

Individual Report

RCVS Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Practice, 2014/15

Professor Mike Herrtage

The Programme

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

1.1 Course content

Curriculum set by the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons for the C modules

Response from college requested: **NO**

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

Clearly stated in terms of learning outcomes and learning topics

Response from college requested: **NO**

1.3 Teaching methods

The modules are assessment only. Formative assessment has been proposed to help candidates develop the skill of case report writing. Some candidates do not appear to take full advantage of the comments on their work.

Response from college requested: **NO**

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

The resources on RVC Learn are reasonably comprehensive. Access has been improved during this year, although a number of candidates do not appear to take advantage of this resource.

Response from college requested: **NO**

1.5 Please provide any additional comments and recommendations regarding the Programme

It seems that candidates who fail are given feedback, but to ensure this is taken on board by the candidate, they should have to write a reflective comment on how they intend to address their deficits before they are allowed to resit the examination. I also believe that requesting an additional attempt at an examination should not be classed as an appeal. An appeal should be a challenge against the conduct of the examination. Currently most individuals are allowed a third attempt, which is fine for this type of professional qualification provided the candidate shows improvement at each attempt. This change in requiring a reflective comment should help.

Response from college requested: YES

COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Jill Maddison

Course Director Response:

We will ensure that candidates who are asking to resit an examination or resubmit a piece of work for the 2nd time i.e. 3rd attempt (they are automatically allowed to resubmit once) are advised to include this reflective statement in their letter requesting the resit. The issue of what to call this if not an appeal is to be discussed with the Academic Registrar in a meeting scheduled for the end of March. Currently RVC students can appeal the conduct of an examination or they can appeal to be allowed back onto a course (after a failed resit). So the word Appeal in the RVC context does apply to both circumstances but I agree it can be confusing. I appreciate the recognition that this is a professional qualification and as such allowing a well justified 3rd attempt is reasonable.

Action Required:

To discuss with the Academic Registrar the specific concerns of the current appeals process for the CertAVP and to consider the renaming of the request for a 3rd assessment.

Action Deadline:

31-Jul-2015

Action assigned to:

Jill Maddison and Joanne Jarvis

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

Last year, a few comments were made that the assessment of these modules by other providers may be easier. It is really important that the synoptic results are compared between the major providers to ascertain whether the standard is different and if so, what should be done about it as it could affect candidate numbers.

Response from college requested: **YES**

COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Jill Maddison

Course Director Response:

This is not an issue that RVC can do anything about but as a member of the RCVS CertAVP subcommittee JM is actively campaigning to have RCVS monitor more closely the relevant measures of success – in particular pass results for the synoptic examination regardless of where it is run.

Action Required:

None

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 knowledge at the top is very good and the stratification of the results is fair, justified and predictable. The grading criteria are very clear.

Response from college requested: **NO**

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

There were less complaints this year about the consistency of the referencing system used by candidates. However, although no one referencing system is correct, it is important that the assessors of all modules appreciate the importance of a consistent type of referencing.

Response from college requested: **NO**

Attention needs to be given to ensuring that the students are given a defined and consistent referencing system that they are assessed on throughout all modules.

Assessment Process

Please comment, as appropriate, on:

3.1 Assessment methods (relevance to learning objectives and curriculum)

The assessment is very relevant and structured.

Response from college requested: **NO**

3.2 Extent to which assessment processes are rigorous

Double marking is employed for candidates close to the borderline. The double marking is not done blind, but in the knowledge of the mark given.

Response from college requested: **NO**

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

The standard is consistent with postgraduate level 7.

Response from college requested: **NO**

3.4 Standard of marking

Good.

Response from college requested: **NO**

3.5 Opinion on changes to the assessment process from previous years in which you have examined

No changes were recommended last year.

Response from college requested: **NO**

3.6 Please provide any additional comments and recommendations regarding the assessment process

The small number of candidates per module means that it is challenging to maintain a consistent standard from year to year and to avoid drift upwards or downwards. The course management needs to keep a close eye on the consistency between the modules.

The submission of excessive numbers of appendices mentioned last year, does not seem to have been a problem this year.

