RC♦S | SETTING VETERINARY STANDARDS

Middlesex University Accreditation Visit

with the College of Animal Welfare 2018

Report to the Veterinary Nurses Council of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS)

Contents

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Summary of the Visitors' findings

Middlesex University and affiliated training practices were visited between 19th & 20th November 2018. The following programmes were under accreditation review:

BSc (Hons) Veterinary Nursing
BSc (Hons) Veterinary Nursing with Foundation Year

The Visitors received a warm welcome from the staff and are grateful to all those who were responsible for preparing the visit, arranging the schedule and providing supplementary information when requested. The enthusiasm, commitment and pride of the staff in what they do made it an interesting and enjoyable visit.

Middlesex University (MDX) and the College of Animal Welfare (CAW) are to be **commended** for the following;

- Their ability to provide a range of higher educational experiences to suit the differing types of undergraduate and what they want from their university experience. This has been achieved by the development of a programme of study across three different sites (Hendon, Huntingdon and Leeds)

- Module delivery occurs during the same timetabled slots at each centre. Core lecture material is used across all sites and lecture capture enhances the student learning experience

- The development of further additional elective modules delivered in the final year of the programme is an added strength to the programme and the fact that the delivery of these is via an on-line platform means that there is not a minimum number of students needed in order for any one module to run, providing choice to all students.

- The use of a range of assessment techniques including peer and team-based assessment is to be commended and this has been made possible through the ongoing collaborative partnership between the staff of the School of Health and Education and CAW.

- The Learning Resources were of an excellent standard and provided students with a free core reading text electronically.

- We welcome, as with all awarding organisations, the continued planning and development of innovative assessment with robust evidence based methods.

Areas for further review included:

- The need to 'tidy up' the programme handbook and programme specifications based on the anomalies highlighted at the validation event, including the use of consistent language around the Day One Skills (DOS) and Day One Competences (DOC).

- The need to review the anomalies identified in the Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE) paperwork submitted.

- Ensure that the language used within the intended learning outcomes reflects the level of the modules to which they are linked.

- Ensure that there is parity of language used across all modules in terms of the level of detail used in the description of both formative and summative assessments.

- Ensure that on each module descriptor the assessment is clearly linked to the intended learning outcomes for the module. For instance, there was mention of a draft assignment hand in opportunity, when there were no assignments listed as summative assessment.

- Add a generic statement regarding the fact that current journal articles will be an expected part of the module reading for each module in addition to the book lists provided.

- Within the dissertation module change the assessment description from 'literature review' to 'meta-analysis' of literature, to reflect the student activity expected within this assessment.

Standard 1- Organisation

Suggestions

None

Actions

1. The University must forward on the module specifications and the programme handbook for the BSc in Veterinary Nursing with the foundation year element.

2. The University must confirm that Boltons Park Farm is no longer used for the delivery of the Veterinary Nursing BSc.

Standard 2- Sustainability

Suggestions

None

Actions

1. The university must forward the market research evidence to corroborate the presentation delivered at the validation event

Standard 3 – Qualification design and delivery

Suggestions

1. MDX to consider improving the current examination quality assurance mechanisms by utilising a validation strategy / framework to provide evidence that the assessment methods utilised test what is expected and that threats to validity are reduced.

2. The University may wish to consider removal of reference to the NPL in the module specifications, and reference these to the Day One Skills instead.

3. The University may wish to investigate using OSCE stations with marking rubrics as opposed to checklists.

Actions

1. The University must supply a document that clearly demonstrates mapping of the module content to the RCVS Day One Competences for veterinary nurses, and confirm whether or not the foundation year modules are mapped to the DOC or DOS.

2. The University must complete the mapping to the RCVS Day One Skills and evidence this to the RCVS.

3. The University must revise the practical examination Student and Examiner Guidance documents taking in the areas highlighted within this report to ensure that the information is accurate, and it is clear to the reader (including the RCVS) which examination the information relates to.

4. The University must review the proposed OSCE stations to ensure that they are constructed in a way that the students can meet the RCVS Day One Skills that they are referenced to in the time given. This includes having mechanisms in place to ensure that the scenarios are clearly written, that examiner marking across Centres can be standardised and that the equipment lists are clear.

5. The University must review the OSCE Blueprint to ensure that all parts of the Day One Skills, which can be sampled, are included in an OSCE. Where it is not feasible to assess a skill via an OSCE this should be noted. A plan detailing the timeline for writing and trialling new examination material must be provided.

6. The Centre must ensure that the university security and confidentiality processes are consistently applied.

Standard 4 – Qualification quality management

Suggestions

None

Actions

1. The University must confirm how all quality assurers are gaining sufficient training and CPD for their roles.

2. The University must submit its response to the QAA recommendations as set out in the 2015 report.

Standard 5 – Assessment

Suggestions

1. The University may wish to include in their moderation policy in the veterinary nursing handbook, a stipulation for high marks and a range of marks to be included in each quality assurance sample.

