Visitation to the Royal Veterinary College

5-9 November 2018

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

CONTENTS

List of Visitors

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Professor Tim Parkinson – AVBC

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Dr Linda Prescott-Clements - RCVS

Mr Jordan Nicholls - RCVS

Introduction

1.   Visitors representing the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS), the American Veterinary Medical Association Council on Education (AVMA COE), the European Association of Establishments for Veterinary Education (EAEVE), the Australasian Veterinary Boards Council (AVBC) and the South African Veterinary Council (SAVC) were present at the Royal Veterinary College from 5 – 9 November 2018 inclusive, having conducted off-site inspections on 3 November and a briefing session for Visitors on Sunday 4 November. A self-assessment document was prepared by the College and provided to the Visitors two months before the visit. The Visitors were also given access to a well-organised repository of supporting documents including examination papers, external examiners' reports, committee records, course material, staff CPD records, as well as access to the College's intranet.

2.   The Visitors toured the facilities, including the various off-site premises used for core teaching, and stayed together as a group for the majority of the meetings with staff and students.

3.   The Visitors met with the Principal of the RVC, Professor Stuart Reid on the first and final days of the visit, and gave a summary of their main findings and advance notice of the recommendations that would be passed to RCVS.

4.   The Visitors are grateful to Professor Reid, and all the staff in the College for their help and hospitality during the visit. The Visitors are aware of the considerable amount of work and time that is taken up by these visitations, and thank the staff from the various departments who made themselves available. The Visitors would also like to thank the employers and alumni who attended the meetings and the undergraduate and postgraduate students who met with the Visitors each day to talk about the experience of studying at the RVC. The Visitors commend the College on the quality, commitment and motivation of its veterinary students, including postgraduates, interns and residents. Their contribution to the visit was most important.

Summary of the Visitors' findings

Standard 1 – Organisation

Suggestions

1. The College should continue its work in succession planning and increasing diversity within the College, especially in the senior executive level.

Standard 2 – Finances

There were no recommendations or suggestions.

Standard 3 – Physical Facilities

Commendations

2. The College is commended for the development of contemporary study and recreation spaces and for involving students in their design.

Suggestions

3. The RVC is in compliance with UK regulations for monitoring radiation exposure in its hospitals and clinics. Due to the variability reported by students at EMS sites the RVC should implement approaches to ensure adequate radiation safety monitoring at EMS sites.

Recommendations

4. All vehicles transporting students must be equipped with netting or screening to provide safe physical separation from transported equipment.

Standard 4 – Animal Resources

There were no recommendations or suggestions.

Standard 5 – Information Resources

Commendations

5. The College is to be commended on their student-focused approach to accessible teaching content via digital support and tools as well for creating a visible, well-equipped and well-used Learning Resource Centers. Investment in additional physical spaces around the both campuses, where students can find support for their learning and academic development is commendable.

Suggestions

6. The College should continue to invest in broadening cooperation in innovation and developing e-learning tools and ideas supporting student learning, with other Vet Schools in the UK and beyond.

Standard 6 – Students

7. The RVC is commended for its comprehensive suite of student support services.

Standard 7 – Admission & Progression

There were no recommendations or suggestions.

Standard 8 – Academic & Support Staff

There were no recommendations or suggestions.

Standard 9 – Curriculum

Suggestions

8. The College should re-examine the content of the didactic curriculum in food animals, with particular reference to the principles of animal production and the overall live animal practical content throughout the program. It may be helpful to include the core rotation practitioners in these conversations.

9. The College should increase the numbers and diversity of necropsy exposures for students.

10. The College should explore opportunities for student exposure to a high throughput abattoir and a poultry processing plant.

Recommendations

11. Students must have a more comprehensive abattoir experience, including hands-on post-mortem inspection.

Standard 10 – Research

There were no recommendations or suggestions.

Standard 10b – Assessment

Recommendations

12. The College must conduct some summative assessments of student animal handling skills to ensure student safety before they begin AHEMS placements.

Standard 11 – Outcomes Assessment

Recommendations

13. The College must develop a robust method to consistently record, track and audit student attainment of clinical competences by direct observation.

Standard 1 – Organisation

> **Standard 1, Organisation**
> **(RCVS/AVBC Standard 1, EAEVE Standard 1 – Objectives and Organisation)**
>
> The college must develop and follow its mission statement.
>
> The school must have a strategic plan and an operating plan.
>
> An accredited college of veterinary medicine must be a part of an institution of higher learning accredited by an organization recognized for that purpose by its country's government. A college may be accredited only when it is a major academic administrative division of the parent institution and is afforded the same recognition, status, and autonomy as other professional colleges in that institution.
>
> The chief executive officer/dean must be a veterinarian. This individual must have overall budgetary and supervisory authority necessary to assure compliance with accreditation standards. The officer(s) responsible for the professional, ethical, and academic affairs of the veterinary medical teaching hospital(s) or equivalent must also be veterinarians.
>
> There must be sufficient administrative staff to adequately manage the affairs of the college as appropriate to the enrolment and operation.
>
> The school must provide evidence that it manages concerns about, or risks to, the quality of any aspect of the veterinary programme.
>
> The college must create an academic environment that does not discriminate and seeks to enhance diversity, consistent with applicable law. Diversity may include, but is not limited to race, religion, ethnicity, age, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, cultural and socioeconomic background, national origin, and disability.
>
> The governance of the school and its management structures and functions must be defined and understood by all stakeholders. This definition must encompass the school's internal relationships, relationships with the university and with the school's external providers.
>
> Governance and management of risk assessment, workplace health and safety, statutory obligations and human resources, animal care and management policies must aspire to be at best practice standards.
>
> The composition, terms of reference, powers, reporting relationships, representation of relevant groups, and decisions must be documented for all committees and delegated authorities.
>
> The school's organisational structure must ensure that staff, students and key stakeholder groups have the opportunity to contribute to the school's direction and decision making processes.
>
> The school must be able to assure the AVBC of the continuity of core partnerships for curriculum delivery.

Background

1. The Royal Veterinary College is an autonomous member institution within the federal University of London (UoL). The College's Mission is to provide inspirational leadership and excellence in veterinary science through innovative scholarship and pioneering clinical activity. In particular, the educational mission of the Bachelor of Veterinary Medicine (BVetMed) programme is:

- To develop the knowledge, skills and attributes to promote and enhance animal health and welfare, and public health through scholarship, scientific and professional endeavour, and veterinary practice
- To equip students with the knowledge, skills and attributes to meet the current and future challenges of all aspects of the veterinary profession
- To provide a learning environment that appreciates diversity, promotes excellence in learning and teaching, and embeds a desire for lifelong learning
- To satisfy the requirements of the RCVS, the CoE of the American Veterinary Medical Association and the Veterinary Directives of the European Union.

2. The College's Strategic Plan for 2014-2019 is currently being reviewed and extended by two years to 2021, mindful of the changing political environment as the UK, not least plans to leave the EU. The strategy is supported by an annual financial planning process overseen by the College Executive Committee (CEC), and a five-year, Professional Services Operational plan.

3. The RVC is one of 18 institutions which comprise the federal UoL. The UoL and its member institutions are registered with the Office for Students (OfS) as higher education providers, in accordance with the UK legislative framework for Higher Education (the Higher Education and Research Act 2017). The UoL is also subject to a recognition order of the Veterinary Surgeons Act (1966) which allows holders of the Bachelor of Veterinary Medicine (BVetMed) degree to be registered with the RCVS and able to practise.

4. The Principal of the College (at the time of the visitation, this was Professor Stuart Reid CBE BVMS PhD DVM DipECVPH FRSE MRCVS) is a member of the Collegiate Council of the UoL alongside the heads of other member institutions. The Collegiate Council advises the Board of Trustees on the strategic direction of the UoL, and is responsible for ensuring the proper discharge of its academic affairs. The College pays the federal University a contribution towards costs and benefits shared by all its member institutions, for example the cost of running the central University library to which all students and staff have access.

5. The UoL's Ordinances authorise its member institutions, including the College, to award degrees of the UoL to successful students, to introduce new study programmes, to amend existing programmes, and to amend their academic regulations, without having to seek the UoL's approval.

6. In 2015 the College underwent a review, as part of a regular schedule of quality assurance process, by the UK Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA). The QAA's May 2015 Review Report concluded that of the four areas for review, three met UK expectations and the fourth, for enhancement of students learning opportunities, was commended. Quality assurance is now considered, alongside requirements for financial sustainability and widening participation, a baseline for participation in a UK-wide assessment of teaching excellence – the TEF. The 2017 TEF assessment concluded that the College delivered outstanding teaching, learning and outcomes for its students, resulting in a Gold Award.

Council governance and management

7. Council is the governing body of the College, and is responsible for approving corporate strategy and associated plans and budgets; for approving major business decisions and corporate policy; for

considering and approving the framework of governance and management; and for monitoring institutional and executive performance. Council must seek and receive advice on all academic matters from the Academic Board (AB). In addition to AB, Council is supported by Audit Committee (AC), Ethics and Welfare Committee (EQC), Finance and General Purposes Committee (FGPC), Nominations and Fellowships Committee (NFC), Senior Staff Remuneration Committee (SSRC) and the Safety Committee (SC).

