

Visitation to the School of Veterinary Medicine
University of Surrey

22nd – 26th March 2021

Report to the Council of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS)
in accordance with Section 5 of the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966

Contents

Contents	2
List of visitors	3
Introduction.....	4
Summary of visitors' findings	5
Standard 1 – Organisation	9
Standard 2 – Finances	13
Standard 3 – Facilities.....	17
Standard 4 – Animal Resources	21
Standard 5 – Information Resources	27
Standard 6 – Students	32
Standard 7 - Admissions and Progress	37
Standard 8 – Staff	41
Standard 9 – Curriculum	45
Standard 10 - Assessment.....	51
Standard 11 - Research.....	57
Standard 12 – Outcomes Assessment	59
School response to visitors' findings.....	63

List of visitors

Representing RCVS

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Chair of the Visitors

Professor Jo Oultram MRCVS

Dr Lynne Hill MRCVS

Dr Fredrick Mckeating FRCVS

Professor Michael Herrtage FRCVS

Dr Clare Tapsfield-Wright MRCVS

Dr Eleanor Glover BVSc MRCVS

Student representative

Also present

Professor Tim Parkin FRCVS

Observer

Dr Linda Prescott-Clements

Director of Education, RCVS

Mr Jordan Nicholls

Lead for Undergraduate Education, RCVS

Ms Kirsty Williams

Education Quality Improvement Manager, RCVS

Mr Kieran Thakrar

Education Administrator, RCVS

Introduction

1. The Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons has a statutory duty to supervise veterinary degree courses under Section 5 of the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966, “for the purpose of securing that the courses of study to be followed by students training to be veterinary surgeons and the standard of proficiency required for registration in the register shall be such as sufficiently to guarantee that persons registered in the register will have acquired the knowledge and skill needed for the efficient practice of veterinary surgery”.
2. This was a virtual visitation, conducted remotely as a result of restrictions in place due to the covid-19 pandemic.
3. A self-evaluation report (SER) was prepared by the School and provided to the Visitors two months before the visit. The Visitors were also given access to a repository of supporting documents including examination papers, external examiners’ reports, committee records, course material, staff CPD records, as well as access to the University’s Virtual Learning Environment.
4. The Visitors toured the facilities, including various off-site premises used for core teaching, through a combination of pre-recorded and live video footage, and photographs, and stayed together as a group for the majority of the meetings with staff and students.
5. Meetings with staff and students were held via the Zoom platform, in line with the RCVS virtual visitation guidelines.
6. The Visitors are grateful to Professor Proudman, and all the staff in the School for their help during the visit. In particular, thanks were given to Mr Sam Hillage and Ms Aimee Roussos for their professionalism in the organisation of the visit, the creation of the virtual base room, and their efficiency in the light of repeated requests for additional information from our team.
7. The Visitors are aware of the considerable amount of work and time that is taken up by these visitations and thank the staff from the various departments who made themselves available. The Visitors would also like to thank the employers and alumni who attended the meetings and the undergraduate and postgraduate students who met with the Visitors to talk about the experience of studying at Surrey. The Visitors commend the School on the quality, commitment and motivation of its veterinary students, including postgraduates, interns and residents. Their contribution to the visit was most important.
8. The findings in this report are based on the Visitor team’s review. A follow-up in-person visit is required within 12-18 months of this virtual visit. The Visitors are not the decision-makers, and their commendations, recommendations and suggestions may be subject to amendment during the committee process.

Summary of visitors' findings

Standard 1 – Organisation

Commendations

- The University and School are commended for the award of ISO 22301 for Business Continuity Planning.
- The School is commended for the support provided to the staff and students during the pandemic.

Recommendations

There are no recommendations for this standard.

Suggestions

- The Senior Management Team should ensure that there is sufficient resource to enable staff to engage in all aspects of their role including personal development, and that the workload is spread across the staff in an equitable fashion.

Standard 2 – Finances

There are no recommendations or suggestions for this standard.

Standard 3 – Physical Facilities

Commendations

- The School is to be commended on the clinical skills laboratories and the development of a range of high-quality models and the variety of species represented.

Recommendations

There are no recommendations for this standard.

Suggestions

- Abattoir visits should be recommenced when possible.
- The Hub, proposed on Manor Park, should be completed as originally envisaged.
- The number of Veterinary Clinical Teaching Fellows (VCTFs) visits with the Intra Mural Rotation (IMR) practices should not be reduced and should continue to be in-person rather than online.

Standard 4 – Animal Resources

Commendations

- The School is to be commended for a high proportion of primary care cases seen on IM rotations.

Recommendations

There are no recommendations for this standard.

Suggestions

- Steps should be taken to ensure that each student has the opportunity to necropsy sufficient numbers of companion, equine and farm animals.

Standard 5 – Information Resources

Commendations

- The School is commended on their swift move to online learning and information resource support during the past year, when more students have been learning remotely; this has been effective and efficient.
- The Faculty and School are to be commended on the establishment of the Maths and Statistics Advice Service.

Recommendations

There are no recommendations or suggestions for this standard.

Standard 6 – Students

Commendations

- VCTFs are to be complimented on their enthusiasm, commitment, and support for student wellbeing.

Recommendations

There are no recommendations for this standard.

Suggestions

- Going forward the School should ensure that the VCTF to student ratio is sufficient to allow opportunity for the development and maintenance of the personal relationship between VCTF and student, which is especially important for students away from campus on IMR and EMS placements.

Standard 7 – Admission & Progression

Recommendations

- The School's website must ensure the requirements regarding Fitness to Practise (FtP) and withdrawing from the programme are clearly stated and available for potential students.
- The School's website must ensure the commitments and costs of the Extra-Mural Studies (EMS) and IMR programme are clearly stated and available for potential students.

Suggestions

- Data should be collated and analysed regarding student progression and success on the programme, in the context of the entry criteria to the programme.
- The School should use data other than the KPI of more than 95% progression rates to assess student attrition.

Standard 8 – Academic & Support Staff

Commendations

- All of the staff at the School show great commitment to the success of the veterinary programme and to the student experience.

Recommendations

- The School must review VCTF staffing levels as a matter of urgency, to ensure that there is sufficient breadth and depth of expertise and experience so that the teaching programme can continue to operate smoothly.

Suggestions

- The School should ensure sufficient time and staff resource are in place to enable all members of the VCTF team to progress and enrich their personal development.

Standard 9 – Curriculum

Recommendations

- A formal comprehensive curriculum review must be undertaken at least every seven years.
- There must be a system in place to enable EMS providers to provide feedback on the EMS programme.
- The School must adhere to the recommendations of RCVS with respect to the current fifth year cohort.
- For future cohorts, IMR delivery must return to at least 28 weeks of practice based IMR.

Standard 10 – Assessment

Recommendations

- The School must enhance the validity of the summative assessment of students' clinical and practical skills in years 3 and 4.

Standard 11 – Research Programmes, Continuing & Higher Degrees

Suggestions

- The workload of teaching staff should be structured to allow collaboration with researchers so that teaching staff can gain some research skills and become co-authors on published material.

Standard 12 – Outcomes Assessment

Recommendations

- The School must reinstate their standard 28-week practice based IMR model as soon as possible.
- The School must source a replacement site for basic anaesthesia, surgical and post-operative care previously delivered in year four of the programme to ensure the Standard is met.

Suggestions

- To ensure the meeting of the Standard the School should not rely only on externally produced data and should concentrate on collecting its own data when appropriate.

Standard 1 – Organisation

Background

1.1 **School mission:** To inspire and educate veterinary professionals who will advance veterinary medicine to meet the needs of a changing world.

1.2 The School launched its second 5-year strategic plan in September 2020. This strategy was developed by the School's Senior Management Team following an extensive staff consultation process. The plan has been reviewed and approved by the School's Board of Faculty. Key objectives for the 2020 – 2025 period:

- EAEVE accreditation
- A diverse and inclusive School
- An excellent research environment
- An excellent student experience
- International mobility of staff and students

In addition to these strategic objectives, the School has defined key programme outcomes for the BVMSci programme which include:

- Student achievement of RCVS Day One Competences
- Graduate employability
- Student wellbeing
- Understanding and adopting innovation
- Understanding and adopting diverse career options

1.3 Achievement of strategic objectives and programme outcomes is monitored by the School's Outcomes Champion. An annual Outcomes Review meeting of the Senior Management Team is held to review progress against each objective.

1.4 Council is the governing body of the University and is responsible for ensuring the University is managing its strategy, finances and administration appropriately. The Executive Board defines over-arching strategy and ensures the delivery of effective day-to-day operations. Senate is responsible, subject to Statutes and Ordinances, and the control and approval of Council, for the oversight of the academic endeavour of the University regarding standards, overall governance and assurance, and has the power to make recommendations to Council.

1.5 The University defines the legal, financial and organisational frameworks within which the School operates, these provide extensive guidance through a range of policies and support networks that help deliver the strategic and operational plans for the School. Faculties and Schools are required to operate within the University's regulatory and quality assurance framework. Local policies and practices can supplement those of the University but not supersede them.

1.6 The School of Veterinary Medicine is one of four Schools in the Faculty of Health and Medical Sciences. A Faculty Executive Board, chaired by the Executive Dean and including Heads of Schools, has oversight of all Faculty activity and works to enhance coordination and collaboration across the Schools. Associate Deans for Learning and Teaching, Research, the

Doctoral College and for Internationalisation provide Schools with further support for aspects of their mission. The Executive Dean is a member of the University's Executive Board.

- 1.7 The School of Veterinary Medicine is organised into four departments for administrative purposes. Department Heads are responsible for managing staff workload, setting targets, annual appraisal and career progression. As departments grow, Section Heads are appointed to assist with staff management.
- 1.8 **Senior Management Team (SMT)**, comprising the Head of School, Heads of Department and other staff in leadership roles, is responsible for the strategic direction of the School.
- 1.9 **Operations Committee**, comprising representatives of academic, technical and professional services teams, is responsible for resource allocation within the School and for alignment of technical, academic and administrative services in order to deliver teaching and research. The Operations Committee reports to the Senior Management Team through the Faculty Business Operations Manager, who in turn, reports to the Director of Faculty Operations.
- 1.10 **Board of Studies**, comprising all teaching staff and a student representative from each year group, is responsible for the academic governance of the BVMSci programme. It reports to Faculty Education Committee, which reports into the University Education Committee. An example of this governance structure in action is the School's request for a change in assessment policy to allow a third attempt at certain skills-based assessments. This was supported by Faculty and University Education Committees, and a recommendation for approval passed by Senate.
- 1.11 **Board of Examiners**, comprising examiners of the BVMSci programme and external examiners, meets three times yearly to consider and ratify the results of assessments. The external examiners' reports are discussed at the Board of Studies and actions considered and responded to. All outcomes are reported through the annual programme review which is considered by the Quality Enhancement Subcommittee which reports to the University Education Committee.
- 1.12 **Curriculum Committee** is the School's forum for detailed planning of module delivery, curricular integration and pedagogical debate. Recommendations from this committee go forward to the Board of Studies.
- 1.13 **Research Culture Committee** is the forum for coordination of School research activity and for discussion and approval of strategic initiatives designed to enhance the School's research culture.
- 1.14 **Other Committees** within the School are:
 - Health & Safety Committee (chair: Head of School, reports to Faculty Health & Safety Committee)
 - Staff-Student Liaison Committee (chair: SSL staff representative, reports to Board of Studies)
 - Employability Working Group (chair: Director of Employability, reports to Curriculum Committee)
- 1.15 Staff input into School strategy and decision making occurs through:

- Annual staff survey
- Board of Studies
- Staff consultation workshops e.g. gender equality, strategic plan
- School meetings (twice per term)
- Senior Management Team accessibility (email account, suggestions box)
- Departmental feedback

1.16 Student input into School development occurs through:

- Staff-Student Liaison Committee
- Module evaluation questionnaires
- Board of Studies
- Unitu/MySurrey Voice online feedback platform

1.17 The School consults with its external stakeholders through the External Advisory Board and through the Intra-mural Rotation (IMR) Operations Group. The clinical partner network is also represented on the School's Veterinary Admissions Review Group, and on Board of Studies. Partners are frequent participants in admissions interviews, oral examinations, research events and Open Days.

1.18 The School's budget is finalised as part of the University's annual planning cycle. Income and expenditure projections are based upon the School's prior financial performance and forecast student numbers. Re-allocation of resource between different cost-centres can be made, on condition that the final operational out-turn remains unchanged. Budget for the delivery of IMR is defined upon financial projections in the IMR Delivery Document. Financial planning is undertaken by the Head of School, who is the budget holder, and the Faculty's Business Finance Partner with oversight from the Dean of Faculty and the Deputy Director of Operational Finance. Resources other than financial (e.g. staff, space, equipment) are allocated by the School Operations Committee.

1.19 The Head of Veterinary Education is accountable for the design, delivery and assessment of all elements of the BVMSci programme with advice from the Faculty's Associate Dean (Education). Reporting to the Head of Veterinary Education, the Directors of Clinical Education and Veterinary Partnerships are responsible for the educational delivery of final year IMR and the partnership network necessary for this delivery. A team of Veterinary Clinical Teaching Fellows (VCTF) is responsible for clinical coaching, assessment and quality assurance during final year rotations.

1.20 At School level, oversight of collaborative provision through the School's partner network is provided through Board of Studies which reports to the Faculty Education Committee which reports to the University Education Committee. The IMR Operations Group and Education Advisory Group report to the Curriculum Committee which in turn reports to the Board of Studies.

1.21 Curriculum design and delivery is led by the Head of Veterinary Education working to the validated BVMSci curriculum document. A Programme Leader is responsible for coordination of the curriculum across years and works with year leads to ensure consistent application of educational philosophy and assessment strategy. Alignment of curriculum delivery is assured by the School's Curriculum Committee and Board of Studies; this latter committee reporting to

Faculty Education Committee. This structure allows both “bottom-up” engagement of staff and “top-down” oversight. Curriculum alignment is reviewed through the University’s established Programme Life Cycle Processes, which include comprehensive annual and periodic reviews.

1.22 The Director of Veterinary Partnerships is accountable for partnership engagement and sustainability; this is assured through:

- Contractual agreements spanning several years (10 years for Educational Partnership Agreements) and with one-year termination notice periods.
- Resilience in the partnership network i.e., excess capacity.
- Frequent events and engagement opportunities e.g., Consultation events, annual partner conference, business development opportunities.
- Joint appointments (e.g., Pirbright Institute, Fitzpatrick Referrals, Animal and Plant Health Agency).
- Research collaboration e.g., co-funding of PhD studentships, co-authorship of publications.

Comments

1.23 Concern was raised about the workload on the VCTFs, this has led to pressure on their personal development time.

Commendations

1.25 The University and School are commended for the award of ISO 22301 for Business Continuity Planning.

1.26 The School is commended for the support provided to the staff and students during the pandemic.

Suggestion

1.27 The Senior Management Team should ensure that there is sufficient resource to enable staff to engage in all aspects of their role including personal development and that the workload is spread across the staff in an equitable fashion.

Standard 2 – Finances

Background

- 2.1 The Veterinary School project was funded by a substantial bank loan to the University, with three new, purpose-designed buildings completed in 2016 at a cost of £46.5m. Operational financial deficits in the early years of operations were built into a business plan that accurately predicted operational surpluses by 2017. A project payback by year 15 of operations was forecast, and this remains realistic.

Table 2.1: Annual expenditure of the School, last 5 years

Area of Expenditure £k	19/20	18/19	17/18	16/17	15/16
a. Personnel					
a.1 teaching staff	4,100	3,418	3,296	2,782	2,270
a.2 support staff	899	961	869	736	765
a.3 research staff	133	173	156	170	164
Total for a	5,133	4,553	4,321	3,688	3,199
b. Operating Costs					
b.1 Utilities	0	0	0	0	0
b.2 Expenditure relating specifically to Teaching	1,831	1,056	566	434	455
b.3 Expenditure relating specifically to Research	1,663	1,635	1,091	952	675
b.4 General Operations (excluding the above)	405	312	366	330	443
Total for b	3,899	3,004	2,023	1,717	1,572
c. Equipment					
c.1 teaching	92	152	108	258	157
c.2 research	41	38	44	87	35
c.3 general or common equipment	76	105	94	60	31
Total for c	209	295	246	405	223
d. Maintenance of buildings	-	-	-	-	-
e. Total expenditure	9,240	7,852	6,591	5,810	4,994

Note: Costs relating to staff funded exclusively by external research contracts are included in the above table under Operating Costs - Expenditure relating specifically to Research.