2. The University may wish to stipulate specific requirements for APL onto the veterinary nursing programme, including reference to the RCVS DOC and DOS.

Actions

1. The University must supply the RCVS with evidence that all modules associated with the DOC and DOS have an element of unseen examination.

2. The University must provide the RCVS with the DOS portfolio quality assurance strategy.

Standard 6 – Centre approval and quality assurance

Suggestions

None

Actions

1. The University must provide evidence to the RCVS of how the bullet pointed facilities requirements in the main body of the report are being met in the limited practical space dedicated to them.

2. The University must inform the RCVS of the mechanism in place to communicate any major changes to facilities or resources for the programme to the RCVS.

3. The University must provide evidence of how it conducts a minimum of one site visit to each approved Centre/delivery site, annually, based on a documented risk assessment policy.

4. The University must assure the RCVS that placements provided to HE students will not be delayed or interrupted by the private financial relationship between the Centre and the Training Practices.

Standard 7 – Self evaluation and reporting

Suggestions

None

Actions

1. The University must supply any student surveys undertaken in academic year 17/18, and the latest annual monitoring review at the point that these are completed and submitted by CAW.

2. The University must evidence how the external examiner suggestions have been met.

3. The University must submit the latest annual monitoring review for the Veterinary Nurse BSc at the point that these are completed and submitted by CAW.

Standard 1 – Organisation

A senior member of AO or HEI staff (the official correspondent) responsible for the overall delivery of RCVS-approved licence to practise qualifications, in veterinary nursing, must be designated.

Details of the location(s) at which the qualification is to be administered must be provided.

Licence to practise qualifications must be accredited by a UK University/HEI or by an AO recognised by the UK national regulatory authorities.

Applications must be made by the principal or chief executive of the AO or HEI.

1.1. The site of delivery and the awarding organisation is noted in the application form as:

Middlesex University
The Burroughs
Hendon
NW4 4BT

There are an additional two delivery sites detailed as:

The College of Animal Welfare
Headland House
Chord Business Park
London Road
Godmanchester
Cambridgeshire
PE29 2BQ

And

The College of Animal Welfare
Topcliffe Close
Capitol Park
Tingley
Leeds
West Yorkshire
WF3 1DR

1.2. It was discovered at the accreditation visit that Middlesex University had validated a BSc in Veterinary Nursing with Foundation year in 2017, which the RCVS were unaware of. This is a

four year BSc programme consisting of a foundation year followed by the same modules and programme structure as the three year BSc in Veterinary Nursing. This foundation year is designed to upskill students who may not have been successful in achieving the entry requirements for the programme.

Suggestions

None

Actions

1. The University must forward on the module specifications and the programme handbook for the BSc in Veterinary Nursing with the foundation year element.

2. The University must confirm that Boltons Park Farm is no longer used for the delivery of the Veterinary Nursing BSc.

Standard 2 – Sustainability

Finances must be demonstrably adequate to sustain the educational programmes.

AOs and HEIs must be able to demonstrate that the delivery of the proposed qualification is cost effective.

AOs and HEIs must demonstrate that there is a sufficient need for all new qualification(s).

2.1. A budget for the programme reflecting the actual income for 17/18 and projected income for years 18/19, 19/20, 20/21 and 21/22 appears to show that the programme breaks even after all expenditure is satisfied. It is unclear, therefore, where reserves are being accrued for the development of the course. It may be factored into the 'investment support costs' as noted in the Notes and Assumptions of the same document.

2.2 A budget for the programme reflecting the actual income for 12/18 and projected income for years 18/19, 19/20, 20/21 and 21/22 is matched against respected annual expenditures. This not only allows for the day-to-day operation of the programme but also the ongoing investments in facilities, infrastructure, the amortisation of development costs, provisions for depreciation and for replacement of assets specifically utilised by the programme as detailed in the Notes and Assumptions. These provisions are accrued from the surpluses generated at programme level and are accounted for in the general reserves of both partner institutions.

2.3 The University presentation indicated an on-line survey shared with Training practices, Clinical Coaches and past and present students. The university must forward the evidence to corroborate the presentation delivered at the validation event.

Suggestions

None

Actions

1. The university must forward the market research evidence to corroborate the presentation delivered at the validation event

Standard 3 – Qualification design and delivery

Licence to practise qualifications must address the RCVS Day One Competences for Veterinary Nurses and RCVS Day One Skills for Veterinary Nurses and, in the case of HE programmes, relevant benchmark statements.

Licence to practise qualifications must contain the minimum Guided Learning Hours (GLH) as defined by the body entrusted for setting GLH for your sector. Prior to registration students must complete 2,990 hours in duration, actively engaged in training (GLH and clinical placement), excluding annual leave and absence.

Programmes of study delivered by Centres must incorporate a minimum of 1,800 hours of clinical work experience, to be gained in a veterinary practice registered with the RCVS as a Training Practice (TP) or an Auxiliary Training Practice (aTP). This must be in addition to the GLH as set by the relevant bodies. It is the AO/HEIs responsibility to ensure these requirements are being met.

Work-based learning requirements must articulate with the RCVS Day One Skills for Veterinary Nurses and be recorded and assessed in a format that is readily auditable and accessible to students, clinical supervisors and quality assurance personnel.

Methods of summative assessment must be detailed within the modules. Assessments need to be valid and reliable and comprise a variety of approaches. Direct assessment of RCVS Day One Skills for Veterinary Nurses must form a significant component of the overall process of assessment.

3.1 The modules for the three-year BSc do not appear to be mapped to the RCVS Day One Competences. No separate matrix document could be found.

3.2 Not all the Day One Skills could be found in the mapping table on page 34 of the draft Programme handbook, e.g. Section 2, 2.3 and 2.7. In addition, there is reference to 'NPL Section' in the Module specifications. In order to future proof against any changes made to the NPL, it is suggested that the University refers only to the RCVS Day One Skills.

3.3 The University submitted the following:

The RCVS VN Registration Rules require all student veterinary nurses to complete a minimum of 1800 hours in an approved training practice (www.rcvs.org.uk). This programme however requires you to complete a minimum of 2000 practice hours.

Programme specification form Appendix 3k

http://www.mdx.ac.uk/about-us/policies/academic-quality/handbook/ 2017/18 10

Year 1	VET 1615	VET 1617	VET 1604	VET 1616
	30 credits	30 credits	30 credits	30 credits
	Introduction to Nursing Care	Applied Functional Anatomy	Introduction to Professional Issues	Working in a Veterinary Environment 20 weeks practice (750 hours)
Year 2	VET 2711	VET 2710	VET 2204	VET 2712
	30 credits	30 credits	30 credits	30 credits
	Pathology for Veterinary Nurses	Clinical Nursing	Evidence Based Veterinary Nursing	Theatre Practice 24 weeks practice (875 hours)
Year 3	VET 3713	VET 3710	VET 3717 – 3724	VET 3703
	30 credits	30 credits	30 credits	30 credits
	Principles of Imaging & Anaesthesia 10 - 14 weeks practice (375 hours)	Pharmacology for Veterinary Nurses	Elective (Students select one elective module at L 6)	Dissertation Module and Professional Practise

Notes: Theory Module = 10 - 13 weeks
Practice Year 1 750 hours 20 weeks
       Year 2 875 hours 24 weeks
       Year 3 375 hours 10-14 weeks
(Facility for additional placement during the last block for those students that have not completed the Day One skills or who have practice hours to make up)
Total: 2000 hours 54-58 weeks

3.4 The University submitted a proposal for the practical assessment. Following discussion with RCVS a second proposal detailing an Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE) was submitted. The OSCE examination, consisting of twelve, six-minute stations, is embedded within the Dissertation and Professional Practice Module VET 3703. The original proposal of a Scenario Based Practical Assessment (SBPE) will still feature in modules VET1615, VET2710 and VET3710 in order to demonstrate validity, reliability, and fairness of this type of assessment. Should the university be in any doubt as to the validity of the SBPE then it should not use this assessment in a high stakes examination.

3.5 There was insufficient time at the re-accreditation event to discuss the OSCE examination documentation. Areas which need consideration are provided within this section of the report.

Student and Examiner Guidance documents for the OSCE were provided   These appear to contain information on both the OSCE and the SBPE. In some cases, it is unclear which examination method

the guidance relates to. The documents must be reviewed to ensure that the information is accurate, and it is clear to the reader which examination the information relates to.

The following must be considered when finalising the Student Guidance:

- Both section 9.0 and section 13.0 are titled 'Exam procedure'. If they both relate to exam procedures it is suggested that these sections are combined.
- On page10, there is information to the student on the 12 station OSCE. This text on this page appears to have been copied from the briefing provided to students at another Awarding Organisations. Where large pieces of text are copied in this way it would be customary to acknowledge the source.
- On page 10 and 16, there is an indication that the OSCE stations will be 6-20 minutes in length. This differs from information provided elsewhere in the document that the stations are 6 minutes long.
- On Page 11, section 4.2 it states, 'As a registered veterinary nurse you are bound by the current code of professional conduct'. The reader is a student veterinary nurse so is not registered and they may not see the relevance of this section.
- Page 12 and 13, provides details about how the practical module examinations are marked. This appears to relate to the SBPE only, but the reader may think that it covers both types of practical examination.
- Page 15 contains information on the wearing of jewellery and allows students to wear one single plain 'ball' ear stud. It is unclear what the difference would be to patient care if a number of ball stud earrings were used. A number of AOs and HEIs do not permit the wearing of jewellery including stud earrings because they may become loose during clinical and surgical procedures.