8. Academic Board is responsible to Council for academic governance, and specifically for regulating, in accordance with the College's Charter, Statutes and Ordinances, the admission of students to the BVetMed programme; its curriculum and assessment; the maintenance and enhancement of its academic standards; and the award of the BVetMed degree and other qualifications. It is chaired by the Principal and meets three times a year. The following teaching and quality-related committees report into AB:
    *   Learning, Teaching and Assessment Committee (LTAC)
    *   Student Development Committee (SDC)
    *   Teaching Quality Committee (TQC).

9. The Undergraduate Medicine Course Management Committee (CMC) is specifically concerned with the delivery of the BVetMed and reports directly into LTAC. It consists of the BVetMed Course Director(s), Year/Module and Strand Leaders. There is student representation for each year of each programme and representatives from collaborating institutions, as appropriate. Membership also includes between one and three external members, (normally from employers and/ or relevant professions), the relevant Head/s of academic department or their nominee(s) and a range of other key role holders, such as the Professor of General Practice, representing the First Opinion Teaching Practices.

10. **The Principal's Advisory Group (PAG)**: is the senior committee responsible for developing options for the College's strategy, and for major resourcing and financial issues underlying the strategy's implementation. Initiatives developed at PAG are further evaluated by the College Executive Committee (CEC). The PAG also provides ad hoc advice to the Principal, as necessary, and can act with authority of the Principal when necessary and appropriate.

11. **The College Executive Committee (CEC)**: is the senior operational decision-making body of the College, with responsibility for the oversight and resourcing of the operational implementation of the College's strategy. This is undertaken through regular monitoring of the HE policy environment, approval and review of key College projects, monitoring the College's financial performance and key performance indicators, which are then reviewed by the Council. The CEC includes PAG and the Heads of academic departments, the Academic Registrar, Chair of Equality and Diversity Committee, and the Directors of Infrastructure Services, External Relations, Human Resources, Learning and Wellbeing, Access and International Engagement.

Staff and student representation on committees

12. The SU President has an open invitation to attend the CEC, as do all members of staff - professional and academic. College-wide 'Town Hall' meetings are also held for all staff. All major College committees have staff representation, including AB and the committees that report to it. Two faculty

members from AB are also elected to the College Council to represent the faculty's perspective alongside the Principal.

13. The College's default position is that there is student representation on all committees unless there is good reason to the contrary. Committees with student representation thus include Council, Academic Board, Finance and General Purposes Committee, College Services Forum, Safety Committee, Equality and Diversity Committee, Learning Teaching and Assessment Committee, Teaching Quality Committee, Research Degrees Committee and Undergraduate Medicine Course Management Committee.

Comments

14. RVC has a clear, well-developed mission statement, which is aligned with their strategic plan.

15. The RVC strategic plan (2014-2019) has been extended through to 2021, until Brexit has been resolved.

16. Input from staff and students is guaranteed by a number of committees, which come together in the College Executive Committee (CEC), the Principal's Advisory Group (PAG) and the Academic Board and finally in the College Council.

17. The College has identified the need to continue to expand the diversity of the staff and student body.

18. Although the team considers the organizational structure to be complex, the governance of the RVC and its management structures and functions are defined and understood by all stakeholders, and ensures that staff, students and key stakeholder groups have the opportunity to contribute to the college's direction and decision making processes.

19. Governance and management of risk, workplace health and safety, statutory obligations and human resources, animal care and management policies aspire to be at best practice standards.

Suggestions

20. The College should continue its work in succession planning and increasing diversity within the College, especially at the senior executive level.

Recommendations

None.

Standard 2 – Finances

Finances must be adequate to sustain the educational programs and mission of the college.

Colleges with non DVM undergraduate degree programs must clearly report finances (expenditures and revenues) specific to those programs separately from finances (expenditures and revenues) dedicated to all other educational programs.

Resources allocation must be regularly reviewed to ensure it meets the requirements for accreditation of the professional veterinary degree.

Clinical services, field services and teaching hospitals must function as instructional resources. Instructional integrity of these resources must take priority over financial self-sufficiency of clinical services operations.

The school and university must provide reasonable evidence to AVBC that finances to sustain the veterinary programme are secure for the next 7 years.

Sufficient funds must be allocated for the acquisition and maintenance of buildings and equipment.

Background

21. The College has full jurisdiction over its financial affairs, and receives direct funding from the UK Government. This, along with revenue generated from other sources, including student tuition fees, veterinary clinical service fees, overhead recovery from funded research work, commercial activities and philanthropic donations, is deployed in support of its key strategic missions; learning and teaching, research and clinical service provision.

22. The Principal has overall responsibility for the College finances and is accountable to the College Council for these through the FGPC. The Director of Finance (FD) reports to the Principal and is a member of the PAG and the CEC. The FD is responsible for managing all aspects of the College's financial affairs including statutory reporting, financial planning and budgeting, investments, management accounts, financial control, tax and procurement.

23. The College follows an established annual planning and budgeting cycle. At the start of the process, the Vice-Principals review and refresh the priorities for their mission areas for the next three years, mapping these to the College's strategic objectives. Consultation with Associate Deans and Course Directors ensures that proper consideration is given to the requirements of the individual teaching programmes.

24. The operational delivery of the identified priorities is discussed with the heads of academic, clinical and professional service departments in order to assess the associated resource implications. These are considered in the context of the available funding and the need to balance revenue versus capital investment requirements. The final budget and financial forecasts are agreed by the Principal and the CEC, formally approved by Council and submitted to the OfS (previously HEFCE), as the regulatory authority.

25. All new initiatives and projects, both revenue and capital, must be supported by business cases which are subject to approval following a formal schedule of delegated authority.

Comments

26. 26. The RVC's BVetMed degree program has seen consistent revenue growth over the past 5 years (34%), more than keeping pace with expenditure growth (29%) such that the total reserves generated over the period towards capital investment are equivalent to about 35% of current annual expenditure. This trend is projected to continue to Fiscal Year 2021. £45M in new financing has been obtained to partially fund these capital improvements, with about half going to retire old debt that had much higher interest rates. Overall, the fiscal health of the RVC is good, and is projected to improve. Uncertainty and risks, including further decreased UK government funding, reliance on a high proportion of international students, pension shortfall liabilities, and ensuring competitive salaries for specialist clinical faculty may restrict projected growth but, overall, the sound financial position projects well into the future, with backup plans in place to react to changing circumstances.

27. The non-BVetMed degree programmes contribute positively to the financial portfolio of the College.

Suggestions

None

Recommendations

None

Standard 3 – Facilities and equipment

All aspects of the physical facilities must provide an appropriate learning environment. Safety of personnel and animals must be a high priority. Classrooms, teaching hospitals, which may include but are not limited to ambulatory/field service vehicles, seminar rooms, and other teaching spaces shall be clean, maintained in good repair, and adequate in number, size, and equipment for the instructional purposes intended and the number of students enrolled.

Students must have ready access to adequate study, recreation, locker and food services facilities.

The veterinary school must have a clear strategy and programme for maintaining and upgrading its buildings and equipment.

Administrative and faculty offices, and research laboratories must be sufficient for the needs of the faculty and staff.

An accredited college must maintain an on-campus veterinary teaching hospital(s), or have formal affiliation with one or more off-campus veterinary hospitals used for teaching. Appropriate diagnostic and therapeutic service components, including but not limited to pharmacy, diagnostic imaging, diagnostic support services, isolation facilities, intensive/critical care, ambulatory/field service vehicles, and necropsy facilities must be provided to support the teaching hospital(s) or facilities with operational policies and procedures posted in appropriate places.

All core teaching sites (whether on campus or external) should provide adequate learning spaces including adequate internet access.

Operational policies and procedures must be posted for staff, visitors and students.

Facilities for the housing of animals used for teaching and research shall be sufficient in number, properly constructed, and maintained in a manner consistent with accepted animal welfare standards. Adequate teaching, laboratory, research, and clinical equipment must be available for examination, diagnosis, and treatment of all animals used by the college.

Facilities must comply with all relevant jurisdictional legislation including health, safety, biosecurity and UK animal welfare and care standards.

Appropriate isolation facilities must be provided to meet the need for the isolation and containment of animals with communicable diseases and operated to provide for animal care in accordance with accepted modern methods for prevention of spread of infectious agents

Core clinical teaching facilities must be provided in a VTH with 24/7 emergency services at least for companion animals and equines, where the Establishment can unequivocally demonstrate that standard of education and clinical research are compliant with all ESEVT Standards, e.g. research-based and evidence-based clinical training supervised by academic staff trained to teach and to assess, availability for staff and students of facilities and patients for performing clinical research and relevant QA procedures. For ruminants and pigs, on-call service must be available if emergency services do not exist for those species in a VTH. The Establishment must ensure state-of-the-art standards of teaching clinics which remain comparable with the best available in the private sector.

The transport of students, live animals, cadavers, materials from animal origin and other teaching materials must be done in agreement with national and EU standards, to ensure safety of students and staff and to prevent the spread of infectious agents.

Distributed core clinical sites must provide dedicated learning spaces including adequate internet access.

Background

28. The College's main facilities are located on two campuses; the Camden Campus in central London and the Hawkshead Campus, in rural Hertfordshire, which has Boltons Park Farm close by and linked by a footpath. Both campuses have on-site teaching hospitals. The Camden and Hawkshead Campuses are 17 miles apart. Travel time between the two campuses, by road or rail, is approximately 50 minutes. The College provides a free shuttle bus service between Hawkshead and the nearest main railway station, Potters Bar. The College also has a number of off-site teaching facilities which are described in Standard 4.

