**ANNUAL QUALITY IMPROVEMENT REPORT 2022/23**

**Appendix 3: External Examiners’ report**

**MSc Wild Animal Biology and Wild Animal Health**

This appendix contains Course Directors’ responses to 2022/23 External Examiner’s comments and updates to actions from previous External Examiners’ reports (if applicable).

As Course Directors please ensure you reflect on External Examiner’s 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:

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| a. | Updates to actions from previous years’ reports |
| b. | 22/23 Collaborative Annual Report with responses from Course Directors |

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| **Report Question** | **External Examiners’ comment in 2021/22** | **Year Leader’s response and actions** | **Update in 2022/23** |
| **4.4   I was able to scrutinise an adequate sample of students’ work and marks to enable me to carry out my duties** | more time to do a more comprehensive job, would have been helpful. | We appreciate this and will try to provide more time next academic year, including inviting External Examiners to conduct their work in person one day before the Exam Board (as used to be the case before pandemic restrictions were in place)  Action Required:  Exams team to liaise with external examiners in advance of the 2022-23 exam boards over their preferred method and location of work.  Action deadline:  May 2023 (ahead of Interim exam board)  Action assigned to:  Emma Rosenberg as the course examination officer. |  |
| **4.9   I have received enough training and support to carry out my role** | Getting access to the RVC's virtual learning environment has been problematic both in June and September. | We apologise for the issues encountered. This was an issue across all courses, while RVC LEARN was implementing a different sign-on function across the board. All reported issues were resolved quickly. We don’t anticipate this to be a problem in the future. External Examiners are now emailed directly by RVC LEARN team with usernames and passwords.  In terms of training for External Examiners, in addition to the online induction, we have organized a f2f training session for all new and existing external examiners in Feb 2023. Unfortunately, not all examiners invited could attend due to other engagements. The recorded material will be shared with all RVC external examiners. The next RVC Examiners forum is planned to take place on Thursday 8th February 2024. | **Completed.**  There have been no reported issues with accessing Learn in 22/23.  New external examiner for WAB WAH attended f2f training session in February 2023. They have also signed up to attend f2f training in February 2024. |

