

ANNUAL QUALITY IMPROVEMENT REPORT 2021/22

Appendix 3: External Examiners' report

BVetMed Year 2

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
b.	2020/21 Collaborative Annual Report with responses from Course Director

Actions from 2020-21	Update:
<p>Course Director Response:</p> <p>Thankyou for your comments about the strong performance of our 'non-gateway' students – we are very proud of their achievements, and are grateful to all the teaching staff for ensuring they remain supported during a very challenging year. Whilst we were of course disappointed to see the relatively more variable performance of gateway alumni, we are very confident that the support we are putting in place for these students is high. This year the transition tutor has worked with these students on specific aspects of the programme such as preparation for ISF oral exams; next year this support will continue to be developed through a transition summer school, and other support activities. We would point out that students from disadvantaged backgrounds were most severely impacted by the pandemic, and so it is gratifying that the number of poor outcomes for students in this group was no higher than in previous non-pandemic years (and in fact somewhat improved).</p> <p>Thankyou for your comments with regards to ISF orals – this was the first time we had run these online, although the students did get a formative experience. We would suggest the lower than usual performance (although, students historically do perform slightly less well across the board in this assessment) would have been impacted by the relative isolation in which some students worked during the pandemic, limiting their exposure to verbal communication and discussion of scientific topics. As you suggest, ensuring students understand the importance of face to face group work sessions in preparing for these types of assessments in 2021/22 will need to be a deliberate effort on our part.</p> <p>Action Required:</p> <p>Continued monitoring and efforts to ensure Gateway alumni are supported in transition to BVM1 (Year Leader, Transition Tutor)</p> <p>2. Students to be reminded that group work and discussions that take place during those sessions prepare them for oral examinations and are vital for developing communication skills (Year Leader)</p> <p>Action Deadline: 31-Oct-2021 Year Leader; Transition tutor</p>	<p>Update:</p> <p>Gateway student performance in ISF oral exams</p> <p>In the 2021-22 academic year students returned to face-to-face teaching and, for the most part, face-to-face oral exams. Ex-Gateways students under-perform on the ISF oral exams compared to the cohort as a whole, with 38% of ex-Gateway BVM2 students failing the June ISF exam (26% who passed the year, 15% of students who failed the exams at this sit), compared to 26% of the rest of the BVM2 cohort (and only 3.5% who failed the exams as a whole in addition to the ISF oral exam).</p> <p>As the 2020-21 academic year was entirely online, the data is not really comparable, and there were no oral exams the year before that. It is therefore hard to comment on the effect of any Gateway-BVM1 transition work that has been done over the last years.</p> <p>83% of the ex-Gateway students passed the exams at the first sit, fairly comparable to the 88% for the whole cohort, though with a higher proportion of pass marks and a lower proportion of distinctions.</p> <p>It should be noted that no specific support is given to ex-Gateway students as part of their BVM2 studies, beyond any Advice Centre/Study Skills support that the students organise for themselves. Therefore, any improvements in progression rates that are seen are likely to be a result of the work done in the Gateway year.</p>
<p>Course Director Response:</p> <p>Thankyou for your comments, and we agree that our staff put huge efforts and time into assessing our students. We will keep our assessment portfolio under review. It is unlikely that we will return to pencil/paper exams in the future and so we now look to take forward the most beneficial elements of the assessment modes used during COVID19. This will understandably take time as we work through the various benefits and pitfalls of the new methods and consider how compatible they are with existing infrastructure and the ongoing need to satisfy PSRB requirements.</p> <p>Action Required: Continual review and improvement of assessment modes and delivery mechanisms</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Action deadline: 01-May-2022</p> <p>Director of Assessment; Head of Exams; Director of Learning and Wellbeing</p>	<p>Review and improvement of assessment models and delivery mechanisms</p> <p>The written exams remained online in the 2021-22 academic year and students generally appear happy with this and do not feel disadvantaged by this format. There are also some advantages for marking, feedback and collation of marks. There is an on-going conversation about what adjustments to make to the exam system in the current academic year, but to the best of my knowledge a final decision has not been made on this point.</p>

Collaborative Report

Exam board meeting: 07-Jul-2022

Bachelor of Veterinary Medicine, Year 2, 2021/22

Lead examiner: Dr Hanne Jahns

Collaborating examiner(s): Dr Mark McLaughlin, Dr Charlotte Miller

The Programme

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

1.1 Course content

The content remained the same as in previous years. There is no additional content which we would suggest including at this time.

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

The learning objectives appear to have been met.

1.3 Teaching methods

There was a return to teaching on campus.

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

On-line proctoring remains a challenge. While some online exams were proctored other remote exams were not.

1.5 Please provide any additional comments and recommendations regarding the Programme

None

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

Performance in examinations (on individual exam questions, in orals and overall) appears consistent with those seen this academic year in students being examined on similar material 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

Similar to previous years 29% of students failed the ISF orals. Statistics showed that the questions for the MCQs, paper 2a and paper 2b were discriminatory and the students at the top, middle and bottom range performed according to expectations. The average marks were adequate for all parts of the exams.

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

On the whole, students appear to have engaged well and 24% of students have been able to achieve distinction.

Please comment, as appropriate, on:

3.1 Assessment methods (relevance to learning objectives and curriculum)

All assessments were carried out with methods appropriate to the learning objectives and curriculum followed. There was a good mixture of different assessment methods including continuous assessment, orals, MCQs and short note questions.

3.2 Extent to which assessment procedures are rigorous

Sample double-marking, moderation and data analysis in place to ensure a rigorous approach.

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

Assessment level appears appropriate to second year (level 5) work.

3.4 Standard of marking

Moderation in place to insure consistent marking within the CATR. Post hoc analysis of MCQs in place to identify and if necessary remove questions. Standard setting is in place for the MCQ.

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)

All sound and fair

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

The oral exams were back face-to-face and each student had a practice run before the exams. The research project was replaced by the critical appraised topic report (CATR). It was noted that there were many more students to hand in the assignments late compared to other years. The majority of students (97.5%) passed the CATR and the average was good (66%).

3.7 Please provide any additional comments and recommendations regarding the procedures

The exams remained online except for the ISOF orals. The programme team was very considered towards students who experienced technical issues during the exams. All queries regarding marks, student's performances and procedures were answered sufficiently, which showed a lot of preparation, knowledge and engagement by the programme team.

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

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

No

Additional comments, particularly if your answer was no:

I had attended the pre-programme board meeting on the same morning, and the other two external examiners attended both meetings.

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:

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 training and support to carry out my role

Yes

Additional comments, particularly if your answer was no:

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:

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)

None