Camden Campus

29. The Camden Campus accommodates the Gateway programme, years one and two of the BVetMed programme, year one of the Graduate entry BVetMed programme, the undergraduate Biosciences programmes and a range of postgraduate programmes.

30. The major buildings at Camden include:

- The Hobday Building, which houses faculty, staff and student services areas, a Learning Resources Centre, social learning spaces, teaching accommodation, research laboratories and office and support spaces
- The Beaumont Sainsbury Animal Hospital, the College's small animal and exotics general hospital
- MacFadyean and Amoroso Buildings, which house the LBIC, a bioscience hub providing laboratory accommodation and business support for biotechnology companies ranging from start-up to blue chip companies.
- a Biological Services Unit
- College Grove, a student halls of residence with 83 en-suite bedrooms.

Hawkshead Campus

31. The Hawkshead Campus is broadly arranged in four key zones: residential and recreational, teaching and administrative, research and clinical. It accommodates the last three years of the BVetMed programme along with the veterinary nursing programme and a range of postgraduate programmes including intern and resident training.

32. The residential and recreational zone includes:

- The Student Village (191 en-suite bedrooms, with two for disabled use, and common living spaces), College Close (89 rooms, one for disabled use) with common living spaces, and Odiham Hall (30 rooms predominately for short-term rental)
- The Advice Centre, offering support, information and guidance for students including wellbeing, disability and finance
- A conference facility comprising a restaurant, meeting and conference rooms and hotel-style bedrooms
- Hawkshead House, the original estate house, providing student social facilities, SU offices and shop, and Infrastructure Services Department offices

33. The teaching and administrative zone contains:

- The Teaching and Research Centre (TaRC) housing the main reception, laboratories, practical classrooms and offices
- The Eclipse Building, providing teaching accommodation, Learning Resource Centre, office space, social learning spaces, meeting rooms, library archives, a coffee shop and student services
- The RVC Alumni Lecture Theatre (capacity 327)
- The Link Building, providing research laboratories, a teaching room with multi-headed microscopes, and offices for academic and support staff
- The Mill Reef Building, with a necropsy hall, a 199 seat lecture theatre, diagnostic clinical laboratories, offices and a seminar room
- The Kalanisi building, containing temporary office space
- The Clinical Block, an original 1950s building with a range of research laboratories, offices for academic and support staff and a small pathology museum. This building is due for replacement commencing in 2019 as part of the Hawkshead Estate Development Project
- The LIVE centre, housing the Centre for Excellence in Lifelong and Independent Veterinary Education, clinical skills laboratories, a student computer room and communication skills training suite and staff offices
- Biosecurity changing facilities

34. The research zone includes:

- The Centre for Emerging, Endemic and Exotic Diseases (CEEED), containing high containment laboratories for infection and immunity research, offices and meeting spaces
- A Biological Services Unit (BSU), which comprises a range of barns and similar units providing accommodation for different species of research animals
- Structure and Motion Laboratory buildings accommodating a flight barn, locomotion barn and related facilities
- The Clinical Investigation Centre, housing a range of laboratories focused on clinical research with accompanying office and administrative facilities

35. The clinical zone consists of:

- The Queen Mother Hospital for Animals (QMHA), a teaching hospital for small animals with isolation facilities, which includes a range of teaching and student spaces and administrative facilities
- The Large Animal Clinical Centre (LACC), including teaching and student spaces
- The Equine Referral Hospital (ERH), which comprises surgical and intensive care facilities, a diagnostic imaging suite and accommodation for clinical cases, including intensive care and separate isolation facilities
- The Farm Animal Clinical Centre (FACC) which comprises surgical and medical facilities for production animals.

36. The main lecture theatres and directed learning facilities on both campuses have been expanded and upgraded as part of a rolling programme of improvements.

37. Boltons Park Farm comprises 200 hectares, mainly of grazing grass supporting 150 Holstein Friesian milking cows, 70 heifers and 500 mixed breed sheep. It has accommodation for farm animals with associated teaching facilities, another component of the BSU, biosecurity changing facilities and classrooms.

38. Animals used in teaching and research are housed at several locations across the College including Boltons Park Farm, the BSUs, and as inpatients in the College's hospitals. Animal holding and isolation facilities have been refurbished to meet current standards. Equine stabling at Hawkshead was replaced by larger facilities in 2016, and additional facilities at Boltons Park Farm were completed in early 2018. RVC currently has contracts with commercial abattoirs (Long Compton abattoir in Warwickshire and the Langford abattoir, which is also part of the University of Bristol) at which cattle, sheep and pigs are slaughtered. The Long Compton abattoir also slaughters sows and water buffalo.

Comments

39. Both the Camden and Hawkshead campuses have undergone substantial development in recent years, as have several of the external sites (e.g. Synergy) leading to some excellent facilities. This is all the more commendable given the constraints at the Camden site. More developments are planned in areas that currently look a little tired. A system for health and safety risk assessment is in place that provides clear guidance and SOP's for students and staff.

40. The dissection room (TaRC; Hawkshead) has columns that have a tile base with an exposed, porous concrete surface above, which while meeting regulatory requirements are not considered good practice for laboratories where 'wet' specimens are handled.

41. The ambulatory vehicle at Kingston Maurward does not have a partition between the passenger and storage compartments.

42. The RVC complies with UK regulations for radiation protection and radiation waste; has a staff radiation protection adviser and radiation waste adviser; and is regularly audited by an external agency. There are robust internal monitoring and reporting systems, and RVC and UoL safety committees. RVC has more than 10 years of documented very low exposure rates of radiology staff who wear dosimetry badges; however, students are not badged. The site team verified that students are trained in radiation safety and protection, including the use and importance of dosimetry. Students are involved in animal and cassette positioning but typically are not in radiology rooms during exposures or are appropriately protected. On clinical rotations in equine imaging, students are trained in radiation safety including use of dosimetry badges; however they do not wear badges because they are not permitted in the room when exposures are made including their required training taking distal limb radiographs (foot and fetlock) on limb specimens. This meets with UK radiation safety regulation. On EMS rotations it is the responsibility of the practice to comply with UK regulations; students typically reported appropriate use of PPE but variable use of dosimetry.

43. Soda lime canisters on anesthesia machines in small animal surgery but not in equine surgery were labelled with the date of soda lime replacement. Vaporizers are calibrated annually.

44. Formaldehyde concentrations in the anatomy gross laboratory are monitored (Formaldemeter 400) regularly (3 measurements/course); the permissible workplace exposure level is <2ppm with a recommended exposure benchmark of 0.5 ppm. Records from 2015 onwards (192 measurements) were provided and concentrations >2ppm have been recorded (once in 2017 and once in 2018; both associated with opening of the abdominal cavity; range 2.17-3.07 ppm). A new ventilation system normally operating at 12 air changes /hour and capable of 20 air changes/hour was installed in October 2018. Of 47 measurements since installation, 3 were >2ppm, all associated with body cavity opening. RVC has instituted an exposure benchmark of 0.5 ppm with a trigger value of 1.5 ppm for implementation of control measures and action. There is an appropriate and robust safety standard operating procedure (SOP) in place to ensure exposure levels as low as reasonably practicable in accord with UK regulations. If exposure levels exceed 1.5 ppm, other measures are executed including having students leave the laboratory until levels are below 1.5 ppm. Exposure events are reported to Departmental Safety Supervisor, RVC Estates Department, and Corporate Health and Safety Team.

45. Recent capital improvements, based on significant student input, have expanded high quality student interactive and recreational spaces.

46. Hospitals and clinical facilities meet the requirements of the RCVS Practice Standards Scheme.

Commendations

47. The College is commended for the development of contemporary study and recreation spaces and for involving students in their design.

Suggestions

48. The RVC is in compliance with UK regulations for monitoring radiation exposure in its hospitals and clinics. Due to the variability reported by students at EMS sites, the RVC should implement approaches to ensure adequate radiation safety monitoring at EMS sites.

Recommendations

49. All vehicles transporting students must be equipped with netting or screening to provide safe physical separation from transported equipment.

Standard 4 – Clinical resources

Normal and diseased animals of various domestic and exotic species must be available for instructional purposes, either as clinical patients or provided by the institution. While precise numbers are not specified, in-hospital patients and outpatients including field service/ambulatory and herd health/production medicine programs are required to provide the necessary quantity and quality of clinical instruction. The program must be able to demonstrate, using its assessment of clinical competency outcomes data, that the clinical resources are sufficient to achieve the stated educational goals and mission.

Schools must ensure that students are competent in animal handling relevant to the workplace learning and clinical work to be undertaken and that Health and Safety matters are briefed before the student begins their placement.

It is essential that a diverse and sufficient number of surgical and medical patients be available during an on-campus clinical activity for students' clinical educational experience. Experience can include exposure to clinical education at off-campus sites, provided the college reviews these clinical experiences and educational outcomes. Further, such clinical experiences should occur in a setting that provides access to subject matter experts, reference resources, modern and complete clinical laboratories, advanced diagnostic instrumentation and ready confirmation (including necropsy). Such examples could include a contractual arrangement with nearby practitioners who serve as adjunct faculty members and off-campus field practice centres. The teaching hospital(s) shall provide nursing care and instruction in nursing procedures. A supervised field service and/or ambulatory program must be maintained in which students are offered multiple opportunities to obtain clinical experience under field conditions. Under all situations students must be active participants in the workup of the patient, including physical diagnosis and diagnostic problem oriented decision making.

