ANNUAL QUALITY IMPROVEMENT REPORT 2019/20

Appendix 3: External Examiners' report

BVetMed Year 2

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, 01707666938

Appendix 3 consists of:

a.	Updates to actions from previous years' reports
b.	2019/20 Collaborative Annual Report with responses from Course Director

a. Updates to actions from previous years' reports

Report Question	External Examiners' comments & suggested actions	Course Director/Year Leader's response & Action	Update in 2019/20
3.2 Extent to which assessment procedures are rigorous	Oral exam (ISF): .There remain some differences in the information provided to the students regarding the level of questions and when this is achieved. We suggest that it is mandatory that the students are informed when they have achieved a level 1, 2 or 3 as there was a lack of consistency in providing this information.	Your comments regarding the ISF are taken on board. We will highlight to examiners that signposting of a student's progress through the various levels of the exam is an expectation. **Action Required:** Amendment to ISF examiner briefing and training to ensure that examiners know to signpost levels explicitly. Amended briefing to Integrated Concepts examiners **Action Deadline:** 01-Mar-2019 **Action assigned to:** ISF exam coordinator; Exams office; BVetMed Year 2 Leader	N/A no ISF Orals exams ran in 2019-20. Action rolled over.
3.4 Standard of marking	A question in paper 2 was late being marked which did delay the ability to review the student performance data across the assessments…… ….. The application of standard setting should now be adopted to paper 2 and every effort made to have the marking completed for the external examiners to review.	Thankyou for your comments. It is our intention to standard set paper 2 for future assessments. We apologise for the late marking of one question, which did delay the availability of accurate mark sheets for the externals on this occasion. We will endeavour to remind individuals of the importance of meeting marking deadlines. **Action Required:** Formalise standard setting of paper 2. We will endeavour to remind individuals of the importance of meeting marking deadlines. **Action Deadline:** 01-Jun-2020 **Action assigned to:** Director of Assessment; Exams Office; Heads of Department where required.	Completed
3.6 Opinion on changes to the assessment procedures from previous years in which you have examined	. A new box on the ISF oral mark sheet which aims to identify those students who may benefit from support in development of their communication skills is a useful addition, though staff may require guidance on its function and use	We agree that guidance on the level of concern required to generate use of the communication skills box would be useful for examiners. We will seek to clarify this for next year. **Action Required:** Ensure the use of the	N/A no ISF Orals exams ran in 2019-20. Action rolled over.

		communication skills concern box is explained to examiners **Action Deadline:** 01-Mar-2020 **Action assigned to:** ISF exams coordinator; Exams Office; BVetMed Year 2 Leader	

Collaborative Report

Exam board meeting: 01-Jul-2020

Bachelor of Veterinary Medicine, Year 2, 2019/20

Lead examiner: Dr Richard Payne

Collaborating examiner(s): Dr Mark Mclaughlin, Dr Charlotte Miller, Dr Hanne Jahns

The Programme

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

1.1 Course content

The course would appear to be appropriate for the needs of the students.

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

A significant proportion of the teaching material was delivered up to the implementation of lockdown and a number of summative assessments were completed. Teaching material (lectures and videos) were accessible through LEARN so that most ILOs were met.

1.3 Teaching methods

Not truly assessable this year due to C19 restrictions. It is assumed that the transition to online teaching delivered the required LOs.

COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Sarah Channon

Course Director Response:

Many thanks for your comments. We are confident that the emergency remote teaching, employed in response to COVID19, was effective and that it delivered the required LOs. In particular, for this year group, only the Integrated Concepts weeks of teaching, and communication skills sessions were affected by lockdown restrictions, and these were able to be delivered effectively remotely. In fact, the students commented on how useful the telemedicine aspect of the comms skills sessions was.

Action Required:

Action Deadline:

Action assigned to:

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

Access to some resources that required hands on (anatomy specimens) was prevented and the oral examinations cancelled.

COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Sarah Channon

Course Director Response:

All anatomy teaching had been completed prior to lockdown restrictions and so no access to these resources was required by students. The oral examinations were cancelled, due to insufficient time to move these online. These will be held online if required in 2020-21.

Action Required:

Action Deadline:

Action assigned to:

1.5 Please provide any additional comments and recommendations regarding the Programme

COVID-19 restrictions have had a profound effect on the externals' ability to assess the programme.

Dr M.M

COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Sarah Channon

Course Director Response:

We appreciate this, and are very grateful regardless for the efforts of the external examiners and their willingness to oversee the examinations in such challenging circumstances. It should be noted that examinations this year were formative in response to COVID19 so this effect on the external examiners role will not have translated to a negative impact on student progression or achievement.

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

Student performance would appear to be on a par with previous years.

COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Sarah Channon

Course Director Response:

We agree, and in the circumstances this is reassuring.

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

This was difficult to assess since there were no anatomy orals examinations which would normally reflect the depth of student knowledge and communication skills. However, the performance on the written formative examination would suggest that the spectrum of the quality of students was similar to previous years.

Dr M.M

COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Sarah Channon

Course Director Response:

Thankyou for your comments. We agree that the profile of marks and performance of students was similar to previous cohorts. These students did have the opportunity to develop their communication skills during comms skills training sessions in Summer Term, and their anatomy knowledge is also assessed within written assessments. We are therefore not concerned about the knowledge base of the majority of students as they enter Year 3 of the programme. Where formative exam marks were low, students are receiving support and guidance.

Action Required:

Action Deadline:

Action assigned to:

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

Seven students were identified as giving cause for concern. It is recommended that these students be highlighted to their tutors and additional assistance provided where appropriate.

COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Sarah Channon

Course Director Response:

Thankyou, this has been done, and a handover to third year tutors is underway.

Action Required:

Action Deadline:

Action assigned to:

Assessment Procedures

Please comment, as appropriate, on:

3.1 Assessment methods (relevance to learning objectives and curriculum)

As all assessments were online, the usual practical/handson assessments could not be performed. Although the assessments were formative, adjustments were made to the exam formats so that they were compatible with this procedure, specifically the removal of the essay format but retaining the MCQ and paper 2. These papers were relevant to the ILOs covered up to the point of lockdown.

COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Sarah Channon

Course Director Response:

Thankyou for your comments. This is correct. There were no further examinable LOs covered for this year group during or after lockdown, and so the original exam papers that were set earlier in the year and approved by the externals were able to be used.

Action Required:

Action Deadline:

Action assigned to:

3.2 Extent to which assessment procedures are rigorous

Within the limitations of online assessment at short notice, the assessments appear to be robust.

COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Sarah Channon

Course Director Response:

Thankyou, we agree with this statement.

Action Required:

Action Deadline:

Action assigned to:

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

The level of assessments appears to be consistent with other instates delivering a Veterinary Medicine programme.

COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Sarah Channon

Course Director Response:

Thankyou, this is reassuring.

Action Required:

Action Deadline:

Action assigned to:

3.4 Standard of marking

Assessment of a sample of scripts from the formative exams and the research project found the marking to be consistent with appropriate feedback provided.

COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Sarah Channon

Course Director Response:

Thankyou for your oversight of the marking, your comments are pleasing to hear.

Action Required:

Action Deadline:

Action assigned to:

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

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

The effects of the COVID-19 restrictions have been far-reaching. The RVC team have produced excellent adaptations to these trying times to ensure a fair assessment of the students.

COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Sarah Channon

Course Director Response:

Thankyou, this has been a big team effort, and the efforts of our externals in helping us deliver the assessments are very gratefully received.

Action Required:

Action Deadline:

Action assigned to:

3.7 Please provide any additional comments and recommendations regarding the procedures

Dr M.M

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:

Due to the COVID-19 situation, the format for assessment and the delivery of the programme had to undergo a dramatic adaptation. Comparison to last year is therefore not valid.

COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Sarah Channon

Course Director Response:

We acknowledge that some of our actions from last year that arose in response to your comments will need to be rolled over into the next academic year.

Action Required:

Roll over 2018-19 actions from external examiners report into Annual Quality Improvement Report for 2019-20

Action Deadline:

02-Nov-2020

Action assigned to:

BVetMed Year 2 Leader

4.2 An acceptable response has been made

Additional comments, particularly if your answer was no:

Dr M.M

See 4.1

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

No

Additional comments, particularly if your answer was no:

Overall mark sheets were assessed, and although at relatively short notice, access to all exam scripts and research project was made available online through the LEARN system.

COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Sarah Channon

Course Director Response:

We appreciate that this was a busy time for yourselves. Mark sheets were provided as soon as they were available, in keeping with our usual processes. External examiners were provided with full access to all student exam questions, answers and feedback via RVC Learn.

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:

Would appear to be consistent with previous years despite C19.

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)

No

Additional comments, particularly if your answer was no:

As above - unavoidable inability to visit the RVC.

COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Sarah Channon

Course Director Response:

We understand that you would have preferred to visit our campus, however under lockdown restrictions this was not possible. Our campuses were depopulated in response to COVID19. We believe that all other information that you required to fulfil your role was provided but we would be happy to provide any missing information on request.

Action Required:

Action Deadline:

Action assigned to:

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:

At the University of Glasgow, a similar formative assessment exam procedure was adopted for 2nd (and 1st) year students with all progressing to the next year of the programme. At the University of Nottingham veterinary school, the online assessments were completed in an open-book scenario. Mean marks were higher as expected but the assessments were deemed to be a fair judge of students' knowledge. There are variations across the UK based Vet Schools and it would be ideal if the experience of the different institutes so that positive and negative lessons can be shared in the near future.

COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Sarah Channon

Course Director Response:

We are pleased to hear that the necessary modifications that we made to examinations in 19-20 reflect those that occurred elsewhere. Evaluation of the variations in format across the vet schools would make a very interesting project.

Action Required:

BVetMed 2 (now BVetMed 1) Year leader to investigate whether such a project is ongoing

Action Deadline:

30-Oct-2020

Action assigned to:

BVetMed Year 1 Leader

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)