

ANNUAL QUALITY IMPROVEMENT REPORT 2021/22

Appendix 3: External Examiners' report

MSc Veterinary Epidemiology

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

a. Updates to actions from previous years' reports

2020/21			
Report Question	External Examiners' comments & suggested actions	Course Director/Year Leader's response & Action	Update in 2021/22
2.3 Please provide any additional comments and recommendations regarding the students' performance	... Especially with projects and different types of project there could be further guidance to examiners and students of what is expected	Course Director Response: We agree that additional guidance on what is needed for different types of projects, and this will be provided. Action Required: Brief guidelines to be drawn up outlining expectations for different types of projects Action Deadline: 01-Jun-2022 Action assigned to: Course Director - Kim Stevens	Detailed subject-specific guidelines have been adapted from those used by LSHTM and are now available to students highlighting expectations for the different types of projects (data analysis, spatial analysis, risk assessment and economics). These guideline documents are available on the LEARN project webpage.

Collaborative Report

Exam board meeting: 08-Sep-2022

MSc in Veterinary Epidemiology, 2021/22

Lead examiner: Professor Alasdair Cook

Collaborating examiner(s): Dr Jasmeet Kaler

The Programme

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

1.1 Course content

This joint RVC- LHSTM course provides an excellent grounding in veterinary epidemiology and equips its graduates with the skills necessary to embark upon a career in this discipline

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

Each module has clear and relevant learning objectives; together, they provide a coherent programme to meet the purpose of the course - namely, to provide an understanding of the principles and practice of veterinary epidemiology.

1.3 Teaching methods

A mix of lectures, practicals, tutorials and self-directed learning. Importantly, students have the opportunity to share learning with LSHTM epidemiology students and to benefit from teaching on surveillance and risk analysis from APHA

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

The course is well resourced; from the students viewpoint, there is excellent access to teaching staff, library and other necessary materials.

1.5 Please provide any additional comments and recommendations regarding the Programme

This is a well-established and highly respected course that sets a very high standard

COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Kim Stevens

Course Director Response:

Thank you for your kind words.

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

Overall, students' performance is good and matches or exceeds that of students on comparable courses with which I am familiar in UK and Europe. There was some suggestion that students in the current cohort, completing in 2022, did not perform quite as well as previous intakes. Whether the impact of the COVID pandemic contributed to this or whether it simply represents a normal variation is unclear. However, there is no evidence that this reflects any change in the learning experience provided, which remains consistently excellent.

COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Kim Stevens

Course Director Response:

Students did not achieve as well as usual and it is not altogether clear why. **While there did seem to be fewer exceptional students than usual**, one notable factor that contributed **to the disappointing performance** included the introduction of negative marking on the MCQ exam for the LSHTM module Modelling & the Dynamics of Infectious Diseases, which lead to half the class failing a module that usually has a 100% pass rate. Negative marking has since been removed from future assessments. In addition, one of the students who failed the June exams did not attend any of the online practical sessions.

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

Despite there being some reduction in the number of students achieving distinction level results, within each band the performance of individual students remains appropriate. At the highest level, students demonstrate the capacity to utilise the taught methods independently and to present results at a level suitable for peer-reviewed publication. All students attaining a MSc are competent to appreciate underlying principles and apply methods to data, providing a good foundation for eg PhD study or employment in a research or policy environment.

COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Kim Stevens

Course Director Response:

The reduction in number of students receiving distinctions is likely a reflection of the overall less academically strong cohort. In addition, the student who came second in class was one of those who failed the Modelling & the Dynamics of Infectious Diseases assessment. If that student had performed as expected in the modelling assessment they would have graduated with an overall distinction.

Action Required:

Action Deadline:

Action assigned to:

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

As a whole, the work presented evidences a high degree of engagement by students with the learning materials.

Please comment, as appropriate, on:

3.1 Assessment methods (relevance to learning objectives and curriculum)

Assessment is provided by an appropriate mix of methods, including formal written exams, MCQ and assessed presentations.

COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Kim Stevens

Course Director Response:

This is the final year in which students will be assessed using the formal written exams. These have been replaced with modular assessments for all modules.

Action Required:

Action Deadline:

Action assigned to:

3.2 Extent to which assessment procedures are rigorous

The assessment methods are rigorous, appropriate and scrupulously fair.

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

The level of assessment is entirely consistent with FHEQ

3.4 Standard of marking

Marking is of an extremely high standard and where any important discrepancy may arise between markers, these are resolved appropriately.

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)

Procedures are sound and fair. In particular, I would like to thank the course management for their excellent help and support to the external examiner. Some issues were encountered this year with access to RVC Learn, which I understand were due to some system upgrades. However, these were dealt with swiftly and effectively.

COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Kim Stevens

Course Director Response:

The course management team and exam's office representative are fundamental to the smooth running of the course, responding to all queries promptly and effectively.

Action Required:

Action Deadline:

Action assigned to:

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

Assessment remains rigorous.

3.7 Please provide any additional comments and recommendations regarding the procedures

The standard of feedback offered to students is excellent.

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:

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:

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:

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)

