

Higher Education Review

The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) has confirmed the quality and standards of provision at the Royal Veterinary College following its review visit in February 2015.

A team of QAA reviewers visited the Royal Veterinary College and judged that its academic standards, the quality of its student learning opportunities, and the quality of information about its learning opportunities **all meet UK expectations**. The enhancement of its student learning opportunities is **commended**.

Professor Stuart Reid, Principal at RVC says, "I am delighted that the Royal Veterinary College has received a very favourable report following the QAA review. We are committed to delivering the highest of standards in our programmes and the results of the recent assessment endorse the efforts of all at the RVC. Unique amongst UK veterinary schools in being subject to institutional level inspection, I am immensely grateful to my staff and students for their dedication in making this small specialist institution amongst the best in class."

QAA's Higher Education Reviews are carried out by experts from other universities and colleges. Every review team includes a student reviewer, because QAA believes that students should be partners in the quality assurance of their education.

The team that reviewed the Royal Veterinary College included Stephen Finch (Royal Agricultural University), Barbara Howell (Coventry University), Professor Denis Wright (Imperial College of Science, Technology and Medicine) and David Messling (student reviewer from University of East Anglia).

A successful review means that the College can display the QAA Quality Mark, indicating to UK and international students that the College meets national requirements for standards and quality.

Further details about the process of Higher Education Review can be found on the QAA website [here](#).

The full report on the Royal Veterinary College was published on 13 May 2015. It is available to read [here](#).

Following Higher Education Review, each College or University is required to produce an action plan in response to the conclusions of the report. The action plan is intended to support the College in continuing development of its higher education provision by describing how it intends to take forward the findings of the review visit. Through its publication, the action plan constitutes a public record of the College's commitment to take forward the findings of the review visit. It is intended that the publication of the action plan will promote greater confidence among students and other external stakeholders about the quality assurance of higher education at the College.

The Royal Veterinary College's action plan has been produced jointly with student representatives and has been signed off by the Principal. The action plan will be updated annually in conjunction with student representatives until all actions have been completed. Updates to the action plan will be published [here](#) on the College's website.

**Quality Assurance Agency (QAA)
Higher Education Review
Action Plan**

The QAA Higher Education Review Team identified a number of examples of **good practice**. These include:

1. The extensive use of external expertise across all aspects of the management of standards and quality (Expectations A3.4, B7, B11 and Enhancement).

We will continue to include external expertise in our management of standards and quality by, for example:

- appointing External Examiners who meet agreed national and College criteria;
- seeking feedback from employers of our graduates;
- including External Members on Course Management and Strategic Committees, Working Groups and ad hoc reviews;
- including External Members on the membership of course Validation and Periodic Review Panels

2. The integrated approach to student support provision, which enables a wide range of student needs to be met (Expectations B4, B3 and B11).

The Student Development Committee was established with this precise purpose in mind. It will remain a standing committee of the Academic Board for the foreseeable future. It actively uses the natural advantages of the College as a small specialist Higher Education Institute. Its method of work is to identify key projects which integrate and gain synergy from carefully combining curricula and service provision where required. Current projects involve employability on science courses and tutoring in all courses.

We will continue regular meetings of the Advice Centre with Senior Tutors and Associate Deans with a view to dealing with current issues and sharing information.

We will continue to work on 'enabling independence' as our focus of support.

A review of Student Well-Being has been conducted by a panel including three external members. The review was commissioned by the Principal. The outcomes of the review will be considered in the Autumn Term of the 2015-16 academic year and will inform further progress in supporting students.

Lead Student Representatives: The student body commends the College's integrated approach to support provision. We look forward to continued student engagement and involvement in the reviews of employability and the tutoring system. We also look forward to the outcome of the Well-Being review, and we are confident that the College will continue working together with the Students' Union to ensure the wellbeing of all students.

3. The deliberate steps taken to build, sustain and enhance an environment which supports a high and effective level of engagement by all students in the management of learning opportunities (Expectations B5, B3, B4, B11 and Enhancement).