- 2.2 University reporting of School expenditure explicitly excludes the following items: utilities, depreciation on equipment & buildings, interest on bank loan, buildings maintenance, insurance, cleaning and security, staff costs for faculty and central staff supporting the School, recruitment and marketing, and library resources and subscriptions. These centralised costs were previously allocated to Schools via an infrastructure charge (an allocation of central support costs charged to all academic departments). However, this approach ended with effect from 2020/21 and centralised infrastructure costs are no longer allocated to Schools.
- 2.3 The Head of School is challenged with achieving a contribution surplus (or deficit in early years of operations) but retains authority over how this target is achieved. If the target is found to be unrealistic this can be amended during the twice-yearly re-forecasting process. An example of how this has worked is the School's requirement for technical staff. The initial budget projections underestimated the number of technicians required to operate three buildings, each with specific technical challenges. The School's budget was adjusted in 2015

to recognise this need and to provide additional salary budget to employ additional technicians.

Table 2.1.1: Projected future expenditure of the School

Area of Expenditure	18/19 Result	19/20 Result	20/21 Forecast	21/22 Plan	22/23 Plan	23/24 Plan
a. Personnel						
a.1 teaching staff	3,418	4,100	4,218	4,323	4,431	4,542
a.2 support staff	961	899	1,022	1,048	1,074	1,101
a.3 research staff	173	133	83	85	87	89
Total for a	4,553	5,133	5,322	5,455	5,592	5,731
b. Operating Costs						
b.1 Utilities	-	-	-	-	-	-
b.2 Expenditure relating specifically to teaching	1,056	1,831	1,790	2,128	2,182	2,236
b.3 Expenditure relating specifically to Research	1,635	1,663	1,642	1,683	1,726	1,769
b.4 General Operations (excluding the above)	312	405	376	385	395	405
Total for b	3,004	3,899	3,809	4,197	4,302	4,409
c. Equipment						
c.1 teaching	152	92	87	89	92	94
c.2 research	38	41	51	52	53	55
c.3 general or common equipment	105	76	73	75	76	78
Total for c	295	209	211	216	221	227
d. Maintenance of buildings	-	-	-	-	-	-
e. Total expenditure	7,852	9,240	9,342	9,868	10,115	10,368

2.4 All budget allocations include appropriate assumptions on inflation.

2.5 Teaching costs in the School financial plan increased sharply in 2018/19 reflecting the need for *per capita* payments to practices hosting students undertaking IMR placements, and the associated travel & accommodation costs. A further sharp increase was seen in 2019/20 as this is the point at which the first full undergraduate cohort (120 students) begin their IMR placements.

2.6 Non-staff budget for the 2020/21 cohort of students on IMR rotations is £1.34m. This is a one-year reduction reflecting programme amendments made because of covid-19. Costs are budgeted to increase again in 2021/22 when covid-19 restrictions are lifted.

Table 2.2.1: Annual revenues of the School for the last 5 years (£k)

Revenue Source	19/20	18/19	17/18	16/17	15/16
a. revenue from the state or public authority	6,733	5,760	4,546	3,098	1,909
b. revenue from private bodies					
c. revenue from research	2,121	2,045	1,506	1,352	656
d. revenue earned & retained by the school					
d.1 registration/tuition fees from students					
domestic/EU students	5,991	5,028	3,901	2,732	1,621
international students	433	305	216	132	88
d.2 revenue from continuing education					4
d.3 revenue from clinical activities					
d.4 revenue from diagnostic activities	100	74	257	354	255
3. revenue from other sources	178	159	170	165	244
f. Total revenue from all sources	15,556	13,370	10,596	7,832	4,777

- 2.7 All income streams generated by the School of Veterinary Medicine are allocated in full to the School.

Table 2.2.2: Projected future revenues of the School (£k)

Revenue Source	18/19 Result	19/20 Result	20/21 Forecast	21/22 Plan	22/23 Plan	23/24 Plan
a. revenue from the state or public authority	5,760	6,733	6,470	6,535	6,731	6,765
b. revenue from private bodies						
c. revenue from research	2,045	2,121	2,166	2,220	2,275	2,332
d. revenue earned & retained by the school						
d.1 registration/tuition fees from students						
domestic/EU students	5,028	5,991	6,082	6,427	6,518	6,611
international students	305	433	496	696	801	936
d.2 revenue from continuing education	-	-	-	-	-	-
d.3 revenue from clinical activities						
d.4 revenue from diagnostic activities	74	100	117	119	122	124
e. revenue from other sources	159	178	270	276	281	287
<i>f. Total revenue from all sources</i>	<i>13,370</i>	<i>15,556</i>	<i>15,601</i>	<i>16,273</i>	<i>16,728</i>	<i>17,055</i>

- 2.8 Allocation of funds within the School is achieved through an annual budgeting process conducted by the Faculty Business Finance Partner and Head of School, following consultation with Heads of Department and other budget holders within the School to determine their needs. School budgets are re-forecast in Autumn and Spring to recognise latest student fees, emerging demands or unforeseen circumstances.
- 2.9 Budgets are allocated on the basis of expected need and expenditure is monitored under specific cost centres. Data gathered from the first few years of operation continues to inform the funding allocations for the future.
- 2.10 As a £46.5m capital investment has been made to build and equip three new School buildings, further substantial capital investment is not anticipated in the first few years of operations. However, the University's longer-term cash flow projections assume that substantial re-investment of approximately £7m in equipment will be required 10 years after the opening of the new buildings to replace obsolete equipment and fixtures. In addition to this, long-term maintenance spend for the buildings has been included in University cash flow forecasts from 5 years after opening, in line with University policies.
- 2.11 Should additional capital investment be required, application can be made to the University's Capital Expenditure Committee. This committee meets monthly and holds capital funds which can be allocated to Schools where required.

Comments

- 2.12 As the number of students in final year reach approximately 150, more places in IMR practices are required with the additional costs attached. The geographical spread of practices is also extended which will bring extra costs going forward for the School. These costs are accounted for in future budgets.
- 2.13 It is important that sufficient maintenance and replacement budgets are available for the clinical skills centres as the School has a high reliance on models for teaching purposes.

2.14 Workload models have been done. As the cohorts in years increase, flexibility in funding to allow increased staff numbers in certain areas will be vital to the continued success in delivery of the programme.

Standard 3 – Facilities

Background

3.1 **Vet School Main Building (VSM)**

This is the home of the Veterinary School, providing spaces for teaching, study, administration and research. Designed around a large central atrium, each floor of the building has a specific function:

- i) **Ground floor:** teaching spaces and service/social areas
- ii) **First floor:** student study area, teaching spaces and student support services
- iii) **Second floor:** staff office, meeting rooms and research laboratories.

- 3.2 **Ground Floor. Atrium:** This large social space is a meeting and mixing area for staff, students, partners and visitors. Catering facilities are located in the atrium and it is used as a breakout area for conferences and meetings. The open access nature of the area, at the heart of the Veterinary School means that students, staff, partners and visitors come into contact with each other.
- 3.3 **Lecture theatres:** One large (250 seat) and one smaller (150 seat) lecture theatre, with multiple projection, lecture capture technology and 3D projection capability.
- 3.4 **Small group teaching rooms:** The ground floor houses 12 small group teaching spaces, some are discrete rooms, others are open “collaboration spaces”. Each space has furniture for 12 people, computer and projection equipment. When not used for formal teaching sessions these spaces are used as private study areas by students.
- 3.5 **Clinical skills teaching unit:** This £5m HEFCE-funded facility provides teaching space for 75 students. Mobile tables, surgical-style lighting and a range of models and teaching aids allow students to learn practical skills including surgical skills. Equipment in this laboratory includes surgical-style scrub sinks and large TV repeater screens to show instructional movies.
- 3.6 **Fledglings Veterinary Practice:** This suite of rooms is designed in the style of a small animal veterinary clinic complete with two fully equipped consulting rooms equipped with video recording cameras for communication skills training. Kennels for dogs and cats, a pharmacy, reception desk and client management software further add to the teaching opportunities.
- 3.7 **First floor. Student study areas:** Five small group teaching rooms and a large room that can be divided into two smaller ones are provided along with an open-plan workspace with desks for 72 students plus desktop computers. Student services staff are co-located adjacent to this area and desk space is also provided for post-doctoral researchers.
- 3.8 **Teaching laboratory:** This facility accommodates up to 75 students, each bench-top workstation having access to power, a sink and gas supply. Projection equipment and drop-down screens are strategically positioned allowing support material (protocols, videos) to be shown. Adjacent areas include offices for technicians, glassware wash facilities, autoclave, waste management and storage facilities.

- 3.9 **Second floor. Staff office:** The open-plan office area accommodates 54 staff workstations. Two separate offices with multiple 'hot desk' workstations have been created to host the growing team of Veterinary Clinical Teaching Fellows (VCTF). Four bookable rooms are available for meetings, the larger boardroom having video-conferencing capability in addition to standard audio-visual equipment.
- 3.10 **Research laboratories:** A suite of seven access-controlled laboratories are provided to support School research in addition to six rooms housing support facilities and offices. Temperature-controlled rooms are provided at -20°C, 4°C and 37°C. Co-located are wash-up and storage rooms.
- 3.11 **Vet School Pathology Building (VSP)**
- In addition to veterinary pathology facilities, this building provides a large, wet-lab teaching classroom. Pathology facilities include post-mortem examination areas, chillers and freezers for large carcasses, biological sample handling/processing, histology processing, digital pathology and microscopy teaching. This building incorporates high levels of biosecurity. It is designed to ACDP2/3 and SAPO3 standard, so animals with infectious and/or zoonotic disease can safely be dealt with. Business continuity is assured by high levels of containment between adjacent parts of the building. Accession of samples for diagnostic services is through a customised laboratory information management system (LIMS).
- 3.12 **Wet lab teaching area:** A 75-seater classroom equipped with stainless steel, mobile tables, stools and surgery-style lighting is provided. Cold-store and -20°C freezer space is provided for specimen storage; staff and student changing facilities, shower, and storage for PPE is also provided.
- 3.13 **Live animal reception and handling:** Lairage and a crush are available for receipt and euthanasia of large animals. An overhead hoist is provided for carcasses handling.
- 3.14 **Biosecurity:** This facility is built and operated to containment level 2 status as detailed under The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (COSHH). There is also a containment level 3 suite to enable examination of cases which pose a suspected zoonotic risk from Hazard Group 3 human pathogens. Additional requirements detailed in the Specified Animal Pathogen Order 2008 (over and above COSHH) have been designed due to the possibility of contamination by carcasses submitted for post-mortem examination.
- 3.15 **Vet School Large Animal Clinical Skills Unit (VSC)**
- This building provides facilities to allow student exposure to large animals (cattle, sheep, horses) for practical teaching such as handling and clinical examination. Animal housing, compliant with DEFRA Codes of Practice on Animal Housing (2014), is provided for cattle, sheep and horses. The facility is equipped with cattle crushes, a fixed cattle race, and horse stocks. Hand wash, boot wash and changing facilities are co-located.
- 3.16 Within the large, covered, rubber-floored atrium, extensive work has been carried out to equip the space with a broad range of large animal clinical skills models. This has enhanced the teaching of large animal clinical skills by placing inanimate learning resources adjacent to live

animal resources. The VSC also has a radiography room and 3 smaller teaching rooms for practical teaching.

- 3.17 Adjacent to the atrium is a 75-seater lecture room with full audio-visual equipment.
- 3.18 All three buildings are compliant with UK health and safety legislation. Specifically, all scientific areas and teaching laboratories within the VSM meet containment level 2 status as detailed under The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (COSHH). Infrastructure is in place to handle both chemical and biological agents under these regulations. All laboratory areas within VSM have been assessed as suitable under The Genetically Modified Organism (Contained Use) Regulations 2014. Research laboratories are compliant with the Antiterrorism, Crime and Security Act, 2001.
- 3.19 In all buildings, equipment installed is subject to regulatory inspections and maintenance as detailed under The Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations (LOLER) 1998, The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (COSHH) and the Pressure Systems Safety Regulations (PSSR) 2000.
- 3.20 Catering is available in the School's atrium café (08:30 – 15:00), in Heart and Soul café/bar (08:00 – 23:00), and in The Bench Bar and Starbucks located nearby (5 mins walk) in Surrey Sports Park. Students also have access to the facilities in the Kate Granger Building (8 mins walk) including Café Priestly Road (CPR).
- 3.21 Recreational facilities are available to staff and students in Surrey Sports Park. Facilities include a 50m swimming pool, squash courts, gym facilities, climbing wall, fitness classes and outdoor sports pitches and all-weather surfaces. Staff, students and partners benefit from discounted membership.
- 3.22 Personal storage, changing facilities and shower rooms are available for staff and students on the ground floor of VSM where every student has their own secure locker. Additional changing, hand washing and shower facilities are available in VSP and VSC.
- 3.23 The University partners with several off-site teaching providers, to allow students in Years 1-4 to gain animal husbandry and production experience in a variety of authentic settings.
- 3.24 Clinical teaching during final year (Intra-Mural Rotations, IMR) takes place within the School's network of over 70 partner practices. Practices are carefully selected and trained to ensure University standards for the delivery of the quality of teaching are met. This network of practices provides students the opportunity to develop Day One Competencies through workplace-based learning.
- 3.25 The University of Surrey houses a small number of animals on site in the VSC building (cattle (3), sheep (6-8) and horses (6)). The availability of cattle and sheep onsite allow students the opportunity for remediation and additional handling. Horses are used for equine teaching in years 1-4.
- 3.26 Quality Assurance of offsite teaching facilities is provided through annual clinical or non-clinical site audits, ensuring that these facilities are safe, biosecure and that compliance with UK animal welfare and care standards is maintained. Risk assessments provided by each off-

site provider are reviewed by the School's own health and safety team, prior to commencement of teaching.

- 3.27 The School's diagnostic pathology service operates from the VSP building, including the CL2 post-mortem room which was designed specifically for student teaching. Downdraft tables are provided along with an overhead camera facility and a viewing gallery for up to 20 students. A dedicated histology teaching suite houses 8 standard microscopes, a double-head microscope and a 10-head microscope. A slide scanner is available to enable digital pathology. Clinical pathology also forms part of the Veterinary Pathology and Public Health rotation in final year.
- 3.28 The VSP building houses humane slaughter facilities, including a livestock holding area, lairage, crushes for cattle and sheep and carcass processing areas. The lairage is designed to hold a small number of animals without compromising their welfare, allowing a one-way flow from unloading to the point of slaughter, with minimum abrupt corners. Both the holding area and lairage provide an opportunity for students to carry out *ante-mortem* inspection. The cattle and sheep crushes installed in the VSP building are suitable for restraining animals for stunning and slaughter. Captive bolts (cattle and sheep) and electrical stunning equipment (sheep and pigs) are available for demonstration. Trolleys and hanging areas for carcasses and offal are available for teaching students the principles of the *post-mortem* inspection.
- 3.29 Along with time spent within VSP, the Veterinary Pathology and Public Health (VPPH) IMR rotation involves collaboration with external abattoirs. Students visit a red meat abattoir with an annexed meat processing plant. This visit to an industrial-scale operation is geared towards supporting students analyse the impact of food safety regulations at an industry level, and consider the national and global implications of food production. Students also visit a family-owned, low-throughput white meat plant, processing less than 10k birds per year. This experience allows students to acquire a perspective on and direct experience of a local, full-throughput facility and appreciate different legislative requirements. The University is in negotiation with a further two, small, white meat abattoirs to provide further teaching opportunities.
- 3.30 In order to support student experiential learning before visiting a slaughterhouse, The University of Surrey, in collaboration with the University of Glasgow and the Royal Veterinary College, has also developed an interactive and immersive abattoir virtual reality simulation for the 20/21 academic year. Using the software, students learn about the workings of an abattoir and its role in food safety before a physical visit, allowing them to obtain the maximum benefit from their in-person visit. This also provides greater resilience within the Public Health domain, should for any reason physical facilities be unable to accept students (e.g. during the covid-19 pandemic).
- 3.31 Dry waste from VSM laboratories follows waste streams designated for either general waste or offensive waste. Biological liquid waste is autoclaved prior to disposal in the foul sewer system. Animal faeces from VSM clinical skills unit follow the offensive waste system. Clinical waste from VSP (from anatomy dissections and post-mortem examinations) follows UN3291 Clinical Waste and Offensive Waste routes as appropriate. Waste categorised as CL3 (clinical post-mortem exams) is autoclaved at 134°C for 30 mins prior to disposal. Carcass material too large for the autoclave is double bagged and disinfected with a DEFRA-approved

disinfectant prior to following a Category 1 waste route. Animal bedding from VSC currently leaves campus as non-hazardous waste. All waste leaving School premises is collected and disposed of by a contractor licensed by the Environment Agency.

