



- 2.1 The key aims of our teaching, learning and assessment strategy over the period 2008-2013 are:
- i. To maximise the quality of learning based on sound pedagogical principles
 - ii. To promote independent learning and the skills required for life-long learning, and ensuring that all graduates have acquired a range of both course-specific and generic skills that enhance their employability
 - iii. To continue to develop the learning environment, in particular student support arrangements, to suit a more diverse student body and thus both promote equality of opportunity and maximise student potential
 - iv. To ensure students learning occurs in a relevant scientific context, so that all graduates have a sound grasp of scientific method
 - v. To develop the use of e-learning where this is an appropriate educational approach
 - vi. To develop assessment strategies that are valid and reliable, and that promote desired learning outcomes
 - vii. To ensure that all staff have the necessary knowledge, skills and support to implement this strategy.

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- 3.1 The College's mission is to enhance its global reputation as an outstanding independent veterinary college by:
- Delivering excellent education through the best methods and progressive practice.
 - Undertaking research of International quality in focused areas of global significance for animal and human health, to inform clinical practice and government policy.
 - Improving animal health and welfare by the provision of outstanding clinical activity across animal species.
 - Engaging vTj /R22ng c-10.3015(i)-2.163015(i)-

- veterinary school, and thus able to command a critical mass of subject-specific resources in support of its strategy;
- iv. the rapid growth in our student numbers, the range of our course portfolio, and the size of our physical estate;
- v. the strengths of the College's academic and support staff, in terms of teaching skills, subject knowledge, research prowess, and clinical expertise;
- vi. the College's sound financial position.

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- 4.1 The College is working towards the following objectives, which are applicable, to a greater or lesser extent, to all our courses:
 - i. integration of teaching across disciplines
 - ii. increased depth of study in selected topics
 - iii. increased student choice of study options
- 4.2 The opportunity to choose study options, and to specialise in particular aspects of their chosen discipline, should become the norm rather than the exception in all our courses. Introduction of more modular curricula will facilitate this.
- 4.3 Our curricula must continue to aim to develop the student's mind, rather than simply developing the competence to perform a list of vocationally-relevant tasks.
- 4.4 One of the challenges which the College continues to face is that of developing our students, in whatever discipline (science, veterinary medicine or para-veterinary), as professionals. In recent years the research literature on professional education has grown enormously. During the lifetime of this strategy the College will tap into this knowledge, and its own research, with the goal of enhancing the "professional" outcomes of all its courses.

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- 5.1 A primary objective of this Strategy is to optimise the quality of teaching and learning. The College is proud of the quality of the education which it provides (as evidenced by our success in assessments by the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA), the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA), the European Association of Establishments for Veterinary Education (EAEVE) and the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS)), and intends to maintain this. Equally, the College sets demanding academic standards, which are essential if the College's awards are to continue to have international currency, and if the College itself is to achieve its own degree awarding powers.

primary focus must be upon learning: teaching and assessment are important to the extent that they promote learning and enable us to measure it.

- 5.3 Over the lifetime of this Strategy we will continue to develop teaching practices in ways that promote independent learning and the skills required for life-long learning. The College has become increasingly concerned that the preparation which our students receive in secondary school has made them “dependent” learners and handicaps their ability to benefit from Higher Education. Students should spend more time learning and less time being taught. We will continue to adapt our curricula and teaching methods to create the space and the opportunities that will enable all students to develop the capacity to learn independently and at a distance, whilst maintaining an appropriate level of support and guidance that reduces as students move through their programmes. This involves:
- i. continuing to move from the traditional reliance on didactic teaching to a problem-solving approach in which the learning process is student-centred rather than teacher-centred;
 - ii. a reduction in the numbers of lectures in all programmes, and increased use of small group, independent, peer assisted learning and e-learning;
 - iii. further expansion of induction programmes in generic skills, including study skills, and integration throughout the rest of the curriculum;
 - iv. investigation of methods of pre-course guidance, with the aim of introducing this in some form during the lifetime of this strategy;
 - v. reviewing feedback methods, with a view to ensuring that all staff give feedback effectively, and students make the most of all the different forms of feedback they receive. This is essential if they are to become effective life-long learners, which they must do if they are to be adaptable and enjoy continuing personal and professional success in a rapidly changing world.

