

## ANNUAL QUALITY IMPROVEMENT REPORT 17/18

### Appendix 3: External Examiners' report

#### MSc Veterinary Epidemiology

This appendix contains Course Director's/Year Leader's responses to 2017/18 External Examiners' comments and updates to actions from 2016/17 External Examiners' report (if applicable).

As Course Director/Year Leader 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](mailto:afilipovic@rvc.ac.uk), 01707666938

Appendix 3 consists of:

a.	Updates to actions from previous years' reports
b.	2017/18 Collaborative Annual Report with responses from Course Director

Update to actions from 2016/17 External Examiners Report:

Question	External Examiners' comments	Course Director's response & Action	Update in 2017/18
<p>3.7 Please provide any additional comments and recommendations regarding the procedures</p>	<p>Planning of students projects is difficult as, in common with all research, unexpected problems sometimes arise. One are where many students could have improved their projects dissertations and viva voce performance was to provide a more critical assessment of their work, highlighting both strengths and weaknesses. We recommend students include more reflection within their dissertations regarding the shortcomings of their work, the potential impacts of these, and ways they would suggest improving this if they were to do the project again. These are important areas of learning and students (and examiners) should be made aware that these are likely to be picked up for discussion in the viva voce</p>	<p>Students are given project guidance which includes this advice. It will be particularly emphasised in future. Many students did follow it!</p> <p>Action Required:</p> <p>Emphasise to students the importance of reflecting on their study's limitations and weaknesses during the writing of the report and in preparation for the viva.</p> <p>Action Deadline:</p> <p>01-Jul-2018</p> <p>Action assigned to:</p> <p>Course Director</p>	<p>Completed:</p> <p>A session on report writing and the viva has been timetabled for the third term where the importance of reflecting on their study's limitations and weaknesses during the writing of the report and in preparation for the viva will be emphasised to the students.</p>
<p>4.9 I have received enough support to carry out my role</p>	<p>Both external examiners found the RVC online learning system somewhat difficult to navigate. It would be helpful, and save considerable time, if a simple method could be used to share documents - perhaps simple email of a zipped folder (password protected if needed).</p>	<p>Examiners' comment noted: Exams office will be asked to do this next year if it is possible</p> <p>Action Assigned to:</p> <p>Exams Officer</p>	<p>Completed</p> <p>Individual links are provided to the OCM page, the course Learn page and one to the guidance documents. It is not feasible to provide downloads from OCM but exams office is on hand to provide face to face support to external examiners once they arrive at RVC to go through course material.</p>

# Collaborative Report

Exam board meeting: 24-Sep-2018

**MSc in Veterinary Epidemiology, 2017/18**

**Lead examiner: Professor Ann Lindberg**

**Collaborating examiner(s): Professor Alasdair Cook**

## The Programme

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

### **1.1 Course content**

#### **Professor A.C**

Insofar as it was possible, I undertook an overview of the course content and consider it appropriate for the programme.

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

### **1.3 Teaching methods**

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

### 1.5 Please provide any additional comments and recommendations regarding the Programme

The RVC/LSHTM MSc in Veterinary Epidemiology is a comprehensive and ambitious programme which produces veterinary professionals of great value to animal and public health authorities, animal industries as well as academia. It could benefit the programme if the links to LSHTM are further developed so that the programme is perceived as a truly joint programme - including harmonisation of student administration.

**Professor A.C**

The collaboration and interaction with LSHTM is excellent.

## 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**

**Professor A.C**

From my knowledge of other MSc courses in UK, I consider that students on this course perform at or above their peers

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

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

The students belonging to the 2017/2018 have performed well, and with less spread than previous cohorts that the lead examiner has observed. After looking at the individual selected assignments this appears to be a true reflection of the quality of the students, and not related to the assessment procedure.

**Professor A.C**

I fully concur with these comments

Please comment, as appropriate, on:

### 3.1 Assessment methods (relevance to learning objectives and curriculum)

The procedure for developing the course papers appears to be rigorous and the questions are of the type that require a good understanding of the subject matter, both technical skills and contextual understanding. The research projects are on topics that are relevant, with sometimes advanced data sets to manage and analyse. The collaboration with APHA in this respect seems to work well and is, in my understanding, an asset to both parties.

### 3.2 Extent to which assessment procedures are rigorous

Assessment procedures seem highly rigorous and fair. The use of rubric scores allow tutors and students to have a transparent dialogue on the outcome of the assessments.

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

### 3.4 Standard of marking

The marking procedure seems to work well. There are few situations where assessors show great discrepancy, and the reasons why seems justifiable/understandable. It is good that the agreed score is a result of a dialogue between the assessors rather than a standard average.

### 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)

Yes

**Professor A.C**

Yes

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

**3.7 Please provide any additional comments and recommendations regarding the procedures**

## General Statements

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

Yes

**Additional comments, particularly if your answer was no:**

**Professor A.C**

Not applicable

**4.2 An acceptable response has been made**

**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:**

Two of them.



**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:**

The two external examiners jointly had the opportunity to scrutinise an adequate sample of students' work. One of the examiners could only look at results from courses where the assessments were available on Learn, and could not see the material from LSHTM.

As an external examiner it is good if one can plan the audit before actually going through the materials. Such planning is done by looking at a compilation of the individual assessments, by course, by student, and by assessor. We want to make a selection based on outliers (e.g. very good, very poor, large discrepancy), and we also want to target students that are borderline in some sense. If this planning can be done in advance, more time can be spent on the actual material. It would be most helpful if the course administration could compile the results in such a way that this risk-based selection can be done in an easy way. The way that the material is presented on Learn means that data has to be downloaded, imported, edited - by assessment and compiled to provide the necessary overview. This can be improved and the external examiners could be invited to provide a suggestion of a desirable report format for this purpose.

Thank you for your comments in relation to providing you with a specific selection of students to review. We do not provide pre-determined student scripts for External Examiners to review in order to ensure there is full transparency within the quality assurance process. We will endeavour to provide the External Examiners with result spreadsheets that show results for individual modules / assessment but also the complete overview for the course, although this will be outside of the online marking system. This will then allow the External Examiners to select any outliers that are of concern.

Professor A.C

I agree with these comments

**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:**

Professor A.C

YES

**4.6 Candidates were considered impartially and fairly**

**Yes**

**Additional comments, particularly if your answer was no:**

**Professor A.C**

YES

**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:**

**Professor A.C**

YES

**4.8 The standards of student performance are comparable with similar programmes or subjects in other UK institutions with which I am familiar**

**Additional comments, particularly if your answer was no:**

**Professor A.C**

YES

#### 4.9 I have received enough support to carry out my role

Yes

**Additional comments, particularly if your answer was no:**

The course administrators do a great job and are most helpful. Note that more attention could be paid to ensuring that logins, credentials etc function without any problem, if possible.

**Professor A.C**

Although a few logistical problems were encountered, these were overcome thanks to the excellent assistance of the admin staff - thank you!

#### 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:**

**Professor A.C**

YES

#### 4.11 Appropriate procedures and processes have been followed

**Additional comments, particularly if your answer was no:**

**Professor A.C**

To the best of my knowledge, yes

**4.12 The processes for assessment and the determination of awards are sound**

**Yes**

**Additional comments, particularly if your answer was no:**

**Professor A.C**

YES

## 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:**

In the Exam Board, we discussed the use of Skype for attending the meeting, in order for more tutors to be able to attend. The potential that it could be regarded as a breach of confidentiality was mentioned. We suggest this should be further explored and that means of managing such concerns should be found, given the needs of today's digital society.

**Professor A.C**

Agreed

**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)**