

Individual Report

Exam board meeting: 06-Mar-2024

Graduate Diploma in Equine Locomotor Research, 2023/24

Dr Lance Voute

The Programme

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

1.1 Course content

The course has not run since the 2018-19 intake and has been discontinued. Students who did not submit their project report with that cohort were granted extensions; one student submitted a report and presented their project (as previously, assessment was based on evaluation of the report and a presentation summarising project).

Refer to previous reports for comments in relation to course content.

COURSE DIRECTOR: Mr Andy Fiske-Jackson

Course Director Response:

From 2019 we had no further admissions onto the course. This was primarily because the minimum threshold of 10 students/year was not met; in 2020 we have 7 applicants, in 2021 we had just 3 applicants. The last cohort of 6 students consisted of 4 males and 2 females (with no BAME students); this reflects the current state of the farriery industry which is heavily dominated by white males. 50% of the students were from overseas.

These final six students struggled to conduct their research project, certainly Covid-19 played a part in this.

Numerous extensions were given but the result was five students withdrawing from the course and one student graduating in 2024.

Action Required:

Action Deadline:

Action assigned to:

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

No comments further to previous reports.

COURSE DIRECTOR: Mr Andy Fiske-Jackson

Course Director Response:

.The external examiners were happy that the course content aligned with the aim to be accessible to individuals who may have had little involvement in formal education for several years. It enabled farriers to undertake research, and thereby contribute to the evidence-base of farriery. They also stated that learning outcomes and aims were clear, appropriately expressed and easily accessed by students. The external examiners also stated that the assessments were well aligned with the outcomes with respect to overall strategy, individual tasks and marking rubrics. There was a range in level of attainment demonstrated but it was apparent students were well prepared, thereby making the outcomes achievable

Action Required:

Action Deadline:

Action assigned to:

1.3 Teaching methods

No comments further to previous reports.

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

I understand that resources, and support, were available to the candidates up to the submission deadline.

COURSE DIRECTOR: Mr Andy Fiske-Jackson

Course Director Response:

The external examiners were happy that considerable resources were available to the students via the RVC's virtual learning platform and the course was well-supported by enthusiastic teaching staff and an effective administration. Student performance in assessments suggested that resources themselves, or how they are delivered, were not a limiting factor. It was suggested that provision of an extra academic writing coaching (1-1) for students who were long out of education, who may need support on grammar fundamentals, may have been beneficial. During Student Performance and Development meetings we offered this, and other support via the Advice Centre. This was not taken up by any of the students.

Action Required:

Action Deadline:

Action assigned to:

1.5 Please provide any additional comments and recommendations regarding the Programme

None.

COURSE DIRECTOR: Mr Andy Fiske-Jackson

Course Director Response:

The external examiners stated the Exam Board Meetings were well run and facilitated open discussion; the team was commended on great practice in terms of rigour, support and transparency. The course design in relation to inclusivity (recognition of the needs of individuals who are likely to have not had recent educational experience) and the quality of feedback provided for written assessments were exceptional.

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

The student's performance fell within the range seen in previous assessment cycles.

COURSE DIRECTOR: Mr Andy Fiske-Jackson

Course Director Response:

Student satisfaction survey results were positive. One student commented that it was hard to feel part of a community when on a part time course which had become all online; clearly the Covid pandemic influenced this. It was also stated that the staff had 'done the best they could under difficult circumstances this year'. Also, that the course 'had been much better run with better communication' since the period of transition between course directors. There was a positive comment on the critical appraisal of progress made on projects. Since taking over the course the informal feedback (via email) has been positive with a couple of students showing a keenness to maintain links particularly for research.

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

The candidate's performance demonstrated they had achieved the course intended learning outcomes.

COURSE DIRECTOR: Mr Andy Fiske-Jackson

Course Director Response:

When surveyed, graduates of the course said they either agreed (60%) or strongly agreed (40%) that they utilised what they learnt in their studies.

Action Required:

Action Deadline:

Action assigned to:

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

It was evident that the student found writing their report a considerable challenge. Its completion, especially given the time elapsed following completion of teaching, is testament to their perseverance and the support provided by staff at the RVC.

Assessment Procedures

Please comment, as appropriate, on:

3.1 Assessment methods (relevance to learning objectives and curriculum)

Unchanged since previous report.

3.2 Extent to which assessment procedures are rigorous

Assessment procedures were undertaken as previously, and were rigorous, valid, and fair. The Examinations Board meeting was well run and facilitated open discussion.

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

The level of assessment was consistent with the FHEQ Level 6 descriptor for postgraduate diplomas

3.4 Standard of marking

The grading scheme used for the project reports was the Common Grading Scheme, as previously. It was applied appropriately and consistently between the two markers. There was no disagreement between markers. The External Examiner agreed with grades awarded by the markers.

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)

The procedures were rigorous, robust, valid, and fair.

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

There was no change from previously.

3.7 Please provide any additional comments and recommendations regarding the procedures

None.

General Statements

4.1 Comments I have made in previous years have been addressed to my satisfaction

N/A

Additional comments, particularly if your answer was no:

Discontinued course.

COURSE DIRECTOR: Mr Andy Fiske-Jackson

Course Director Response:

Overall, there was a strong feeling amongst staff members that the course had catered for those farriers of whom research was an interest but as majority of the farrier population, for whatever reason (time, interest, financial resources) were not sufficiently interested to embark on this post graduate qualification. The Worshipful Company of Farriers (WCF) also offers further qualifications, Associate and Fellowship, which farriers are likely to be more compelled to embark on. We approached the WCF on several occasions to explore the possibility of collaboration, or the GradDipELR being recognised on the WCF website, but no interest was shown by them.

Action Required:

Action Deadline:

Action assigned to:

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:

See previous 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)

None.

COURSE DIRECTOR: Mr Andy Fiske-Jackson

Course Director Response:

Overall, the lack of applicants, the extreme difficulty (and low success rate) in getting the last cohort through to completion and the original course directors (Dr Thilo Pfau and Professor Renate Weller) leaving to work in Calgary have all led to the decision to close the course.

Action Required:

Action Deadline:

Action assigned to: