# Verification and focused revisit to the University of Surrey School of Veterinary Medicine

## 05 October 2023

**Report to the Council of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS)**
**in accordance with Section 5 of the Veterinary Surgeons Act 196**

# Contents

## List of Panel Members

Prof. Tim Parkin, Chair, RCVS
Prof. Liz Mossop, RCVS
Dr. Clare Tapsfield-Wright, RCVS


Also in attendance:

Ms. Claire Holliday, RCVS staff
Mrs. Kirsty Williams, RCVS observer

# Background Information:

1. In March 2021, a virtual visitation to the University of Surrey, School of Veterinary Medicine was undertaken. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the site team was unable to attend in person.

2. Following the virtual visitation, the RCVS Education Committee granted the status of "Accreditation for a shorter period" for a period of 2 years to the Bachelor of Veterinary Medicine and Science (BVMSci), with a revisit to occur in 2023. It was agreed that this would be a short, focused revisit, looking specifically at the sustainability of the programme with increasing student numbers, staff workload and assessment validity, along with the School's progress with addressing the suggestions and recommendations from the visitation report.

3. In addition, it was confirmed that this revisit would also satisfy the requirement for all virtual visits to be followed up with an in-person visit within 12-18 months, as set out in the virtual accreditation visit guidelines.

4. The panel members are grateful to Professor Jeevaratnam, and all the staff in the School for their help and hospitality during the visit. In particular, thanks are given to Susie Thompson for her professionalism in the organisation of the visit, and her efficiency in the light of requests for additional information from the panel. The panel members are aware of the considerable amount of work and time that is taken up by accreditation visits, and thank the staff from the various departments who made themselves available.

5. The panel members would also like to thank the students who met with them, for providing their valuable feedback about the experience of studying at Surrey.

6. The scope and focus of the revisit was based on the standards against which recommendations or suggestions had been identified at the 2021 virtual visitation. However, the panel would consider any evidence presented during the accreditation event.

# Summary of Findings: Focused revisit 05 October 2023

## Standard 1 – Organisation:

**Suggestions**

- The Senior Management Team should further engage proactively with all staff to ensure they are fully aware of any workload concerns, and continue to identify ways to reduce excessive workload.

## Standard 3 – Physical Facilities and Equipment:

There are no Commendations, Recommendations or Suggestions for this Standard.

## Standard 4 – Animal resources:

**Suggestions**

- The School is encouraged to continue efforts to increase overall post-mortem numbers in equine and production animal species, while maintaining numbers in other species.

## Standard 6 – Students:

**Recommendations**

- The school must review its policy on individual student risk assessments, working with the central university, and ensure it is fit for purpose and supportive to students, and that staff carrying out these processes are properly trained.

**Suggestions**

- The school should maintain a suitable number of LVCP staff members to provide a positive final year experience for students. The school should also continue their focus on retention of these team members.

## Standard 7 – Admission & Progression:

**Suggestions**

- The School is encouraged to update the website to provide some idea of the range of costs that may be incurred by students when on IMR, and provide greater clarity on the direct support available from the School.

## Standard 8 – Academic & Support Staff:

There are no Commendations, Recommendations or Suggestions for this Standard.

## Standard 9 – Curriculum:

**Suggestions**

- A more proactive approach should be taken to inviting feedback from EMS providers.

## Standard 10 – Assessment:

**Commendations**

- The engagement of IMR providers in validating OSCE stations is to be commended.

**Suggestions**

- The School should provide data in the future to support validity and reliability evidence.

## Standard 11 – Research Programmes, Continuing & Higher Degrees:

There are no Commendations, Recommendations or Suggestions for this Standard.

## Standard 12 – Outcomes Assessment:

There are no Commendations, Recommendations or Suggestions for this Standard.

# Standard 1 – Organisation

**Suggestion from 2021 report:**

- 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.

**Background (information from Surrey's Self Evaluation Report (SER))**

7.  Following the announcement that Professor Proudman would step down from the position of Head of School, Professor Kamalan Jeevaratnam was appointed to the role on August 1st 2023, following an internal appointment process.

8.  The School conducted internal and external reviews of the School's structure and effectiveness in 2021. As a result of recommendations made following those reviews, a series of School workshops were carried out which gathered feedback from staff on structural issues within the School and suggestions for change. All School staff, including professional services staff and technicians, participated in this consultation and helped to shape the current School structure, as shown in figure 1.1:
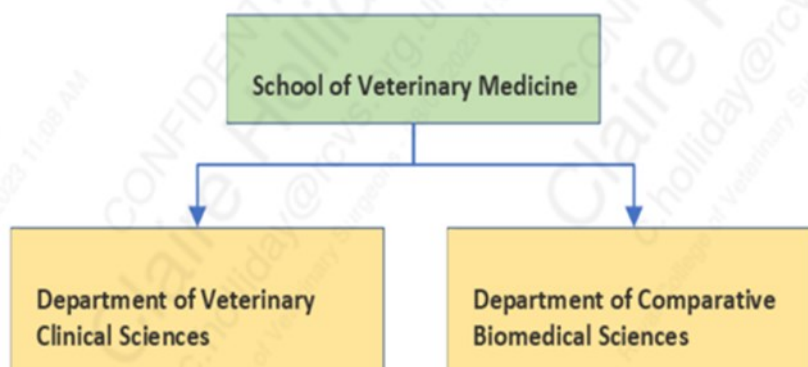


Figure 1: New development structure within the School of Veterinary Medicine.

9.  An outcome of the consultation was the need for effective and responsive line management within departments to manage staff workload and advise on staff development and career progression. In response to this requirement, the School has developed "Sections" within each department, typically groupings of 3 – 8 staff, with clear line management. Section Heads have undergone management training to assist them to support staff within their section.

