

Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) Higher Education Review

The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) 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 said, "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 initial Royal Veterinary College action plan was produced jointly with student representatives and was signed off by the Principal in July 2015. The action plan was updated annually in conjunction with student representatives until all actions had been completed. The most recent update was in July 2018. The most recent update to the action plan is published [here](#) on the College's website.

Quality Assurance Agency (QAA)

Higher Education Review

Royal Veterinary College

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

Update July 2016:

We continue to include external expertise in our management of standards and quality.

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 was 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.

Update July 2016:

The Student and Staff Well-Being Report includes recommended actions split into four priority areas. An action plan is available from the Academic Registrar upon request.

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 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.

Update from the Undergraduate Lead Student Representative - July 2016:

- The Student Union and the Academic Quality Team continue to support and cherish Course Year Student Representatives through regular meetings.
- A greater number of students are now invited and present in various College meetings that directly influence learning opportunities and student engagement, for example, the new Student Union Vice Principals attend student tutoring discussion, QMHA patient welfare forum etc.
- Maintaining and sustaining close ties with the University at all levels including the College Council and Academic Board.

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.

Update July 2016:

The Lifelong Independent Veterinary Education Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning continues developments as outlined above.

	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.	Deadline December 2017. Validations held: Postgraduate Diploma in Veterinary Clinical Practice held on 22 nd January 2016; Graduate Diploma in Equine Locomotor Research held on 27 th May 2016. Minor amendments have been made to the design and approval of courses procedure for example, the broadening of the Course Proposal and Development Group to	Academic Quality Manager	The approval of new courses that are high quality and viable, and support the College's strategic aims and goals.	

			include the Marketing and Communications Director, and the Head of Governance, Planning and Compliance. We will continue to review the design and approval of courses procedure. Action completed June 2016			
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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	Deadline May 2016: 1. Comments on updated Feedback Policy received and used to make minor changes to wording in	Associate Deans for Undergraduate teaching, Postgraduate teaching and Student Experience, the Learning Development Manager, the four Academic	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

		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 Students' Small Private Online Course (SPOC) in Learn. 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. 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. 5. Gather information to evaluate the student and staff experience of feedback in order to inform point (1).	document. Final version to be presented at June LTAC meeting ready for 2016/17 academic year. 2.Feedback remains on the schedule for induction sessions for all undergraduate courses. Updating of professional studies strand allows us to work more closely with BVetMed tutors on Feedback. 3. Ran an 'Appreciative Inquiry into Feedback at RVC' event on both campuses for a selection of staff and students on all courses. Brought together a smaller cross campus/course group of staff and students to take forward the main themes arising from these sessions. Next step is to deliver training at Summer and	Departmental Teaching Co-ordinators and Course Directors.		implementation of the new feedback policy will ensure improvements in the satisfaction scores in both internal and external surveys.
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			Winter INSET days (both of which are scheduled). 'Improving Feedback' has also been incorporated into VetEd teaching sessions this year and forms part of our EMS Providers Training Day. 4. Materials from these AI and INSET events have been gathered in the Academic Staff Development area in Learn. 5.2014/15 NSS open comments used to inform working party proposal at LTAC Autumn meeting. Action completed			
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	<i>educational provision offered to its students.</i>					
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)	Deadline November 2015: Research Degrees Committee received and considered performance data for 2014-15 PGR degrees at the first meeting of the academic year 2015-16 and will continue to do so. Action Completed November 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)	1. Survey all PGR students to establish their training needs.	Deadline: November 2015: The PGR survey was completed prior to the deadline. The survey results were considered by the team creating a framework of teaching and learning for all staff and students who teach (see below for further details). Action completed. Deadline December 2015: A framework of teaching and learning training for all staff (who are not probationary lecturers), and postgraduate students who teach and/or	Vice Principal for Students, the Graduate School and the Director of Development of Academic Staff.	To improve the Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES) results, specifically 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. PRES results 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	We emphasise the importance of appropriate training provided to students before they undertake teaching of any description and that ensuring all postgraduates are supported in their teaching and training will make a significant improvement in the delivery of teaching and quality assurance of teaching standards. Supporting postgraduate students to build towards teaching qualifications will not only strengthen their pedagogical background but also enhance their career options.

		2. 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.	supervise students at the RVC was approved in principle by the College Executive Committee in November 2015. Action Completed November 2015 The 'Teaching and Learning in Higher Education (TLiHE)' course commenced in October 2016. The TLiHE runs three times per year in May, July and November. The delivery of the TLiHE is blended (mainly online but including a face-to-face induction and a final presentation session at the end). The attendees are required to undertake a 6-week online course on Learn, and complete an assessment quiz. The training is compulsory		teaching. In 2017, the PRES results indicated that of those PGR students who had taught (57% of respondents) 51% mostly or definitely agreed they had received "appropriate support and advice" in advance of undertaking teaching. The Teaching Quality Committee will continue to monitor the QAA recommendation and RVC performance against the success indicator. The RVC did not take part in the PRES during 2018.	
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			for those who teach more than 6 hours/year. Update October 2018: The TLIHE training has been further updated to make aspects of it more relevant to supporting student research projects, which is how the majority of PGR students are involved supporting UG students (to clarify, PGR students are not involved in assessing student projects).			
	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
2.	Clarify the monitoring, evaluation and institutional oversight of	Student equality and diversity issues relating to course applications are	Deadline September 2015 Recommendations	Academic Registrar and the Chair of Teaching Quality		The student body understands the efforts the College is

	student equality and diversity (Expectation B4)	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. 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.	from the Annual Review of Data to inform Quality Assurance report continue to be approved and submitted to Academic Board. Action Completed September 2015. Deadline December 2015 Progress as at 16th November 2015: The 'Annual Review of Data to inform Quality Assurance' document has been forwarded to the Chair and Secretary of the Equality Strategy Group for two consecutive years. Action Completed.	Committee Equality Strategy Group (ESG)	Evidence of stronger focus on student equality and diversity from the minutes of ESG meetings. To achieve 100% attendance of student representation at each meeting of the ESG.	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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		It is recommended that the ESG should receive and 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.	Progress as at 16 th May 2016: The Student Union Vice President is a member of ESG as is the Student Union Manager. Both attend the meetings. Action Completed.			
	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
3.	Ensure that all students have appropriate and timely access to information on procedures for complaints and appeals (Expectations B9, B10 and C).	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.	Deadline September 2015 A Student's Guide to Appeals, Complaints etc. button has been added to a new General Handbook page on Learn Action Completed November 2016.	Academic Registrar	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.

		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.	Deadline December 2015 Changes to relevant clauses of RVC-LSHTM agreements have been agreed between the parties – letters awaiting formal sign-off once changes to LSHTM contacts for notices have been confirmed. All other agreements are compliant. Action Completed June 2016.	Collaborative Programmes Officer		
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QAA HER Action Plan approved by the Principal of the Royal Veterinary College, Professor Stuart Reid:

Signature:

Date: