
Certificate of Advanced Veterinary Practice – EXTERNAL EXAMINERS REPORTS

Responses to 2015/16 External Examiners' Comments

To be considered at the Teaching Quality Committee Meeting on: 14th June 2016

- a. **2015/16 Individual Report written by External Examiner:**
Carole Clarke

Individual Report

Exam board meeting: 24-Feb-2016

RCVS Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Practice, 2015/16 (Carole Clarke)

Ms Carole Clarke

The Programme

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

1.1 Course content

The curriculum is set by the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons for the A and B Modules. Plans are in place to increase the choice of modules at B and C level.

Response from college requested: NO

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

Set out in the module descriptors for the RCVS CertAVP and in the RVC published module outlines which are clear and comprehensive and relevant to general practice. Essay topics are relevant to practice and give appropriate choice for candidates.

Response from college requested: NO

1.3 Teaching methods

Modules are assessment only. Formative assessment is offered for all submissions, supported by increasing resources on RVC Learn.

Response from college requested: NO

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

Not all candidates access these resources fully, despite advice. Resources are signposted where appropriate in assessment feedback. The introduction of a requirement to complete the plagiarism test appears to have resulted in improvement to performance by candidates with regard to referencing and avoiding plagiarism. The new IT webinar for CertAVP students and specific induction list of resources are appropriate for student development as they start the programme.

Response from college requested: NO

1.5 Please provide any additional comments and recommendations regarding the Programme

In the A module, where similar feedback remarks are made to several candidates regarding essay structure, approach or content (for example 40 and 45), consideration should be given to providing candidates with improved guidance before they write the essay, to assist them in meeting the marking criteria. This would be particularly helpful for the A module summary essay.
The programme underwent Periodic Review in 2015.

Response from college requested: YES

COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Jill Maddison

Course Director Response:

This advice has been noted and will be progressed. The assessor of essay 40 has written guidance notes for the essay and these are now available to the candidates. We shall ask the assessor of the summary essay to provide further guidance as well.

Action Required:

Follow up with assessor of essay 45

Action Deadline:

31-Mar-2016

Action assigned to:

Jill Maddison

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

Comparative data on success in the RCVS synoptic examination would be helpful, should they become available.

Response from college requested: NO

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

Knowledge, reflection and evidence of critical thinking skills are very good at the top of the range and there is evidence that formative feedback is effective in improving skills of those at the bottom as they progress through the course. Grading criteria are clear and transparent and the spread of results is justifiable.

Response from college requested: NO

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

RVC Learn resources are available to students to improve their performance but are not always used. The consistency of appropriate referencing in student essays has improved.

Response from college requested: NO

Assessment Procedures

Please comment, as appropriate, on:

3.1 Assessment methods (relevance to learning objectives and curriculum)

Assessment methods are appropriate and feedback is relevant to the specific learning objectives.

Response from college requested: **NO**

3.2 Extent to which assessment procedures are rigorous

The Common Grading Scheme with descriptors for reflective writing and clinical case reports supports consistent marking. Detailed constructive feedback directs the student towards specific improvements in most cases reviewed, although some assessors do not give such comprehensive guidance for improvement as others, particularly for those achieving higher marks. Feedback training for all assessors may improve consistency, although time constraints may be a factor for those marking popular essays and marking essays with particularly low marks. Standard paragraphs for feedback (used by some assessors) should be used with caution if feedback is to be personal and relevant (see also 1.5).

Response from college requested: **YES**

COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Jill Maddison

Course Director Response:

We are grateful for the examiner highlighting these issues relating to feedback quality. We will liaise with specific assessors where appropriate to emphasise to them that CertAVP assessment is not just of the candidate's learning but for their learning.

Action Required:

Further guidance to CertAVP assessors about the role of feedback for the candidates' learning and the importance of providing personalised and constructive feedback

Action Deadline:

31-Mar-2016

Action assigned to:

Jill Maddison and Joanne Jarvis

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

Assessment is consistent with the framework for post graduate level 7

Response from college requested: **NO**

3.4 Standard of marking

Good and consistent with the common grading scheme descriptors

Response from college requested: **NO**

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. Candidates are considered fairly and administration is conducted efficiently with adequate data to inform discussion at exam board. The examination board is well attended.

Response from college requested: NO

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

Candidates may find the changes in pass mark in the last two years confusing but the issues have been considered and marks seem to be applied fairly. The revised grading scheme descriptors have aided fair assessment and appropriate feedback.

Response from college requested: NO

3.7 Please provide any additional comments and recommendations regarding the procedures

Delays in receiving feedback are commented on by participants on the A and B modules. With a two year module enrolment, and 4 submission dates per year, having to wait 8 weeks for feedback causes frustration for some candidates. The policy of one assessor per essay question makes shorter turn around time difficult for more popular essays. Consideration could be given to increasing the number of assessors for popular essays and using IT to help assessors plan and manage their time to reduce assessment turn round.

Response from college requested: YES

COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Jill Maddison

Course Director Response:

We agree that the 8 week turnaround time for assessment is too long and is well in breach of the college's feedback policy.

Action Required:

We will put in place plans to ensure that no Module A assessor receives more than 6 essays to mark, that reminders about when essays are due to arrive and when feedback is due back are automatically place in essays diaries (assuming they accept the invitation!). Once the structure is in place we will introduce a 4 week turnaround for Module A work (as there now is for Module B)

Action Deadline:

31-Jul-2016

Action assigned to:

Jill Maddison and Joanne Jarvis

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:

Response from college requested: NO

4.2 An acceptable response has been made

Yes

Additional comments, particularly if your answer was no:

Response from college requested: 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:

Sufficient work from both modules and in differing subject areas at all levels was reviewed.

Response from college requested: 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:

Response from college requested: NO

4.6 Candidates were considered impartially and fairly**Yes****Additional comments, particularly if your answer was no:**

Appeals were dealt with fairly. It is not clear whether the option of having a different assessor for a resubmitted essay is routinely available and this requires clarification.

Response from college requested: YES

COURSE DIRECTOR: Dr Jill Maddison

Course Director Response:

Yes -I agree that this needs to be clarified and a policy developed.

Action Required:

Formalise a policy in relation on the assessor for a 3rd submission

Action Deadline:

31-Jul-2016

Action assigned to:

Jill Maddison and Joanne Jarvis

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:**

Response from college requested: NO

4.9 I have received enough support to carry out my role**Yes****Additional comments, particularly if your answer was no:**

Administrative support, RVC Learn resources and interaction with programme academic staff have all been excellent thank you

Response from college requested: 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:**

Any additional information I have requested has been provided.

Response from college requested: NO

4.11 Appropriate procedures and processes have been followed

Yes

Additional comments, particularly if your answer was no:

Response from college requested: NO

4.12 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:

There is an open culture of continual improvement on the Cert AVP Programme with acknowledgement and discussion of procedure and assessment issues as well as the quality of the student experience at Examination Board and Course Management Committee meetings,

Response from college requested: NO