Comments

- 3.32 The Vet School building is spacious, light and modern.
- 3.33 Sports facilities share the campus at Manor Park, where the Vet School is situated, making sports easily accessible.
- 3.34 The clinical skills facilities are very comprehensive for the practice of basic clinical skills, with taught timetabled sessions plus student access out with teaching hours.
- 3.35 There are 15 onsite animals which are reserved for demonstration and remediation sessions.
- 3.36 Abattoir visits occur (having been temporarily replaced by virtual experiences during the covid-19 pandemic) and the Visitors consider these essential to the student education.
- 3.37 IMR provision: Most vets from partner practices interviewed were enthusiastic and dedicated to the work, with a minority exhibiting a negative attitude towards institutional procedures. Some stated they were providing the work out of a sense of altruism and obligation to the profession. Financial remuneration is not a standalone incentive. Practices varied in their facilities; all have to be members of the Practice Standards Scheme therefore some uniformity is delivered.
- 3.38 The expected delivery of the extended student hub has not materialised, partially due to the covid-19 pandemic. The increase in student numbers on the programme would indicate that this extra space for the students will be required.
- 3.39 The VCTFs visit a practice twice during a rotation to be able to assess the student experience which adds value, quality assurance and enables contact with the entire practice team.

Commendations

- 3.40 The School is to be commended on the clinical skills laboratories and the development of a range of high-quality models and the variety of species represented.

Suggestions:

- 3.41 Abattoir visits should be recommenced when possible.
- 3.42 The Hub, proposed on Manor Park, should be completed as originally envisaged.
- 3.43 The number of VCTFs visits with the IMR practices should not be reduced and should continue to be in-person rather than online.

Standard 4 – Animal Resources

Background

- 4.1 Cadavers and animal materials are obtained for anatomy and physiology teaching through a number of ethically acceptable routes. Anatomical specimens (viscera, organs, heads and limbs) are purchased from a local abattoir and fallen stock suppliers.
- 4.2 Companion animal cadavers are sourced from individual pet owner donation from local practices and donations from the Blue Cross. All companion animal cadavers acquired for teaching have been euthanised by suitably qualified staff at the places of origin for purposes completely unrelated to their use in teaching. A comprehensive Pet Donation Consent Form is signed detailing owner understanding that their animal may be used for education, research, training and anatomical examination. Cadavers are initially stored by the donating practice and then collected by a member of the University of Surrey technical services team. The pet donation scheme has ethical approval from the University.
- 4.3 Sheep used for anatomy teaching are commercially bred and obtained from a local supplier. Animals are transported a short distance to the School's dedicated facilities and humanely euthanised by appropriately qualified staff. This on-site euthanasia forms an important part of a Veterinary Public Health and abattoir practical and has ethical approval from the Non-Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 Sub-Committee (NASPA).
- 4.4 Cadavers and specimens are stored frozen in a large -20°C freezer or chilled in fridges at 4°C. The School has expertise (academic-led) in the preservation of cadaver materials for teaching.

Table 4.1.a Cadavers and material of animal origin used in practical anatomical training

Species	Number of cadavers			
	19/20**		18/19	
	Whole	Additional specimens	Whole	Additional specimens
Cattle	16	279	12	546
Small ruminants	38	247	48	608
Pigs	1	155	15	499
Companion Animals	38		23	
Equine	6	165	4	344
Poultry and Rabbits	145	91	277	223
Exotic Pets				
Other (Specify)	56 (squirrels, ferrets)		44 (Wildlife)	

**Figures are not for a complete year due to covid-19

- 4.5 The University holds a contract with the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) and offers a distributed post-mortem service for farmed livestock across the South East of England. Individual case reports are produced and data from this service are collated for national disease surveillance. The VSP also receives private submissions for Post-Mortem Examination (PME), out with the DEFRA surveillance scheme.

- 4.6 Practical pathology teaching begins in Year 2 of the BVMSci programme. Each student performs a teaching Post-Mortem Examination (PME) on a chicken and a rabbit. They also work in small groups to perform a post-mortem examination on a sheep, pig or calf. Cadavers sourced for this purpose and are not part of the diagnostic caseload of the Veterinary Pathology Centre.
- 4.7 During the Veterinary Pathology and Public Health Rotation (VPPH) rotation students perform PME on both private submissions to VSP and DEFRA surveillance cases, individually (one chicken and one pig carcass each) or in small groups (all other species). Cadavers are brought in, in the unlikely event of low case submissions during a rotation. Students complete a PME report based on a PME they have performed. The minimum numbers of PME cases seen by each student throughout the VPPH rotation is 2 small animal, 1 pig, 1 bovine, 1 equine, 1 small ruminant and 2 chicken. Students are also involved in an average of 5 additional cases per rotation.

Table 4.1b: Number of necropsies over the past two years (for final year pathology teaching)

Species	Estimated % of necropsies observed by or undertaken by veterinary undergraduate students ('core' cases only) 19/20		Estimated % of necropsies observed by or undertaken by veterinary undergraduate students ('core' cases only) 18/19	
	19/20		18/19	
'Core' Cases				
Cattle	12	12%	12	12.0%
Small ruminants	15	15%	18	18.6%
Pigs	21*	21%	15*	15.5%
Companion Animals	27	27%	23	23.7%
Equine	12	12%	9	9.3%
Poultry and Rabbits	8*	8%	11*	11.3%
Exotic Pets (inc. wildlife)	5	5%	9	9.3%
Total core cases	100	100%	97	100%
'Extra' cases #	17		40	
Total cases	117		137	

*Pig and chicken PMs: Every student performs a full porcine and a full avian PME so one chicken and one pig carcass per rotation is recorded in the table. Pig and poultry PME numbers in the table are higher as the figure includes any additional specimens submitted for surveillance or privately that students observe or undertake.

Extra cases on top of 'core' PME cases are submissions under the University of Surrey's surveillance service, and some private submissions from Marwell Zoo. These vary between rotations but add to the pathology caseload seen by students for cattle, small ruminant, pigs and wildlife.

- 4.8 Cattle, sheep and horses for some animal handling and husbandry classes are housed on site in the Veterinary Clinical Skills building. The 6 horses are owned by the University of Surrey and the 3 cattle and 6 sheep are provided by Sparsholt College. Although the majority of production animal husbandry teaching occurs at partner sites. The availability of cattle and sheep onsite allows students the opportunity for skills remediation and additional handling practise.
- 4.9 First year students are assessed on their handling skills for five species (dog, cat, sheep, horse, cow). During these assessments they must demonstrate how to safely and correctly approach and handle the animals (e.g. placing a head collar on a horse, putting a cow in a crush, lifting a dog correctly). They are also assessed on their understanding of biosecurity to prevent spread of infection to humans/other animals. These assessments are undertaken to ensure students are safe to undertake Animal Husbandry Extra Mural Studies (AHEMS) placements in years one and two.
- 4.10 Food hygiene and public health learning outcomes in final year are delivered through an IMR rotation in Veterinary Pathology and Public Health (VPPH). VPPH is the only rotation based at the University, within the Veterinary School Pathology building (VSP).
- 4.11 Clinical teaching during final year takes place within the School's network of over 70 partner practices, in a series of Intra-Mural Rotations (IMR). The network of practices provides students the opportunity to develop Day One Competencies through authentic, workplace-based learning.
- 4.12 IMR consists of seven, four-week rotations, each of which is hosted within a different practice. Four 'core' rotations focus on primary care veterinary practice (small animal x 2, equine and production animal), one rotation is dedicated to small animal referral practice and one to Veterinary Pathology and Public Health. Students also choose a special interest elective rotation, which gives an opportunity to repeat one of the primary care rotations, or to explore a more specific area of interest to them, e.g. diagnostic imaging or anaesthesia.
- 4.13 The School's clinical partner network also reflects the types of practice and ownership structures found in the UK, providing students the opportunity to experience a range of workplaces. This helps students to establish the type of practice that would suit them post-graduation, helping them to make informed choices when seeking employment.
- 4.14 For the academic year 2020-21, the network has 10-30% extra capacity depending on placement type and will continue to expand to accommodate 150 students + 15-25% resilience.
- 4.15 This network is managed, and quality controlled by the Head of Veterinary Partnerships and Animal Resources (HVPAR) and the Veterinary Partnerships and Animal Resources Manager. Partner practices are carefully selected to ensure they meet a series of set criteria, outlined in the Due Diligence Process. Each partner practice is required to sign an Educational Partnership Agreement (EPA) provided by the University, which clearly sets out

the obligations of both parties. A contractual obligation of IMR partner practices is the provision of dedicated learning space and internet access within the practice to allow students access to online learning resources.

- 4.16 All clinical partner practices must be accredited by the RCVS Practice Standards Scheme or an equivalent scheme recognised by RCVS. Other requirements include the annual practice audit which is completed before students first visit, and annually thereafter. As with all offsite teaching facilities, remediation of deficiencies revealed during audit are captured in an action plan and a time frame for redress agreed. Feedback from students is also captured in a post-placement feedback questionnaire, which is fed back to the Veterinary Partnerships Manager, who investigates and tracks these actions and ensures remediation within a suitable time frame.
- 4.17 Delivery of the final year module and oversight of student progression, learning and assessment is managed by the Director of Clinical Education with a team of twelve Veterinary Clinical Teaching Fellows (VCTFs), supported by the Veterinary Placements administration team (VPT). The size of the VCTF team is always under review to ensure that numbers are sufficient to provide suitable support to the network and the School's students. This team will increase to thirteen in 20/21 in line with expansion of the IMR network.
- 4.18 VCTFs are experienced primary care clinicians, employed by the University, who have undertaken a bespoke training programme, developed in conjunction with the Department of Higher Education and incorporating the Graduate Certificate in Learning and Teaching. The VCTFs visit students individually in practice every 2 weeks, not only providing oversight of their experience and pastoral care but also providing opportunities for structured clinical discussion. Between these visits VCTFs have remote interactions with students, providing feedback on portfolio assets and support as required.
- 4.19 Provision and facilitation of learning opportunities within the partner practice is provided by the Clinical Instruction Mentors (CIMs) who are partner clinicians trained in mentorship by the University and are responsible for the delivery of agreed learning objectives. All CIMs are practising members of the RCVS and wholly employed by the partner practices. All active CIMs have completed a training programme. Completion of CIM training is audited by the VCTF team.
- 4.20 Contractually each partner practice provides a minimum of 2 trained CIMs who provide structured time for individual student discussion and feedback in addition to engaging with students while undertaking clinical work. CIMs and VCTFs have numerous points of contact to allow them to discuss student needs and progression, with a minimum of a pre and mid placement discussion, and an end of placement review.
- 4.21 Site specific Health and Safety information is covered in an induction on day one. In addition, students are made aware of generic risks during their IMR introduction week, encouraging them to perform dynamic risk assessments, when they note a risk arising. Students on equine placements are provided with safety helmets complying with relevant legislation.
- 4.22 The VMS5001 (IMR) module is subject to University quality assurance procedures and standards. Students have the opportunity to provide feedback following each rotation via their

VCTF and a post-placement questionnaire. Feedback from CIMs and partners is also obtained, through face-to-face contact with VCTFs, a feedback survey and through CIM representatives.

- 4.23 Feedback is reviewed in real time by the Director of Clinical Education, the Veterinary Placements Team and the Director and Manager of Partnerships and Animal Resources and reported regularly to the IMR Educational Advisory Group and IMR ops group as appropriate. These groups report into the Curriculum Committee, and ultimately to the Board of Studies. Outcomes of summative assessments, are also subject to Board of Examiners scrutiny, including four external examiners.
- 4.24 Across IMR, four of the seven rotations focus on primary care with the opportunity to repeat one during the SIE as a 'core species elective'. These are hosted in clinics with opportunities for students to engage in a range of medical and surgical cases. Staff supervising each rotation have the appropriate level of expertise; many practice-based CIMs have veterinary post-graduate qualifications. The School's partner referral practices include many clinical diploma holders and RCVS Specialists. Clinical education is supplemented by instruction from University staff with specialist clinical expertise.
- 4.25 The typical group size for IMR placements is two students per practice. This affords maximum opportunity for involvement in clinical cases and one-to-one supervision, and students benefit from the support of a peer. Large, multidisciplinary hospitals used for the referral rotation have groups of up to eight students though they each have an individual rota of sub placements within the practice. Given that some year groups have uneven numbers of students, and some students may need to remediate, the School reserves the right to place some students individually. In these circumstances the School will ensure that additional levels of support both within the School and at the partner practice are in place.
- 4.26 During 2nd, 3rd and 4th year, students are taught clinical skills by University academics during onsite practical classes on a range of live animal species or cadavers, as well as a range of clinical skills models. In addition, they are taught and assessed by University academic staff, qualified veterinary surgeons and other suitably qualified persons whilst attending offsite teaching facilities such as the veterinary clinics, zoos and farms within the School's partner network.
- 4.27 Clinical skills of 3rd and 4th year students are assessed by University academic staff through barrier OSCE examinations prior to progressing through the BVMSci course.
- 4.28 Until 2020 4th year students spent time at a spay and neuter clinic, working alongside University of Surrey academics. Unfortunately, this facility is no longer available but a new host is being sought for the 2021-22 academic year. During this time students gain hands on experience of routine surgeries, anaesthesia and patient care procedures. In 4th year students also spend time at a 'Wellbeing' clinic at the Blue Cross, carrying out health checks and providing advice on vaccinations, parasiticides and neutering, giving them experience of consulting and client communication. Equine clinical skills teaching takes place on site and production animal teaching takes place at several different sites, including Sparsholt College where students focus on reproductive health, udder health, youngstock, infectious disease and mobility in cattle.

- 4.29 Once in final year, when students are spending time within the clinical practice partnership network, there are a wide range of opportunities for them to further develop their clinical competences. The distributed model of teaching allows students exposure to a variety of cases, and each case with which the student has direct involvement in is logged.
- 4.30 Following the closure of the RSPCA hospital that hosted the School's spay and neuter clinic, investigations are underway to identify a new host ahead of the start of the 21-22 academic year.

Comments

- 4.31 The visitors consider that although the current level of training and assessment is a satisfactory preparation for the risks presented by large animal handling in AHEMS, it may be insufficient to develop confidence at this stage in students who have little prior experience of handling large animals which may be exacerbated by the current difficulties in arranging suitable EMS.
- 4.32 The average number of necropsies per student appears to be low (ref. Table 4.1b) and the School should ensure that the maximum number of submitted cases across the full species range are seen and examined by the students.
- 4.33 The partner practices continue to provide intramural rotations with a diverse caseload of surgical and medical patients available for the students' clinical education. The majority of cases seen in intramural rotations are primary care.

Commendations

- 4.34 The School is to be commended for a high proportion of primary care cases seen on IM rotations.

Suggestions

- 4.35 Steps should be taken to ensure that each student has the opportunity to necropsy sufficient numbers of companion, equine and farm animals.

Standard 5 – Information Resources

Background

- 5.1 Situated at the heart of campus on Stag Hill, the Library building is open 24 hours a day, 365 days a year to all members of the University (reduced opening hours during Christmas vacation 2020). The building provides space for study and research including silent study areas, group areas, and bookable group study rooms for collaborative working. The Library is wireless-enabled, with 1,700 study spaces; 450 open access networked PCs; and 144 loanable laptops, providing access to online resources and the University network. The Library search interface, SurreySearch, is available on and off- campus and links through to full text of online books and journals, and library locations of print copies. A variety of services are provided, detailed on the Library Web pages for staff and for students including: Inter-library loans; automatic renewals; online reservations; self-service borrowing and returns; photocopying/printing/scanning – including printing from own device; wireless networking; Laptop loan; and the Distance Learners Information Service (DiLIS), helping students at a distance to use the Library more effectively. The Library works with the School to provide a range of electronic resources, and comprehensive support for off-site users to ensure that students on external placements have access to information resources.
- 5.2 The Library's collection of books is just over 31,500 in hard copy, and over 790,000 e-books. Core reading list titles for veterinary students are available as multiple copies including electronic format facilitating access anywhere with internet connection. Reference copies of core texts are kept in the Library, available 24 hours/day during Semester and students and staff can reserve copies on loan via SurreySearch. The Library has a large collection of e-resources, all of which may be accessed on- and off- campus. Titles are searchable electronically and students can access relevant books directly via online reading lists embedded within the virtual learning environment (SurreyLearn). From Semester 1, 2020, the University introduced Personal Digital Texts from BibliU, providing students with free, personal digital copies of a selection of essential textbooks, as selected by academic colleagues in the programme team. A list of e-journals is available via the Library website. The Library also subscribes to a wide range of electronic databases, many including full-text access. All are available on- and off- campus. The Veterinary School has its own subject page on the Library website signposting resources relevant to the programme including core databases such as CAB Abstracts; VetMedResource; Medline; and Vetstream Vetlexicon amongst others.
- 5.3 Initial book purchasing takes account of student numbers and of likely demand, and the Library will purchase e-book access wherever possible, in order to maximise availability, in addition to shelf copies. The Library responds positively to demand for increased access to texts from students and staff and through regular evidence-based review of reservations. Where there is heavy demand, a reference copy is additionally made available. In addition, copyright licensed, digitised core chapters or papers can be embedded, full-text, within the online module reading lists in order to increase access to material both on- and off- campus. Teaching and research staff can also request resources for the Library and recommend journal subscriptions which are then evaluated for inclusion in collections by the Library Resources Decision Committee. Additional material can be provided via the Inter-Library Loans service, with requests fully integrated into Library systems for secure online delivery.
- 5.4 The Faculty of Health and Medical Sciences has a designated qualified Faculty Engagement Librarian responsible for developing appropriate collections and services, and for liaising with

academic and research staff. The Faculty Engagement Librarian and Faculty-dedicated Learning Development Librarian and Learning Development Adviser colleagues work closely with the School of Veterinary Medicine. Reading lists are available online from the Leganto reading lists system via SurreyLearn pages and the librarian liaises with academic staff regarding recommended books, journals and other Library resources. The Faculty Engagement librarian team also contribute to the Graduate Certificate in Learning and Teaching programme, specifically the use of reading lists in module design, supporting new academic colleagues in pedagogic development. Effective communication with the School of Veterinary Medicine is ensured by participation in Boards of Study; Staff-Student Liaison Committees; Faculty Education and Research Committees. A weekly drop-in has been run in the School. The Library has also developed a series of Library and Student Engagement Forums, as an opportunity to share feedback and ideas in developing the service to best meet the needs of the user community. Library staff have been active in the development and delivery of embedded and ad-hoc training for staff and students in using Library resources.