The following should be considered when finalising the Examiner guidance:

- It was not immediately clear that these were examiner guidance notes, because the initial information appears to be guidance for students.
- On page 5, there is an indication that the 12 station OSCE must 'also' be passed in order to register with the RCVS. The OSCE is embedded into module VET 3703 and therefore must, like all other modules, be achieved to pass the degree. It is the completion of the degree that leads to registration with the RCVS and not the OSCE.
- On page 5, the pass mark of 8/12 stations is mentioned but this does not appear in the student handbook. It was unclear if this was intentional.
- On page 8, there is an indication that the OSCE stations will be 6-20 minutes in length. This differs from information provided in the student guidance.
- On page 9, there is a section on exam regulations. These read as if it is intended for students, but an examiner might think that they also have to adhere to it.
- Page 10 includes a section on preparation for practical examinations. It is unclear what its purpose is in the examiner guidance.
- On page 13, there is an indication that during the re-sit the tasks will be different from those selected for the first attempt or mock. This limits the number of OSCE stations which can be used, and students will not study for the stations that they have been included in previous examinations or the mock. (Middlesex University please note that if this information is to remain in the document and you feel it is confidential, i.e. not being provided to students then

this statement will need to be redacted in the report published online. Please advise the RCVS as appropriate)

- On page 15, there is an indication that all jewellery must be removed but other documents state that a ball stud can be worn.
- Page 15 does not relate to the OSCE but there is no indication of this.
- Page 18 - In order for an MRCVS to examine, they must be UK-practising category of membership not just an MRCVS.
- Page 19 covers the assessment design. This appears to relate to the SBPE and not the OSCE. There does not seem to be a similar section for the OSCE.
- On page 21, there is a statement to indicate that one examiner will assess each station. Please clarify that a different examiner will examine each OSCE station i.e. there will be a minimum of 12 examiners with each one being responsible for marking one station.
- Page 22 - 14.4 additional data analyses could be used to consider the number of students failing each step. There are also other metrics which could be used to review the quality of the examination (see Amee guide 49, How to measure the quality of the OSCE: A review of the metrics).
- Page 23 - this section is about the exam procedures for examiners but appears to relate to the SBPE only. There needs to be a similar section for the OSCE.
- Page 26 sections 16.2 and 16.4 are both titled 'standard setting'. It was unclear if this was intentional. Under section 16.4 there is an indication that if there is concern about the number of students failing, then borderline regression could be used to standard set. It is unclear from this whether checks would be made to ensure that the cut score was correct by using borderline.regression if a large number of students failed, or if this would be used where not enough students failed. Given the high number of students sitting this examination it is advisable to use borderline regression to set the cut score rather than using it ad-hoc in the manner described. Furthermore, examples of the OSCE mark sheets do not contain a space for a global rating to be recorded. It is therefore unclear how the Borderline regression will be undertaken.

3.6 During the interview with students they provided feedback on the current practical examinations. They commented that at least one of the stations was impossible to complete in the time allowed. They also indicated that the marking criteria mean that some students fail the examination because they do not carry out a relatively minor part of task. This information has not been investigated further by the RCVS. It is suggested that the University consider this feedback and ensure that it is possible for students to complete practical examinations in the time given and that the marking criteria distinguish between competent students and those not yet competent.

3.7 The OSCE blueprint maps the OSCE tasks to the RCVS Day One Skills for Veterinary Nurses. There are a number of Day One Skills, which are not sampled or are only partially sampled within OSCE stations provided. Where this is because the skill cannot feasibly be examined using an OSCE this should be noted. Where it is feasible to test using an OSCE then plans should be in place outlining how and when these will be produced. This will reduce the threat of Construct Underrepresentation. Examples include NUR06. This OSCE station is referenced to RCVS Day One Skill 4.6 'Assess, monitor, manage and report the status of wounds'. The scenario and marking criteria do not require the student to do this. THE03 and THE04 are referenced to RCVS Day One Skill 9.2 'Prepare, package and monitor the sterilisation of instruments and materials'. The only part of this that is being tested is packaging of the instrument. Further OSCE stations need to be written (if feasible) to cover the other areas 'preparing' and 'monitoring the sterilisation'.

3.8 The OSCE stations are in the format of scenarios and detailed checklists, similar to those used by awarding organisations delivering the level 3 Diploma. The university has expressed concern that this type of OSCE encourages rote learning and prevents a holistic approach. It is suggested that the University may wish to investigate using OSCE stations with marking rubrics as opposed to checklists to increase their confidence in this type of assessment.

3.9 The university submitted a number of examples of OSCE stations they have developed. The OSCE stations are referenced to the RCVS Day One Skills for veterinary nurses. Each OSCE station has a scenario providing students with information about the processes and skills they are required to demonstrate. A marking checklist has also been provided. Some steps are shaded. It is unclear from the examiner and student guidance documents what these are or how they are applied.

3.10 Examiners mark the students as 'achieved, omitted or not achieved'. There is no mention of this in the examiner guidance document. It also appears that the examiner needs to work out if the student has passed or failed the OSCE station. A global score/rating is not provided. It is therefore unclear how a borderline regression can be undertaken (as detailed in the examiner guidance).

3.11 Equipment lists have been provided but these are lacking in information. For instance, for the radiography station 'ties' are required but it is unclear how many the examiner should provide, similarly it is unclear of the size of 'Co-flex' required.

3.12 A number of the stations require the use of a 'soft toy'. It is unclear if these have been adapted to mimic real life patients (in so far as is reasonably practicable).

3.13 There are no specific examiner instructions to ensure examiners are standardised and would mark the same performance in the same way across all three centres and between examination sessions. For instance, where stations contain a step '.....carried out using a safe effective and aseptic technique' or similar, how will all examiners make the same judgement? There are also two steps on the checklist relating to communication skills and professional skills even though these may not be evident when the students complete the skill because no part of the task requires communication. It is suggested that specific OSCE stations testing communication skills would be more appropriate.

3.14 All OSCE stations must be reviewed to ensure that they are appropriate. An example of an OSCE station where amendments must be considered is detailed below. All OSCE stations must be reviewed and trialled to ensure that they are suitable for use in high stakes assessment.

3.15 ANA 01 Anaesthesia (Ayres T-piece) - This OSCE station requires students to select, assemble and attach the most appropriate anaesthetic breathing system for the patient. The equipment list only requests that one anaesthetic breathing system is made available. It will therefore be difficult to test the selection of the breathing system. What is meant by the term "scavenging"? Is a pen required or are students expected to supply their own? If students need to supply their own this needs to be added to the student guidance document. This OSCE station is referenced to RCVS Day One Skill '10.2 Prepare patients for anaesthesia' but RCVS Day One Skill 10.2 is 'Prepare for Anaesthesia'.

3.16 Throughout the documentation appropriate security and confidentiality processes are outlined. This includes the requirement for all examination documents to be password protected. The Centre must ensure that the university security and confidentiality processes are consistently applied.

3.17 The design, delivery and quality assurance of the examinations were detailed in the University Regulations Procedures 2018/2019 pages 25-27, 98-100, 101-102 and 103-105. This covered the appointment and role of the external examiner, examination room rules and invigilation of the examinations. The university is strongly advised to also consider developing this further by formalising an assessment validation strategy to ensure that the purpose of the assessment is clear, and the outcomes stated are actually being achieved.

Suggestions

1. MDX to consider improving the current examination quality assurance mechanisms by utilising a validation strategy / framework to provide evidence that the assessment methods utilised test what is expected and that threats to validity are reduced.

2. The University may wish to consider removal of reference to the NPL in the module specifications, and reference these to the Day One Skills instead.

3. The University may wish to investigate using OSCE stations with marking rubrics as opposed to checklists.

Actions

1. The University must supply a document that clearly demonstrates mapping of the module content to the RCVS Day One Competences for veterinary nurses, and confirm whether or not the foundation year modules are mapped to the DOC or DOS.

2. The University must complete the mapping to the RCVS Day One Skills and evidence this to the RCVS.

3. The University must revise the practical examination Student and Examiner Guidance documents taking in the areas highlighted within this report to ensure that the information is accurate, and it is clear to the reader (including the RCVS) which examination the information relates to.

4. The University must review the proposed OSCE stations to ensure that they are constructed in a way that the students can meet the RCVS Day One Skills that they are referenced to in the time given. This includes having mechanisms in place to ensure that the scenarios are clearly written, that examiner marking across Centres can be standardised and that the equipment lists are clear.

5. The University must review the OSCE Blueprint to ensure that all parts of the Day One Skills which can be sampled are included in an OSCE. Where it is not feasible to assess a skill via an OSCE this should be noted. A plan detailing the timeline for writing and trialling new examination materials must be provided.

6. The Centre must ensure that the university security and confidentiality processes are consistently applied.

Standard 4 – Qualification quality management

AOs and HEIs must be compliant with all criteria stipulated by their accrediting national regulatory authority.

Student selection criteria must be in place including the minimal acceptable qualifications to be achieved prior to commencing the qualification. The number of students registered for the qualification must be consistent with the resources available including the availability of sufficient Training Practices to enable the required clinical experience to be undertaken

AOs and HEIs must allow the RCVS access to people, premises and records relevant to the management and delivery of the accredited qualification, and must cooperate with RCVS quality assurance activities in relation to the delivery and assessment of such qualification(s).