- 5.4 We accept that the traditional lecture continues to have a role as a source of

by an external consultant during the life of the previous Strategy, we are developing a Directed Learning tool kit to aid staff with the delivery of small group teaching. This tool kit will be made available to staff during the lifetime of this strategy.

- 5.7 The College recognises the essential role of clinical education in the BVetMed, BSc and FdSc in Veterinary Nursing, in postgraduate courses such as the MScs in Wild Animal Health and Veterinary Physiotherapy, MVetMed and in the Clinical Training Scholar programme. Clinical exposure should be structured to maximise their learning potential and include clearly defined learning objectives. Students should be an integral part of the clinical team, so that they participate throughout the progress of a case. We must be explicit and realistic about the aims of clinical rotations, which should be structured to maximise their learning potential and include clearly defined learning outcomes.
- 5.8 Laboratory placements are integral to developing a mature understanding of the processes of science on the part of our students, as well as their practical skills at the bench. We will continue to improve the learning experience gained from laboratory placements by ensuring that supervisors and mentors are fully prepared for their responsibilities; student projects are adequately resourced; and students become a part of the scientific teams in which they are placed. In particular, we intend that students play an active role in the work of their host laboratories, especially the projects for which they have responsibility.
- 5.9 If our students are to become more effective learners, we must encourage them to understand and reflect upon their own learning styles. We will continue to deliver this during the undergraduate induction programmes and throughout their courses, in the context of the development of study skills and Personal Development Planning (PDP). We are committed to carrying PDP forward to another level during the lifetime of this Strategy, linking it more closely to course learning outcomes, Day One Skills or their equivalent, and course content. The value of the PDP system will be enhanced by integration with other electronic systems such as rotation records and examination results.
- 5.10 We will continue to make use of the results of research on teaching and learning to assess which methods to employ, and our strategy will be informed by inputs from external experts, peer reviewed literature, attendance at education conferences and workshops, and through engagement in organisations such as Veterinary Education Worldwide (ViEW), the Higher Education Academy, the Staff and Educational Development Association, Association for Medical Education in Europe (AMEE), Association for the Study of Medical Education (ASME) and the Society for Research into Higher Education.

10 | Page

- 6.1 We aim to ensure that all graduates have acquired a range of both course-specific and generic skills. We will continue to expand the generic skills

development work which we have commenced in the last decade, and we will continue to strengthen the subject-specific skills development in all our courses. They will also be assessed to encourage greater student commitment to skills.

- 6.2 In the context of increased student numbers, we will adopt flexible approaches to skills development. Alongside the use of the clinical skills centre, we will assess how students could make more use of audio-visual, streaming video and e-learning in developing their skills. In the BSc Bioveterinary Science, we are developing a programme of placements to develop skills and increase employability.
- 6.3 Since the Strategy of 2002 a comprehensive PDP scheme has been introduced across our undergraduate courses. As part of this, students are encouraged to reflect on their skill acquisition, identify gaps, and adopt measures which will allow them to develop the skills they cannot yet perform to the required level. In the BVetMed, there has been a great staff investment in tutorials to continue

