

## ANNUAL QUALITY IMPROVEMENT REPORT 2019/20

### Appendix 3: External Examiners' report

## BVetMed Year 1

This appendix contains Year Leader's responses to 2019/20 External Examiners' comments and updates to actions from previous External Examiners' reports (if applicable).

As Course Director 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 – <i>no actions from previous year requiring a response!</i>
b.	2019/20 Collaborative Annual Report with responses from Course Director

# Collaborative Report

Exam board meeting: 01-Jul-2020

**Bachelor of Veterinary Medicine, Year 1, 2019/20**

**Lead examiner: Dr Karin Mueller**

**Collaborating examiner(s): Mr David Kilroy, Dr David Bainbridge, Dr Ian Jeffcoate**

## The Programme

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

### 1.1 Course content

This is appropriate for the course and the qualification awarded at its end.

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

Overall, learning objectives were achieved and candidates were able to demonstrate this achievement. The students' performance is a credit to both the students and the college, given the extraordinary circumstances leading up to these exams and the move to a novel examination format.

### 1.3 Teaching methods

The standard achieved by the majority of the candidates suggests that the teaching is appropriate and of high quality.

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

The online platform appeared to have worked well, with very few technical glitches. Good consideration was given to students potentially affected by technical issues.

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

Comments by part of EE team: the written papers constituted a good thorough test. That said we feel that the MCQ questions need reviewing and refreshing as the same questions have been in use for some years now. Since the students haven't had as much laboratory time this year and have not done the oral tests for the exam it will be necessary to give them increased opportunity to catch up in this valuable aspect of their education. Hopefully this can be achieved next year, if not, deferred until later.

**Year Leader's Response: Dr Sarah Channon**

Thank you for your positive comments on the exam process this year, and on the achievement of our students. We use a bank of MCQs and continually review the MCQ question bank to ensure that questions are up to date and relevant, but agree that in some areas we could increase the number of questions available. A very small number of questions are repeatedly used by design, since they are helpful in acting as an aid to standard setting and tracking the performance across successive cohorts of students. We feel this is useful. The MCQ paper undergoes scrutiny internally from strand leaders to ensure questions are suitable and then is made available to the externals for comment. We are aware that students from this cohort will not have had the experience of undertaking summative ISF oral examinations in BVetMed 1. ISF orals are planned for 2020-21, but clearly this year group will need support in their preparation for the BVetMed 2 ISFs. We are currently exploring how we can achieve this alongside discussing the format of the 2020-21 oral exams.

**Actions:**

Ensure new MCQs are called for in November call for exam questions – Year 1 leader

Finalise plans for 2020-21 ISF orals – Year leaders of BVM1, 2 and GAB; Director of Assessment; Head of Exams

Create formative experience or sufficient support for BVM2 students ahead of their summative Year 2 ISF Oral – BvetMed 2 co-leaders

## 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

This is similar to performance at comparable institutions.

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

There was surprisingly little mark escalation considering the open book nature of the exam, and the mark distribution graphs show quite normal pattern with reasonable discrimination achieved.

Most repeating / resitting students demonstrated adequate performance. The fail rates in Gateway students continues to cause some concern. However, the college clearly is not complacent about this with continued review of all aspects that may underlie this performance or require adjustments. We support the suggestion by DB to also interview those Gateway students that performed well (in addition to those that underperformed).

#### Year Leader's Response: Dr Sarah Channon

Thank you for your comments. The RVC is committed to widening participation and ensuring the success of our Gateway students. A meeting was held on 4th May 2020 to discuss how gateway students can be further supported through their BVetMed 1 studies and beyond. Plans for the future include:

- More timetabled problem solving study workshops in BVetMed1. Asking lecturers to present their DL sessions as a series of Problem Solving Question opportunities and to signpost them as such. – Action BVetMed Year 1 leader
- More practice for the ISF oral exam. ISF orals will be introduced in the Gateway year as the ICA for the Animal Husbandry module. Action – Gateway course director
- Increased opportunity for self assessment, such as quizzes. It is hoped that the blended learning format will facilitate this. Action – Strand leaders
- Increased availability of practice exam papers. This has been implemented.
- Access to BVetMed1 course handbook from the minute students complete the Gateway year. This has not been possible for 2020-21 due to the considerable changes to course material in response to the move to a blended format of teaching. We will look to implement this in the future. Action – BVM1 year leader; course support

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

The students' performance is a credit to both the students and the college, given the extraordinary circumstances leading up to these exams and the move to a novel examination format.

#### Year Leader's Response: Dr Sarah Channon

Thank you this is pleasing to hear.

Please comment, as appropriate, on:

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

The range and style of written assessments tested different skills of the students well.

### 3.2 Extent to which assessment procedures are rigorous

The college's examination team is to be congratulated on the creation of a successful online assessment in a very limited time. The exam paper was carefully constructed to provide a useful learning experience for students. We are pleased to see that both parts of paper 2 are now standard set.

#### Year Leader's Response: Dr Sarah Channon

Thank you, this has been a huge team effort at a challenging time.

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

This was consistent with that framework

### 3.4 Standard of marking

We compliment all staff on the detailed feedback they gave on candidates' efforts.

**Year Leader's Response** This is especially pleasing to hear since this has been a subject of concern in the past. It is thanks to the external examiners for prompting us to address this issue, and those who have worked hard to ensure staff are trained in providing feedback and annotations. The move to online assessment has also certainly facilitated a higher quality of feedback.

### 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 move to a formative, open book online assessment was perfectly acceptable given the constraints caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. We would like to thank the RVC examination team for providing detailed explanation and justification and regular updates on proposed changes. The impact this adaptation has on progression and award classification is well thought-out and the "Extraordinary Regulations Principles in Response to Coronavirus/COVID-19".

#### Year Leader's Response: Dr Sarah Channon

Thank you for your support

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

Performance in the newly-introduced research paper based Integrated Reasoning Question was good, supported by solid and extensive formative opportunities students had to practice this type of assessment. It was reassuring to see that the move away from the Essay did not lead to a lowering of marks, as feared based on IRQ performances in previous years (a particular concern of the EE team last year). The weighting between parts A and B is justified for year 1 students, as is the proposed shift in weighting for higher years.

#### **Year Leader's Response: Dr Sarah Channon**

Thank you for this helpful feedback

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

Despite the open book format, we would recommend that subject leads or question setters review questions (and model answers) as usual in terms of performance and quality.

Given that this cohort has not had exposure to the ISF Oral examination, expectations for their Y2 or Y3 performance in this type of exam may have to be adjusted, and staff should be briefed accordingly.

The support structure for underperforming students in general is solid, as is the protocol on progression under the Covid-adaptations. Good consideration is given to appropriate follow-up with students that achieved a narrow pass, too.

#### **Year Leader's Response: Dr Sarah Channon**

There are no plans to have an open book format of exam for 2020-21. This was an interim measure for 2019-20 due to the emergency response to covid. Summative exams in 2020-21 will be proctored. The examinations in 2019-20 however were reviewed both internally and externally by our usual processes, since they were set prior to the lockdown conditions imposed by COVID19.

As per our comments in 1.5, ISF oral exposure (or lack of) for incoming BVetMed 2 students is being addressed. Thank you for your comments on the support structure for students.

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

Yes

Additional comments, particularly if your answer was no:

4.2 An acceptable response has been made

Yes

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:

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:

**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:**

IJ was not able to attend the online BoE because of technical issues.

**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 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:**

**Dr I.J**

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:**

As noted earlier, staff and students responded well to the Covid arrangements which necessarily arose quite late in the year.

**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)**