AOs and HEIs must employ sufficient suitably qualified staff to administer and quality assure the qualification(s).

Quality assurance personnel must demonstrate, maintain and provide evidence to RCVS of relevant occupational and academic competence in relation to the evaluation of assessment materials and decisions.

4.1 The following entry requirements were stipulated in the documentation for the three year BSc:

Middlesex University Admissions Department will be responsible for ensuring that prospective students meet the programme's minimum entry requirements.

The programme requires a minimum of five GCSEs at grade 4 (C) or above in English Language, Mathematics, one Science plus two other subjects. Scottish applicants must have a minimum of five National 5 at grade C in English Language, Mathematics, one Science plus two other subjects. Equivalent Level 2 qualifications will be considered on a case by case basis.

In addition to the above or equivalent qualifications the following are also required:

A minimum of 3 A levels at grade C or above; one of which is expected to be Biology although another science subject such as Chemistry would be favourably considered; or

A minimum of two Scottish Advanced Highers at grade C one of which is expected to be Biology although another science subject such as Chemistry would be favourably considered and two Highers at grade C; or

A minimum of four grade C's at Irish Higher, to include a Science and a minimum of grade C at ordinary level in English Language, Mathematics and a science; or

Level 3 Extended Diploma in an Animal related subject at overall Distinction with Distinctions in science and veterinary nursing related subjects; or

Level 3 Extended Diploma in a science related subject at overall Distinction: or International Baccalaureate - minimum of 28 points including a science subject at a minimum of grade 5

Access to HE Diploma (Science or Animal Based subject) pass with a minimum of 45 credits at level 3, of which 15 must be at distinction and 30 credits at merit or higher.

Equivalent qualifications to any of the above will be considered.

International students are most welcome. Applicants holding equivalent foreign qualifications are required to have all foreign qualifications officially translated into English with a notarised stamp and to have proof of competence in the English Language by holding either the ESOL qualification or IELTS at a minimum score of 6.5 (minimum 6.0 in any component) plus equivalent qualifications in the sciences.

Students applying to join the programme with the foundation year must meet the GCSE's requirement stated above (or equivalent) and qualifications to a minimum value of 48 UCAS points, of which 16 points must be in a science, are also required.

International students applying to join the programme with the foundation year are most welcome. Foundation year applicants holding foreign qualifications are required to have all foreign qualifications officially translated into English with a notarised stamp and to have proof of competence in the English Language by holding IELTS at a minimum score of 6.0 (with a minimum of 5.5 in all four components) or a recognised equivalence such as the ESOL qualification. The University's English language requirements shall apply. Equivalent qualifications to meet the overall entry requirements are also required.

Prospective applicants who are over 21 years of age and meet the minimum of 5 GCSEs at grade C or above in Mathematics, English Language, a science plus two others but do not hold further qualifications but who can show high levels of ability and experience within the veterinary care sector and are able to provide an appropriate reference supported by a Veterinary Practice Principal, are also invited to apply.

And for the BSc with Foundation year:

Students accepted to study the BSc (Hons) Veterinary Nursing with Foundation Year should have the following qualifications:

- *A minimum of 2 A-levels - DD/CE, or;*

- *Edexcel BTEC Level 3 Extended Diploma – minimum of 2 subjects – MP, or;*

- *Access to HE Diploma – pass including 45 credits at Level 3, plus;*

- *A minimum of 5 GCSEs grade A-C (including mathematics, English language and a science)*

In addition, all students must have a minimum of four weeks work experience gained within a clinical veterinary practice environment of which a minimum of two weeks experience should be gained prior to interview. A satisfactory reference on headed paper from the Practice Principal/Head Veterinary Nurse will be required. Additional work experience with a range of animals in a variety of contexts is encouraged.

4.2 Staff profiles were reviewed and showed sufficient training and CPD. Two of the quality assurers' profiles did not appear to hold any reference to quality assurance training.

4.3 The MDX QAA report from 2015 was submitted, and included a number of recommendations made by the regulator. A response to these recommendations could not be found.