Medical records must be comprehensive and maintained in an effective retrieval system to efficiently support the teaching, research, and service programs of the college.

There is a sufficient, reliable supply of live animals, cadavers and teaching materials of animal origin to enable students to develop expertise in necropsy, food hygiene and veterinary public health including access to abattoirs.

Background

50. The College has access to a range of healthy animals for training students in animal handling on site. These facilities include Boltons Park Farm (BPF), and the BSUs at both Camden and Hawkshead campuses. To safeguard their welfare, animals used for teaching are cared for by qualified staff and maintained in sufficient numbers to ensure their "teaching duties" are limited.

51. When appropriate, live animals and cadavers are used to demonstrate practical anatomy. Examples include the use of equine limbs for practising radiography and injection techniques; dissection classes involving dogs, sheep and ponies; and the increasing availability of plastinated samples for scheduled and informal practical classes related to integrated structure and function anatomy teaching.

52. The College's clinical skills learning laboratory contains mannequins, simulators and virtual reality devices, and is based in the LIVE building. This facilitates student 'drop- in' access during working hours and one late evening per week. There is also provision for students in their final year to access the labs out of hours, so they can use the facility at times more convenient for their rotation groups.

53. For clinical rotations, the year-on-year growth in on-campus clinical caseloads has meant numbers of cases per student have been maintained to meet student number growth. An expanded caseload in individual farm animal medicine and surgery has been achieved through enhanced off-site partnerships. The continued expansion of the small animal (dog and cat) first opinion caseload in the Camden Campus's BSAH along with the establishment of an expanding exotic pet service there, has enabled the College to double the number of student weeks offered in this busy, inner-city practice, while the expansion of a Shelter Medicine and Accessible Care Programme with charity sector partners provides RVC students with further exposure to a variety of first opinion cases and focused surgical (mainly neutering) experience. The College's Small Animal Referral Service at the QMHA is one of Europe's largest and busiest small animal referral hospitals. The QMHA was the first Veterinary Trauma Centre accredited by the American College of Veterinary Emergency and Critical Care (ACVECC) outside North America.

54. "RVC Equine", based at Hawkshead, offers first opinion ambulatory and hospital-based services to regional horse owners and referral services to professional colleagues in the region. In addition to the core rotations provided at Hawkshead, students have additional options for tracking rotations in equine diagnostic imaging along with additional ambulatory and specialist equine hospital activities with partner providers. Students are exposed to a variety of production animal cases through two-week core rotations run at Synergy Farm Health in Dorset and the Endell Veterinary Group in Hampshire, together with a one-week Farm Animal Clinical Services (FACS) core rotation run from the Hawkshead Campus.

55. Both core and tracking rotations occur within in-house pathology and diagnostic services. These rotations provide training in clinical and anatomic pathology utilising case material from both the College's hospitals and practices that use the College's pathology services.

56. Students also have the opportunity to gain first-hand experience in zoological medicine on a tracking rotation.

57. Clinical activity in College hospitals is coordinated through integrated computer systems, in brief comprising a common practice management system (PMS), currently RxWorks, integrated with other software for handling clinical data, including a bespoke clinical record information system (CRIS), a vendor-neutral archiving system (VNA), and a laboratory information management system (LIMS). These systems can be searched, and thus used in clinical research, using two bespoke search tools (VetMine and VetCompass) designed and developed at the College, as well as the direct search function in the PMS.

58. Off-campus rotations are run either as part of a full College-supervised rotation (SR), with veterinary services delivered by College employees, or fully hosted by a partner through a Critical Relationship (CR) in which veterinary services are delivered by partner employees. There are 12 locations for off-campus clinical instruction, including sites carrying out both "core" (mandatory) rotations and

"tracking" (elective) rotations. Learning outcomes, student numbers, standardised processes (standards of supervision, formative and summative feedback, non-institutional based faculty qualifications) and, where appropriate, residential accommodation are all agreed in contractual arrangements between participating sites and the College.

59. Rotation groups range from two students to a maximum of six. All core rotations have group sizes ranging from five to six for the 2018/19 rotation cycle. Each rotation group is supervised by a minimum of one FTE faculty member with an average level of supervision of ~1.7 faculty. All rotations also have a minimum of one intern and/or resident working with the student group.

60. Practical anatomy training occurs in multiple rotations and in various formats. Anatomy teaching in years one and two is centred on practical cadaver dissection as well as use of the more traditional prosected material, and is now increasingly complemented with plastinated demonstration material and digital resources. Depending on the species and body system being taught, cadavers are either preserved, fresh, or frozen-thawed. All cadavers are sourced through registered suppliers and all are animals or parts of animals that were scheduled to be killed for other reasons. The student/teaching material ratios are as follows: four students per dog cadaver; two students per dog limb and four students per horse limb; seven to eight students per cadaver for teaching thoracic and abdominal anatomy of horses and ruminants.

Recommendations

None.

Standard 5 – Information resources

Timely access to information resources and information professionals must be available to students and faculty at core training sites. The college shall have access to the human, digital, and physical resources for retrieval of relevant veterinary and supporting literature and development of instructional materials, and provide appropriate training for students and faculty. The program must be able to demonstrate, using its outcomes assessment data, that students are competent in retrieving, evaluating, and efficiently applying information through the use of electronic and other appropriate information technologies.

Background

61. The RVC maintains Learning Resources Centres (LRCs) as physical centres for library and IT services at both the Camden and Hawkshead Campuses. Staff and resources regularly move between the two campuses. Patterns of use and demand tend to be different between the two LRCs and this is reflected in library opening hours. The College is also a member of a collaborative university library access scheme which affords students reference use of most UK university libraries, including the UoL's Senate House Library and those of other London institutions. It is RVC's policy to obtain both hard and online copies of text books and journals whenever possible. Support for library and IT users during core hours is available in person, by email or telephone via a helpdesk that is operated from both LRCs. A third party provides specialist out of hours IT support between 17:00 and 08:00, 365 days per year.

62. The College's mobile app (RVC Mobile) includes the ability to renew library loan materials, give access to timetables and to the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) "RVC Learn".

63. The IT facilities in both LRCs are open 24/7 365 days a year providing students access to computers, various types of furnished space, printing, scanning and copying facilities and technology-rich areas where they are able to dock their own equipment to large screens. There are currently 323 open access PCs in total (155 at Camden and 168 at Hawkshead), plus 100 netbooks/laptops available on loan from the library helpdesks.

64. An annual rolling programme refreshes and upgrades all classroom technologies to ensure classrooms and meeting rooms are supported by accessible and reliable audio-visual, lecture recording and, in selected areas, video- conferencing systems. There is an audio-visual specialist in the IT Helpdesk teams at both campuses, although all the IT technicians can support audio-visual equipment. All BVetMed lectures are recorded through Echo360 software making them available at any time throughout a student's programme of study.

65. The College's Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) "RVC Learn" provides an area where students can participate in online tests and directed learning sessions, collaborate with their peers and communicate with their tutors. Students have their own dedicated portal through which they access RVC Learn, their home drives and online e-resources when off-campus. Key applications, e.g., RVC Learn, have been adapted for use on any mobile device.

Comments

66. Students have unrestricted electronic access to information resources both on and off-campus. The library collections as well as the IT learning infrastructures are well equipped, easily accessible and intensively used by students. These facilities underpin many of the College activities.

67. The IT and library staff are highly engaged, and students as well as teachers are constructively involved in evaluation as well as further innovation of information resources and more specific innovating digital learning tools, and the use of the Learning Resource Centres.

68. In order to meet the challenges faced by a small organization in maintaining support and innovation of learning and information resources adequately, the College is involved in a number of networks. For example, the College is coordinator of the Bloomsbury Learning Environment group of the UoL, which brings together a network of e-learning teams from across the London area and collaborations with other UK veterinary schools.

Commendations

69. The College is to be commended on their student-focused approach to accessible teaching content via digital support and tools as well for creating visible, well-equipped and well used Learning Resource Centers. Investment in additional physical spaces around the both campuses, where students can find support for their learning and academic development is commendable.

Suggestions

70. The College should continue to invest in broadening cooperation in innovation and developing e-learning tools and ideas supporting student learning, with other Vet Schools in the UK and beyond.

Standard 6 – Students

The number of professional degree students, DVM or equivalent must be consistent with the resources and the mission of the college. The program must be able to demonstrate, using its outcomes assessment data, that the resources are sufficient to achieve the stated educational goals for all enrolled students.

Colleges should establish post-DVM/VMD programs such as internships, residencies and advanced degrees (e.g., MS, PhD), that must complement and strengthen the professional program and not adversely affect the veterinary student experience.

Student support services must be available within the college or university. These must include, but are not limited to, appropriate services to support student wellness and to assist with meeting academic and personal challenges of the DVM program; support for students with learning or other disabilities; and support of extra-curricular activities relevant to veterinary medicine and professional growth.

The college must promote an inclusive institutional climate that fosters diversity within the student body, consistent with applicable law.

In relationship to enrolment, the colleges must provide accurate information for all advertisements regarding the educational program by providing clear and current information for prospective students. Further, printed catalog or electronic information, must state the purpose and goals of the program, provide admission requirements and procedures, state degree requirements, present faculty descriptions, clearly state information on tuition and fees along with procedures for withdrawal, give necessary information for financial aid programs, and provide an accurate academic calendar. Information available to prospective students must include relevant requirements for professional licensure.

There must be effective mechanisms for resolution of student grievances (e.g. interpersonal conflict of harassment).

