

ANNUAL QUALITY IMPROVEMENT REPORT 2015/16

Appendix 3: External Examiners' report

BVetMed Year 2

This appendix contains Course Director's/Year Leader's responses to 2015/16 External Examiners' comments and updates to actions from 2014/15 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

Update to 2014/15 actions:

Question	External Examiners' comment	Year Leader's response	Update in 2015/16
<p>1.2 Learning objectives, and the extent to which they were met</p>	<p>The examiners would find it highly desirable to have a summarized version of the learning objectives and curricula of the BVETMED2 course as a single document. This would serve two major purposes.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. It would greatly facilitate mapping (blue printing) of the contents of the entire examination against the curricula and learning objectives to demonstrate objectivity and balanced sampling of the entire examination.</li> <li>2. It would provide a reference to the external examiners to track the exam contents</li> </ol>	<p>The BVM2 course handbook does contain the requisite information i.e. the content and learning objectives for each strand delivered in BVM2 is contained within the handbook. My understanding is that the EE's are provided with this document. Do the EE's require an edited version of this? It is also important to point out that given the integrated nature of the BVM curriculum, it would be misleading to consider the objectives and the BVM2 curriculum in isolation. Being given access to Learn pages of all BVetMed years will enable the External Examiners to see the full breadth of the curriculum.</p>	<p>Comprehensive mapping of learning objectives and learning outcomes will be taking place in 2016/17.</p>
<p>2.3 Please provide any additional comments and recommendations regarding the students' performance</p>	<p>The students performed well in many areas,</p>		

	<p>external examiners. This was discussed in some detail at the Board of Examiners' meeting. The externals are satisfied that appropriate effort s were made by staff in contents delivery and that poor student attendance to the corresponding lectures/instructions was a contributing factor to the below par performance.</p>	<p>remind students of the clear relationship between student absence from teaching sessions and their subsequent exam failure! We trust that these measures will avoid a repetition in the 2016 exams.</p>	
<p>3.2 Extent to which assessment procedures are rigorous</p>	<p>a. Staff to review question performance and standard setting process.</p>	<p>Student performance in individual questions will be monitored. The standard setting process that is followed is uniformly adhered to across the 5 years of the BVM course. The process that was followed for the BVM2 2015 exams utilized the criterion-based Angoff method (Angoff, 1971) and was identical to the methodology used since 2010 - such an approach met with the approval of the External examiners in each of the previous years. The Angoff method has been suggested to be more reliable when compared to other norm-based methods for standard setting in undergraduate medical exams (George et al 2006 BMC Medical Education doi:10.1186/1472</p>	

procedures are rigorous	the common grading system needs clarification.	and not by individual examiners. The exams office will ensure that clear advice is passed onto to the examiners with respect to the procedure for rounding of marks in when marking PSQ questions.	marks in PSQ questions, and how rounding should be performed. For clarity, we will ask the exams office to state clearly on the instructions in marking packs for future exams, that half marks are permitted, and no rounding should be performed by the marker.
3.2 Extent to which assessment procedures are rigorous	c. The balance of content in this examination should be revisited. The external examiners also request the opportunity to observe the conduct of the spot exam (as for the ISF (oral exam)).	In response to feedback from External examiners, they were invited to the re-sit Spot Test in September 2015. On this occasion the EE's were unable to make use of the invitation to attend. A similar invitation to observe the conduct of the Spot Test in 2016 will be forthcoming - we hope the EEs will be able to attend on this occasion. In terms of content, both Pathology and Parasitology were examined extensively via the written papers (MCQs and PSQs) and as such were not represented as much in the Spot Test, whose focus was the examination of those areas that were less represented in the written papers. Anatomy, Histology and Imaging are examined more effectively by Spot Tests.	Update 11/8/16: External examiners did not attend the spot test in June 2016 however this examination is due to be removed.
3.2 Extent to which assessment procedures are rigorous	d. To improve transparency and feedback to students it is recommended that the marking scheme includes the specific descriptors for grades beyond 75%.	The CGS which is utilized for marking of Research Project 1 (RP1) does contain descriptors for grades beyond 75%. There is a reluctance on the part of markers to award marks above 75%. Markers will be encouraged to make use of the full range of the CGS.	This was not a criticism in 2015-16 relating to RP1 suggesting better spread of marks and usage of the scheme by markers. However, the same issue - in terms of variability between examiners in utilizing the spread of available descriptors - was noted with respect to essay exam questions. The use and application of the common grading