We will continue to embed student engagement in the management of learning opportunities through building on our good practice. This will include working in partnership with the Students' Union to review and refine the ways in which we gather input from students, graduates and employers; continue to develop online student survey mechanisms with which students can engage easily; review and refine the 'Training and Support Programme for Student Representatives' to ensure we enhance their visibility and help to maximise their effectiveness; educate all students more effectively on the evaluation processes available to them and promote opportunities for their involvement. We will ensure that where students contribute to the College's Quality Assurance and Enhancement procedures (including Periodic Reviews and Validation Panels) they receive effective training to enable them to contribute meaningfully as equal partners in the process. Our success in these areas will be measured through the Key Performance Indicators in the College's 'Strategy for Enhancement and Assurance of the quality of Learning, Teaching and Assessment 2013-18'.

Lead Student Representatives: The student body applauds the deliberate steps taken by the Academic Quality team and the rest of the College to enhance and sustain student engagement. In line with the College's continued support, the Students' Union recently introduced the position of Vice President Representation and Communications to optimise communication and student engagement. We hope that the role will further improve coordination with the College to ensure all students are empowered to enhance their learning opportunities.

4. The effective contribution the Lifelong Independent Veterinary Education Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning makes to the enhancement of student learning (Expectations Enhancement, B3 and B4).

We will continue development and revision of all RVC curricula, to promote the wellbeing of our students and their development as self-regulated learners in order to enhance their employability.

We will target staff development around professional skills delivery to improve the student experience in this area.

We will extend educator development opportunities to non-academic staff (including research fellows and assistants) with significant teaching input, to ensure consistent minimum standards of delivery.

We will continue development of outcomes framework for curricula, and monitor individual student outcomes, both for external accountability and to support individual student learning.

Lead Student Representatives: The student body recognises the importance of professional skills especially in light of the vocational courses we offer here at the RVC. We trust that continued development and revision of the professional studies strands will have a positive impact on student learning and employability.

| | Affirmation <i>The QAA review team affirms the following actions that The Royal Veterinary College is already taking to make academic standards secure and/or improve the educational provision offered to its students.</i> | Action to be taken by the College | Date for completion/ Progress to date | Lead Responsibility | Success indicators | Lead Student Representative Comments |
|----|--|--|--|----------------------------|---|---|
| 1. | The implementation of the new programme approval process (Expectations A3.1 and B1). | The Teaching Quality Committee will review the new process for the design and approval of courses following the course validations that take place in 2015-16 and 2016-17. | December 2017 | Academic Quality Manager | The approval of new courses that are high quality and viable, and support the College's strategic aims and goals. | |

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| 2. | The introduction of the new policy and guidance on feedback to taught students (Expectations B6 and B3). | Ongoing implementation of the policy to include: 1. Continue to refine and develop the feedback policy document ensuring that it is fit for purpose at the start of each academic year. 2. Work with students at induction and beyond to develop their understanding of what constitutes feedback at the RVC, how and why it is useful and ways in which they might engage with it to improve their academic and professional outcomes. This includes continuing development of a feedback module in the 'Academic Skills for | Ongoing | Associate Deans for Undergraduate teaching, Postgraduate teaching and Student Experience, the Learning Development Manager, the four Academic Departmental Teaching Co-ordinators and Course Directors. | Improved confidence and competence in staff undertaking feedback activities with students (via internal meeting minutes and focus groups) | We would like to highlight further the importance of good quality feedback in student learning experiences. We anticipate that full implementation of the new feedback policy will ensure improvements in the satisfaction scores in both internal and external surveys. |

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| | | <p>Students' Small Private Online Course (SPOC) in Learn.</p> <p>3. Provide ongoing training and support for staff in implementing the new feedback policy in order to Improve the student feedback experience within their teaching and learning sessions.</p> <p>4. Continue to develop and update online learning resources on the theme of feedback within the 'Academic skills for staff' Small Private Online Course (SPOC) in Learn.</p> <p>5. Gather information to evaluate the student and staff experience of feedback in order to inform point (1).</p> | | | | |
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| 3. | The introduction of an annual review of student performance data for postgraduate research degree programmes (Expectation B11). | Research Degrees Committee to consider Key Performance Indicator data annually, at the first meeting of each academic year (i.e. in October or November) | December 2015 | Research Degrees Committee | Affirmation in the minutes of the Research Degrees Committee that members are content with the student performance data or, if there are matters arising from their consideration of the data, evidence that the points noted have been followed up, the appropriate action(s) has/have been taken and the outcome(s) recorded. | Better understanding of postgraduate student performance can only be a positive for future students; therefore we are happy that steps are being taken to review this data. |