Mechanisms must be in place by which students can convey their needs and wants to the school.

Each accredited college must provide a mechanism for students, anonymously if they wish, to offer suggestions, comments, and complaints regarding compliance of the college with the Standards of Accreditation. These materials shall be made available to the Council annually.

Background

71. Students can enter the BVetMed programme through three separate pathways, all of which converge for a common final three years. The three pathways are:

    i.   the five year BVetMed programme; the standard programme for UK/EU school leavers.
    ii. the 'Gateway' pathway; a one-year foundation programme leading to the 'standard' five-year BVetMed programme. Upon successful completion students automatically progress to the five-year BvetMed programme. Gateway students may choose to complete their veterinary education at other UK institutions and a small proportion of students (typically 1 or 2 each year) do so following successful interview at their school of choice.

    iii.   the graduate entry programme. Students enrolled on this track must have successfully completed a three-year science based Bachelors or Master's degree. After this separate one year programme, these students join the final three years of the BVetMed programme.
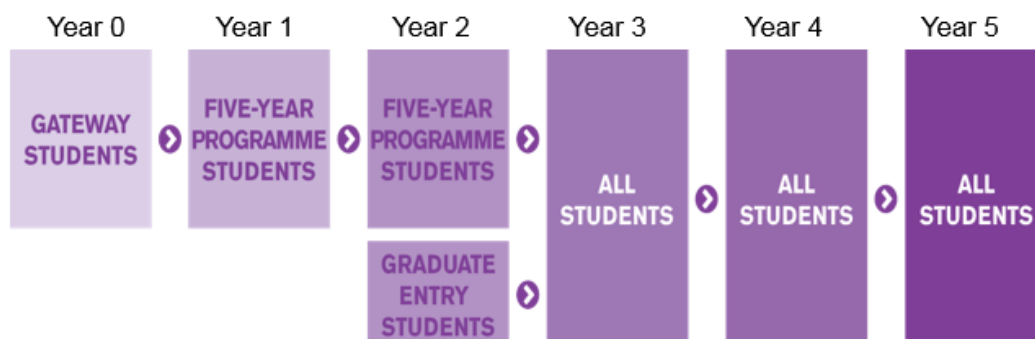
72. The number of student places is determined by a combination of the current perceived needs of the UK for veterinary graduates together with financial modelling of the most cost effective means of delivering the curriculum. The removal of Government imposed caps on student number has afforded the College greater flexibility in the number of UK/EU students it recruits. The UK government makes no provision for non-subsidised domestic places so the student body is composed entirely of subsidised UK/EU students, and international students from outside the EU.

Table 6a: Students enrolled

Class	2012/3	2013/4	2014/5	2015/6	2016/7
Gateway	40	44	42	46	50
First year	218	202	207	212	216
Second year	205	205	197	207	209
Accelerated	55	33	45	80	99
Third year	257	251	226	239	268
Fourth year	232	247	252	219	234
Fifth year	214	232	242	248	219
Graduated	210	231	241	241	213

Table 6b: Veterinary applications, offers, acceptances

	UK/EU students		Overseas students		Total	
	A/P	O/A	A/P	O/A	A/P	O/A
2017	1,239/222	315/180	459/100	298/120	1,698/322	613/300
2016	1,024/222	334/213	371/100	252/100	1,395/322	586/313
2015	1,127/221	365/254	376/60	132/39	1,503/281	497/293
2014	1,218/185	298/210	374/45	93/35	1,592/230	391/245
2013	1,157/190	279/192	402/33	134/42	1,559/223	413/234

A/P = Applications/Positions available; O/A = Offers made/acceptances

73. Students who need additional academic or personal support can access a variety of services in the Advice Centre (AdC). In the main, students are referred directly by a personal tutor or via the

Student Performance and Development System (SPDS) to the AdC team depending on the type and severity of the issue. To provide maximum accessibility, all of the support services can also be accessed by self-referral or through any of member faculty or staff. Also students, both as individuals or as groups, can refer other students about whom they are concerned. Students may initially see one of the Student Advisers in the AdC or go directly to an appropriate specialist adviser (for example, Disability Adviser, Counsellor). Appointments for AdC can be booked on- line or by drop-in,or by Skype or phone, and tutors may also bring a student to the offices directly.

74. Students who need to defer continue to have access to services while not physically attending College, and students who withdraw may also have limited access to services for a period after leaving. Before returning to study, students attend a 'Return to Study' meeting with SPDS and occupational health where appropriate.

75. Students meet regularly with their personal academic tutors who advise the student on their personal and professional development either directly or through accessing specialist services. These advice sessions are student centric and are tailored for the individual. Students identified as struggling or underperforming academically are encouraged to meet with their personal tutor to discuss strategies for success and to identify skills gaps. They can also access or be referred to the Education Development (EDev) team for support with study skills, and the AdC for other support services including initial screening for a Learning Difference and mental health support. All students are able to review their exam scripts with staff and to discuss how they might improve their learning and modify their approach to future assessments.

76. Students withdrawn from the BVetMed by an examination board due to poor performance can appeal if they feel they have been disadvantaged due to personal circumstances. The student is given the opportunity to present their case in writing with supporting evidence but must also attend an appeal hearing in order that the panel is able to engage fully with the student and understand all circumstances which may have led to under-performance.

77. The College's Assessment Enhancement strategy (Strategy for Enhancement and Assurance of the Quality of Learning, Teaching and Assessment, 2013-18) states that "All students…have a right to express their views about their learning experience, for those views to be listened to and for the College to respond where appropriate". Students are able to articulate their needs to the College through two key mechanisms:

> i. Student surveys – students are asked to complete short surveys at the end of modules/strands and also other annual or bienniual surveys that explore wider issues
> ii. Each year group of the BVetMed degree elects between two and four student representatives who are the key contact point between the year group and the College. They represent their respective cohorts at College committees and they canvas the students for their opinions and ideas for improvement. Crucially, they also report back to their constituents regarding discussions at meetings and actions being undertaken as a result of both the surveys and their specific comments. The student reps receive training and support from both the College and the Students' Union in order to be effective in their roles.

78. In addition to the mechanisms described above, before they can receive their grading for each rotation block, all students are asked to comment on the suitability of each rotation in as much detail as they desire. The process is web-based and anonymised; the anonymity of the system is emphasised at numerous points within the curriculum. Students wishing to complain about any components of their course or their extracurricular experiences can do so through a number of avenues including their student year representatives, their tutors, through the Student Development Committee (SDC) and through the various student members of all major College committees.

79. If the student feels that the complaint has not been resolved through these avenues, they are able to use the College Complaints and Resolution procedure.

80. In 2017 the new Department of Learning and Wellbeing was created with a mission to:

- Create an inclusive and supportive wellness environment (digital, physical and social) for all staff and students
- Support staff to create and foster engaging curricula and learning experiences.
- Develop activities for staff and students to promote wellness and prevent illness
- Promote and develop mental health knowledge in order to develop skills to self-manage and thrive.
- Strengthen a sense of belonging to the RVC community
- Ensure all students can access effective services that enable them to manage the transition into and out of HE study.

81. The College is also diversifying the kinds of support that promote healthy behaviour and is introducing an online Cognitive Behavioural Therapy application for staff and students, as well as a Mentoring for Wellbeing programme.

Comments

82. Faculty expressed the view that the present and planned facilities are adequate to meet the needs of the current student cohort, but that there is very limited scope for an increase in numbers of veterinary students.

83. The RVC provided the team with an updated table of student numbers (see table 6a above).

84. The RVC has extensive higher degree programs covering PG Certificates through PhD. It also has extensive intern/resident programs in most species/clinical disciplines. Internships and residencies in food animal practice are hosted in the distributed practices.

85. The recently established Directorate of Learning and Wellbeing (LWB) brings together academic and student support services in order to develop and support a holistic vision of wellbeing for students (and staff) at RVC. Its roles include advice and support for both academic and personal issues, study skills, and careers advice.

86. The RVC has a comprehensive suite of student support services. It has policies for the management of disabled students in terms of assessment of their likely ability to complete the veterinary degree

Commendation

87. The RVC is commended for its comprehensive suite of student support services.

Recommendations

None

Standard 7 – Admission and progression

The selection criteria for admission to the programme must be consistent with the mission of the school. The number of students admitted must be consistent with the resources available to the school.

In relation to enrolment, the school must provide accurate information in all advertisements regarding the educational programme by providing clear and current information for prospective students. Further, printed catalogue or electronic information must state the purpose and goals of the programme, provide admission requirements and procedures, state degree requirements, present faculty descriptions, clearly state information on tuition and fees along with procedures for withdrawal, give necessary information for financial aid programmes, and provide an accurate academic calendar. The information must include the accreditation status of the degree course (whether by RCVS or other relevant accrediting bodies), and the requirements for eventual registration/licence, including fitness to practise.

An accurate description of the selection criteria and processes must be published and readily available to potential students. The school must regularly review and reflect on the selection processes to ensure they are appropriate for students to complete the programme successfully, including consideration of their potential to meet all the RCVS Day One Competences across the common UK domestic species.

The college must have a well-defined and officially stated admissions policy and a process that ensures a fair and consistent assessment of applicants. The policy must provide for an admissions committee, a majority of whom must be full-time faculty members. The committee must make recommendations regarding the students to be admitted to the professional curriculum upon consideration of applications of candidates who meet the academic and other requirements as defined in the college's formal admission policy.