10. Since the visitation in 2021, there has been a change in the clinical teaching team due to staff turnover and parental leave. In response to a University-level restructure of staffing roles, the job title of the dedicated intra-mural rotation academic staff has changed from "Veterinary Clinical Teaching Fellow (VCTF)," to "Lecturer in Veterinary Clinical Practice (LVCP)," as shown in figure 1.2.
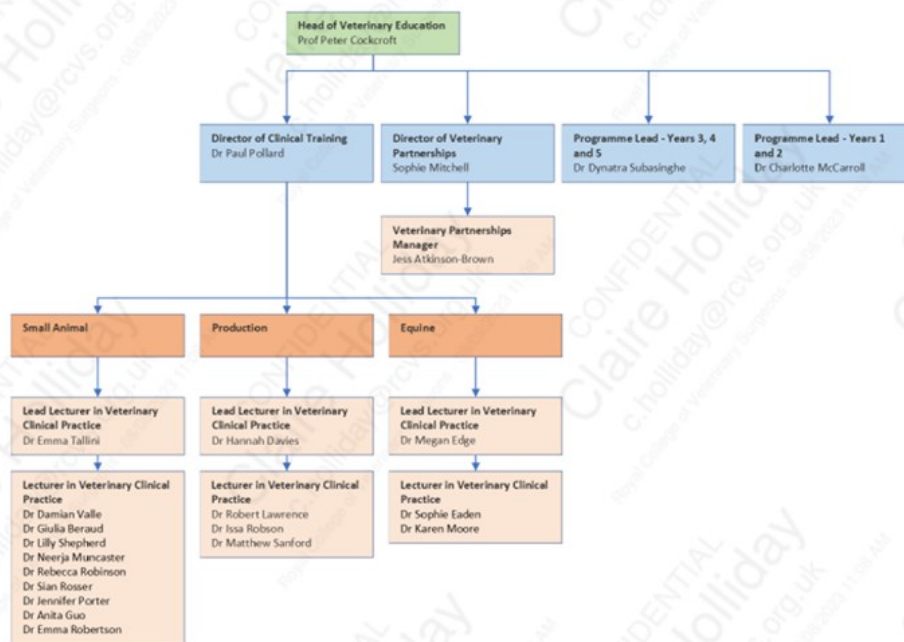
Figure 2: Organisation chart of clinical teaching roles within the School of Veterinary Medicine.

11. In order to ensure that staff are enabled to engage in all aspects of their role including personal development, and that the workload is spread across the staff in an equitable fashion, the school has completed the following actions:

- **Staff resource**: As of July 2023, there is an LVCP team of 14.7 FTE. This equates to a Staff/Student ratio (SSR) of 1:8.6 based on the 2022/23 student number of 126 in final year.

- **Workload planning**: The School undertook a detailed "Deep Dive" review of LVCP workload in 2022. Eleven recommendations from this report have now been enacted to rationalise LVCP workload. Each recommendation has been considered, and where not already completed, actions put in place.

- **Remote working**: The University has reviewed the principles for granting Lecturers in Veterinary Clinical Practice remote worker status. Following discussion with colleagues in the Vet School and as part of their retention strategy for this category of staff, a remote worker category for the LVCP team has been created.

**Panel Comments**

12. The panel recognised the efforts made by the Senior Management Team to identify solutions to workload concerns of different groups of staff, in particular the LVCPs. To explore evidence of the impact of the actions made by the School following their deep dive review on staff, the panel heard from this group that the 'deep dive' exercise had helped workload to some extent, as has the introduction of remote contracts for some LVCPs.

13. There was some concern that, even with remote contracts, the requirement for LVCPs to return to Surrey on a regular basis was overly burdensome. LVCPs reported that they did not feel their voice was fully heard with reference to decision making regarding their work.

14. Some staff felt the changed contracts had made some positive contributions to their role, including enabling some staff to claim for travel, and also enabled more time working from home during non-visit weeks to help catch up with administrative tasks. However, there were reports that in some areas workloads remained excessive.

15. The visiting team considered the evidence provided in the repository along with evidence received during the visit and found that, whilst workload allocation principles had been adjusted after the deep dive, some staff noted a continued excessive workload. Regular, individual discussions regarding workload did not appear to consistently take place which was evidenced through discussions with the wider LVCP team

16. It is hoped that the newly introduced structure which includes 'Sections' within each department will enable line managers to better identify staff who are overworked and who feel their workload restricts their ability to engage in all aspects of their role.

## Commendations
There were no Commendations for this Standard.

## Recommendations
There were no Recommendations for this Standard.

## Suggestions

17. The Senior Management Team should further engage proactively with all staff to ensure they are fully aware of any workload concerns, and continue to identify ways to reduce excessive workload.

# Standard 3 – Physical Facilities and Equipment

**Suggestions from the 2021 report:**

- 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.

## Background from the SER

18. External abattoir visits recommenced as part of the Veterinary Pathology and Public Health (VPPH) IMR rotation in September 2022. All final year students visit one of two red meat abattoirs with an annexed meat processing plant. Students also visit a family-owned, low-throughput white meat plant, processing less than 10k birds per year.

19. The proposed Manor Park Hub has been delayed due to rising costs, however, a £500K refurbishment is taking place to develop a student social/catering space on Manor Park. This new hub opened in Spring 2023 and is a 5-minute walk from the Vet School Main building (VSM).

20. The University also operates across Surrey's Stag Hill and Manor Park Campuses. Stag Hill and Manor Park are linked by a subsidised bus service, however, it is within reasonable walking distance for students and staff. Students from the School live across both sites and use facilities in both areas. The University has made investments in enhancing student facilities on Stag Hill over the last 3 years, resulting in two new student study/social spaces opening and an expansion to the study areas of the Library. In addition, the School of Veterinary Medicine students, Post Graduate Researchers (PGRs) and staff have shared access to new facilities that opened in 2019, in the Kate Granger Building on Manor Park.

21. The School currently employs 18 LVCPs (14.7 FTE) with an SSR of 1:8.6. This is an increase on the previous 1:10 SSR in 2021 and enables time for student support and for staff personal development.

22. The current policy is that the School provides in-person visits by LVCPs during week 2 and week 4 of a rotation and online visits only happen in exceptional circumstances (e.g. where a member of the LVCP team becomes unwell at short notice and are unable to visit in person).

## Panel Comments

23. The tour of the clinical skills laboratory, plus a second space within the vet school building, demonstrated that it was very well equipped with numerous models of a variety of species, and

procedural models to enable students to practice basic clinical skills. Students reported that it was easy to book sessions at various times of the day to access the clinical skills area.

24. It was noted in the evidence within the repository that abattoir visits had been resumed in person for both red and white meat.  Students confirmed this and reported they had appreciated the experience of attending in person, finding the visits to be well organised and informative.

25. The Manor Park hub project has been put on hold for the present. Students have been encouraged to access study and social spaces in other areas of the campus such as Manor Park or the Stag centre, in addition to the library and other social and learning spaces known as Dots.  Students reported that they felt they had sufficient space and could make a personal choice as to which location they felt most suited their study needs.

26. The School reported that the number of LVCPs was sufficient for IMR practice visits and the students confirmed that LVCPs visit each student twice in person on each IMR rotation. Sometimes a pastoral visit was done remotely by a LVCP in addition to an in-person, species specific visit by an appropriate LVCP.

**There are no Commendations, Recommendations or Suggestions for this standard.**

# Standard 4 – Animal resources

**Suggestions from the 2021 report**

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

## Background from the SER

27. 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 Vet School Pathology (VSP) also receives private submissions for Post-Mortem Examination (PME), outwith the DEFRA surveillance scheme.

28. Practical pathology teaching begins in Year 2 of the BVMSci programme. Each student performs a teaching PME on a chicken and a rabbit. They also work in small groups to perform a PME on a sheep, pig or calf. Cadavers are sourced for this purpose and are not part of the diagnostic caseload of the Veterinary Pathology Centre.

29. During the Veterinary Pathology and Public Health Rotation (VPPH) rotation students perform PMEs on both private submissions to the VSP and on DEFRA surveillance cases, individually (one pig carcass each) or in small groups (all other species). On average, there are 20 students per rotation undertaking VPPH and each group of 20 students receives the same number and diversity of species of the following donated fallen-stock cases: 20 piglets, 2 cats, 2 dogs, 2 bovine and 2 equine. In the unlikely event of low case submissions during a rotation, cadavers would be bought in.

30. The minimum numbers of PME cases seen by each group of students throughout the VPPH rotation are 2 small animal, 1 pig, 1 bovine, 1 equine, 1 small ruminant and 2 chicken.

31. Students are also involved in an average of 5 additional cases per rotation: students attend alternate afternoons in the post-mortem room so are exposed to, on average, 1/14th of the available material from diagnostic cases, this is based on the data presented in tables 1 and 2 below.

| 2022-2023 (Diagnostic cases only) | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Species | IMR1 | IMR2 | IMR3 | IMR4 | IMR5 | IMR6 | IMR7 |
| Cattle | 6 | 2 | 8 | 1 | 1 | 7 | 2 |
| Small ruminants | 2 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 12 | 14 |
| Camelids | 2 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 4 |
| Pigs | 2 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Companion Animals | 11 | 4 | 11 | 7 | 7 | 14 | 6 |
| Equine | 0 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Avian (Poultry vs other) | 3 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 0 |
| Rabbits | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Exotic & wildlife | 3 | 4 | 1 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 0 |
| Total diagnostic cases | 29 | 22 | 29 | 21 | 21 | 43 | 28 |
| Total bought-in stock cases (mixed – see row below)* | 28 | 28 | 28 | 28 | 28 | 28 | 28 |
| | *Each IMR was exposed to the same species within these 28 fallen stock animals:<br>- 20 pigs<br>- 2 cats<br>- 2 dogs<br>- 2 cows<br>- 2 horses | | | | | | |
| OVERALL TOTAL OF PM CASES PER IMR GROUP (Diagnostic plus donated/stock) | 57 | 50 | 57 | 49 | 49 | 71 | 56 |

| TOTAL CASES FOR THE YEAR ACROSS ALL 7 IMR GROUPS 2022-2023 | | |
|---|---|---|
| | DIAGNOSTIC CASES | 193 |
| | FALLEN STOCK CASES | 196 |
| | TOTAL CASES | 389 |

Table 1: Numbers of necropsies per species over the past year (2022-2023) of final year pathology teaching.

| 2021-2022 (Diagnostic cases only) | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Species | IMR1 | IMR2 | IMR3 | IMR4 | IMR5 | IMR6 | IMR7 |
| Cattle | 1 cow | 1 calf | - | 3 cows | - | 1 reindeer | 4 cows |
| Small ruminants | 3 sheep | - | 2 goats | 1 sheep<br>3 lambs | 2 sheep<br>3 goats | 4 lambs | 3 lambs<br>1 goat |
| Camelids | 1 alpaca | - | - | 2 alpacas | - | - | - |
| Pigs | 1 | 4 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 3 | - |
| Companion Animals | 4 dogs<br>3 cats | - | 2 dogs<br>1 cat | 6 dogs<br>5 cats | 2 dogs | 2 cats | 1 cat<br>2 dogs |
| Equine | 1 | - | - | - | - | 1 foal | |
| Avian (Poultry vs other) | - | - | 1 chicken<br>1 falcon | 1 chicken<br>2 finches<br>4 budgies | - | - | |
| Rabbits | 2 | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Exotic & wildlife | - | 2 fish<br>1 leopard | 1 zebra | 1 African wild ass<br>1 zebra | - | 1 oryx<br>1 sitatunga | 1 oryx |
| Total diagnostic cases | 16 | 8 | 10 | 30 | 9 | 13 | 12 |
| Total bought-in stock cases (mixed – see row below)* | 28 | 28 | 28 | 28 | 28 | 28 | 28 |
| | *Each IMR was exposed to the same species within these 28 fallen stock animals:<br>- 20 pigs<br>- 2 cats<br>- 2 dogs<br>- 2 cows<br>- 2 horses | | | | | | |
| OVERALL TOTAL OF PM CASES PER IMR GROUP (Diagnostic plus donated/stock) | 44 | 36 | 38 | 58 | 37 | 41 | 40 |

| TOTAL CASES FOR THE YEAR ACROSS ALL 7 IMR GROUPS 2021-2022 | | |
|---|---|---|
| | DIAGNOSTIC CASES | 98 |
| | FALLEN STOCK CASES | 196 |
| | TOTAL CASES | 294 |