- 7.5 We will use a variety of assessment methods, as appropriate to the knowledge and skills being developed by each course. These will include traditional methods such as essays, short notes, multiple choice questions, and in-course projects and reports. These familiar formats will be extended further to include EMQs (Extended Matching Questions), open book exams, and peer assessment. Additionally, innovative approaches will be taken to the assessment of clinical competence through performance in clinical rotations, practical examinations, OSCEs (Objective Structured Clinical Examinations) and simulations.
- 7.6 Computer-aided assessment is particularly valuable in helping to identify areas of student difficulty; and can free staff time from marking to enable more discussion with students.
- 7.7 The College employs a combination of formative and summative assessments in each of its courses. Formative assessment is designed to encourage learning, to identify students with difficulties and to familiarise students with novel exam formats. The provision of timely and informative feedback to students is an essential element of formative assessment; attendance at formative assessments may be a summative criterion.
- 7.8 Summative assessment is designed to test whether students have achieved the learning outcomes set for the preceding periods of teaching before progressing to the next. Final Examinations are designed to test that students have met the course objectives by integrating and synthesising material learnt throughout the whole period of their studies.
- 7.9 The College recognises the great importance of the concepts of validity, reliability and standards in shaping an appropriate assessment scheme. Validity is ensured through mapping assessment methods against specified learning objectives. Reliability can be assured only by ensuring a sufficiency of test items (determined by assessment type) and analysing assessment data systematically and taking remedial action where this is indicated. The setting of standards allows for accountability and transparency both for internal and external quality assurance purposes.. The College, through Boards of Examiners, is committed to monitoring and improving the validity, reliability and standards of its assessment processes.
- 7.10 We will seek to minimise, as far as possible, the load which assessment imposes on both staff and students. This is difficult to achieve given the range of knowledge and skills which the College seeks to assess, and the positive correlation between the time devoted to assessment and its reliability.
- 7.11 Examinations are organised to maximise students opportunities to consolidate their learning which will usually involve a period of study leave.
- 7.12 Assessment schemes should demonstrate retention and progression. As students move through their programme of study, they should be expected to demonstrate achievement of higher order learning objectives, and to build upon learning from earlier stages of their studies.

7.13 Assessment processes will be transparent. There will be clear guidelines and criteria for assessment; students will be given sufficient notice of what is required of them; and both staff and students will have ready access to assessment regulations and related information.

7.14 During the lifetime of this Strategy we will audit the appropriateness (in terms of validity, reliability, cost, and acceptability to staff and students) of our assessment methods, and adapt 1(t)TJ 221.651 0 p(8)14.406(1) 2.10956(e) 1.47498(9) 5.85106

- teaching hospitals carrying a caseload which is varied in terms of both condition and species
- active research laboratories with appropriate support for student learning
- archived specimens, case material and case records to support self-directed enquiry

Learning Environment

This Teaching and Learning Strategy is vital to the development of other College strategies including:

Human Resources Strategy

Elements of the HR Strategy which support this one include:

- a programme of training and development for academic and support staff, including training needs analysis
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E-learning Strategy

The E-Learning Strategy will support teaching and learning by:

- Increasing student engagement in the learning process by encouraging interactivity, problem -based and self-directed learning and student production of learning materials;
- Supporting staff in their effective adoption and utilisation of new e-learning techniques through training and advice;
- Helping to embed learning materials into clearly defined areas of the curriculum by integrating them into core curriculum objectives;
- Improving the process of self-assessment and feedback by the use of computer aided assessment tools for both formative and summative assessment;
- Establishing a meta data system for digital describing and indexing learning objects, multimedia and computer aided assessment questions;
- Creating a managed learning environment which will provide structured access to all learning resources for RVC undergraduates and staff both on and off campus;

Student Support and Guidance Strategy

This strategy's objectives will support teaching and learning by providing a framework of support which will help students to fulfil their personal and academic potential but not undermine the student's development to become independent and professional with insight to recognise their own learning needs. This will be achieved through academic support in tutorials, taught programmes and APRICOT; pastoral and welfare services and engaging student participation and service priorities that reflect the demands of the College's provision and the needs of its students.

Estates Strategy

This strategy is currently being drafted but will also have a major role in supporting teaching and learning.

- 10.3 We will continue to support staff development activities which both equip individual academics with the “tools of their trade”, and give staff the knowledge and skills required to implement the more novel aspects of this strategy. We will continue to require new staff to attend an induction course in teaching, and will develop and implement a comprehensive framework of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for academic staff. As part of this framework, we will identify annually a programme of topics for

The LIVE Centre will play a central role in enhancing the quality of learning, teaching and assessment during the lifetime of this Strategy. LIVE has two main, complementary themes:

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