Suggestions

None

Actions

1. The University must confirm how all quality assurers are gaining sufficient training and CPD for their roles.

2. The University must submit its response to the QAA recommendations as set out in the 2015 report.

Standard 5 – Assessment

> Qualification assessment strategies must be appropriate, valid and fair. A pass must be achieved in each assessment assessing the RCVS Day One Competences for Veterinary Nurses and RCVS Day One Skills for Veterinary Nurses.
>
> Reasonable adjustment, mitigating circumstances, fitness to practise policies and an appeals procedure must be in place, taking into account the licence to practise requirement for all students to achieve all competences contained in the RCVS Day One Competences for Veterinary Nurses and RCVS Day One Skills for Veterinary Nurses.
>
> Mechanisms must be in place to allow Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL) to be taken into consideration.
>
> Appropriate security arrangements must be in place to safeguard the integrity of assessment processes.
>
> The design and quality assurance of assessments must be carried out by personnel who are specifically qualified to execute these functions.
>
> There must be procedures in place to maximise the fairness, validity and reliability of assessment outcomes, including but not limited to academic peer review of assessment content, proofing of scripts, supervision and invigilation, maintenance of records and moderation processes.
>
> There must be appropriate moderation processes in place to ensure parity within and between individual units of study, across the programme, with other institutions; and to ensure that each student is fairly treated.
>
> All modules or units of a qualification that address the RCVS Day One Competences for Veterinary Nurses and RCVS Day One Skills for Veterinary Nurses must include unseen independent examination as an element of the assessment strategy.
>
> Independently assessed Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE), or a similarly robust, objective and evidence-based form of examination, must be employed to test the safe and effective acquisition of clinical skills.
>
> Practical assessment must be carried out by individuals who are specifically qualified to evaluate practical skills and performance, and who have sufficient occupational experience and qualifications to support safe and effective judgements of clinical competence.

5.1 Middlesex regulations state:

M1.7 Assessed work at all levels, be it course- work, examination or other form of assessment which is deemed to be a fail by the initial marker, shall be marked by a second person. In the event of the two markers not agreeing the mark/grade, a third marker (moderator) shall be involved.

M2 Coursework – minimal requirements

M2.1 Normally, coursework shall be marked by one member of staff. At FHEQ level 5 and above coursework shall be subject to moderation. Arrangements for moderation by a second member of staff shall include sampling across the range of student work, drawn, normally, from all campuses on which the module is delivered. A minimum of 10 per cent of each coursework assignment shall be moderated. Precise arrangements for moderation shall be published in the Programme Handbook. The percentage of work moderated shall reflect the number of students completing a particular assignment but shall always meet the 10 per cent minimum.

M3 Examinations – minimal requirements

M3.1 Each examination paper for a given module shall be subject to moderation by a second member of staff. Arrangements for moderation shall include sampling across the range of student work, drawn, normally, from all campuses on which the module is delivered. A minimum of 10 percent of examination scripts for the module shall be moderated. The percentage of work moderated shall reflect the number of students completing a particular examination but shall always meet the 10 percent minimum.

M3.2 Examination papers shall be set to assess specific and identified module learning outcomes.

M3.3 For modules in which the assessment grade is derived from a combination of coursework and examination, specific moderation arrangements to consider all borderline and fail candidates shall be determined by the Programme team and included in the Programme handbook.

5.2 The programme handbook is in line with these regulations, and are detailed as:

In line with the university regulations section M Code of Assessment Practice minimum requirements all Programmes shall, at the very least, operate a system of moderation for assessed work. A minimum of 10% of all coursework and written exams are moderated. All failed assessments are second marked. Viva examinations are marked by two examiners. All practical examiners participate in a moderation process.

Arrangements for the moderation and provision of feedback for other forms of assessment (e.g. nursing progress log; placements; presentations) shall be made in accordance with the principles as above. They shall be determined by Programmes and recorded in the Programme Handbook. They may vary according to the level of a module, but shall be consistently applied across all modules at a given level offered by the Programme.

5.3 There is no mention of range of marks or high marks to be moderated as standard within this document, which could improve standardisation of marking.

5.4 An assessment grid was embedded in the application form, with only some of the modules stipulated within it. One of the modules stipulated (2712) was mapped to the DOS and did not appear to include an element of unseen examination.

5.5 Appeals procedure fit for purpose.

5.6 MDX regulations state:

B4.3 Recognition of prior accredited and experiential learning

a) Responsibility rests with the applicant for making a claim to have acquired knowledge and skill and for supporting the claim with appropriate evidence. Assistance will normally be given in preparing an application for the accreditation of prior learning.

b) The learning derived from experience must be able to be identified in order to be assessed.

c) Prior learning is identified through systematic reflection on experience, the writing of clear statements about what was actually learned and the collection and collation of evidence to support those statements.

d) Where it is proposed to allow entry with specific credit, the methods of assessment must be such that the judgement made can be overseen by Assessment Boards. Where the prior credit is sufficient to gain entry to Level 6 appropriate External Examiner oversight must be sought either through the awarding organisations Assessment Boards or through the University approval process.

It makes no recommendations regarding the maximum allowance provided for APL, nor is there reference to the DOC or DOS in the generic University regulations.

5.7 The University have an extenuating circumstances policy in place.

5.8 The University DOS quality assurance policy could not be located.

5.9 A fitness to practise policy is in place.

Suggestions

1. The University may wish to include in their moderation policy in the veterinary nursing handbook, a stipulation for high marks and a range of marks to be included in each quality assurance sample.