- 5.5 SurreyLearn, the University's Virtual Learning Environment (VLE), is a system for creating, hosting and editing online learning resources. It contains a flexible suite of tools for creating content for courses and users. This platform is used in all modules to provide easy access to up-to-date and relevant learning materials, module and programme information and guidance, and activities such as discussion fora, quizzes and online assignments. Other Learning Tools Interoperability (LTI) compliant systems (e.g. lecture capture software Panopto; and Turnitin) are also integrated within the VLE. The University has a content capture policy, and the School has developed a School-specific approach for the use of Panopto lecture capture.
- 5.6 Pedagogical evaluation of new technology for teaching is carried out in collaboration with the academic staff within the School, IT Services, and the Digital Learning team as part of the Surrey Institute of Education. Learning analytics are used to track the uptake of new technology e.g. the number of students accessing flipped resources via SurreyLearn prior to classes. Student feedback on resources is gathered directly, or through surveys. This feedback is reviewed at Staff Student Liaison Committee and conclusions reported to Board of Studies. Technology is evaluated on the basis of whether it is delivering the desired outcome e.g. Poll Everywhere found to be very useful as an almost 100% response rate to questions is achieved very rapidly.
- 5.7 Students and staff have access to centralised IT support services for advice and problem-solving in person at the walk-in help-desk in the Library, via email, live chat and telephone (24hour service). IT support teams cover key areas of:
- Desktop Service supporting primary devices staff and student use daily.
 - Teaching and Academic Services, supporting bespoke research labs teaching spaces and all Audio-Visual support.
 - Research Technologies, focussing on specialist research requirements.
- 5.8 Students have access to PCs within the School and across campus with 62 machines in the first-floor open access study area for undergraduate and postgraduate students at the School, 450 PCs within the Library building, with additional 144 loanable laptops, and a further 200 PCs in computer labs across campus. All teaching spaces have audio-visual services and support from 8:30 till 17:00 during teaching times.

- 5.9 If a student experiences IT issues while on IMR placement and are unable to use a computer or laptop at the practice provider, the University has provision to support a temporary loan of a laptop to this student until they have their own (machine) again. This is to limit the delay in students completing required assessments and case work as part of their IMR placements.
- 5.10 The School supports the teaching of practical skills through use of mannequins, models and training aids. Surgical skills trainers and models to develop small animal clinical skills (e.g. ophthalmic examination, clinical anatomy models, and cardiovascular monitoring devices) are located in the Clinical Skills Laboratory in VSM. The Large Animal Clinical Skills Unit (VSC) houses a range of models to assist training in clinical skills relevant to ruminants, horses, pigs and poultry.
- 5.11 The Clinical Skills Teaching Unit in VSM includes a 'mock surgery' (with reception area, consulting rooms, pharmacy and kennelling for both dogs and cats) and a clinical skills laboratory. These facilities provide an authentic learning environment for the development of early-stage professional skills e.g. communications skills, animal handling. This environment is used for the development of clinical reasoning, diagnosis and treatment through case simulations.
- 5.12 Access to clinical skills instructions are freely available through SurreyLearn along with a multitude of instructional videos. Clinical skills may be practised during Open Access, and students are able to book themselves available seats in an automated booking system to visit the relevant sites in VSM and VSC. Open Access is available daily during the teaching semester, and also out-of-hours.
- 5.13 The pedagogical environment is focussed on meeting programme learning outcomes. An example of this is a 'dry run' neutering clinic day; the Clinical Skills Laboratory is transformed into a veterinary clinic and students are guided through a day of neutering simulation. The teaching consists of small group working, discussion, practical skills and critical thinking using a range of both low and high-fidelity models. The aim of the practical is to prepare the students for a day of live animal neutering the following week.

Comments

- 5.14 The panel were impressed with the provisions in place to provide the full service during the current covid-19 constraints especially the delivery service for hard copy publications.
- 5.15 The School had responded swiftly to the need for maximum access to the teaching models and students appreciated the ease of the online booking system.
- 5.16 Students conducting research appreciated the ease with which they can contact the library and book appointments for advice and learning support.
- 5.17 Students indicated that they have benefitted from the recently established Maths and Statistics Advice Service.

Commendations

- 5.18 The School is commended on their swift move to online learning and information resource support during the past year, when more students have been learning remotely; this has been effective and efficient.
- 5.19 The Faculty and School are to be commended on the establishment of the Maths and Statistics Advice Service.

Standard 6 – Students

Background

- 6.1 The School's strategy for BVMSci student numbers has been to incrementally grow to a target cohort size of 150 students per year; the new School buildings were designed to accommodate a maximum class size of 150. A first cohort of 48 students was admitted to allow them to be taught in temporary facilities on the Stag Hill campus (before the new buildings were available), and to enable a smaller cohort to embark upon the first year of IMR rotations in year 5.

Table 6.1.1: Number of Veterinary Students Enrolled on the BVMSci Programme

	2020/21	2019/20	2018/19	2017/18	2016/17	2015/16	2014/15
First year	144	151	152	140	127	123	48
Second year	151	146	143	128	123	48	n/a
Third year	143	140	121	114	47	n/a	n/a
Fourth year	141	120	108	45	n/a	n/a	n/a
Fifth year	115	108	40	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

*Figures taken from the start of the academic year and include students repeating a year both with and without attendance.

- 6.2 The School of Bioscience and Medicine delivers a Veterinary Bioscience BSc programme which admits between 20–30 students per year. Veterinary School staff deliver approximately 20% of this programme and there is limited sharing of resources. This programme is primarily delivered on the Stag Hill campus.
- 6.3 MSc in Veterinary Microbiology has been running since 2012 and is the only Masters-level veterinary microbiology programme in the UK. It is delivered on a modular basis and also as a part time programme. It is run jointly with local, world-leading veterinary research institutes: the Animal & Plant Health Agency and the Pirbright Institute. It provides a unique opportunity for students to undertake practical training and a research project within these laboratories. The programme has been temporarily suspended until September 2022. The programme team are currently investigating the most appropriate delivery modality to ensure that the programme can be relaunched in 2022, with a focus on improved sustainability and the student learning experience.
- 6.4 The Student Handbook available to all students electronically, provides detailed information to students about services, policies and procedures and information about their course. Key contacts for veterinary students are listed for all services. This document is made available to students on the SurreyLearn site at the start of each academic year.

- 6.5 Student Support plays a key role in the School with a dedicated Vet School Student Services Team providing support to the students' programme activities. The Faculty has a dedicated Clinical Placements Team to ensure resilience across all placement areas and sharing of best practice. The team are co-located with the Faculty Academic Hive teams to ensure a joined up, "one-stop" support service for students.
- 6.6 The Vet Student Services Team send a welcome email to all new students prior to their start to support their initial entry onto the programme. A similar communication is also sent to the returning students sharing key updates and information in preparation for their return. There is a University induction week for first year students which includes University-wide introductory sessions as well as those tailored to the requirements of the Veterinary Medicine students. Students receive talks from internal and external representatives, the Students Union, the Student Services Team and academic staff to make them aware of key regulations, processes and key contacts. The Vet School also uses this week as an opportunity to introduce the students to their personal tutors and the Senior Tutors.
- 6.7 A bespoke IMR introduction week is held for fifth year students prior to the start of their first placement to guide students through the IMR process, establish expectations and offer a series of sessions designed to support their transition into the profession.
- 6.8 The Student Services Team has implemented a Service Level Agreement with the Faculty Assessments Team to enhance support for examinations and assessments, especially during the assessment periods which includes an allocated Assessments drop-in service for staff.
- 6.9 The Student Engagement Platform is an online platform which has been developed to provide students with easy, one stop access to all key University services, information and systems. Stage one of the project started in 2019.
- 6.10 Students can access appropriate support services directly or after "signposting" by their personal tutors or the student peer support network. For students with health problems a range of healthcare services are provided on campus including an NHS medical practice.
- 6.11 The University's Centre for Health and Wellbeing provides support when personal and health issues are impacting on a student's ability to study and cope at University. The Centre has a team of professionally registered counsellors who offer free, confidential, one-to-one counselling to students. In 2018, the University joined up to Big White Wall, a free 24/7 online support service run by trained counsellors which acts as an online forum for students to anonymously discuss and receive information and training on mental health and wellbeing.
- 6.12 The Disability & Neurodiversity Department (previously Additional Learning Support) is a confidential service to assist students with a range of difficulties including: autism, mental health difficulties, medical conditions, and specific learning difficulties e.g. dyslexia, dyspraxia.
- 6.13 The University's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion team ensure all students have access to the appropriate resources and opportunities. They support initiatives such as the Race Equality Charter and the Athena Swan charter (to which the Vet School is currently submitting an application and action plan for a recognition award). In addition to this, the diversity of the student body is an outcome that is actively monitored by the School.

- 6.14 The Clinical Placements Team, who work alongside the Vet School Student Services Team, are available via phone, in person or on email for students both in and out of semester. Students that have concerns whilst on placement are encouraged to contact either team, or their Personal Tutor as soon as possible for guidance. If students experience urgent difficulties out-of-hours they can contact the University's Security Team who are trained to deal with emergency matters. Urgent incidents are escalated to rostered University Senior Managers to direct a response as required. Students report any incidents or accidents that occur while on placement to the Clinical Placements Team and these are recorded following the School's Incident Reporting process. For other issues of concern, such as wellbeing or professionalism, the EMS co-ordinator and Clinical Placements Team offer guidance and follow up with students, staff and placement providers as required.
- 6.15 Student peer support service scheme trains volunteer students to support their peers and is facilitated by the Centre for Wellbeing with input from the Senior Personal Tutors. Each Peer Supporter undertakes training provided by the Centre for Wellbeing to enable them to provide a non-judgemental listening and support service with appropriate signposting to other services. The scheme began at the Vet School in 2016/17 and following a successful pilot grew in subsequent academic years. Due to the success of the peer support service within the Vet School, it has now been launched as a University-wide service and consists of Peer Supporters from all faculties. The peer support service forms part of a network of support mechanisms for Surrey veterinary students which includes enhanced personal tutoring and the student-led "Vet Families" initiative which finds senior vet student buddies for new students.
- 6.16 Feedback Engagement and Tracking at Surrey (FEATS) is a student-designed portfolio tool aimed to help students to better understand and engage with feedback from their assignments. This was launched in August 2017 to first year students and has now been rolled out to all other students across the University. 86% of the first year BVMSci students engaged with this in 2017 and a current Veterinary Medicine student gave a presentation on the benefits and the co-design method of FEATS at the University's Teaching and Learning Away Day.
- 6.17 One of the outcomes that the School is working towards is increasing the students' awareness of the diversity of the veterinary profession and encouraging the graduates to consider a broad range of careers. To support this desired outcome the School's Employability Working Group offers a range of activities focusing on raising students' awareness of career opportunities and the importance of being able to demonstrate a range of transferable non-technical skills. These activities begin in Year 1 with a networking event for students, partners and veterinary professionals and continue into Years 3 and 5 with a Careers Fair highlighting different sectors of veterinary practice as well as the industry, government and research sectors.
- 6.18 There are a number of formal feedback mechanisms in place to meet this requirement:
- **Module Evaluation Questionnaires (MEQ) process:** Students provide feedback on each module. Scores and comments are reviewed by teaching staff, Programme Leader, Head of Veterinary Education and the Associate Dean for Learning & Teaching leading to an action plan for module development or remediation if necessary.

- **Student representatives:** Organised through the Students' Union, students have the opportunity to be elected as a student representative for their course and year.
- **Staff-Student Liaison Committee (SSLC):** Organised by the School's academic lead for staff-student liaison, student representatives have the opportunity to raise concerns relating to their programme and/or related matters. Within the Vet School, SSLC acts as the forum to inform and consult with students. Meetings occur at least once per semester.
- **Boards of Studies:** Chaired by the Programme Leader, and including student representatives, this committee covers responses to the issues raised at the Staff Student Liaison Committee and considers module changes arising from MEQs and other feedback.
- **Surrey Student Survey:** Independent student survey inviting feedback on all aspects of University life.
- **National Student Survey:** The Vet School received overall satisfaction scores of 100% and 92% in 2019 and 2020 respectively.
- **MySurrey Voice (Unitu):** A student voice platform used to raise issues, ideas, concerns, or other matters for discussion with their peers, their Academic Representatives and to the department. It provides a real-time discussion board for students to contribute, discuss, and vote on matters they wish to be escalated to the department for attention.

6.20 Additional feedback mechanisms include:

- **Personal Tutor meetings:** Students meet their tutors at least twice per semester for discussion and feedback. Tutors can report feedback to appropriate individuals or committees.
- **Pastoral forum:** a meeting held by the Senior Personal Tutor, with a representative from the Academic Hive and Student Veterinary Society welfare reps to raise any wellbeing concerns.
- **Head of School update meetings:** held once a semester to update students on aspects of the Schools' development and opportunity for students to ask questions and provide feedback.
- **Head of School & Veterinary Society President meetings:** These occur three times per year and are an opportunity for feedback on Veterinary Society issues.
- **Dean's Lunches:** Bi-annual meetings between students and the Executive Dean, Associate Dean for Learning & Teaching and the Faculty Student Services Manager to raise general feedback and to share strategic information relevant to students.
- **SurreyLearn:** For each module there is a discussion tab where students can post feedback which they can choose to post anonymously if they wish.
- **IMR student feedback:** At the end of each IMR placements, students complete an online Feedback Form (see IMR Delivery Document) which is reviewed by the Director of Clinical Education and the Vet Placements Team. Any specific points to note will be discussed by the Curriculum Committee and fed back to the practices where appropriate.
- **Student feedback to Student Services:** A questionnaire has been added to student helpdesk to give students additional opportunities to comment on the quality of service and make suggestions.

Comments

- 6.21 The Vet School continues to provide excellent pastoral care for students despite the challenges of covid-19. Support services are available online and students were aware of how to access support, with signposting from their tutors or directly to the services.
- 6.22 Societies, including vet societies continue to meet and engage students online with talks and activities to maintain contact and student social interaction.
- 6.23 The peer support service was much appreciated by students.
- 6.24 The information in the careers fair is very comprehensive.
- 6.25 MySurrey voice offers an app by means of which student can offer feedback anonymously and which is considered and if appropriate, acted upon promptly.
- 6.26 Students on IMR rotation appreciated the student-initiated Teams platforms on which students, VCTFs and alumni could all discuss cases and seek advice on any topic they chose.
- 6.27 VCTFs are personal tutors for fourth and final year students meeting them twice a semester. The students appreciated the helpful supportive relationships with their personal tutors, especially when progressing onto the IMR rotations. Some VCTFs reported being personal tutors for up to 30 students which adds considerably to their already significant workload. Group mentoring sessions were being considered to ensure all students had contact with their mentor as the number of students rises.

Commendations

- 6.28 VCTFs are to be complimented on their enthusiasm, commitment, and support for student wellbeing.

Suggestions

- 6.29 Going forward the School should ensure that the VCTF to student ratio is sufficient to allow opportunity for the development and maintenance of the personal relationship between VCTF and student which is especially important for students away from campus on IMR and EMS placements.

Standard 7 - Admissions and Progress

Background

7.1 Candidates are assessed on academic ability, experience and personal attributes/competency (the latter based on the RCVS Day One Competences).