Potential students must be advised of the demands of the veterinary course and RCVS requirements for fitness to practise.

The college must demonstrate its commitment to diversity and inclusion through its recruitment and admission processes, as consistent with applicable law. The college's admissions policies must be non-discriminatory, as consistent with applicable law.

Subjects for admission must include those courses prerequisite to the professional program in veterinary medicine, as well as courses that contribute to a broad general education. The goal of pre-veterinary education shall be to provide a broad base upon which professional education may be built, leading to lifelong learning with continued professional and personal development.

Factors other than academic achievement must be considered for admission criteria.

If not otherwise covered within the early part of the course, the entry criteria for the programme must include evidence that the student has a solid background in the chemical, physical and biological science and mathematics, in order to meet the requirements of the EU Directive on basic subjects.

Students with a disability

There must be clear policies and procedures as to how applicants with disabilities or illness will be considered and, if appropriate, accommodated on the programme, taking into account the requirement that all students must be capable of meeting the RCVS Day One Competences by the time they graduate.

Student Progression

The basis for decisions on progression (including academic progression and professional fitness to practise) must be explicit and readily available to the students. The school must provide evidence that it has mechanisms in place to identify and provide remediation and appropriate support (including termination) for students who are not performing adequately (including areas such as practical animal handling, client communication etc).

The school must have mechanisms in place to monitor attrition and progression and be able to respond and amend admissions selection criteria and student support if required.

Student Exclusion

Mechanisms for the exclusion of students from the programme, either for academic reasons or under fitness to practise procedures, must be explicit.

Appeals and misconduct

School policies for managing appeals against decisions, including admissions, academic and progression decisions, should be transparent and publicly available. The process for exclusion of students on any grounds must be explicit.

Policies for dealing with student misconduct and fitness to practise must be explicit.

Background

88. The College's Admissions Policy is reviewed each year and approved by the Taught Programmes Admissions Committee (TPAC) as well as LTAC and AB. It is compliant with relevant UK legislation and informed by sector best practice. It outlines the admissions principles and procedures as well as providing information on the redress applicants can take, should they wish to appeal or complain.

89. Admission to all taught programmes at the College is overseen by TPAC. Membership comprises senior academic administrators, faculty, and specialist professional staff. TPAC meets four times a year to consider statistics on student progression, review entry requirements, enrolment data and targets, and to make final admissions decisions on whom to admit.

90. All RVC staff are required to undertake annual training in data protection and bi-annual training in equality and diversity. Staff, both academic and professional, who are directly involved in Admissions decisions undertake extra training including by UK NARIC on qualifications and education in non-UK countries, training concerning fraud and deception, fees and funding, and visa and immigration matters.

91. The RVC website contains details of the programmes, financial information and entry requirements along with other relevant information for applicants such as accommodation options and living costs. This information is also published each year in the undergraduate prospectus.

92. All applicants are initially screened for work experience requirements (and return of a work experience form in the case of UCAS applicants) and then academic requirements. The personal statements/essay answers provided by applicants are then screened and scored against a set rubric. In modernising its policy, the RVC recognises that applicants from disadvantaged backgrounds could be penalised by this process and in order to ensure equality and diversity amongst the applicant pool, additional points are awarded to UK applicants who have attended a school listed as 'contextual' by the College and/or who live in an area identified as having low HE participation rates. The cut off score for interview is determined by the number of interview places available and thus the score varies year on year, depending on the performance of the cohort. The number of interview places is normally set at approximately four times the number of places available, but this is reviewed on an

annual basis, based on previous cohort behaviour and conversion rates. Interviews are conducted in the UK, North America and Asia. The College moved to Multi-Mini Interviews (MMI) for entry in September 2012.

93. Applicants are not able to appeal an admissions decision; they are able to complain that published processes have not been followed and request a review of the decision on procedural grounds by the Head of Admissions.

94. The requirement to pass each year is the achievement of an aggregate mark of 50%, but within this there are additional requirements that reflect the importance of each year's learning as a foundation for the next, and, particularly, for clinical skills.

95. The RVC Charter outlines the expectation of students, including their professional behaviours. This is communicated to students electronically at first enrolment, hard copy during induction and is publicly available on the College's web pages. Should a student fail to meet these expectations through academic or general misconduct, then the appropriate policy is employed to investigate and apply proportionate penalties where necessary. These regulations are also individually communicated to the student in writing when procedures commence. Where the misconduct is persistent or significant, the Professional Requirements Procedure can be instigated at any time. The College ensures fairness and transparency within all of these processes through clear guidelines and a hearing panel that includes a representative from the Students' Union (unless the student requests them not to attend), a range of academic staff and in the case of Professional Requirements a member of the appropriate profession and a panellist external to the College.

96. Students cannot appeal the award of individual marks as this calls into question academic judgement which is regulated by double marking and the external examiner system. A student is able to appeal an exam board decision removing them from the programme following a procedural error or where they can evidence that they have been disadvantaged relative to their peers, typically on medical or personal grounds. As with all student-facing policies, the appeals policy and process is communicated to students via the RVC web pages but also individually via letter following the decision to remove a student from the programme.

Comments

97. RVC has a comprehensive and accessible website that explains all the admissions routes, along with printed material directed at home, international and 'widening participation' (WP) candidates. The College strives to constantly improve its admissions processes in order to be fair, consistent and encourage diversity, with regular formal evaluations of these processes.

98. RVC admissions are undertaken in several stages: academic screen (taking account of academic achievement and WP policies), followed by MMIs conducted by trained assessors comprising Faculty staff and stakeholders, followed by TPAC review and sign-off. There is a comprehensive academic and pastoral support system for providing students with advice, counselling and remediation, along with clear processes for termination.

99. The college's pre-requisites include appropriate scientific (and optional broader) academic qualifications and evidence of time spent in the animal industries including with veterinarians.

100. Applicants whose first language is not English are required to achieve an overall IELTS score of 7.0 (no band less than 6.5).

101. Academic achievement and defined animal experience underlies the invitation to interview. The interview (MMI) which tests a range of attributes including communication skills, ethical awareness and problem solving. Students who are interviewed before their high school grades are released are made a provisional offer of a place subject to satisfactory attainment of grades.

Suggestions

None

Recommendations

None

Standard 8 – Faculty

The institution must ensure that all staff are appropriately qualified and prepared for their roles.

Staff who participate in teaching much display competence and effective teaching skills in relevant aspects of the curriculum, regardless of whether they are full or part time, residents, interns or postgraduate students, adjuncts or off-campus contracted teachers.

Faculty numbers and qualifications must be sufficient to deliver the educational program and fulfill the mission of the college. Participation in scholarly activities is an important criterion in evaluating the faculty and the college. The college must provide evidence that it utilizes a well-defined and comprehensive program for the evaluation of the professional growth, development, and scholarly activities of the faculty.

Academic positions must offer the security and benefits necessary to maintain stability, continuity, and competence of the faculty. The college must cultivate a diverse faculty through its hiring policies and retention practices, consistent with applicable law. The college must demonstrate its ongoing efforts to achieve parity in advancement opportunities and compensation. Part-time faculty, residents, and graduate students may supplement the teaching efforts of the full-time permanent faculty if appropriately integrated into the instructional program.

The school must be able to demonstrate that it has a programme for staff development in tertiary teaching theory/practice, and how that programme is managed.

Promotion criteria must be clear and explicit. Promotions must recognise excellence in, and place equal emphasis on all aspects of teaching (including clinical teaching), research, service and other scholarly activities.

The Establishment must ensure that all staff are appropriately qualified and prepared for their roles, in agreement with the national and EU regulations. A formal training (including good teaching and evaluation practices, learning and e-learning resources, biosecurity and QA procedures) must be in place for all staff involved with teaching. Most FTE academic staff involved in veterinary training must be veterinarians. It is expected that greater than 2/3 of the instruction that the students receive, as determined by student teaching hours, is delivered by qualified veterinarians.

Academic staff should have a manageable workload of teaching, research and service for academic staff is required; and they must have reasonable opportunity and resources for participation in scholarly activities

Background

102.   Faculty positions currently number 235 (212 direct employees and 23 off-site individuals delivering teaching on the BVetMed programme). College faculty teaching on the BVetMed programme has increased by 23% since 2012. There have been adjustments in the number of clinical faculty positions to support the further expansion of clinical activities and to provide students with the appropriate range and number of clinical cases and opportunities for small group learning. The College predominantly delivers its core teaching for the BVetMed using permanent employees. These may be part-time employees enabling support for some of the College's equality and diversity initiatives as outlined below. Postgraduate students are also encouraged to engage in limited

teaching. The College has no faculty engaged on Hourly Paid Contracts. Occasional Guest Lecturers are engaged to deliver one-off specialist lectures.

103. Recruiting and retaining talented faculty continues to be a key strategic aim for the College. Changes in government, uncertainty over funding and the outcome of the EU referendum have placed greater pressure on the sector and impacted on the College's ability to attract and retain highly skilled employees. The employee turnover rate for the year ending July 2017 averaged 21.04% overall, of which 15.29% was voluntary.

104. The CEC has a direct role in the review and authorisation of all faculty positions to ensure a strategic approach to recruitment. All vacated faculty posts are reviewed by the CEC to consider whether a like-for-like replacement or an alternative approach is most appropriate. The College has an integrated approach to the management of induction, probation, ongoing development and promotion of faculty that reflects best practice across the HE sector. Responsibility for the management, implementation and review of this process rests with the Academic Probation and Promotion Panel (APPP), membership of which comprises the Principal, Deputy Principal, Vice-Principals, the academic Heads of Department, two elected faculty members and a senior external academic.