Table 2: Numbers of necropsies per species over the past year (2021-2022) of final year pathology teaching.

## Panel Comments

32. The panel examined the evidence in the repository and noted that the diversity of sources of fallen stock cadavers and post-mortem cases ensured a consistent experience for each rotation group. Numbers of post-mortem cases have increased over the last two years. This evidence was further triangulated during discussions with students who explained that they had hands-on experience with a variety of cases including the opportunity to complete a full piglet post-mortem in 5th year.

33. Students did report, however, that opportunities for equine and adult cattle necropsy experience were limited, although they did get access to plucks from bovine and sheep to inspect.

34. The panel also noted that equine diagnostic cases were fewer in number, however, the School recognised this particular challenge and are working to develop relationships with local practices to increase their supply.

## Commendations

There are no Commendations for this Standard.

## Recommendations

There are no Recommendations for this Standard.

## Suggestions

35. The School is encouraged to continue efforts to increase overall post-mortem numbers in equine and production animal species, while maintaining numbers in other species.

# Standard 6 – Students

**Suggestion from the 2021 report**

- 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.

## Background from the SER

36. The School has continued to model the workload of the LVCP (Lecturer in Veterinary Clinical Practice) team. The School is currently (as of July 2023) working at 14.7 (FTE) LVCPs supporting IMR which provides a staff: student ratio of one staff member to 8.6 students. This follows the recruitment of an additional 1.7 (FTE) LCVPs, which is an increase from 2021 (13 FTE) and to ensure the School can meet operational needs, support for students, and the personal development requirements of the team. The staff: student ratio (1:10) has increased from academic year 2021/22.

## Panel Comments

37. There is a requirement for students to report to their LVCP if they feel they need special considerations and requirements/reasonable adjustments for IMR placements. LVCPs are required to perform a risk assessment, following on from the students' occupational health report, before commencing the placement. This needs to happen before the placement can commence and students need to be well informed about the need to request risk assessments in good time, but without causing unnecessary concern or delay inadvertently making students reluctant to seek necessary adjustments in placements.

38. There was a high level of confusion amongst staff and students around the recent change in policy which led to the generation of individual risk assessments for students with any type of health issue, following occupational health reports. Junior staff were relied upon to produce these risk assessments, and reported that minimal training was provided. The policy document appeared to contain a solicitor's letter which did not support staff in decision making. There was also confusion amongst students around declaring health issues following this new approach, as timing was critical for it not to impact on their experience.

39. Whilst the panel appreciated that this constituted a central University policy, and that all staff were required to complete risk assessments, the visit team were concerned at the lack of effective training (relevant to their role) for staff on how to conduct the risk assessments. This was triangulated by the panel through conversations with multiple staff who reported feeling overwhelmed with these responsibilities. It was felt that training and clearer guidance would be beneficial.

## Commendations

There were no Commendations for this Standard.

## Recommendations

40. The school must review its policy on individual student risk assessments, working with the central university, and ensure it is fit for purpose and supportive to students, and that staff carrying out these processes are properly trained.

## Suggestions

41. The school should maintain a suitable number of LVCP staff members to provide a positive final year experience for students. The school should also continue their focus on supporting the retention of these team members.

# Standard 7 – Admission & Progression

**Recommendations from the 2021 report**

- 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 from the 2021 report**

- 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.

## Background from the SER

42. The School noted that their external programme webpage contains a link to the Fitness to Practise procedures, under the "Entry Requirements" page.

43. Information about Fitness to Practise is additionally available to all current students via the MySurrey website and from the main (external) webpage under policies. The webpage provides students with specific advice, including information about registration bodies, how to raise concerns, how concerns are investigated, and how students are notified. There is also information on Fitness to Practise Panels and outcomes of panels. A full document "Regulations for Fitness to Practise" is also accessible from this webpage. Students can also access the Regulations for Fitness to Practise directly from the Quality Framework website.

44. Regarding programme withdrawals, the *code of practice for temporary and permanent withdrawals* is accessible from the programme webpage, which links to the document also found on the external Quality Framework website for prospective students. This is also available on the policies list on the MySurrey webpages for current students.

45. Regarding ensuring that the commitments and costs of the Extra-Mural Studies (EMS) and IMR programme are available on the website, the School noted some top level information is available under the 'placements' tab on the programme web page.

46. The School noted that a progression action plan is developed by the Head of Veterinary Education annually and presented to the Board of Studies, with progression data analysed at each level according to student characteristics. The Head of School, Head of Education and the Programme Leads meet regularly to monitor the implementation of the action plan and progression outcomes. Student attrition is monitored as part of the progression action plan.

**Panel Comments**

47. The information regarding Fitness to Practice is now clearly available.

48. The panel were pleased to see additional information on the website now available under the headings of EMS and IMR separately. However, greater clarity on the likely range of costs for both and on the support available for IMR, in particular (given the almost entirely distributed model of the Veterinary Programme) would be useful.

49. Students noted that costs could be unclear, not provided early enough and could be a surprise regarding the financial outlay needed for both IMR and EMS.