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | |  |  |  |  | |  | |  | | --- | | **The Programme** | | | | |  |  |  |  | |  |  | |  | | --- | | **Please comment, as appropriate, on the following aspects of the programme:** | | | |  |  |  |  | |  |  |  | |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | **1.1   Course content** | | | | | |  |  |  |  | |  | |  | | --- | | The course content was relevant, and covered current issues in conservation. | | | | |  |  |  |  | | |  | | --- | |  | | | |  | | --- | |  | |  | |  |  |  |  | | | |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | **1.2   Learning objectives, and the extent to which they were met** | | | | | |  |  |  |  | |  | |  | | --- | | The learning objectives stated in the programme specifications and the MSc Wild Animal central area on RVC learn, appear to have been covered as judged by the range of exam questions asked and the answers given. The learning objectives were stated by the majority of questions in the model exam papers | | | | |  |  |  |  | | |  | | --- | |  | | | |  | | --- | |  | |  | |  |  |  |  | | | |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | **1.3   Teaching methods** | | | | | |  |  |  |  | |  | |  | | --- | | Teaching methods were a mixture of lectures, practical classes and visits, problem based learning, seminars, tutorials and debates . As an external examiner it was difficult to find out any more about the different methods other than what was stated in the programme specification and the master of Science Wild animal Central MSC WAB WAH on RVC learn and a few comments at the first examiners meeting regarding a missed visit and the odd discussion about a problem based learning scenario. In future years it would be useful to get feedback from the students on the success of the different teaching methods and whether they made use of the online resources. | | | | |  |  |  |  | | |  | | --- | |  | | | |  | | --- | |  | |  | |  |  |  |  | | | |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | **1.4   Resources (in so far as they affected the assessment)** | | | | | |  |  |  |  | |  | |  | | --- | | It was not possible to tell from the material on RVC learn what resources were available to the students (specific to the programme ) other than : Blended learning surveys, careers, chaplaincy, digital skills, 5 ways to be well. imaging suite, IT resources, library information, the Proctorio test area and a large amount of material ( learning objectives, lectures etc ) on the master of Science Wild animal Central MSC WAB WAH on RVC learn | | | | |  |  |  |  | | |  | | --- | |  | | | |  | | --- | |  | |  | |  |  |  |  | | | |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | **1.5   Please provide any additional comments and recommendations regarding the Programme** | | | | | |  |  |  |  | |  | |  | | --- | | A huge amount of information was available to the students on RVC learn at the beginning of this course. This included introductions to areas the students may not have been familiar with such as problem based learning , concept maps and research skills. A lot of effort has been put into providing information on orientation, booking taxis for trips, who to meet for various sessions and what to expect. from the course. It was also made clear that students can give feedback as well as receiving it | | | | |  |  |  |  | | |  | | --- | |  | | | |  | | --- | |  | |  | |  |  |  |  | | | |  |  |  |  | | | |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | |  |  |  |  | |  | |  | | --- | | **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** | | | | | |  |  |  |  | |  | |  | | --- | | There was a wide range in peformance, possibly greater than other Msc Courses , where the majority of students had English as their first language . Student performance on this course appears to have been just as wide ranging over the last few years. On the whole student performance was acceptable. | | | | |  |  |  |  | | |  | | --- | |  | | | |  | | --- | |  | |  | |  |  |  |  | | | |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | **2.2   Quality of candidates’ knowledge and skills, with particular reference to those at the top, middle or bottom of the range** | | | | | |  |  |  |  | |  | |  | | --- | | This was as expected, with students at the top of the range having a level of knowledge and skills assoicated with a first class degree, while those at the bottom or the range failed the course. | | | | |  |  |  |  | | |  | | --- | |  | | | |  | | --- | |  | |  | |  |  |  |  | | | |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | **2.3   Please provide any additional comments and recommendations regarding the students’ performance** | | | | | |  |  |  |  | |  | |  | | --- | | Many students appear to be asking for extensions for submitting their research projects or essays. It may be useful to reveiw the reasons for this and look at trends over the years, to see if extra help is required in specific areas, or whether it is a selection of random causes such as deaths or ill health within the family, financial difficuties, or an increase in mental health problems. | | | | |  |  |  |  | | |  | | --- | |  | | | |  | | --- | |  | |  | |  |  |  |  | | | |  |  |  |  | | | |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | |  |  |  |  | |  | |  | | --- | | **Assessment Procedures** | | | | |  |  |  |  | |  |  | |  | | --- | | **Please comment, as appropriate, on:** | | | |  |  |  |  | |  |  |  | |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | **3.1   Assessment methods (relevance to learning objectives and curriculum)** | | | | | |  |  |  |  | |  | |  | | --- | | There are a wide range of assessment procedures including short answer questions, essays, critical appraisal, production of posters, presentations, grant applications and a research project. This enables the examiners to test understanding of knowledge, critical appraisal of scientific papers, ability to write and present scientifically and to design and carry out a research project. This enables the students to not only learn course material but gain skills they will need for future careers. | | | | |  |  |  |  | | |  | | --- | |  | | | |  | | --- | |  | |  | |  |  |  |  | | | |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | **3.2   Extent to which assessment procedures are rigorous** | | | | | |  |  |  |  | |  | |  | | --- | | Not all papers were double marked but a selection were and where 60% of the second markers marks disagreed with the main marker , all papers were re-marked. All research projects, (which carried a large percentage of the overall mark) were double marked. | | | | |  |  |  |  | | |  | | --- | | **Exams office response**:  For clarification, the majority of assessments at the RVC are first and sample marked. The only exception to this is Research Projects, which are double marked (blind). If there is a disagreement between the markers which crosses grade boundaries, a facilitator is introduced to justify the agreed mark or act as a mediator to get to an agreed mark.  