2. The University may wish to stipulate specific requirements for APL onto the veterinary nursing programme, including reference to the RCVS DOC and DOS.

Actions

1. The University must supply the RCVS with evidence that all modules associated with the DOC and DOS have an element of unseen examination.

2. The University must provide the RCVS with the DOS portfolio quality assurance strategy.

Standard 6 – Centre approval and quality assurance

Centres/delivery sites approved for the delivery of the accredited qualification must address the requirements for personnel, resources and facilities stipulated within the RCVS Standards and procedures for the approval and monitoring of Centres.

AOs and HEIs must conduct a site visit, including an audit of facilities and resources, before approving any Centre/delivery site to deliver a licence to practise qualification.

AOs and HEIs must conduct a minimum of one site visit to each approved Centre/delivery site and/or its affiliated Training Practices, annually, based on a documented risk assessment policy.

Centres delivering a licence to practise qualification must be notified to the RCVS.

AOs and HEIs must set in place binding agreements with Centres that articulate both their national and professional regulatory obligations.

6.1 Following student feedback the practical skills facilities were moved from Boltons Park Farm. Details of this change had not previously been provided to the RCVS. The University must ensure that the resources and facilities meet RCVS Centre Standard 8.c *'A dedicated practical teaching facility is required. This must be well-specified and capable of providing a realistic representation of a veterinary practice for the purpose of clinical skills teaching'.* The dedicated practical teaching facility must provide a reasonable representation of the key clinical facilities available in a working veterinary practice including:

- consultation room
- preparation/anaesthetic area
- operating theatre
- in-patient accommodation
- radiography facility
- pharmacy area
- storage areas/systems
- hand-washing facilities

This facility must provide a realistic and safe environment for the teaching and practice of a wide range of skills and clinical techniques. It must be of a sufficient size to accommodate the planned number of students and provide adequate space for the appropriate storage of equipment. It may be preferable to adopt an open-plan layout, demonstrating the different areas and typical layout of a veterinary practice, rather than a series of small rooms. This makes it easier to facilitate the demonstration, and supervise student practice, of clinical skills.

6.2 A MDX visit report dated 2015 was submitted, which held no detail of TP management and quality assurance. Annual site visits to all centres must be maintained annually.

6.3 The MOU between the University and the Training Practices was reviewed and it contained the following statements:

6.4 In accordance with RCVS and Awarding Organisation requirements the College is required to receive notification of the acceptance of the practice to support any students on placement from alternative course providers.

While the communication of student numbers in the practice may be stipulated in the MOU between Centre and TP, the interpretation of the above sentence could be that RCVS regulations state that the responsibility of communicating this lies with the practice, which is not the case.

6.5 The practice recognises that any delay in providing documentation or payment of fees may result in the student's enrolment with the RCVS and the Awarding Body being delayed which will in turn delay the release of the NPL.

It is unclear why HE placement providers are subject to fees which could delay an HE student's progression.

6.6 A formal agreement between MDX and CAW is in place.

6.7 A TP risk banding was provided with the application, and at the accreditation the TP visit strategy was clearly informed by this.

Suggestions

None

Actions

1. The University must provide evidence to the RCVS of how the preceding bullet pointed facilities requirements are being met in the limited practical space dedicated to them.

2. The University must inform the RCVS of the mechanisms in place to communicate any major changes to facilities or resources for the programme to the RCVS.

3. The University must provide evidence of how it conducts a minimum of one site visit to each approved Centre/delivery site, annually, based on a documented risk assessment policy.

4. The University must assure the RCVS that placements provided to HE students will not be delayed or interrupted by the private financial relationship between the Centre and the Training Practices.

Standard 7 – Self evaluation and reporting

AOs and HEIs must evaluate the delivery of a licence to practise qualification across all approved Centres and provide a report to the RCVS annually or when otherwise required to do so.

7.1 The RCVS has received annual SARs from the University. The external examiner report submitted made two recommendations. It is not known whether these have been addressed.

7.2 Student satisfaction surveys were not included in the programme assessment and so a review could not be made.

7.3 The annual monitoring review required by MDX was referred to in the application but not submitted for 17/18. This is because the natural cycle of this data collection falls to the next academic year, and at the time of the accreditation this had not been completed.

Suggestions

None

Actions

1. The University must supply any student surveys undertaken in academic year 17/18, and the latest annual monitoring review at the point that these are completed and submitted by CAW.

2. The University must evidence how the external examiner suggestions have been met.

3. The University must submit the latest annual monitoring review for the Veterinary Nurse BSc at the point that these are completed and submitted by CAW.

31|1|19

University response

Action	AO/HEI response	Action by whom	Date for resolution