| | Recommendation <i>The QAA review team makes the following recommendations to The Royal Veterinary College.</i> | Action to be taken by the College | Date for completion/ Progress to date | Lead Responsibility | Success indicators | Lead Student Representatives Comments |
|----|---|---|--|---|---|---|
| 1. | Ensure that all postgraduate research students (PGR) receive appropriate training before undertaking teaching and/or assessment (Expectations B3 and B11) | <p>Survey all PGR students to establish their training needs.</p> <p>We will develop a framework of teaching and learning training for all staff and students who teach that stipulates compulsory training via a programme based upon the UK Professional Standards Framework. This programme will have flexible entry and exit points, where appropriate building towards Associate Fellow of the Higher Education Academy, Fellow of the Higher Education Academy and the Postgraduate Certificate in Veterinary Education as appropriate for each individual.</p> | <p>December 2015</p> <p>December 2015</p> | Vice Principal for Learning and the Student Experience and the Director of Development of Academic Staff. | <p>To improve the Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES) responses which in 2015 indicated that of those PGR students who had taught (~50% of respondents) 56% mostly or definitely agreed they had received “appropriate support and advice” in advance of undertaking teaching.</p> <p>To achieve at least ~85% satisfaction in response to the PRES question that asks if “appropriate support and advice” had been received in advance of undertaking teaching.</p> | We would like to emphasise the importance of adequate training and we believe that ensuring all postgraduates receive sufficient training will make a significant improvement in the quality assurance of teaching standards. |

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| | <i>The QAA review team makes the following recommendations to The Royal Veterinary College.</i> | | | | | |
| 2. | Clarify the monitoring, evaluation and institutional oversight of student equality and diversity (Expectation B4) | <p>Student equality and diversity issues relating to course applications are evaluated by the Teaching Quality Committee (TQC) through the 'Annual Review of Data to inform Quality Assurance' report. The Committee's recommendations are submitted to Academic Board.</p> <p>In addition the Equality Strategy Group (ESG) monitors equality data for enrolled students through the 'Annual Equal Opportunities Monitoring' report and the triennial Equality and Diversity Action Plan [RVC Equality Objectives]. These are submitted to the Senior Management Group (SMG) and RVC Council for approval.</p> <p>It is recommended that the ESG should receive and</p> | December 2015 | Equality Strategy Group (ESG) | Evidence of stronger focus on student | The student body understands the efforts the College is making to ensure equality and diversity. To support this, the Students' Union's new Vice President for Welfare will be collaborating closely with the College particularly through the Equality Strategy Group. |

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| | | <p>review the 'Annual Review of Data to inform Quality Assurance' report to inform the Equality and Diversity Action Plan and that the ESG commits to encouraging greater involvement of student representatives in ESG meetings.</p> | | | <p>equality and diversity from the minutes of ESG meetings.</p> <p>To achieve 100% attendance of student representation at each meeting of the ESG.</p> | |
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| | <i>The QAA review team makes the following recommendations to The Royal Veterinary College.</i> | | | | | |
| 3. | Ensure that all students have appropriate and timely access to information on procedures for complaints and appeals (Expectations B9, B10 and C). | <p>Add a complaints and appeals button to the front page of all student course handbooks on the College's Virtual Learning Environment for the 2015-16 academic cycle.</p> <p>Review all Collaborative Agreements to clarify that all aspects of appeals are covered by the RVC appeals procedure, where the RVC is the body responsible for the award.</p> | <p>September 2015</p> <p>December 2015</p> | <p>Academic Registrar</p> <p>Collaborative Programmes Officer</p> | All students have access to appropriate and timely information on procedures for complaints and appeals at the outset and throughout their studies. | We acknowledge the positive steps the College is taking to provide easier access to information on complaints and appeals for students. |

QAA HER Action Plan approved by the Principal of the Royal Veterinary College, Professor Stuart Reid:

Signature:



Date: 17th July 2015