50. The panel could see that information about costs is provided, however, this is at a high level and an average or range of costs would be more beneficial to prospective students.

51. Good use of more granular data related to progression (and for Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)) by characteristics was now routine within the school. Identification of 'at risk' students was proactively being worked on with interventions to follow where necessary. This approach was regarded as more appropriate than simply identifying 'at risk' individuals by singular (or specific combinations of) characteristics.

**Commendations**

There were no Commendations for this Standard.

**Recommendations**

There were no Recommendations for this Standard.

**Suggestions**

52. The School is encouraged to update the website to provide some idea of the average and range of costs that may be incurred by students when on IMR, and provide greater clarity on the direct support available from the School.

# Standard 8 – Academic & Support Staff

**Recommendations from the 2021 report**

- 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.

**Suggestion from the 2021 report**

- 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.

## Background from the SER

53. On 1 August 2022, the University unified academic role titles across the Research and Teaching track. The unification of academic role titles was in response to feedback from academic colleagues regarding their job titles and means that academic role titles are aligned with their competitor group and internationally, with the aim of making the teaching track titles are more attractive to potential employees. The unified titles are referred to in the below table.

54. The School noted that the process only changed job titles and not any other role profile duties, work activities or work allocations. Academic staff members continue to be aligned to either the Research and Teaching track, or the Teaching track, according to their role profile, as outlined in table 3. Academic staff members were also given the choice to retain their title, for example where maintenance of their role title was important for professional identity to external groups.

| Research and Teaching track (R&T) titles before 1 August 2022 | Teaching track (T) titles before 1 August 2022 | Practice | Unified Titles from 1 August 2022 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Professor | Professorial Teaching Fellow | Professor in Practice | Professor |
| Reader | Principal Teaching Fellow | | Associate Professor |
| Senior Lecturer | Senior Teaching Fellow | | Senior Lecturer |
| Lecturer B | Teaching Fellow B | | Lecturer B |
| Lecturer A | Teaching Fellow A | | Lecturer A |

Table 3: Research and Teaching track job title changes.

55. With the aim of providing greater resilience within the team, the School's recruitment strategy has focused on individuals who are able to support student visits across species, and there are now six members of the team visiting practices who are capable of this role.

56. Within the LVCP team, 12 out of 18 staff members hold a postgraduate qualification across a range of subject areas: Post Graduate Certificate in Veterinary Professional Studies and Small Animal Surgery, Official Controls Qualification (Veterinary) as well as Masters qualifications in Ruminant Nutrition, Global Health, Veterinary Clinical Studies (Small Animal Practice),

International Animal Health and Veterinary Education.

57. The LVCP team also hold a range of memberships such as British Equine Veterinary Association, Equine Veterinary Dental Association, British Small Animal Veterinary Association, Veterinary Cardiology Society and British Veterinary Association. The LVCP team hold a range of prior experience as Senior Veterinary Surgeons including work in equine, farm and small animal practice, Senior Veterinary Inspector, Veterinary Programme Advisor, Equine Lecturer Course Manager and Co-founder of British Veterinary Ethnicity and Diversity Society.

58. In the School, LVCP workload has been mapped to ensure there is time allocated for professional development as shown in table 4. This is derived from the "Deep Dive" into LVCP workload, as part of an audit on how the team uses its time.

| Activity | Number of hours | |
|---|---|---|
| Teaching Total | 394 | |
| Clinical Placement support | 150 | |
| Individual projects not related to IMR | 82 | |
| LVCP team projects and activities | 130 | |
| IMR meetings | 74 | |
| Admission/Open Days | 42 | |
| Student research projects | 26 | 30% total time |
| Personal Tutorials | 30 | |
| Collegiality/Development | 300 | |
| Maintenance of clinical skills | 144 | |
| CPD | 36 | |
| Other | 142 | |
| Total hours | 1550 | |

Table 4: LVCP allocation for professional development.

59. Staff in the LVCP team are supported in their personal development through additional training and through maintenance of clinical skills in clinical practice. In the academic year 2022-23, the team have undertaken 70 days of maintenance of clinical skills where they are provided focused time to immerse themselves in clinical practice to improve their skills. The School has increased staff resource by 1.7 (FTE) since 2021 to provide more time for personal development.

60. To support continuing professional development, all staff are allocated funds to attend courses. In the academic year 2022-23, the department has provided £8,530 to support these activities which has resulted in 62 days of CPD across the team. The University also has a Travel Fund for academics to attend conferences, targeted at those who are presenting. Each award is valued at £1000 to cover attendance, travel and accommodation. Within the LVCP team, three have been awarded this in the current academic year.

61. All new LVCPs are supported to complete a Post Graduate Certificate in Learning and Teaching and hence gain their FHEA status. One member has now been awarded the SFHEA award and there are three others currently within the application process. Pan-University career development is encouraged and within the LVCP team, posts currently held include; admissions officer, EDI committee members, disability and neurodiversity lead, student wellbeing champion, sustainability champion and internationalisation lead.

**Panel Comments**

62. The Deep Dive report was conducted to identify the workload distribution of the LVCP team and adjustments were made as a result, bringing more student assessment performed in the vet school rather than at the end of the IMR placement and reducing the amount of time spent on extracurricular duties that had evolved.

63. LVCP recruitment is reported by the school as being up to the full required quota which has been assessed by means of the deep dive into the working hours and rotas of the LVCPs. The school reported that they had no issues in recruiting for the LVCP positions, and the standard of the applications had been excellent, ensuring enough LVCPs to deliver the IMR rotations and perform the personal tutor roles.

64. The LVCP team agreed that the team worked well together and made great efforts to support and train new LVCPs as they join the team. However, it was indicated that this was challenging during periods of high turnover.

65. The LVCPs reported that they were well appraised of the programme for professional growth and development and had time and resources to progress. Six LVCPs have achieved promotion.