Stage 1 – Preliminary Shortlisting

	GCSE (or equivalents)	A Level (or equivalents)	BTEC	International Baccalaureate	Degree	Access
Academic	5 subjects at grade A. ----- Must include Biology, Physics and Chemistry (or Double Science) ----- Maths and English Language at grade B	AAB ----- Must include grade A Chemistry and Biology ----- Critical Thinking or General Studies not included	DDD ----- Must be in Animal/Science related subject area ----- Grade A Chemistry A Level also required	34 points ----- Must include Biology, Chemistry at standard level 7 or higher level 6.	2:1 in a Bioscience related subject	45 level 3 credits at distinction – 39 level 3 credits at distinction and 6 level 3 credits at merit ----- including 15 level 3 credits Biology at distinction and 15 level 3 credits in Chemistry at distinction. The other 15 level 3 credits at distinction can be in any subject
Work Experience	Applicants are expected to have gained at least four weeks of animal related work experience to include a week in a general veterinary practice OR one week of animal related work experience and the completion of an online virtual work experience course, details can be found on our website.					

7.2 Stage 2 – Online Questionnaire

The questionnaire is designed to assess core competencies such as critical thinking and problem solving, teamwork and collaboration, adaptability and professionalism. Applicants are assessed through situational judgement testing (SJT).

7.3 Stage 3 – Multiple Mini Interviews (MMI)

Applicants with the highest questionnaire scores are invited to attend an interview day at the University. Each MMI cycle comprises 7 x 5 minute stations; each station asks a question or provides a task to assess a specific competency or characteristic as follows:

	Station 1	Station 2	Station 3	Station 4	Station 5	Station 6	Station 7
Competency	Problem Solving & Critical Thinking	Data Interpretation & Emotional Intelligence	Integrity & Ethical and Moral Reasoning	Empathy & Ethical and Moral Reasoning	Problem Solving & Critical Thinking	Reflection & Empathy	Reflection & Observation
	Communication						

7.4 **Training** for those involved with selection (specifically interviews) is delivered via pre-recorded video content and face-to-face briefings prior to the start of the recruitment cycle. This training

covers the format of the interviews, introduces interviewers to the scenario instructions, use of probing questions and covers bias. Electronic training resources and bespoke training sessions are also available for staff unable to attend the main session.

- 7.5 Selection criteria and the admissions process are subject to a detailed annual review as well as scrutiny by the Veterinary Admissions Review Group. This group comprises members of the Admissions team, academics from the School and external veterinary partners. Reference is made to applicant feedback from post-event questionnaires, applicant performance data and feedback from the staff and partners involved in the recruitment cycle.
- 7.6 Following review in 2020 by a focus group consisting of staff, final year students and alumni the situational judgement test questionnaire was updated last year and refreshed with new questions. Admissions staff undertook online CPD on MMI, referenced literature and liaised with a subject expert to form a focus group and trial new MMI scenarios.
- 7.7 The University's policy of equal opportunity ensures that all applicants are considered on the same academic grounds. Students with a wide range of disabilities or health conditions can achieve the required standards of knowledge and skills to enable them to practise - each case is individually assessed with close reference to the RCVS 'Guidance on the Admission of Students with Disabilities'. All offers are conditional upon occupational health clearance (facilitated by the Cordell Health Group). In addition to pre-course screening, the Occupational Health team assesses students ahead of enrolment so that any required adjustments can be identified and facilitated. The Vet School disability co-ordinator is involved in initial conversations and considerations to signpost and explore available options and support.
- 7.8 Students study a total of 120 credits per year over 2 semesters. All modules carry a pass mark of 50% - module classifications are detailed on the programme specification. Definitions for module classifications can be found in paragraph 10 of section A1 of the University Regulations.
- 7.9 Under certain criteria (level aggregate of at least 55%, module mark of no less than 40%) up to 30 credits in year 1 and up to 15 credits in subsequent years may be compensated.

Table 7.1.1: Attrition of Veterinary Students

Entering Class	Total Students	Relative Attrition		Absolute Attrition		Transfer onto Programme		Total Attrition	
	N	Academic n (%)	Personal n (%)	Academic n (%)	Personal n (%)	Academic n (%)	Personal n (%)	n	%
2014/15	48	5 (10%)	2 (4%)	0 (0%)	2 (4%)	0 (0%)	1 (2%)	9	19%
2015/16	123	12 (10%)	4 (3%)	1 (1%)	4 (3%)	5 (4%)	1 (1%)	21	17%
2016/17	126	14 (11%)	8 (6%)	2 (2%)	3 (2%)	12 (10%)	3 (2%)	27	21%
2017/18	135	4 (3%)	7 (5%)	4 (3%)	2 (1%)	14 (10%)	9 (7%)	17	10%
2018/19	149	3 (2%)	6 (4%)	1 (1%)	6 (4%)	4 (3%)	5 (3%)	16	11%

2019/20	147	0 (0%)	2 (1%)	0 (0%)	1 (1%)	3 (2%)	4 (3%)	3	2%
2020/21	144	0 (0%)	1 (1%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (1%)	1	1%

Total students: students who have entered the class and enrolled onto the programme at the beginning of the year (i.e. does not include course-suspended entrants).

Relative Attrition: students who transfer into earlier years, transfer to another vet school.

Absolute Attrition: students who leave and never return.

Transfers onto Programme: students joining a cohort at any point after initial registration (i.e. returning suspended students or entrants direct to year 2).

7.10 The University has a formal complaint and disciplinary procedures. All are publicly available on the University's website:

- Regulations for Academic Integrity
- Regulations for Fitness to Practise
- Procedure for Complaints
- Student Disciplinary Regulations
- Regulations for support to Study

7.11 Academic performance is tracked formally by the Board of Examiners which meets at least three times a year. Concerns may also be raised by students directly with staff. Each student is assigned a personal tutor who acts as a key contact for any matters relating to academic progress, personal development and welfare, and underpins the process of induction and orientation into the University community. Additionally, the School has a Senior Personal Tutor to advise on complex issues or act as a proxy should a student's tutor be unavailable.

7.12 The number of students admitted to the programme is determined with careful reference to both University and School-level strategic/financial plans. Factors such as staff/student ratios, lab space and the number of placement opportunities are all considered.

7.13 High demand for the BVMSci programme allows the School to be selective in its admission of students. The mechanisms for selection are weighted heavily on evidence of core values informed by the RCVS Day One Competences and assessed by a pool of veterinary professionals, partners and staff.

7.14 With regard to attrition, the School's key performance indicator value is a progression rate of >95% to the next year level. This has been achieved in all cohorts for the years since 2014/15 to 2019/20.

Comments

7.15 There is information on both EMS and IMR on the website for students. At the last visit of RCVS, it was suggested that the costs for EMS were made more prominent and this is the case. However as IMR is such an important part of the course, the information on this is not highlighted re travel, possible time away from base and the costs associated.

7.16 Due to the covid-19 pandemic, prospective students can undertake the 'Virtual Work experience and Exploring the Veterinary Profession by FutureLearn' to comply with their requirements for entry.

- 7.17 Although the requirements regarding Fitness to Practise and withdrawing from the programme are on the University website, these are not immediately obvious to a prospective student.
- 7.18 All partner practice vets involved in admissions interviewing or tasks, are trained in diversity and unconscious bias.
- 7.19 The student body is made up of 12% BAME and the School's present target is 14% and they aim to go beyond this target.
- 7.20 The admissions group is monitoring trends in progression and attrition of students to amass meaningful data in future years.
- 7.21 The attrition rate table show decreasing levels in recent years, however the total rates for the early cohorts appear high and the reasons for this and the decreases seen in Year 3 were not completely explained.

Recommendations

- 7.22 The School's website must ensure the requirements regarding FtP and withdrawing from the programme are clearly stated and available for potential students.
- 7.23 The School's website must ensure the commitments and costs of the EMS and IMR programme are clearly stated and available for potential students.

Suggestions

- 7.24 Data should be collated and analysed regarding student progression and success on the programme, in the context of the entry criteria to the programme.
- 7.25 The School should use data other than the KPI of more than 95% progression rates to assess student attrition.

Standard 8 – Staff

Background

Table 8.1.1: Academic staff of the veterinary programme – number and qualifications.

	Non-Veterinarians			Veterinarians					
	BS c onl y	MS c	PhD	BVS c o r DV M o n l y	MSc	Ph D	Veterinary Specialists		
							Board Certifie d o r Diplom a Holder s	Board Certifie d / Dip Holder s & Master' s Degree	Board Certified / Dip Holders & PhD
Head of School									1
Professor			1.4			0.2	0.2	0.9	4.4
Reader				0.2					1
Senior Lecturer			2.5			1.4			2
Lecturer			7			3			
Teaching Fellows				17.8	2	3	3.8	1.8	
Associates					0.17				
CIMs				2*					
Totals			10.9	18	3	7.6	4	2.7	8.4
Total							Veterinary Specialists: 15.1		
Total	Non-Vets: 10.9			Vets: 44.87					

**Contracts are held directly with partner practices and the FTE reflects the cumulative commitment of time made across the practices to support each full cohort, each Clinical Instruction Mentor will also be given 20 hours of training. Clinical Instruction Mentors must be qualified Veterinarians but will have varying levels of qualifications.*

- 8.1 The data above is current on 26th November 2020 and does not include: (i) staff who are engaged in externally funded research (currently 25.5FTE); and (ii) external lecturers who are paid on an hourly basis and contribute less than 10 hours per annum.

Table 8.1.3: Loss and recruitment of academic staff

Position	Number of School Lost (Headcount)	Discipline/Specialist	Number of School Recruited (Headcount)	Year
Lecturer	8	Production Animal Medicine; Epidemiology (x2); Equine Medicine; Veterinary Public Health; Veterinary Anatomy; Molecular and Cellular Sciences; Infectious Disease Epidemiology; and Musculoskeletal	9	2015/2016
				2016/2017
				2017/2018
				2018/2019
				2019/2020
Head of Veterinary Education	1	Pedagogy	1	2015/2016
Senior Lecturer	6	Neuroimmunology; Microbiology; Veterinary Pathology (x2); Neuroscience; Anatomic Pathology,	4	2015/2016
				2017/2018
Senior Teaching Fellow	3	Zoo Animal Medicine (0.2FTE); Professional Skills; and Production Animal Medicine	3	2015/2016
				2017/2018
				2018/2019
Teaching Fellow	8	Welfare and Behaviour; Pharmacology and Therapeutics; Veterinary Clinical (x3); Small Animal Studies; Veterinary Sciences and Education; and Production Animal Medicine	44	2016/2017
				2017/2018
				2018/2019
				2019/2020
Reader	2	Reader; and Comparative Pathology		2019/20
Professor	2	Head of Department (Clinical Services); and Veterinary Sciences	3	2017/2018
				2018/2019

- 8.2 Voluntary staff turnover in the School for the period 1st August 2019 to 31st July 2020 was 14.8%, which is slightly higher than the Faculty average (10.6%) and the University average (10.9%). The senior leadership team within the School and University HR continue to develop and focus on ways reduce this figure at a School and University level.
- 8.3 Where a gap in recruitment has threatened teaching delivery, the School has made use of short-term and *ad-hoc* appointments using Associate and Visiting members of staff, and/or guest lecturers from the University's partner network. For example: Professor Dianne Newell (MIBio, PhD), provides Diseases of Animal Systems: Respiratory Diseases of Animals lectures on MMVM008, Professor Andy Durham, (BvetMed, CertVR, DVDI, MRCVS) provides Foundations of Disease Three: Pathology of the Integument and Alimentary Systems lectures in VMS2003.
- 8.4 The allocation of staff to departments within the School is driven by: i) the needs of the curriculum; ii) research strategy; and iii) provision of appropriate mentorship. Growth in staff numbers has been driven by a staffing plan which describes the number of staff and skills required to deliver each module. There is flexibility within this plan should it become apparent

that the School needs extra or differing resource. All teaching staff are required to hold at least three years prior teaching experience and/or to hold a teaching qualification.

- 8.5 Post-graduate Researchers involved in *ad-hoc* teaching are unable to do so without successfully completing two of the GCLT modules.
- 8.6 All staff receive student feedback via an online Module Evaluation Questionnaire (MEQ), the outcome of which is measured against University benchmarks.
- 8.7 All staff are required to undertake 'Unconscious Bias' training to increase awareness of the impact of unconscious bias on everyday tasks as well as recruitment. During this course, employees are taught to recognise when unconscious bias may affect decision making and steps that should be taken to prevent any bias influencing actions. In addition to this, before a staff member may act as an interview panel member, they must undertake an 'Effective Interviewing' training course, which is run internally by the Human Resources department. This training ensures best practice within selection panels to allow them to confidently interview candidates in a manner that gives every candidate the best opportunity to display their skills and experience.
- 8.8 The Veterinary Pathology Centre generated income of circa £69k in 2019/20. Additional staff, over and above the core team, needed to meet growing service needs will be employed on a fixed-term basis with their contracts being extended in line with income forecasts if required.
- 8.9 All academic staff are now required to have one peer observation of teaching each academic year. Academics can choose their own academic observer and teaching activity is reviewed according to their own developmental needs. The process, which commenced in academic year 2017/18, is designed to help individuals with their own development.
- 8.10 All junior staff are appointed a mentor in the School who will offer support and advice in addition to that provided by the line manager. This occurs both informally and through the formal probation process. Additionally, staff have a designated "senior colleague," often someone from another School, who can offer advice and support about career development. The Staff Development team also offer one-to-one mentoring focusing on the individual development needs.
- 8.11 The University supports employees before, during and upon their return from maternity, paternity, adoption, surrogacy and parental leave. Through the University's commitment to the Athena Swan initiative, managers can access additional funding to provide up to 3 months of staff cover beyond the return date of the employee who has taken leave. This funding has been made available to allow the University to better support employees who are returning from a period of maternity/paternity/adoption/surrogacy and parental leave.
- 8.12 All staff are appraised annually, with interim meetings according to need. The University has a dedicated staff development team that provides a range of personal development courses, coaching, mentoring etc. To date, two members of staff have used the coaching/mentoring service.
- 8.13 The University operates an annual promotion round for academic members of staff. The success of promotion is determined by Promotion Committees either within the Faculty or the

University, depending upon the level of appointment. Promotion cases are considered on the basis of contributions to teaching, management/administration, and research (if on the research pathway). A promotions workshop is held annually to help staff develop strong cases and to dispel myths surrounding promotion. In the 2020 promotion round the School was successful with 7 out of 8 cases that were submitted, and across the full range of academic grades (Teaching Fellow to Reader). Technical and support staff are promoted on an *ad-hoc* basis where there is a strong case that a role is now needed to deliver work at a level of higher capability, and it has been demonstrated that the post holder is demonstrating these higher competences. To ensure fairness and equality, a full recruitment process is undertaken.

Comments

- 8.14 Over the last four years student numbers are now close to the anticipated maximum, consequently staff workloads and commitments have increased considerably.
- 8.15 Although staff development programmes are available and external clinical work is encouraged, increasing pressure of work is limiting the capacity for a growing number of staff to become involved in such activities. VCTFs require opportunities to retain their clinical skill levels, and to pursue CPD and teaching opportunities which are being sacrificed to an unsustainable workload as student numbers increase relative to the number of VCTFs recruited.
- 8.16 The School's modelling for VCTF workload demonstrates the need for 14 FTE VCTFs from the 2022 final-year cohort onwards, compared to the current 10.6 FTE employed.
- 8.17 Covid-19 has resulted in some IMR practices taking a break and a rapid increase in the number of new partner practices involved in delivering IMR has resulted in pressure on CIMs to complete their required training modules in a compressed time scale.

Commendations

- 8.18 All of the staff at the School show great commitment to the success of the veterinary programme and to the student experience.

Recommendations

- 8.19 The School must review VCTF staffing levels, as a matter of urgency, to ensure that there is sufficient breadth and depth of expertise and experience so that the teaching programme can continue to operate smoothly.

Suggestions

- 8.20 Ensuring sufficient time and staff resource to enable all members of the VCTF team to progress and enrich their personal development.