			scheme might therefore be a pertinent topic for staff development training. However, the application of the scheme will always be somewhat subjective, and individual variation will continue to occur.
3.2 Extent to which assessment procedures are rigorous	e. To minimize bias research projects should be randomly assigned to markers.	Such an approach has been discussed with a view to its adoption. Sample marking showed no evidence of bias. However, for 2016 onwards RP1 will be marked summatively by staff other than the tutor but selected from the same department.	Update 11/8/16: This action was not completed. After much internal discussion it was decided that tutors will continue to mark RP1 projects, due to the significantly increased marking workload of the alternative. Random sample marking was again applied this year, to every tutor, again showing no evidence of bias, and satisfaction with the marks awarded.
3.2 Extent to which assessment procedures are rigorous	f. Reduce the number of staff involved in marking the RP1 projects and provide more time to complete the process.		

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Assessment and awards regulation</li> <li>2. Previous year's external examiner report</li> <li>3. How examinations are marked</li> <li>4. Guidelines for RPI reports</li> </ol>		
	<p>b. At the start of the review process, it is suggested that external examiners be given a short presentation by the year leader, explaining the examination structure and overall exam performance of the students. It would provide a good opportunity for the external examiners to query the exam process, obtain an overview of the students' performance and be made aware of any issues at the outset of the visit.</p>	<p>We thank the External examiners for this excellent suggestion. The incoming year leader (Dr Sarah Channon) will aim to brief the external examiners at the outset of proceeding, providing an overview of both the conduct and student performance in the diet of exams under consideration. She will also use this opportunity to draw the attention of the externals to any apparent anomalies in either conduct or performance.</p>	<p>Update 11/8/16: In 2015-6 both the year leader and exam board chair informally briefed the first external examiner to arrive at the college of the examination performance and any issues that were pertinent. Since the timing of the team of external examiners arriving at the college was staggered to allow for variations in individual travel plans, a formal briefing was not arranged. Instead, the exam board chair and year leader were available to brief the externals, or answer questions on any matters throughout the two day visit. However, since this appears to be a recommendation from the external examiners again in 2016-17 we will endeavor to formally timetable a briefing at the upcoming visit in September and in future years for summer examinations.</p>

# **Collaborative Report**

**Exam board meeting: 12-Jul-2016**

**Bachelor of Veterinary Medicine, Year 2, 2015/16**

**Lead examiner: Professor Kin-Chow Chang**

**Response from college  
requested:**

**NO**





## Assessment Procedures

Please comment, as appropriate, on:

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

The assessment methods are continually fine-tuned based on an existing robust and well established template. The range of assessment methods is appropriate, comprehensive and effective. Although labour intensive, the oral (ISF) oral exam was commended for being extremely well organised; access to the live animals during this exam was particularly helpful.

Response from college requested: **NO**

### 3.2 Extent to which assessment procedures are rigorous

The assessment process is highly rigorous and suitably varied. It comprises an MCQ paper, a problem-



### 3.4 Standard of marking



externals to the college (and in the future). We will formally schedule a meeting prior to arrival of the external examiners.

The External Examiners were notified of the dates of Exam Board in February 2016. In future confirmation of receipt of these emails would be sought.

**Action Required:**

Exams office to schedule a formal briefing with the Year Leader, Exam Board Chair and external



requested:

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:

Response from college requested: NO





required...'

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

**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:

NA

Response from college requested: **NO**