. The same high standards previously observed were all present ranging from marking through to curriculum mapping and standard checking.

COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Emma Boardman

Course Director Response:

The Term 1 & 2 in-course assessments, and end of year multiple choice paper 1 were proctored. Papers 2a and 2b (problem-solving) were non-proctored. While problem-solving questions for the non-proctored papers were designed to robustly conform to an 'open-book' format (e.g., to test powers of interpretation, analysis, and application of knowledge, rather than simple factual recall) students were carefully briefed on the very limited extent to which they were allowed to refer to external sources of information to support their answers. This subtle, yet important distinction sets the non-proctored style of exam apart from a true 'open-book' examination, and students were briefed and held to a 'Statement of Honesty & Integrity – Professional and Academic Misconduct', which they were obliged to sign before their examination.

Action Required:

Action Deadline:

Action assigned to:

3.7 Please provide any additional comments and recommendations regarding the procedures

I was also impressed that the graph with different colours had dashed and undashed lines for colour blind students and that male/female farm clients were used as examples which help teach in a very subtle way, these are highly inclusive and should be commended.

COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Emma Boardman

Course Director Response:

Thank you for your comment. We are committed to ensuring our teaching and assessment remain inclusive and accessible, to support and reflect our diverse community.

Action Required:

To ensure accessibility and inclusivity remains integral at exam writing stage.

Action Deadline:

31-May-2023

Action assigned to:

Director of Assessment; Head of Exams; Director of Learning & Wellbeing

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:

All papers were provided in advance of the examinations, external examiners were able to freely comment on them and got responses to their comments.

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:

External examiners were able to see every piece of work/exam response, in an open and transparent manner to check each examination.

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:

External examiners were invited in a timely manner as were all staff involved, everyone was able to speak freely.

4.6 Candidates were considered impartially and fairly

Yes

Additional comments, particularly if your answer was no:

The manner in which exams are marked, and the board is run, ensures candidates are considered impartially and fairly. The support provided to students is of an extremely high level. All staff are very responsive to the external examiners and keen to ensure the very highest standards of teaching, learning and assessment.

COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Emma Boardman

Course Director Response:

Thank you, your support is very much appreciated. We are proud of the support we can provide our students during their learning and assessment journey but are always seeking ways to improve. It is with thanks to our established network of academic tutors, learning and wellbeing teams, and other key teams, coupled with external examiner feedback, that we can do this.

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

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:

This course is comparable with others of the same level in the UK.

COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Emma Boardman

Course Director Response:

This is good news. Thank-you.

Action Required:

Action Deadline:

Action assigned to:

4.9 I have received enough training and support to carry out my role

Yes

Additional comments, particularly if your answer was no:

Thank you to the administrative team and academic staff for providing the necessary support.

COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Emma Boardman

Course Director Response:

Thank you. It is important that we can assist our valued external examiners in a responsive and timely fashion at all stages of the examination process.

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)

Yes

Additional comments, particularly if your answer was no:

I was provided all of the information required plus any requested.

COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Emma Boardman

Course Director Response:

This is very good to hear.

Action Required:

Action Deadline:

Action assigned to:

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:

The team are already considering return to post COVID examinations and ensuring both students and staff are prepared in advance for this.

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)