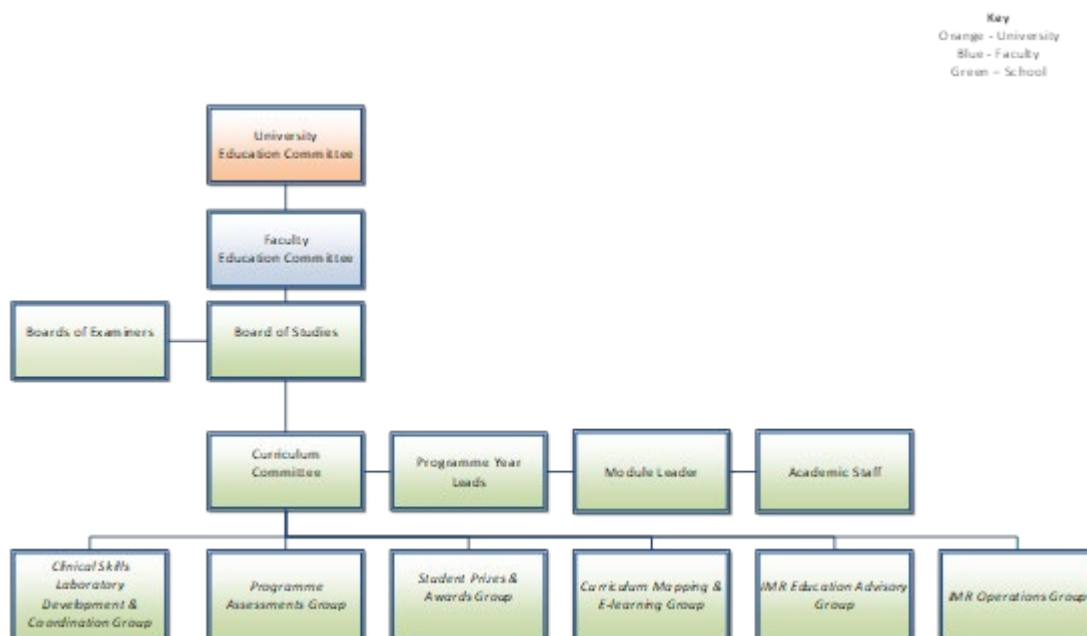
Standard 9 – Curriculum

Background

- 9.1 The first three years of the programme are largely systems-based and spiral in design: **Year 1 (FHEQ Level 4)** curriculum is focused on 'Normal' to gain an understanding of functional anatomy, physiology, animal husbandry, cell biology and basic professional skills. The theme for **Year 2 (FHEQ Level 5)** is 'Abnormal,' with a focus on pathology, pathophysiology, and infectious disease in different body systems and different species and an introduction to veterinary public health, including epidemiology and food safety. Practical skills development in year two focuses on the assessment and documentation of abnormal. Animal husbandry is again visited with advanced skills introduced in handling and restraint including clinical examination of the core species, whilst considering biosecurity measures.
- 9.2 In **Year 3 (FHEQ Level 6)** students study the diagnosis, prognosis and treatment of disease across the body systems. By presenting conditions across the species, the commonality of disease process and similarities of therapies are illustrated. This year introduces students to the fundamentals of practice namely imaging, pharmacology, surgery and anaesthesia and further communications and professional training. Students will be introduced to ethics, business management and law and clinical reasoning skills. They will also be involved in developing skills in evidence-based medicine and clinical research in the first semester and a research project module in the second semester.
- 9.3 During **Year 4 (FHEQ Level 7)**, students study the role of the veterinarian in various types of animal industries; e.g. companion animal, intensive production/laboratory animal, equine and production practice. The content combines the previous knowledge of body systems, with husbandry and management of the animal into the context of holistic veterinary clinical medicine at the various stages of the life cycle. The role of the veterinarian in maintaining wellness and good health is emphasised. Another yearlong module allows the student to develop skills in surgery, anaesthesia and patient care. Clinical reasoning and communication skills are also developed further with students presenting reflective case reports from their EMS placements. Instruction in nursing procedures is integrated throughout the programme.
- 9.4 **Year 5 studies (FHEQ Level 7)** take the form of intra-mural rotations (IMR) where students further develop their clinical and professional skills whilst hosted by our partner practices. Each IMR rotation is 4 weeks in duration; each student will undertake two rotations in small animal practice one rotation in equine first opinion practice and one rotation in farm animal practice. A combined pathology/public health rotation is the sixth core rotation. A special interest elective rotation, in which students select a further rotation, is chosen from clinical, research and business-based elective offerings. IMR provides students with opportunities to further develop day one knowledge, competences, attributes and skills through their integration and application in a workplace-based placement providing an authentic, safe and supervised learning environment, facilitating the transition from student to confident, competent and compassionate veterinarians. IMR is subject to University quality assurance procedures and standards. Feedback from students and CIMs on each rotation is scrutinised by the Director of Clinical Education and reported to Board of Studies.

- 9.5 Modules and teaching methods used in the programme is listed in BVMSci Programme handbook.
- 9.6 Veterinary public health and food hygiene is introduced in **Year 1** (Animals in Society I) and has explicit recognition in Animals in Society II (**Year 2**) which includes food safety, HACCP, abattoir practice, food manufacturing and regulation. These themes are developed further in **Year 4** (Contemporary Issues in Veterinary Medicine) and in the **Year 5** IMR in Veterinary Pathology and Public Health which includes abattoir and food processing plant visits.
- 9.7 Curriculum design and delivery is led by the Head of Veterinary Education. A Programme Leader is responsible for coordination of the curriculum across years and works with year leads and module leads to ensure consistent application of the School's educational philosophy and assessment strategy. The Director of Clinical Education is responsible for the final year IMR and is supported by a team of Veterinary Clinical Teaching Fellows (VCTFs) who are responsible for clinical coaching, assessment and quality assurance during final year rotations.
- 9.8 The BVMSci Board of Studies oversees, monitors and modifies the curriculum. Actions approved by the Board of Studies which require Faculty or University-level support are passed first to the Faculty Education Committee for discussion. This body may then approve suggested modifications or forward them for consideration by the Quality and Standards sub-committee and, if necessary, the University Education Committee. Students are represented at each level (School, Faculty, and University) by annually-elected year representatives.

Figure 9.1.1: Pathways for curriculum planning.



- 9.9 The module review template is a critical tool for monitoring module performance, identifying improvements and innovation. The template includes an evaluation of the performance of examination questions including a summary of the analytics and actions to be taken. Observations by staff are recorded including knowledge gaps, organisation, content and

student performance, behaviour and engagement. External examiners comments are recorded and responses are recorded. There is a Content Capture section which includes listing the range and quantification of activities using content capture, reporting student comments regarding content capture and recommendations for proposed innovations or changes for the next academic year. There is a section on the student module evaluation questionnaire (MEQ) outcomes and actions to be taken. Examples of free text comments are captured and a 'you said we responded' statement is expected.

- 9.10 An accelerated Graduate Certificate for Learning and Teaching (GCLT) training programme has been developed for VCTFs, enabling them to secure FHEA recognition prior to the start of IMR. Practice-based Clinical Instruction Mentors (CIMs) who are involved in IMR delivery are required to undertake a bespoke teaching and learning programme developed by the School. Additionally, CIMs receive teaching and learning updates during the Annual Partner Conference.
- 9.11 Under normal circumstances (out with the covid-19 pandemic) veterinary students complete a minimum of 38 weeks of EMS:12 weeks pre-clinical and 26 weeks of clinical placements.
- 9.12 The School's EMS coordinators have oversight of all EMS provision, with primary responsibility for animal husbandry and preparatory clinical EMS. The EMS Coordinator for years 1-2 manages Animal Husbandry Extra-Mural Studies (AHEMS). The Clinical EMS Coordinator manages EMS in years 3, 4 and 5. The placement administration team (FHMS Clinical Placements) support the EMS coordinators. The team of VCTFs is responsible for personal tutoring of all 4th and 5th year students allowing an integration of clinical experience gained through EMS and IMR. Academic coordinators are responsible for providing guidance, for monitoring placements via the RCVS student experience log (SEL) and receiving feedback from providers. Processes and requirements are explained to students through talks during induction week, the EMS Placements Handbook meetings with their personal tutors, weekly drop-in sessions with the EMS coordinators and comprehensive information on the student Virtual Learning Environment.
- 9.13 In order to prepare students for EMS, specific teaching sessions in animal handling are carried out in Preclinical modules (Animals in Society 1 and Animals in Society 3 modules). Other timetabled sessions within the Structure and Function modules are timetabled to cover relevant knowledge and skills (e.g. lambing, calving, clinical restraint) and to broaden their knowledge of the commercial, ethical and welfare pressures affecting animal enterprises in the UK. Aspects of professionalism (communications, well-being, financial management, and ethics) are covered early in the course (The Veterinary Professional module) in preparation for EMS. Risk awareness and biosecurity is highlighted in a yearly session by the EMS Coordinators and the Health and Safety Manager of the Faculty. Students are encouraged to bring their EMS experiences into the classroom; it is particularly encouraged in problem-based learning classes.
- 9.14 EMS Placement providers, sourced by students, are required to sign a placement agreement form which clearly defines roles and responsibilities. With the permission of the placement provider, their details are added to a database that is available to all students. Student feedback on placements is used to monitor suitability of the provider; this is monitored

by the EMS team using SEL entries. Feedback from placement providers on student performance is provided on forms that are monitored by the EMS support team.

- 9.15 The value of EMS training is further embedded in the curriculum through assessed work in Years 2 and 4. Students in Year 2 (AS3) present an assessed AHEMS audit. Year 4 students are expected to present cases that they have seen during EMS for each of the core species, which are assessed by academic staff.
- 9.16 Professional skills are taught in two distinct modules in Year 1 and Year 3 and are also embedded across the curriculum in years 2, 4 and 5. The first-year module introduces the student to the concept of reflective practice for both their personal and professional development and emphasises the importance of teamwork and effective communication skills. The third-year module focuses on professional practice further developing advanced communication skills and explores the business considerations and ethical and legal responsibilities of a vet in practice. Professionalism is evaluated as one of the six domains of competence in final year.
- 9.17 The appointment of a Teaching Fellow in Professional Skills allows the tracking of this important aspect of veterinary education across the five-year programme. This teaching fellow is an *ex officio* member of the School Curriculum committee, Veterinary Professionalism Group and Employability Working Group.
- 9.18 Special interest electives (SIE) are offered across a range of subjects including, but not limited to, clinical specialisms. Some examples include; Intensive production (pigs and poultry), Charity practice/shelter medicine, Diagnostic imaging, Business and Emergency and Critical Care. All SIEs have a School-based academic supervisor who is responsible for summative assessment.
- 9.19 The role of the veterinarian as a supervisor of quality assurance in the food processing chain is experienced through site visits and epidemiological data set evaluation. Students receive practical instruction in food hygiene policies, practise and regulatory legislation as well as undertaking PBL-based investigations of food-poisoning outbreaks. Small group teaching sessions covering the slaughter and preparation of single animals are delivered within the School's own, custom-built facility, Veterinary School Pathology building (VSP).
- 9.20 Veterinary public health and food hygiene is introduced in Year 1 (Animals in Society I) and has explicit recognition in Animals in Society II (Year 2) which includes food safety, HACCP, abattoir practice, food manufacturing and regulation. These themes are developed further in Year 4 (Contemporary Issues in Veterinary Medicine) and in the Year 5 IMR in Veterinary Pathology and Public Health (VPPH) which includes abattoir and food processing plant visits.
- 9.21 The curriculum is subject to constant development; recent major changes have included: a reduction in the number of PBL activities in years 1 and 2; practical reports in years 1 and 2 are now formative instead of summative. A new module (AS3) in Year 2 has been introduced to expand the 15-credit animal handling and husbandry module in Year 1. In Year 2 clinical pathology has been consolidated into a single module to ensure this underpinning subject is badged, and the syllabus is clearly defined. The School has also moved this second semester module to first semester upon student feedback as it underpins subsequent modules. In year

3, Semester 1 and 2 three x 15 credit modules have been replaced by a single 45 credit core module entitled Veterinary Medicine 1 and Veterinary Medicine 2. In year 4 Semester 1 and 2, four x 15 credit modules have been replaced by a single 60 credit core module entitled Veterinary Medicine 3. Strategically this has allowed for greater integration of assessments and content knowledge and a reduction in assessment burdens. Peer validation of a practical skills has also been introduced in Year 3 and Year 4.

- 9.22 Further improvements to the Evidence Based Medicine and Research module have been made (more portfolio-based assessment) in response to staff and student feedback.
- 9.23 In Year 5, the Core and Special Interest Elective have been merged into a single rotation elective with a reduction the IMR rotations from 32 weeks to 28 weeks. This will enable the start of rotations to be more closely aligned with the University Calendar, avoid trailing credits for failing students and is aligned with other comparable UK veterinary schools. It also allows more time for students to complete EMS, improved opportunities for staff leave, and increases availability of practices for first rotation (many practice staff on leave August).
- 9.24 COPs assessment for the special interest elective has been removed in response to examiner and student feedback.
- 9.25 Summary of changes to IMR because of covid-19 Pandemic:

Table 1: Summary of restructured final year

Original Structure		Restructure		
Introduction week	1	Phase 1	Hybrid teaching weeks	8
IMR placement weeks	28		Virtual elective weeks	3
On campus teaching weeks	4	Phase 2	IMR placement weeks	18
			On campus teaching weeks	3
Total	33		Total	32

Comments

- 9.26 The curriculum is updated on a regular basis in response to feedback, however no formal comprehensive curriculum review has been undertaken since the Validation Documentation 2013.
- 9.27 EMS is monitored to the standard apart from the ability of EMS providers to provide feedback on the EMS programme.
- 9.28 RCVS Standard 9.5 states that the curriculum should include expertise in medicine, surgery, and anaesthesia applicable to a broad range of common species. Students must develop entry-level skills in physical examination and laboratory diagnostic techniques and interpretation (including clinical pathology, diagnostic imaging and necropsy), disease prevention, biosecurity, therapy (including surgery and pharmacotherapeutics), patient management and care (including primary care, intensive care, emergency medicine,

surveillance and isolation procedures) for individual animals, herds, flocks and other populations. The accreditation panel considers that the significant reduction in practice based IMR weeks from the planned programme to those implemented in response to the covid-19 pandemic is not sufficient to satisfy the needs of this standard, as indicated by the feedback letter from the RCVS.

Recommendations

- 9.29 A formal comprehensive curriculum review must be undertaken at least every seven years.
- 9.30 There must be a system in place to enable EMS providers to provide feedback on the EMS programme.
- 9.31 The School must adhere to the recommendations of RCVS with respect to the current fifth year cohort.
- 9.32 For future cohorts, IMR delivery must return to at least 28 weeks of practice based IMR.

Standard 10 - Assessment

Background

- 10.1 The Board of Examiners, comprising examiners of the BVMSci programme, including external examiners, meets three times yearly to consider and ratify the results of assessments. Discussion regarding the performance of examination questions are also held with the external examiners. The external examiners' reports are discussed at the Curriculum Committee and the Board of Studies and actions considered and responded to. All outcomes are reported through the annual programme review which is considered by the Quality Enhancement Subcommittee which reports to the University Education Committee.
- 10.2 Curriculum design is developed, implemented and reviewed by the Head of Veterinary Education in consultation with the Curriculum Committee and Board of Studies. Implementation is through Board of Studies, the Programme Leader, Year Leads and Module Leads. Strategy is reviewed by the Department of Quality Enhancement and Standards for compliance with University policy and national quality assurance standards. Exemptions can be granted where the requirements of professional bodies vary from University policy.
- 10.3 The Curriculum Committee is the School's forum for detailed planning of module delivery, curricular integration, innovation, assessments and pedagogical debate. The curriculum committee has two scheduled meetings a year dedicated to strategic planning. This committee has several working parties which include the IMR Education Advisory Group, the IMR Operations Working Group, the Clinical Skills Laboratory Development and Coordination Group, the Programme Assessments Group, the Student Prizes and Awards group, the Curriculum Mapping and E-learning Group and the Animal Resources Group. Recommendations from this committee go forward to the Board of Studies. The School consults with its external stakeholders through an External Advisory Board and through the Intra-mural Rotation (IMR) Operations Group and the IMR Education Advisory Group. The clinical partner network is represented on the School's Veterinary Admissions Review Group, the Curriculum Committee, IMR Education Advisory Group, IMR Operations Group and on the Board of Studies. Outcomes of summative assessments, are also subject to Board of Studies scrutiny, including external examiners.
- 10.4 Communication with staff occurs through School meetings, e-mails, the programme academic board, the Heads of Departments and the operations committee. Communication to students occurs through direct meeting with year cohorts, student year representatives, via the SSLC and e-mail. MySurrey Voice (UniTu) has been introduced recently which enables a short communication and feedback loop between students and academic staff with regards to academic matters including assessments. There is an annual conference for the clinical partnership network members and they have representatives on the IMR operations group, the IMR education advisory group and curriculum committee.
- 10.5 The student assessment burden is managed through the Curriculum Committee and the Board of Studies. Staff workload during assessments is managed by the Programme Leader in collaboration and consultation with the Heads of Departments through the Workload Planning Committee who ensure that duties are fairly distributed amongst staff and that

deadlines are met. Students assessment calendars are compiled and scrutinised by the Year Leads with oversight by the Curriculum Committee to ensure student and staff assessment workloads are appropriate and suitably timetabled to avoid excessive clustering of assessments. The centralised University Assessments Office provides administrative support. Examination timetables are also governed by University policies e.g. the minimal time spacing between examinations.