Response from college requested: **NO**

Assessment Procedures

Please comment, as appropriate, on:

4.1 In your view, are the processes for assessment and the determination of awards sound and fairly conducted?

The overall management of the course is comprehensive and of a high standard. Both the Course Management Committee Meeting and the Board of Examiners were well attended. The external examiners also attended the RVC Inset Day again this year.

Response from college requested: **NO**

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

The comments made last year appear to have been acted on.

Response from college requested: **NO**

4.3 Please provide any additional comments and recommendations regarding the procedures

The Appeal Process should be separate from 'Requesting permission for an additional attempt at a module' and clear 'case law' should be available to ensure a consistency of decisions.

It was sad that cases of plagiarism were being uncovered. More emphasis is required on the professional impact of plagiarism and this should be included in the earlier modules.

The gender distribution for C modules does not correlate with those for the A and B modules, which are in line with the profession. Attention should be paid to this and if it becomes a consistent trend then the situation should be explored in depth and remedies suggested.

Response from college requested: **YES**

COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Jill Maddison

Course Director Response:

We will be reviewing the Appeals process with the RVC's Academic Registrar. We will enhance the information given in relation to plagiarism and advise all candidates they must complete the plagiarism course and test online before submitting any work. The issue of gender distribution for C modules vs A and B will be monitored. If there is evidence of a continuing problem we will raise this issue with the RCVS to work them to find remedies.

Action Required:

Meeting with RVC Academic Registrar planned for late March. Increase information about plagiarism on Learn. All candidates have been advised to do the plagiarism test and it is now compulsory for them to do so. Most instances of plagiarism involve academic sloppiness rather than intent to deceive and arise from the candidates engaging with academic scholarship after a long break from study or indeed with the type of academic scholarship they have had little or no experience of (depending on where they graduated from). The instances of plagiarism are few considering the large numbers of pieces of work submitted for assessment.

Action Deadline:

30-Jun-2015

Action assigned to:

Jill Maddison and Joanne Jarvis

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

Yes

Additional comments, particularly if your answer was no:

Response from college requested: NO

5.2 An acceptable response has been made

Yes

Additional comments, particularly if your answer was no:

Response from college requested: NO

5.3 I approved the papers for the Examination

Additional comments, particularly if your answer was no:

Response from college requested: NO

5.4 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:

Response from college requested: NO

5.5 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:

Response from college requested: NO

5.6 Candidates were considered impartially and fairly

Yes

Additional comments, particularly if your answer was no:

Bringing an 'appeal' to the full Board of Examiners was new. Previously all 'appeals' had been considered by a small group and the result of the 'appeal' relayed to the External Examiner. The risk of bringing an appeal to the full Board might allow bias to dictate the outcome because the 'appeal' was being addressed differently.

The Board however discussed the grounds for allowing a third attempt in this case and referred it back to the smaller group for a decision.

Response from college requested: **YES**

COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Jill Maddison

Course Director Response:

The issue with the appeal being dealt with at a full board was noted. It was a very useful opportunity to receive the board's views on such matters and will inform future appeal decisions.

Action Required:

Appeal to be heard by mini exam board as for previous appeals.

Action Deadline:

28-Feb-2015

Action assigned to:

Jill Maddison, Joanne Jarvis, relevant Module leader, Matthew Pead or deputy

5.7 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:

Response from college requested: **NO**

5.8 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:

As far as it is possible to know.

Response from college requested: **NO**

5.9 I have received enough support to carry out my role

Yes

Additional comments, particularly if your answer was no:

Response from college requested: NO

5.10 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:

Response from college requested: NO

5.11 Appropriate procedures and processes have been followed

Yes

Additional comments, particularly if your answer was no:

Response from college requested: NO

5.12 The processes for assessment and the determination of awards are sound

Yes

Additional comments, particularly if your answer was no:

Response from college requested: 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:

Do you have any suggestions for improvements based on experience at other institutes? We may use information provided in our annual external examining report:

No. This is an assessment-only modular course and the assessment is generally excellent.

Response from college requested: **NO**

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)

All aspects of the course management for the C-modules has been well-thought out and uniformly applied across a wide array of modules.

Response from college requested: **NO**