66. Administrative task burdens performed by academic staff were reported as being consistent with the university policy. If there is a request for support, it is considered by the director of faculty operations to manage and seek sources for further admin support.


**There are no Commendations, Recommendations or Suggestions for this Standard.**

# Standard 9 – Curriculum

**Recommendations from the 2021 report**

- 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.

## Background from the SER

67. The School undertook its first full curriculum review in 2021 and this included consultation with the School's academic staff, students, and the practice-based clinical instructor mentors. The following School committees have been consulted in the review: Curriculum Committee, External Advisory Committee, School of Veterinary Medicine Employability Working Group, and the Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Committee.

68. An external report regarding the programme assessments was commissioned and prepared by Professor Sheena Warman, Professor of Veterinary Education, University of Bristol. Specific targeted subject reports from academic staff members were included where appropriate for topics which require inclusion going forward such as sustainability and guidelines for developing an inclusive curriculum. Other reports on topics which are not easily captured by curriculum mapping in an integrated curriculum were also included such as digital capabilities.

69. The aims of the review were to present the curriculum changes that have occurred since the start of the programme in 2014, describe the updating and review of the curriculum mapping in response to the revised RCVS Day One Competences, and to present the outcomes of a curriculum gap analysis regarding specific subjects within the curriculum.

70. A summary of progress against the 32-point action plan was provided for the panel in the RCVS repository.

71. Regarding EMS feedback from providers, the School noted that providers are invited to give feedback on the EMS programme and/or process by directly contacting the Placements Team. Providers are made aware of this on the EMS feedback form. This enables the provider to give feedback confidentially without the student being potentially aware of any concerns that that provider may have.

72. On receipt of any such feedback, positive or negative, the placement feedback protocol is followed. In summary, details of the comments as well as the placement provider's information derived from the SEL database is logged in a spreadsheet. The academic EMS coordinators are informed of the feedback received. The responsible coordinator (either for AHEMS or CEMS) can then contact the provider (and/or student if relevant or appropriate) for more information or for discussion. The

coordinator will then update the log spreadsheet based upon that discussion. The placements team can then amend the EMS database that students have access to depending on the nature of the feedback, or if a wider School-level response is required the Head of Education can be informed.

73. Any health and safety issues that arise must be logged onto the MASS information system following the incident reporting process and followed up, if required. The placements team will add to the log.

74. The placements team and/or EMS coordinators will produce a report based on provider feedback and any actions undertaken and present this at the Curriculum Committee on a biannual basis from the academic year 23/24.

75. The School confirmed that IMR had returned to 28 weeks after the pandemic, they explained that final year was delivered as 28 weeks of practice based IMR from 2021-22 to date and will continue to be the same in the 2023-24 academic year and future years.

## Panel Comments

76. The panel considered the evidence in the repository and concluded that the School's progress towards meeting the recommendations made in the 2021 curriculum review appeared to be good. This was triangulated through discussions with staff who were also aware of the broad changes recommended and the reasons behind this. Where actions were indicated as 'ongoing' the panel we reassured that timely progress was being made.

77. Regarding EMS provider feedback, staff explained that if a provider wanted to discuss anything relating to the student this would come through the placements team. An email address is included on the student feedback form to facilitate feedback from providers on the EMS programme, however, only one comment had been received via this route.

78. The recommencement of 28 weeks of practice based IMR was evidenced in the repository and triangulated with students who were very positive about the return.

## Commendations
There were no Commendations for this Standard.

## Recommendations
There were no Recommendations for this Standard.

## Suggestions

79. A more proactive approach should be taken to inviting feedback from EMS providers.

# Standard 10 – Assessment

**Recommendations from the 2021 report**

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

## Background from the SER

80. In the academic year 2021-2022 the number of stations in the Year 3 and Year 4 OSCE examinations was increased to 15 stations as a unit of assessment in each year.

81. The School reported that the validity of the OSCE assessments has been further enhanced by domain blueprinting, station design, pre-testing the station, training of examiners, process instructions for examiners, checklist marking scripts and standard setting using either linear regression (main cohort assessments) or modified Angoff methods (retake assessments). The authenticity of each clinical skills model/procedure used in the OSCE stations has been approved by a species-specific experienced veterinarian.

82. In the academic year 2022-2023, clinical examination summative barrier assessments for cattle, horses and dogs were introduced into Year 3.

83. An 'Assessment workload planning for staff & students' documents sets out the processes and governance used to ensure that appropriate assessment loads for staff and students are achieved.

## Panel Comments

84. The panel noted that, from the report from the School, a comprehensive approach to assessment utility was in place, with good oversight via appropriate committee structures. Reassurance was provided that the bank of OSCE stations is sufficient to continue to deliver 15 stations per assessment event.

## Commendations

85. The engagement of IMR providers in validating OSCE stations is to be commended.

## Recommendations

There are no Recommendations for this Standard.

## Suggestions

The School should provide data in the future to support validity and reliability evidence.

# Standard 11 – Research Programmes, Continuing & Higher Degrees

**Suggestion from the 2021 report**

- 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.

## Background from the SER

86. In 2022, the School underwent a departmental restructure (See Standard 1). The school is organized into two departments, the Department of Comparative Biomedical Sciences and the Department of Veterinary Clinical Sciences, which are divided into multiple sections managed by a section lead who reports to the two departmental heads.

87. The University has been working on revising the "Principles of Workload Allocation", giving more freedom to section heads on how to distribute tasks, following a workload allocation process informed by values of transparency, consultation and fairness. Multiple publications have been written by teaching track academics (25 in total between Jan 2022 and July 2023), in some cases co-authoring students. Two teaching track academics have been co-Investigators in an Innovate-UK grant.