- 10.6 Programme assessment sits within the quality control and quality assurance frameworks managed by the University's Directorate of Quality Enhancement and Standards. validity, reliability, impact on future learning and practice, acceptability to students and staff are all taken into consideration when determining the choice of assessment tool to be used. Chosen methods of assessment are appropriate and relevant to the learning outcomes being evaluated and staff are trained in these assessment methods. The University Code of Practice for Assessment and Feedback specifies in paragraph 27: *"For each programme, the learning outcomes determine the overall assessment regime for the programme, integrating the learning outcomes of its component modules and including the assessment of a balance between specific and generic learning outcomes. It is important that the purposes and requirements of the various units of assessment within a module are correlated, to ensure that the intended learning outcomes of the module are all evaluated, and that there is no unnecessary duplication within and between modules."*
- 10.7 The Code of Practice for Assessment and Feedback gives guidance on grade descriptors at FHEQ levels 4, 5, 6 and 7, assessment rubrics are used with descriptors and mark allocations. Standardized grade rubrics are used to allow tracking of clinical competency of students across the final year clinical rotations. Criterion referencing using behavioural descriptors for the grade scaling are used. Global ratings and checklists are used for all the OSCEs. The programme uses 8 OSCE stations as a unit of assessment (currently 6 during the pandemic), and Visitors did not feel that this was a sufficient number to provide a reasonable sample of the breadth of skills needing to be assessed.
- 10.8 Model answers for examination questions with mark allocations are provided to the external examiners for review and approval. Examination papers provide students with the allocation of marks for each question or sub-component of a question. OSCE regression standard setting is based upon scores and global ratings. Animal handling assessments use procedural descriptors. Internal review and external review processes are used to set the standard for a 50% pass mark on written examinations. The module descriptor indicates the core barrier assessments within a module and the requirements to pass all units of assessment.
- 10.9 The Office for Student Complaints, Appeals and Regulation (OSCAR) is responsible for the administration of academic appeals. Students may submit an academic appeal on one or more grounds: i) procedural error, ii) extenuating circumstances, iii) bias. Appeals are submitted via an online portal which also directs the student to relevant regulations and available support. Staff within the Student Union are available to assist students during this process. The process for academic appeals has been benchmarked against the Office of the Independent Adjudicator's Good practice framework for handling complaints and academic appeals. Students are required to read the RCVS and the University Guidance on Fitness to Practise and submit a statement to confirm they have understood both.

- 10.10 The School is guided by evidence-based best practice in education. These include: taxonomic hierarchies (Bloom's taxonomy (Bloom, 1956), Flink's Taxonomy (Flink, 2003) and Miller's Pyramid of knowledge and skills related to a task (Miller, 1990), active learning, congruence of assessment and learning, and the transition from teacher centred to student centred learning. Key references for their methods of assessment include the Association for Medical Education in Europe (AMEE) guides, a Guide to Assessment in Veterinary Medical Education (Baille, Warman and Rhind, 2014) and Veterinary Medical Education: A Practical Guide (Hodgson and Pelzer 2017).
- 10.11 The curriculum design has been strongly influenced by the paper of May and Silver-Fletcher (2015) which includes the following concepts: top down outcomes based curriculum design (programme, module, teaching activity); tightly controlled curriculum content; valid and reliable assessments (congruence with learning objectives); appropriate and timely feedback; active learning; teaching modalities and resources that facilitate: place, pace and mobility; life-long learning skills and evidenced-based veterinary medicine; the spiral progressive, integration and application of knowledge; vertical and sequential skills development (skills to competencies); teaching students how to learn and transitioning from classroom to workplace (clinical skills and professional skills development).
- 10.12 All modules have defined learning outcomes and all teaching activities within the module have defined learning objectives. The programme's Day One learning outcomes are underpinned by the module learning outcomes and which are underpinned by the teaching activity learning objectives. These learning objectives drive the resources and pedagogy needed to achieve the learning outcomes.
- 10.13 University codes and policies require that module assessments must encourage and reinforce learning, measure achievement of the stated learning objectives and enable robust and fair judgements about student performance, be fair and equitable to students and give them the opportunity to demonstrate what they have learned and maintain academic standards. Assessments are chosen according to their validity, reliability, educational impact, cost-effectiveness and acceptability (van der Vleuten, 1996).
- 10.14 Handling skills in the 'core species' in the year 1, semester 1, Animal in Society 1 module (VMS1001) are 'must pass' barriers prior to students commencing Extra-mural studies (EMS). During the VSM1001 module, students are provided with opportunities to demonstrate competences formatively prior to a summative assessment. Students are assessed on their handling skills for five core species (dog, cat, sheep, horse, cattle). These are individual barrier assessments. An assessed farm husbandry audit is also performed by students. A second-year module in animal handling and husbandry, Animal in Society 3 (VMS3010) extends and consolidates these skills in the core species and practical husbandry and handling skills are further developed for pigs, poultry, camelids, non-traditional companion animals and wildlife species. These skills are assessed within an individual reflective portfolio. These assessments are undertaken to ensure students are safe on their Animal Handling and Husbandry Extramural studies (AHEMS) placements in Years One and Two. Each student is provided with an Animal Husbandry EMS Skills Portfolio booklet which lists key and desirable skills related to each type of placement. The student is expected to record whether they have observed, assisted or performed the skill. Student progress is monitored by personal tutors

and the EMS coordinators. The student is required to complete a reflection for each of the placements which is discussed with their personal tutor. All pre-clinical students must perform a placement husbandry audit and present the findings orally to their peers in VMS2010. This is a summative assessment.

- 10.15 Each student is provided with a Clinical EMS Skills Portfolio booklet. The document lists a range of key and desirable skills related to each type of placement to guide their learning and objective setting for each placement. Skills can be observed, assisted or performed and progress is monitored by personal tutors and the EMS coordinators. The student is required to complete a reflection for each of the placements which is discussed with their personal tutor. All clinical students have to prepare three case reports and present one of them orally to their peers in the fourth year of the programme. This is a summative assessment using a rubric with descriptors.
- 10.16 Students in Year 3 and Year 4 are provided with a checklist of clinical skills they are expected to learn and be able to perform competently. The two clinical skills laboratories support the development of these skills. A portfolio requirement is that two attempts for each station have been validated by one of their peers. These clinical skills are further assessed using Objective Structured Clinical Examinations (OSCE) in Year 3 and Year 4.
- 10.17 Further development of the clinical skills which underpin surgery, anaesthesia and patient care occur in the fourth year Module VMS4001. Until 2020, students rotated through a charity companion animal spay and neuter clinic. This is no longer available, and the School is currently sourcing a replacement. The VMS4001 portfolio assessments include: direct observation of procedural skills (DOPS), entrustable professional activities (EPAs), clinical examination assessments and global assessments of the 6 domains of clinical practice during a hospital patient care day.
- 10.18 Acquisition of clinical skills that fall within the Programme's Day One Competences has been mapped across years 1-4 of the programme using Miller's Pyramid of assessing clinical competence.
- 10.19 In the Final Year IMR rotations Mini Clinical Evaluation Exercises (Mini-CEX), Clinical, Oral and Practical assessments (COP) and Entrustable Professional Activities (EPA) assessments are used. In addition, there are a range of written assessed assets related to clinical skills development in the IMR portfolio including case report, an evidence-based veterinary medicine knowledge summary, critical appraisal of a practice isolation facilities and a reflective essay on achieving the Day One competencies. A comprehensive clinical cases log is maintained by the student.
- 10.20 Students are provided with a clinical skills electronic guiding document which lists and grades the clinical skills within a species as essential or desirable. A record is maintained whether the skill was observed, participated in, or performed by the student. The web-based portfolio is used both formatively and summatively during final year and is monitored by the VCTF team. During IMR placements students receive 360-degree feedback on clinical and professional skills from practice staff in their host practices. This forms part of the assessed portfolio. Formative and summative global assessments across the 6 domains of professional practice:

knowledge, clinical reasoning, technical skills, communication skills, patient care and professional skills and behaviours are performed by the practice mentor within each rotation.

- 10.21 Development of clinical examination and consultation skills begins in the second year where students undergo formative assessment of a general clinical examination in three core species (Cat/Dog, cattle/sheep, horse) by completing an online formative assessment and a peer assessment by fourth year veterinary students. In the third-year clinical reasoning, general clinical examination and further investigation skills are developed within Veterinary Medicine 1 and 2 modules. These are formatively assessed in group based grand round clinical presentations and summatively in written examinations. In the fourth-year students have to peer review a general clinical examination undertaken by second year students in the three core species. This is a formative portfolio completion task. In addition, they are summatively assessed in a general clinical examination of a dog or cat during a hospital-based patient care rotation (VMS4001). During the fifth year IMRs clinical examination including history taking is summatively assessed in all 3-core species in a practice setting using a Mini-CEX assessment. In addition, summative clinical oral and practical examinations during IMR academic assessment return weeks to the University assess component parts of clinical examination, clinical reasoning and client advice within small animals, production animal practice, equine and veterinary pathology and public health. Marks are awarded for competency, knowledge and quality of responses within history taking, clinical examination, clinical reasoning, case management, diagnostic interpretation, and client advice. Marks are aggregated (within a species type and VPPH) and students must attain a threshold score to pass. In addition each component is aggregated across all species within the IMR portfolio and students have to reach a threshold competency for each component across all the return week assessments to attain a pass in that portfolio asset.
- 10.22 All the module assessments are blue printed to module learning outcomes with an internal and external review process for the examination questions and model answers. The external review process is performed by the School's external examiners who are appointed by the University according to the codes and policies.
- 10.23 The School's assessment strategy involves the provision of timely formative feedback to students allowing this to feed forward into improved performance. Feedback for all in-class assignments is provided within three weeks of the due submission date as required by the University Code of Practice for Assessment and Feedback. All students can see their marked examination scripts in the presence of their personal tutors when weaknesses and strengths can be identified, and feedback can be provided. Individual formative feedback is provided in the first and second year practical classes and formative practical reports and in the final session of the problem based learning sessions. Cohort feedback is provided for summative in-class tests and formative online MCQs. In third and fourth year students receive feedback and a whole-class debrief on formative OSCEs prior to their use in summative assessments. Individual feedback on their individual OSCE performance is provided. In-class test feedback is provided to the whole year in Years 3 and 4. Remediation sessions are provided following feedback when required.
- 10.24 Rubrics with descriptors are used to provide feedback for all assignments with additional comments added. A format identifying 3 components that were performed well and three

components that could be improved has been adopted for written assignments. Continual assessment and feedback supported by practice mentors and VCTFs is a central feature of the IMR in final year. The VCTFs provide formative support for all the assets in the IMR student portfolios in addition to other rotation activities. Feedback Engagement and Tracking at Surrey (FEATS) is a student-designed portfolio tool aimed to help students to better understand and engage with feedback from their assignments.

- 10.25 Several methods are used for identifying and remediating failing students. The University Business Intelligence Dashboard provides information regarding the performance of all students at each level of the programme by semester. A risk grading system is used dependent upon the number of module credits a student has failed. These are circulated to the personal tutors for information.
- 10.26 Personal tutors have confidential access to the academic performance of each of their tutees online and are responsible for calling a meeting with a tutee if there is a cause for concern. If the cause for concern is a failed assessment, the Exams and Assessments team automatically notifies the student's personal tutor who will arrange a meeting. The tutor will encourage the student to contact the leader(s) of the failed module(s), direct the student to the appropriate learning resources, and will investigate whether additional learning support is needed. Follow-up meetings will be arranged. Where it becomes clear from assessment results that a student is struggling, the personal tutor will discuss with the student whether additional support is necessary. Additional University support is available including disability and neurodiversity team, academic skills and development team and the maths and stats team based at the library. A self-study e-learning programme called 'Back on Track' has been created specifically to help underperforming students.
- 10.27 The Veterinary Placements Team monitors student EMS placement completion and reports this to the Boards of Examiners in order to officially record completion and to flag where progress is falling behind expectation.

Comments

- 10.28 The workload of the VCTFs was considered to be high. The priority they have to give to assessment and teaching impacts on their ability to engage in the full scope of their job description.
- 10.29 The clinical and practical skills in years 3 and 4 are assessed by summative OSCE's with limited validity. The team does not consider there to be sufficient stations in the OSCEs.
- 10.30. Following the closure of the RSPCA hospital that hosted the School's spay and neuter clinic, investigations are underway to identify a new host ahead of the start of the 21-22 academic year.

Recommendations

- 10.31 The School must enhance the validity of the summative assessment of students' clinical and practical skills in years 3 and 4.

Standard 11 - Research

Background

- 11.1 The School has made an outstanding contribution to the Faculty submission to the Research Excellence Framework (REF), to be submitted in 2021. Researchers in the School have contributed more than the required number of highest quality outputs, reflecting the rapid growth of the School since 2014 and productivity of the School's research active staff. The expansion of the PhD cohort to 36 full time students in 2020 is an inspiring manifestation of this success. Moreover, the faculty strongly believes that diversity and inclusion are essential for excellence, and 50% of the Faculty's submitted outputs are from female staff.
- 11.2 The School currently offers two residences, with a third in development.
- 11.3 Post graduate research students are encouraged to be involved in teaching according to the University's Code of Practice for Postgraduate Researchers who Support Teaching. Given appropriate training and experience, they are able to demonstrate in teaching sessions which is of benefit to undergraduate students and to their own personal development. PGR students are also encouraged to co-supervise undergraduate research projects. Research project and practical class demonstration is always under the supervision of academic staff.
- 11.4 Research conducted by School staff underpins the delivery of teaching in the curriculum, for example, Animals in Society (VMS2008) uses the Veterinary Pathology Centre's post-mortem examination service to illustrate principals of surveillance, epidemiological research is used to illustrate study design and analysis, and pre-clinical research underpins the basic science teaching in the curriculum.
- 11.5 During the first two years of operations 20 undergraduate students voluntarily participated in research projects. The year 3 research module (VMS3009) engages all BVMSci students in research, including a project supervised by School staff, many involving the partner network.
- 11.6 Engagement amongst the School's students with research is also evidenced by high levels of participation in veterinary societies including for Pathology, Zoology and One Health. Veterinary researchers are invited by the student societies to talk about their work, thereby modelling research careers to the undergraduates. Over 20 external speakers gave student-organised talks in academic year 2019/20.
- 11.7 The Year 3 research modules provide every student with the opportunity to engage in research. From 2018-19 onward third year students receive training in research methods in VMS3008 followed by an opportunity to undertake a research project, clinical audit or knowledge summary in VMS3009. Proposals are provided by School staff, by the partner network, including veterinary practices, the Pirbright Institute and the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA).
- 11.8 The veterinary health innovation engine ([vHive](#)), was launched in April 2016. This programme is a joint initiative between the School, the 5G Innovation Centre and the Centre for the Digital Economy (Surrey Business School) and has received investment of £6m over three years from the University, eM3 local enterprise partnership and Zoetis. Student engagement has

included participation as volunteers in projects such as the validation of a collar-mounted accelerometer for predicting the behavioural states of dogs. The use of vHive data for third year student research projects demonstrates the School's commitment to Veterinary Futures objectives around innovation.

- 11.9 Animal health surveillance delivered on behalf of Defra by the Veterinary Pathology Centre, demonstrates innovative approaches to service delivery. The School provides a distributed post mortem examination service for farmed livestock using a unique PathPal app and database. Data is used for reporting individual cases and also collated by APHA for national disease surveillance.

Comments:

- 11.10 Involvement of undergraduates in research is established and offers opportunities for some projects to be published; there is a group of PhD students whose research involves national and international collaborations with scientific and commercial partners. Academic staff without research careers are encouraged to collaborate with researchers, however, opportunity for such staff to participate appears very limited because of the high teaching and administrative workload, especially that of the VCTFs.
- 11.11 Creating research opportunities for all staff may increase job satisfaction, career progression and staff retention.
- 11.12 Third year students reported they found their research projects more interesting and enjoyable than they anticipated.
- 11.13 Partner practices have opportunities to be involved in research projects.

Suggestions:

- 11.14 The workload of teaching staff should be structured to allow collaboration with researchers so that teaching staff can gain some research skills and become co-authors on published material.