105. On completion of the three years probationary period, ongoing development of faculty is managed through the College's Review (appraisal) Process. Annual formal appraisal reviews provide an opportunity for employees to reflect individually with their Head of Department (or other line manager) on their past performance and their development and career aspirations for the year ahead. Specific development objectives are agreed drawing on the opportunities provided by the College's own Staff Development Programme or relevant external programmes, in the context of the operational and strategic needs of the organisation and the expectations set out in the RVC Behaviours Framework. Attendance at courses and conferences as well as personal requests for periods of leave to study are discussed and considered by the Head of Department to enable the costs of such requests to be factored into budgetary considerations.

106. The College invested more than £1.2million in development opportunities for all employees between 2012 and 2017. Membership of the Higher Education Academy remains high with 203 active members and three applications pending.

107. The College meets teacher training needs through INSET days, staff development training through HR, PG Certificate, Diploma and MSc in Veterinary Education, MVetMed resident practical veterinary education training, and Teaching and Learning in Higher Education (TLiHE). These training opportunities are offered to all staff involved in core rotation teaching. Key staff from off-site locations where core rotations are offered are expected to register for the PGCert in Veterinary Education and to undergo examiner training.

108. In 2016, the College recruited an Equality and Diversity Manager who is working with colleagues to ensure equality and diversity are fully embedded throughout the College. The College achieved the Athena SWAN Bronze award in 2017. The number of female professors has increased from 11 to 17 since 2012, representing 38% of the total number. The number of black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) faculty has increased from 29 to 36 during the same period. The College is committed to increasing the diversity of all employee groups.

109.   The College plans to introduce a Workload Allocation Model (WAM) in April 2019 to provide a fair, transparent and effective framework for the allocation and distribution of faculty workloads across the College.

110.   The College engages research students, interns and residents to deliver some teaching. To support them and ensure that teaching standards are maintained they undertake the TLiHE programme. This is compulsory for interns and residents, and for PhD students who teach for more than six hours per year. Any teaching undertaken by interns and residents is under supervision by a faculty member. PhD students are only permitted to deliver "lectures in specific and exceptional circumstances and never for core and mainstream topics".

Comments

111.   The College has recently implemented a new program of career tracks for faculty, whereby individual faculty can have personalized emphases on teaching, research or clinical aspects of their career. To better facilitate promotion amongst clinical faculty, a new rank of Associate Professor has been introduced as a mid-point between Senior Lecturer and Professor, which is specifically intended for clinical faculty (the equivalent rank for non-clinical 'teaching and research' faculty is Reader). Examples were shown of how the new tracking program and the introduction of the Associate Professor (A/P) rank has enabled clinicians to reach A/P or Professorial rank.

112.   Faculty turnover excluding retirement was 9.7% in 2017, a slight increase over 7.4% recorded in 2012. Uncertainty about Brexit and private sector pressure for specialists are the primary contributing factors. RVC has responded by implementing salary supplements for clinical specialists and a more nimble plan for recruiting replacement faculty.

113.   RVC has a robust professional development program for academic staff (faculty) coordinated by the RVC Staff Development Manager in collaboration with the Vice-Principal for Learning, Teaching and Assessment and the Director for Learning and Wellbeing. This is especially so for teaching through the required PG Certificate program, through 3 in-service training (INSET) days annually, and a variety of development programs through Human Resources (60 programs offered in 2017). This program is for staff and postgraduate students.

114.   RVC is engaged in an extensive Workload Allocation Model program to be implemented in April 2019 to provide a transparent, effective framework for allocation and distribution of faculty workloads across the college.

115.   RVC has established criteria for career advancement and has implemented a flexible framework for evaluating faculty performance that acknowledges the distribution of assigned academic responsibilities (teaching, research, service). This framework is recorded in an annually updated Individual Career Profile agreed upon by the faculty member and the department head.

116.   Residents and off-site practitioners who contribute to core teaching are required to undertake specified teacher training instruction. Intramural veterinary nursing staff also contribute to clinical and nursing teaching, and are similarly required to undertake teacher training instruction.

Suggestions

None

Recommendations

None

Standard 9 – Curriculum

The curriculum shall extend over a period equivalent to a minimum of four academic years, including a minimum of one academic year of hands-on clinical education. The curriculum and educational process should initiate and promote lifelong learning in each professional degree candidate.

The curriculum must be designed, resourced and managed to ensure all graduates have achieved the graduate attributes expected of a degree programme at level 7 in the European Qualifications Framework, the minimum training requirements in the European Directive 2013/55/EU on the mutual recognition of professional qualifications, and the RCVS Day One Competences

The learning outcomes for the programme must be explicitly articulated to form a cohesive framework.

Programme learning outcomes for the programme must be communicated to staff and students and:

- Underpin and ensure the effective alignment of all content, teaching, learning and assessment activities of the degree programme;

- Form the basis for explicit statements of the objectives and learning outcomes of individual units of study; and be reviewed, managed and updated to ensure they remain relevant, adequate and are effectively achieved.

The curriculum in veterinary medicine is the purview of the faculty of each college, but must be managed centrally based upon the mission and resources of the college. There must be sufficient flexibility in curriculum planning and management to facilitate timely revisions in response to emerging issues, and advancements in knowledge and technology. The curriculum must be guided by a college curriculum committee. The curriculum as a whole must be reviewed at least every seven (7) years. The majority of the members of the curriculum committee must be full-time faculty. Curriculum evaluations should include the gathering of sufficient qualitative and quantitative information to assure the curriculum content provides current concepts and principles as well as instructional quality and effectiveness.

The committee(s) must include effective student representation, and must also identify and meet teacher training needs for staff, maintaining currency of their skills and competence for future curriculum development.

The curriculum must provide:

1. an understanding of the central biological principles and mechanisms that underlie animal health and disease from the molecular and cellular level to organismal and population manifestations.

2. scientific, discipline-based instruction in an orderly and concise manner so that students gain an understanding of normal function, homeostasis, pathophysiology, mechanisms of health/disease, and the natural history and manifestations of important animal diseases, both domestic and foreign.

3. instruction in both the theory and practice of medicine and surgery applicable to a broad range of species. The instruction must include principles and hands-on experiences in physical and laboratory diagnostic methods and interpretation (including diagnostic imaging, diagnostic pathology, and necropsy), disease prevention, biosecurity, therapeutic intervention (including surgery), and patient management and care (including intensive care, emergency medicine and isolation procedures) involving clinical diseases of individual animals and populations. Instruction should emphasize problem solving that results in making and applying medical judgments.

4. instruction in the principles of epidemiology, zoonoses, food safety, the interrelationship of animals and the environment, and the contribution of the veterinarian to the overall public and professional healthcare teams.

5. clinical, epidemiological, pathophysiological and regulatory skills in management of animal diseases which are:

    - endemic to the UK and the EU,

    - endemic to and of special consideration in the country in which the school is located,

    - exotic to the UK and the EU and which are currently regarded as being of concern as potential emergency animal diseases or diseases of global veterinary significance,

    - significant emerging diseases.

6. entry level capability (to OIE standards) in preventative medicine/epidemiology, zoonoses, food safety and hygiene, regulation of animals and animal products, and management of the interrelationship of animals and the environment. This training must include experience in abattoirs.

7. professional level problem solving skills in evidence-based diagnosis and clinical management, and data and information management skills.

8. opportunities for students to learn how to acquire information from clients (e.g. history) and about patients (e.g. medical records), to obtain, store and retrieve such information, and to communicate effectively with clients and colleagues.

9. opportunities throughout the curriculum for students to gain an understanding of professional ethics, influences of different cultures on the delivery of veterinary medical services, delivery of professional services to the public, personal and business finance and management skills; and gain an understanding of the breadth of veterinary medicine, career opportunities and other information about the profession.

10. opportunities throughout the curriculum for students to gain and integrate an understanding of the important influences of diversity and inclusion in veterinary medicine, including the impact of implicit bias related to an individual's personal circumstance on the delivery of veterinary medical services.

11. knowledge, skills, values, attitudes, aptitudes and behaviours necessary to address responsibly the health and well being of animals in the context of ever-changing societal expectations.

12. fair and equitable assessment of student progress. The grading system for the college must be relevant and applied to all students in a fair and uniform manner.

13. self-management skills in identifying and meeting personal learning needs, maintaining well being and professional relationships.

Extra Mural Studies (EMS)

EMS must be an integral and structured part of the education and training of veterinary students. Veterinary schools must demonstrate how it is incorporated in the curriculum.

Evidence must be provided that extramural farm animal husbandry practical work is used within the curriculum to complement intramural studies to support students' attainment of comprehensive understanding of livestock and farm systems.

Intra-mural core teaching must be supported by extramural clinical studies.

There must be a system in place to enable EMS providers to provide feedback to the school on the performance of students during EMS and on the EMS programme.

There must be a member of the academic staff responsible for the overall supervision of all types of EMS, including liaison with EMS providers and ensuring all students secure required placements.

The school must have mechanisms in place to support students to take responsibility for their own learning during EMS, including preparing before each placement, setting learning objectives in consultation with tutors, being familiar with guidance provided by their university and RCVS for EMS, communicating effectively with placement providers before, during and after placements, and maintaining a reflective log of their EMS experience.