88. The School facilitates the participation of teaching staff in research activities in multiple ways:

- Supervision of 3rd year students' research projects. All staff are required to supervise students and generate original research projects. Staff are invited to attend training meetings that help them formulate research questions as well as how to facilitate the work of their students. Several members of the teaching staff use this opportunity to collect data, which has resulted in publications and presentations at conferences such as VetEd.
- Teaching staff are invited to the annual Partner Conference, which has a dedicated research session, where the School can share research ideas with its partners and can foster collaborations.
- Teaching staff have been invited to present the School's weekly research seminar, which is organized in conjunction with the School of Biosciences.
- A planned Department away day is intended to be an opportunity for teaching and research staff to share ideas and to raise awareness of the research ongoing within the two departments.

## Panel Comments

89. The panel were concerned that workload for many staff remained high, but in this regard it was reported that research contract staff do have sufficient time to pursue their research activities and that teaching staff can use time allocated to conduct pedagogical research. Separate teaching and research promotion criteria are in place. A collaborative environment enabling greater research effort across all staff was reported and welcomed.

**There are no Commendations, Recommendations or Suggestions for this Standard.**

# Standard 12 – Outcomes Assessment

**Recommendations from the 2021 report**

- 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 from the 2021 report**

- 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.

## Background from the SER

90. The School has fully reinstated its 28-week practice based IMR, following temporary disruption in
   2020-21 caused by the covid-19 pandemic. An example IMR structure is provided below:



Figure 3: Example structure of IMR year, including University 'return weeks' and holidays.

91. Regarding the School sourcing a replacement site for basic anaesthesia, surgical and post-operative care, the School has confirmed a contractual arrangement with the Mayhew clinic in London for the delivery of this teaching. Fourth year students visit this clinic for two days where they undertake anaesthesia, neutering and post-operative care. The school is currently working towards an additional contractual arrangement for a second clinic to provide additional resilience.

92. Students are directly responsible for all aspects of treatment and care of dogs and cats undergoing routine neutering surgery at the Mayhew including, anaesthesia, surgery, post-operative care, documentation of anaesthesia and surgery, and discharge to owners. Learning Objectives are listed on SurreyLearn and in the clinic handbook.

93. The School uses a range of different data sources to ensure that students keep a record of, and reflect on, their developing practical and clinical skills over the duration of programme.

94. Over the course of final year, students are encouraged to record and reflect on the cases they have seen and the skills they have developed. This begins at the start of each rotation when

the students create learning objectives (LOs) that they would like to achieve during their rotation. These are sent to the Clinical Instruction Mentors (CIMs) in practice so that they may be discussed with the students while they are on placements. At the end of the placements the students reflect on their achievements and send new LOs to their next placement. They are encouraged to reflect on their learning at the end of each rotation and to reflect on how their understanding of the Day One Competences has changed because of the rotation. This reflection cumulates in a reflective essay at the end of their year of study.

## Panel Comments

95. The 28-week practice based IMR model has been reinstated. The panel are comfortable that the basic anaesthesia, surgical and post-operative care training is now being met through a contract with a charity practice in London, and that additional back-up provision is being negotiated.

96. The School makes good use of both internal and external data to evaluate its programme.

**There are no Commendations, Recommendations or Suggestions for this Standard.**

# University Response

| Standard | RCVS Summary of Findings | Surrey Response |
|---|---|---|
| **1**<br>**Organisation** | **Suggestions**<br>The Senior Management Team should further engage proactively with all staff to ensure they are fully aware of any workload concerns and continue to identify ways to reduce excessive workload. | **Response to Suggestions**<br>The Workload Planning Committee meets regularly to discuss and review workload across the School. The Head of School and Head of Departments are members of this committee to ensure these key senior leaders are directly engaged in staff workload management and staff concerns including how processes and policies can be streamlined to reduce workload are discussed. And monitored.<br><br>All Lecturers in Veterinary Clinical Practice (LVCPs), and all other staff in the School of Veterinary Medicine, received their mid-term appraisal, this data is captured. All staff receive either six monthly probation meetings or annual appraisals. It is also School policy that all staff are met monthly by their line managers to discuss workload and any other issues as detailed in **1.1**<br>**Response School of Veterinary Medicine Section Lead ToR FINAL Aug 2023** provided for reference. |
| **2 – N/A** | | |
| **3**<br>**Facilities and Equipment** | No Commendations, Recommendations or Suggestions for this Standard. | |
| **4**<br>**Animal Resources** | **Suggestions**<br>The School is encouraged to continue efforts to increase overall post-mortem numbers in equine and production animal species,<br>while maintaining numbers in | **Response to Suggestions**<br>The School will continue to ensure adequate numbers of postmortems are carried out across all core species and the School has actively put in place work to increase the number of equine and production animal cadavers students are exposed to.<br><br>A donation scheme is already in place for all companion animals, small and equine, with the offer of remains, either full remains for small animals or heads, hearts and hooves for |

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| | other species. | equines to be |

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| | | cremated and scattered over a garden of remembrance at no cost to the owner. The School has a partnership with a local equine practice to promote numbers of equine cadavers that students are exposed to. The School also has a partnership with APHA to source production animals. We have run CPD days for production animal focused vets to help raise the profile of the postmortem service at the School and will continue to do so. If there are shortfalls, the School will purchase animals from the Fallen Stock scheme.