There was an incident with the marking on the WABWAH course in 2022/23 which resulted in students being asked if they wanted to re-submit a piece of work for marking, which 60% of the cohort took up. | | | |  | | --- | |  | |  | |  |  |  |  | | | |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | **3.3   Consistency of the level of assessment with the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ)** | | | | | |  |  |  |  | |  | |  | | --- | | I am happy that the level of assessment is consistent with the FHEQ | | | | |  |  |  |  | | |  | | --- | |  | | | |  | | --- | |  | |  | |  |  |  |  | | | |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | **3.4   Standard of marking** | | | | | |  |  |  |  | |  | |  | | --- | | Marking seemed good with lots of feedback given on why those marks were obtained and how the candidate could improve their result | | | | |  |  |  |  | | |  | | --- | |  | | | |  | | --- | |  | |  | |  |  |  |  | | | |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | **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)** | | | | | |  |  |  |  | |  | |  | | --- | | In principle yes. There are many changes going on with this programme and many new staff involved. There appears to be some lack of communication due to various different communication channels being used, some of which are not accessible to staff not based on the RVC site . Despite this, the procedures for assessment and determination of awards were fairly conducted | | | | |  |  |  |  | | |  | | --- | |  | | | |  | | --- | |  | |  | |  |  |  |  | | | |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | **3.6   Opinion on changes to the assessment procedures from previous years in which you have examined** | | | | | |  |  |  |  | |  | |  | | --- | | This is the first year I have been an external examiner for this programme | | | | |  |  |  |  | | |  | | --- | |  | | | |  | | --- | |  | |  | |  |  |  |  | | | |  |  |  |  | | | |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | |  |  |  |  | |  | |  | | --- | | **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:** | | | | | |  |  |  |  | |  | |  | | --- | | 1st year as external examiner | | | | |  |  |  |  | | |  | | --- | |  | | | |  | | --- | |  | |  | |  |  |  |  | | | |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | **4.2   An acceptable response has been made** | | | | | |  |  |  |  | | |  | | --- | | **N/A** | | | | | |  |  |  |  | | |  | | --- | | **Additional comments, particularly if your answer was no:** | | | | | |  |  |  |  | |  | |  | | --- | | As above | | | | |  |  |  |  | | |  | | --- | |  | | | |  | | --- | |  | |  | |  |  |  |  | | | |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | **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:** | | | | | |  |  |  |  | |  | |  | | --- | | and this was a very valuable process | | | | |  |  |  |  | | |  | | --- | |  | | | |  | | --- | |  | |  | |  |  |  |  | | | |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | **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 training and support to carry out my role** | | | | | |  |  |  |  | | |  | | --- | | **No** | | | | | |  |  |  |  | | |  | | --- | | **Additional comments, particularly if your answer was no:** | | | | | |  |  |  |  | |  | |  | | --- | | Despite a very good induction session on site at RVC, there have been many problems associated with accessing and navigating the RVC learn site and finding relevant information . However the exam team were extremely helpful, as was Maria Diez leon .  I am extremely grateful for the welcome given by Emma Rosenberg and Maria Diez Leon, without which, I would have felt very much an outsider | | | | |  |  |  |  | | |  | | --- | |  | | | |  | | --- | |  | |  | |  |  |  |  | | | |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | **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:** | | | | | |  |  |  |  | |  | |  | | --- | | It would have been extremely helpful at the beginning of the year to know which candidates were the 2022-2023 MSc WAB/WAH students and which were previous years' resits and which were MSci students. This would have avoided the need to review so many papers.  Some information was sent by teams to which I had no access. Agendas and marks for the board meetings were only received once the meeting had started, making it very difficult to prepare for the meeting . It would also have been useful to have had an introduction to everyone present at the board meetings before the meeting started . This would have only required each person stating their name and role and wouldn't take up much time but would be extremely helpful to new members of the team. | | | | |  |  |  |  | | |  | | --- | |  | | | |  | | --- | |  | |  | |  |  |  |  | | | |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | **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:** | | | | | |  |  |  |  | |  | |  | | --- | | Student support appears to be very good and at the meetings there were genuine efforts to find out why certain students' performance wasn't as good as expected. It was commented that getting feedback from students was quite dificult. At another institute that I have been an external examiner for, 2 sets of written feedback were compulsory and marked . This helped students to not just reflect on which areas they had found difficult but to also reflect on what they had learned from this and what they would change if they approached the same issue again. This was incredibly useful to course directors and enabled them to find out what the issues were and whether the students had in fact learned anything from them and grown more resilient. | | | | |  |  |  |  | | |  | | --- | |  | | | |  | | --- | |  | |  | |  |  |  |  | | | |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | **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)** | | | | | |  |  |  |  | |  | |  | | --- | | While observing the viva exams I felt that the level of questioning was very different for different students. Some examiners seemed to concentrate on one area, not allowing the candidate to expand on areas they had more knowledge. Others allowed students to talk through their research for a long period with only a few minutes for questions . While I appreciate that students on a pass/ fail viva and those on a pass/distinction viva may have been questioned more thoroughly, I felt that the level of questioning needs to be a little more consistent. | | | | |  |  |  |  | | |  | | --- | |  | | | |  | | --- | |  | |  | |  |  |  |  | | | |  |  |  |  | | | | | | | |  |  |  |  |  | | |  |
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