Standard 12 – Outcomes Assessment

Background

Table 12.1: Outcomes, key performance indicators for 2016-2020 and review process

Outcome	Ownership	KPIs/metrics	Data Collection	Forum for Review & Action
1. Achievement of Day One Competences	Head of Veterinary Education	>95% progression to next level (indicating achievement of programme learning outcomes aligned to and underpinning D1Cs)	Assessment results	Board of Examiners and Board of Studies
				Annual programme review
		>80% employer satisfaction with graduate D1Cs attainment	Post-graduation employers' survey (2 yrs.)	5 yearly periodic review
				SMT & External Advisory Board (EAB)
		Number of clinical cases seen in IMR	IMR feedback	Annual Programme Review and Board of Studies
2. Quality assured partner practices	Director of Veterinary Partnerships	Practice partners providing IMR will undergo one annual self-assessment and one annual audit performed by the University	Practice Placement Providers Audit	Director of Veterinary Partnerships, IMR operations group and SMT
		Practice partners will be visited on a fortnightly basis by the Veterinary Clinical Teaching Fellows to provide ongoing monitoring and oversight of IMR provision	Fortnightly VCTF visits to partners	
3. Enhancing the student experience	Head of Veterinary Education	All staff to undertake one peer observation annually	Head of Veterinary Education	SMT and Heads of Department
		>90% MEQ scores >4.0	MEQ scores	Curriculum Committee and Board of Studies
4. Employability	Director of Employability	90% students employed within 6 months	Graduate destination survey (Dept. Strategic Planning)	Curriculum Committee
		Satisfaction with career	Post-graduation	SMT & EAB

		choice > 4.0 (Total possible score 5)	survey	
			Graduate destination survey	Curriculum Committee
5. Understanding and adopting diverse career options	Director of Employability	>10 visitors/guest speakers from non-clinical jobs visiting across the programme	Curriculum audit	Board of Studies & EAB
		% cohort adopting non-clinical jobs post-graduation*	Graduate destination survey	
6. Understanding and adopting innovation	Research Director	>95% students passing research module VMS3001 at first attempt	Assessment results	Board of Examiners and Board of Studies
		Top 100 in the world for Veterinary research	International league tables (Shanghai/QS)	Research Director and Research Culture Committee reporting to SMT & EAB
7. Wellbeing	Senior Tutor	<10 % referrals to Wellbeing Centre	Wellbeing Centre Annual Report	Wellbeing Strategy Group
		Student satisfaction with health/wellbeing services >3.0 (out of 4)		Senior tutor reporting to SMT & EAB
		Number of cases seen by peer supporters*	Peer supporter feedback	

Outcome	Ownership	KPIs/metrics	Data Collection	Forum for Review & Action
8. Diverse student body	Admissions Tutor	>15 places on WP summer School	Widening Participation and Outreach Team	University Education Committee
		20% application rate from WP summer School		
		>10 % conversion of WP applicants		
		Gender & ethnic diversity* (% of student admissions)	Veterinary Admissions Review Group	SMT
9. Institutional outcomes	Head of School	Top three in subject league tables by 2020	HESA data/NSS	Dept. Strategic Planning, reporting to Faculty Executive Board
		Top quartile REF performance	Internal output review process REF 2021	School Research Culture Committee and Faculty

				Research Committee
		Achieve £7.4million in research income by 2021	Research Finance	SMT

- 12.1 The University has a framework of quality enhancement that will be used to review performance against some of the outcomes (progression, MEQ scores, student diversity) and to formulate improvement plans:
- 12.2 Annual programme review is a process which is coordinated by the University Education Committee, and assessed by the Quality Enhancement and Standards Committee. This process explicitly requests data and reflection on clinical student placements i.e. IMR.
- 12.3 Periodic review of programmes is also a University requirement. This holistic review is conducted by a panel, including an external appointee, to assure that programmes continue to meet their stated aims and objectives/learning outcomes, and are adequately resourced.
- 12.4 RCVS Day One Competences map directly to module learning outcomes; achievement of these is monitored by Board of Examiners which reports to Board of Studies. The extent to which students have achieved these outcomes is measured in the annual programme review process. The assessments used in the IMR module have been mapped to the associated RCVS Day One Competences.
- 12.5 The School's assessment strategy is specifically designed to test various learning outcomes at different stages of the programme. The results of assessments are reviewed by Board of Examiners' meetings, subject to the scrutiny of external examiners and reported to Faculty/University Education Committee. Amongst other metrics, the outcomes of formal assessments are reviewed during the annual programme review process and addressed in the resulting action plan.
- 12.6 The student experience is monitored through the Staff-Student Liaison Committee which reports to Board of Studies and through Module Evaluation Questionnaires which are reviewed routinely by Curriculum Committee and by Board of Studies as part of the annual programme review. The National Student Survey is used to monitor the student experience across the whole 5 year programme. Outcomes of these review processes are communicated internally through minutes, enactment of action plans, staff meetings, learning and teaching "Away days", and with external stakeholders through bespoke reporting to the distributed learning community e.g. annual partner conference.
- 12.7 Student wellbeing outcomes are monitored at University and School level by the Wellbeing Strategy Group and the Senior Tutors, respectively. Communication with the Centre for Wellbeing is maintained by the Senior Tutors, with any concerns being reported to the School SMT where necessary.
- 12.8 Consolidated data from student experience logs will be used by the Head of Veterinary Education to evaluate equality of learning opportunities. Correlation of student achievement with number and quality of practical/clinical learning opportunities will allow the School to

develop “benchmark standards” for delivery of IMR. Consolidated data will allow inter-cohort comparisons to be made as part of annual programme review.

Comments

- 12.9 The collection of outcomes data within the course and the use of that data to inform the Curriculum Committee to drive the continued enhancement of quality is clearly identified.
- 12.10 The collection of data on graduate outcomes and employer feedback is in its infancy and has been disrupted by the covid-19 pandemic. The structure is in place and the appointment of an Outcomes Champion should enable the School to accumulate more meaningful and helpful data in the future. The School will be considering data from the VSC and HESA. The remit of the Employability Working Group should help to increase the flow of outcome information.
- 12.11 There has been the loss of the 4th year clinical experience at the RSPCA Hospital covering anaesthesia, surgical skills and post-operative care, and a reduction in face-to-face IMR to 18 weeks, which is a 36% reduction compared with the standard 28-week model. Whilst the situation in the covid-19 pandemic is exceptional, the current plan for the students to only complete a limited number of 3-week rotations does not meet the requirement of the Standard. This change to the curriculum is a major deviation of the programme as approved in 2019.

Recommendations

- 12.12 The School must reinstate their standard 28-week practice based IMR model as soon as possible.
- 12.13 The School must source a replacement site for basic anaesthesia, surgical and post-operative care previously delivered in year four of the programme to ensure the Standard is met.

Suggestions

- 12.13 To ensure the meeting of the Standard the School should not rely only on externally produced data and should concentrate on collecting its own data when appropriate.

School response to visitors' findings



Friday 9th July 2021

Mr Jordan Nicholls

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Professor Chris Proudman

Head of the School of Veterinary Medicine

Dear Jordan,

Further to your email and receipt of the report on the virtual visitation made in March 2021, I am pleased to offer the following formal responses to recommendations and suggestions:

Standard 1 – Organisation

Suggestion 1: The Senior Management Team should ensure that there is sufficient resource to enable staff to engage in all aspects of their role including personal development, and that the workload is spread across the staff in an equitable fashion.

Response: The Senior Management Team notes this suggestion and, through the School's Workload Planning Group, will continue to monitor and adjust workloads to ensure time for personal development and an equitable distribution of duties. Further staff resource has been recruited to the VCTF team to improve the SSR in this area and enable more time for personal development.

Standard 3 – Physical Facilities

Suggestion 2: Abattoir visits should be recommenced when possible.

Response: The School is in dialogue with its abattoir partners to establish how site visits can safely recommence for the next academic year.

Suggestion 3: The Hub, proposed on Manor Park, should be completed as originally envisaged.

Response: The university is currently reviewing its capital plans; providing a student hub on the Manor Park campus remains a priority when capital investment permits. However, in the short term, work is underway to develop and transform the current Heart and Soul establishment on Manor Park into a student-focused social/study space.

Suggestion 4: The number of Veterinary Clinical Teaching Fellow (VCTF) visits with the Intra Mural Rotation (IMR) practices should not be reduced and should continue to be in-person rather than online.

Response: The School has no plans to reduce the number of VCTF visits during IMR. These visits will be in-person visits rather than online (subject to government covid-19 guidelines and local risk assessments).

Standard 4 – Animal Resources

Suggestion 5: Steps should be taken to ensure that each student has the opportunity to necropsy sufficient numbers of companion, equine and farm animals.

Response: The School notes this suggestion and is working with the Veterinary Pathology Centre team to increase their capacity and the material available for post-mortem. Cadaver numbers are closely monitored through the Animal Resources Working Group.

Standard 6 – Students

Suggestion 6: Going forward the School should ensure that the VCTF to student ratio is sufficient to allow opportunity for the development and maintenance of the personal relationship between VCTF and student, which is especially important for students away from campus on IMR and EMS placements.

Response: See response to recommendation 11 (below)

Standard 7 – Admission & Progression

Recommendation 7: The School's website must ensure the requirements regarding Fitness to Practise (FtP) and withdrawing from the programme are clearly stated and available for potential students.

Response: The School's Admissions Tutors have updated our webpage information for applicants to include clearer information about FtP and withdrawal from the programme. These updates are already live.

Recommendation 8: The School's website must ensure the commitments and costs of the Extra-Mural Studies (EMS) and IMR programme are clearly stated and available for potential students.

Response: The School's website content addressing time commitment and costs for both EMS and IMR is being updated. In addition to further text, a video of final year students answering frequently asked questions, including some about cost and time commitment, has been added.

Suggestion 9: Data should be collated and analysed regarding student progression and success on the programme, in the context of the entry criteria to the programme.

Response: A project to address these questions is scheduled for later this year. Outcomes will be reported to the Veterinary Admissions Review Group and will inform the School's admissions policy. The University has also initiated a 'Learning Analytics' project supported by advanced data systems which will contribute to providing the required data linked to entry criteria and performance.

Suggestion 10: The School should use data other than the KPI of more than 95% progression rates to assess student attrition.

Response: The School, supported by Faculty, will undertake a more detailed analysis of student attrition data in order to identify common themes and underlying causes.

Standard 8 – Academic & Support Staff

Recommendation 11: The School must review VCTF staffing levels as a matter of urgency, to ensure that there is sufficient breadth and depth of expertise and experience so that the teaching programme can continue to operate smoothly.

Response: The School has continued to undertake modelling to identify the number of VCTFs required to maintain a suitable staff:student ratio as student numbers increase. Recent modelling identified that for the academic year 2021/22 the school requires 13.6 (FTE) VCTFs supporting IMR to maintain the staff:student ratio, and to meet operational and personal development needs. The School has successfully recruited a further full-time VCTF (1FTE) into the team and has made two fixed-term positions permanent. With this recent recruitment the School is currently operating with 13.8 (FTE) VCTFs providing a 1:10 SSR and enabling effective support to students and time for staff personal development.

The VCTF posts are sought-after and the School is confident that it will continue to attract applicants of sufficient expertise and experience to VCTF roles, with a focus on primary care and education, to provide excellent academic support for final year students undertaking IMR.

Suggestion 12: The School should ensure sufficient time and staff resource are in place to enable all members of the VCTF team to progress and enrich their personal development.

Response: As we move out of the pandemic VCTFs will continue to be allocated time for personal development activities including maintenance and development of their clinical skills. Recruitment of additional staff resource to the VCTF team (see response to recommendation 11, above) will facilitate time for personal development.

Standard 9 – Curriculum

Recommendation 13: A formal comprehensive curriculum review must be undertaken at least every seven years.

Response: The School will undertake a full curriculum review every 7 years. The School has been operational for 7 years; our first curriculum review is currently timetabled for summer 2021.

Recommendation 14: There must be a system in place to enable EMS providers to provide feedback on the EMS programme.

Response: The Veterinary Placements Team will update our current process to include feedback from EMS providers.

Recommendation 15: The School must adhere to the recommendations of RCVS with respect to the current fifth year cohort.

Response: The School has been working with RCVS to ensure that it meets the requirements for our current fifth year cohort.

Recommendation 16: For future cohorts, IMR delivery must return to at least 28 weeks of practice based IMR.

Response: It has always been, and remains, the School's intention to return to 28 weeks of in-practice IMR for future (post-pandemic) cohorts.

Standard 10 – Assessment

Recommendation 17: The School must enhance the validity of the summative assessment of students' clinical and practical skills in years 3 and 4.

Response: Validity of OSCEs, used to assess clinical and practical skills in years 3 and 4, will be enhanced by increasing the number of stations to 15 for each unit of assessment, commencing academic year 2021/22.

Standard 11 – Research Programmes, Continuing and Higher Degrees

Suggestion 18: The workload of teaching staff should be structured to allow collaboration with researchers so that teaching staff can gain some research skills and become co-authors on published material.

Response: Teaching fellows and other teaching-track staff in the school are encouraged and actively supported to undertake both discipline-specific and pedagogical research. This is embedded in the school's Strategic Operating Plan and our staff appraisal process. Workload is managed through the school's Workload Planning Group. Evidence of the success of this approach is provided through teaching staff co-authoring at least 17 peer-reviewed publications since 2018. Teaching fellows are also given the opportunity to apply to the Associate Dean for Education via the School for support to undertake pedagogic research activities with an allocation of protected time and funding. The School will continue to support all staff to engage in appropriate research.

Standard 12 – Outcomes Assessment

Recommendation 19: The School must reinstate their standard 28-week practice based IMR model as soon as possible.

Response: The School’s 28-week programme of practice-based IMR will be reinstated for the academic year 2021-22 and for the foreseeable future.

Recommendation 20: The School must source a replacement site for basic anaesthesia, surgical and post-operative care previously delivered in year four of the programme to ensure the Standard is met.

Response: A contract with a new provider of this clinical placement has been signed; practice-based surgical skills and patient care teaching in year 4 will re-commence in academic year 2021-22.

Suggestion 21: To ensure the meeting of the Standard the School should not rely only on externally produced data and should concentrate on collecting its own data when appropriate.

Response: In addition to externally-commissioned surveys, the School is planning to undertake its own outcomes surveys of graduates and employers on an annual basis, commencing in December 2021.

Response to comments around achievement of day 1 competences by students graduating in 2021 (para 9.28 and 12.11)

The visitors expressed concerns about the achievement of D1Cs in the School’s 2021 graduates who were undertaking our amended final year IMR programme during the covid-19 pandemic (August 2020 – May 2021). It is important to note that at the time of the visitation our final year students had completed between 3 and 9 weeks of their planned 18 weeks of rotations due to the Covid-19 restrictions and were naturally not fully competent at this time.

The School wishes to present objective outcomes assessment data to provide reassurance regarding our modified IMR programme which consisted of an 11 week “Preparation for Practice” programme, delivered before Christmas 2020, and 18 weeks of intra-mural clinical rotations.

Consolidated outcomes data is presented from all students who have completed 18 weeks of clinical rotations. The outcomes of our final year assessments, which were previously commended by the RCVS visitation in 2019, indicate a high level of achievement and high pass rates providing strong evidence for the attainment of the RCVS D1Cs.

1. Clinical / oral / practical examinations (COPS)

Two structured oral examinations for each rotation, independently marked by two examiners. Two clinical scenarios are used. Grading is standardised through the use of a rubric describing each level of performance.

	Average scores (out of 100) and % pass mark across species				
	GP1	GP2	Production	Equine	VPPH
Mean Mark	67.39	67.99	65.79	68.39	75.76
% pass rate	98.6	97.2	97.2	100	98.6%

2. Practice-based global performance assessment results

Two summative global assessments are performed by trained, practice-based Clinical Instruction Mentors (CIMs) during each of the 5 rotations. Six competences of clinical practice are assessed. A pass is indicated by a score of 3 or above as defined by detailed rubric descriptors.

Below Expectation		Meets Expectation		
Poor (1)	Weak (2)	Satisfactory (3)	Good (4)	Excellent (5)

All Students; all GPA scores by rotation type

	Knowledge	Clinical reasoning	Technical Skills	Communication Skills	Patient care	Professional skills and behaviours	Overall Average
SAGP1	3.59	3.53	3.69	3.87	3.60	4.29	3.76
SAGP2	3.68	3.54	3.73	4.09	3.71	4.38	3.86
Equine	3.58	3.63	3.71	4.14	3.86	4.35	3.88
Production	3.42	3.42	3.59	3.83	3.48	4.08	3.64
SA Referral	3.93	3.97	4.10	4.48	4.15	4.59	4.20

All Students; Pass % for Summative GPA scores by Rotation Type

	Knowledge	Clinical reasoning	Technical Skills	Communication Skills	Patient care	Professional skills and behaviours
SAGP1	99	99	99	100	99	100
SAGP2	100	100	100	99	100	100
Equine	98	98	98	99	98	98
Production	98	98	98	99	100	100
SA Referral	100	100	100	100	100	100
Overall	99	99	99	99	99	99

3. The written examination results

The written examination is a two-hour paper consisting of 80 single best answer questions based on RCVS D1Cs:

Examination outcomes 2021

Pass rate 97.3%

Mean score 64.8%

The School presents this data, not available at the time of the visitation, as reassurance that D1Cs have been achieved by all students passing final year assessments in accordance with previously validated programme assessment criteria.

The University is grateful for the suggestions and recommendations made by the visitors and is committed to the continuous improvement of its BVMSci programme.

Yours sincerely,



Professor Chris Proudman

Head of the School of Veterinary Medicine