Cadaver numbers continue to be monitored closely through the Animal Resources Working Group. |
| 5 | | |

| | | Recommendations | Response to Recommendations |
|---|---|---|---|
| **6 Students** | | The school must review its policy on individual student risk assessments, working with the central university, and ensure it is fit for purpose and supportive to students, and that staff carrying out these processes are properly trained.<br><br>**Suggestions**<br>The school should maintain a suitable number of LVCP staff members to provide a positive final year experience for students.<br>The school should also continue their focus on retention of these team members. | The School maintains that its pre-existing guidelines are comprehensive but acknowledges that it is operationally challenging in some circumstances. It has therefore undertaken further work with teams from the central University as part of a small working group to review the policy and processes for students declaring a disability and subsequent risk assessments. Please refer to **6.1ResponseLetterRiskAssessments28_02_24** provided by the University representative – Emma Rowsell, Director of Student Life. This demonstrates the institutional commitment to addressing this recommendation.<br><br>Briefly, a number of changes have been proposed, these include:<br><br>The addition of a Health Declaration during late semester 2 period, for all students in Years 1 – 4 to ensure necessary risk assessments and adjustments can be organised and managed over the summer break as required.<br><br>Declarations made by students in-year will be managed by the central Disability and Neurodiversity team with cases only being referred to Occupational Health if the declaration cannot be handled internally.<br><br>The Disability and Neurodiversity team will take the lead on writing Risk Assessments, but School staff will remain a signoff to ensure they meet the needs of the modules / placement learning outcomes. All academic staff will receive training organised by the central University. |

A Task and Finish Group will now be established to implement the proposed changes as soon as possible but no later than the start of Academic year 2024/25.

With regards to staff training, the School recognises the need for this and has been proactively supporting such activities as detailed below:

Staff training is in place regarding *The Fitness to Practice Process* and *Supporting Placement Students with Reasonable Adjustments.* Details of the most recent events are below:

The Fitness to Practice Process – 17/11/2023
Presentation by Faculty Case Manager, Office of Student Complaints, Appeals and Regulation (OSCAR).

Supporting Placement Students with Reasonable Adjustments – training event for the School of Veterinary Medicine, 19/10/2023 Thursday 13:00-16:15
Everyone is encouraged to attend the workshop on this important topic where teaching permits. The topics have broad application across the programme. The event is recorded for colleagues who are unable to attend. The event is placed in everyone's Outlook Calendar.

Agenda:
13.00-13.10 Welcome
13.10-13.55 Neurodiversity Reasonable Adjustments, Disability Co-ordinator, School of Health Sciences
14.05 - 14.35 Interpreting the Universities UK Suicide Safer Universities placement guidance, Lead for Wellbeing, School of Health Sciences
14.45 - 15.30 Occupational Health perspectives, Cordell Health
15.30-16.00 Disability and Neurodiversity Service (DANS) perspectives University of Surrey DANS 16.00- 16.15 Open discussion and close

**Response to Suggestions**
The School is committed to maintaining a positive student experience in the final year through adequate and appropriate support from within the Lecturer in Veterinary Clinical Practice (LVCP)

| | | and Lecturer in Veterinary Education and Training (LVET) team. Our current ratio is at 8.6:1 allowing resilience within the team to support students. The School have developed the remote contracts and hybrid ways of working as a means to help with staff retention and improve work life balance for the team. Alongside this, we offer more opportunity in areas such as research supervision and maintenance of clinical skills. Multiple LVCPs have already utilised this opportunity, together with Erasmus funding to pursue international teaching collaborations and research work in relation to their personal interest and career progression. Additionally, the Teaching Fellow Conference Support Fund provides additional funding support from Faculty for attendance at activities that support personal and professional development. There is also funding available for small pedagogic research work managed by the Faculty which has been used to support research by LVCPs. The School has also supported protected research time (with adequate planning) for LVCPs. All of these provide a wholesome and enriched academic experience to the LVCP team and will continue. |
|---|---|---|
| **7** **Admission and Progression** | **Suggestions** The School is encouraged to update the website to provide some idea of the range of costs that may be incurred by students when on IMR and provide greater clarity on the direct support available from the School. | **Response to Suggestions** It is important to note that it is impossible to allocate actual amounts to the cost and the corresponding financial support associated with Intramural Rotation (IMR) placements due to the variable nature of cost incurred based on geography. The School additionally needs to balance any commitment it makes to financial support in line with CMA guidelines. We nonetheless recognise that we can make such information more visible and explicit across several platforms. We have updated the Veterinary Medicine and Science BVMSci (Hons) course on the University of Surrey undergraduate courses webpage to include further information on IMR placements, including potential associated expenditure, sources of reimbursement and financial support provided to the students by the University during final year placements. The programme handbook (**7.1 BVMSci Handbook 2023-4 v3**) and VMS 5001 handbook (**7.2 VMS5001 2024-25 Student Handbook**) are provided and have been updated to align with information on the website https://www.surrey.ac.uk/undergraduate/veterinary-medicine-and- science-bv#study-placements under the Travel and Accommodation drop downs. |
| **8** **Academic and Support Staff** | No Commendations, Recommendations or Suggestions for this Standard. | |

| Standard | Commendations / Suggestions | Response |
|---|---|---|
| **9**<br>**Curriculum** | **Suggestions**<br>A more proactive approach should be taken to inviting feedback from EMS providers. | **Response to Suggestions**<br>EMS placement providers whose details are held on our database will be contacted on an annual basis in the form of a short survey to provide feedback regarding the programme. |
| **10**<br>**Assessment** | **Commendations**<br>The engagement of IMR providers in validating OSCE stations is to be commended.<br><br>**Suggestions**<br>The School should provide data in the future to support validity and reliability evidence. | The OSCE station validation study report which underpins the commendation for the validation work on the OSCE stations will be provided in the next annual report return and as part of this response (**10.1 Evaluation of the clinical skills models used for teaching the undergraduate veterinary medicine course at the University of Surrey**). Future validation and reliability studies will provide data regarding student performance on OSCE stations in their third and fourth years and their clinical skills performance ratings on the final year workplace based intra-mural rotation assessments.<br><br>The School will be upgrading its software for assessment, and this will allow us to generate the data required for validity and reliability. The update will commence in academic year 2024/2025. |
| **11**<br>**Research Programmes, continuing and higher degree education** | No Commendations, Recommendations or Suggestions for this Standard. | |
| **12**<br>**Outcomes assessment** | No Commendations, Recommendations or Suggestions for this Standard. | |