Background

117. The BVetMed curriculum is managed by a Curriculum Management Committee (CMC) that reports via the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Committee to the Academic Board. The CMC comprises up to 52 members including faculty, students and an external member. Curriculum deficiencies are identified through regular processes of faculty and student feedback, which are compiled into an Annual Quality Improvement Report (AQIR).

118. The BVetMed degree can be obtained by following 5 year, 4 year (graduate entry) or 6 year (Gateway) programmes. The didactic curriculum (3 years and one term) is integrated as a spiral into body system-based strands. In addition there are three non-body systems strands - Professional Studies, Principles of Science and Population Medicine and Veterinary Public Health (PMVPH). Following completion of the first term of fourth year, students undergo a period of "rotation preparation" before entering the 14 month clinical rotation phase of the programme. This phase consists of 22 weeks of core rotations, six weeks of tracking rotations and eight weeks of a research project.

119. There are 26 weeks of clinical EMS in Years 3-5. The final taught component of the programme consists of didactic electives.

120. Clinical rotations are undertaken either in facilities owned and managed by the College or in facilities owned by third parties that have entered into a contractual agreement with the College. All rotations have learning objectives mapped to Course Outcomes, RCVS Day One Competences and AVMA Competencies.

<u>Arrangements for teaching in abattoirs and premises for food production</u>

121. As part of the core farm animal rotations the students spend a morning at an abattoir in the south west of England and a visit to an integrated milk and cheese producer where food technology and food safety associated with dairy production systems are covered. The students also conduct a visit to a knacker's yard, where they also cover surveillance. As part of the FACS or pathology rotation, one day every two weeks includes a visit to a red meat commercial abattoir with an allocated cutting plant that is facilitated by Veterinary Public Health staff and includes a Veterinary Public Health seminar on outbreak investigation.

<u>Extra-Mural Studies (EMS)</u>

122. EMS is managed by the College's Directors of AHEMS and EMS, with day-to-day administration by the Academic Registry. Students can log and reflect on their acquisition of skills developed on AHEMS and EMS placements as well as communicate with their tutors about these skills through the recently developed online system, Folium.

Comments

123. A curriculum review (based on an 'evolution rather than revolution' approach) is currently in progress with a new curriculum planned for roll-out for new entrants only in 2020.

124. Necropsy caseload equates to ~3.6 cases per student (including examinations undertaken at the Synergy rural practice). The College informed the site team of plans to increase the Pathology rotation to 2 weeks from 1 week in order to enhance the necropsy experience for students.

125. The increase in the farm animal core clinical rotations (to 5 weeks) since the last accreditation visit is a positive development. The content of the supporting didactic curriculum in livestock production is, however, barely adequate. Moreover, whilst the food animal didactic curriculum is well-supported by active learning modalities (i.e. directed self-learning, CAL packages and clinical scenarios), there appears to be a limited number of live animal practical classes.

126. There is limited evidence of execution of practical post-mortem meat inspection. Student visits to abattoirs and food processing plants are short and superficial. The Long Compton facility is small for the student group size.

127. Student appreciation of the value of clinical EMS is high.

Suggestions

128. The College should re-examine the content of the didactic curriculum in food animals, with particular reference to the principles of animal production and the overall live animal practical

content throughout the program. It may be helpful to include the core rotation practitioners in these conversations.

129.   The College should increase the numbers and diversity of necropsy exposures for students.

130.   The College should explore opportunities for student exposure to a high throughput abattoir and a poultry processing plant.

Recommendations

131.   Students must have a more comprehensive abattoir experience, including hands-on post-mortem inspection.

Standard 10 – Research programmes.

The College must maintain substantial research activities of high quality that integrate with and strengthen the professional program. The college must demonstrate continuing scholarly productivity and must provide opportunities for any interested students in the professional veterinary program to be exposed to or participate in on-going high quality research. All students must receive training in the principles and application of research methods and in the appraisal and integration of research into veterinary medicine and animal health.

Veterinary schools must provide advanced postgraduate degree programmes, internships, residencies and continuing education programmes that complement and strengthen the veterinary degree programme and are relevant to the needs of the profession and community. Programmes and the numbers of students in them must be commensurate with the facilities, clinical and other resources and staff.

The research standard serves to ensure student exposure to and/or participation in performance of high quality research and ability to acquire, evaluate, and use new knowledge. Veterinary medical students must be introduced to how new knowledge is developed and disseminated and have access to participation in coursework and career development in research. Examples of learning objectives may include acquisition and evaluation of scientific literature, experimental and non-experimental design, critical analysis of data, scientific writing including writing of research proposals and submission of manuscripts for publication, and hands-on experience in bench, clinical, or field research.

Background

132. Over the last three years the College has received approximately £10m (c. €11m) per annum in research grant and contract income. The quality of the research undertaken and the research environment provided is assessed periodically though the UK's REF, with the latest exercise undertaken in 2014. The proportion of faculty rated as internationally world leading (4*) or internationally excellent (3*) increased to 79% from 55% in the previous 2008 exercise.

133. As part of Research Project 2 (RP2) students must submit an application for ethical approval of their project. This means they must summarise their project's aims and objectives and provide a succinct account of their project with sufficient detail for a review board to grant ethical approval.

134. Many RP2 projects are clinical research focused, but some involve participation in bench or field research. Students are allowed to apply to undertake either specific research projects proposed by particular supervisors, or outline an area in which they are interested in conducting a project. Each member of clinical faculty typically supervises between three and five students a year. Opportunities for supervision are also offered by colleagues conducting research in basic sciences. Students allocated to members of faculty who also have research active postgraduate students (including Master's students and PhD students) will often interact with those postgraduate students during the period of their project.

135. The submitted work that is assessed on completion of RP2 contributes to the final year assessment and is written in the form of a research paper. All students are instructed on how to prepare a manuscript in a format suitable for publication.

136. There are regular research seminars held at the College which are available for staff and students to attend. These are video-linked between campuses and promoted on the intranet. There are weekly seminars given by PhD students at the College and regular research seminars given either by members of faculty or external speakers. In addition to these regular research presentations there are also student research symposia arranged annually where poster presentations and seminars are given by the College's postgraduate students. All these events are promoted internally and students on the BVetMed programme are encouraged to attend.

Interns', residents' and research students' involvement in student teaching

137. The College offers one-year internships in the areas of small, large, exotic and production animals. It also offers residencies in various specialist disciplines in small animal, equine and production animals, anaesthesia, pathology, exotic animal, zoo health management and wildlife population health. Interns are postgraduate students registered for a postgraduate diploma (PG Dip) in veterinary clinical practice and residents are postgraduate students registered for a Masters in Veterinary Medicine (MVetMed) as well as being enrolled in a recognised specialty training programme.

138. Interns and residents work, as part of their studies, alongside BVetMed students in many of the College's clinical facilities and are actively involved in the clinical training of students. Residents are trained as educators in a module of their MVetMed degree entitled "Teaching and Learning in Higher Education". There are clearly defined responsibilities and roles for the BVetMed student, intern and resident which means they are able to work/study alongside each other without competing for clinical resources or research material.

139. Postgraduate research students may assist with skills training of the BVetMed students but are not directly involved in their instruction.

Other postgraduate training

140. The College regularly reviews the relevance and currency of its CPD offering and modifies it accordingly.

141. RVC CPD is one of the education partners of the London Vet Show and provides several of the lecture streams at the conference.

142. The College also offers assessment opportunities for a large number of Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Practice (CertAVP) modules validated by the RCVS.

Comments

143. Research programs span fundamental to translational/clinical science across a range of disciplines, but are concentrated in three main areas. A diverse funding stream of external research funding has decreased modestly (7.5%) over the past 5 years, but remains robust and faculty consistently engage in research with ~500 unique publications per year. Students receive core instruction in research methods and all then engage in two hypothesis-driven research

projects (a less extensive RP1 in year 2 and a more in-depth RP2 in year 4-5); both RP involve analyzing data, describing and presenting results, and discussing the implications and limitations of the findings, but RP2 is a more extensive project that requires obtaining original data under the guidance of a faculty mentor, collected after each student seeks and obtains all necessary ethical approvals. Two 4 week blocks are allocated for completion of RP2.

144. Robust postgraduate programs (internships, residencies) are offered in major specialties; Residents earn Masters degrees and have opportunity to pursue PhD programs. There is a robust PhD program in which ~½ are veterinarians (and about ¼ of those are graduates of the RVC). Interns and residents help teach the BVetMed students under faculty guidance and receive formal training in teaching methods. Postgraduate students at times help supervise BVetMed student research projects (RP2).

Suggestions

None.

Recommendations

None.

Standard 10b - Assessment

Management

The institution must ensure that there is a clearly identified structure within the school showing lines of responsibility for the assessment strategy to ensure coherence of the overall assessment regime and to allow the demonstration of progressive development across the programme towards entry level competence. The strategy must be underpinned by robust quality assurance mechanisms.

Policy and Regulation

The assessment tasks and grading criteria for each unit of study in the programme must be clearly identified, and available to students in a timely manner well in advance of the assessment.

Requirements to pass including the effect of barrier assessments must be explicit.

Mechanisms for students to appeal against assessment outcomes must be explicit.

The school must have a process in place to review assessment outcomes and to change assessment strategies when required.

Assessment methods and design

Programme learning outcomes covering the full range of professional skills and attributes must form the basis for assessment design and underpin decisions on progression.

Assessment must inform student learning and students must receive timely feedback.

Assessment load must be planned and managed to achieve appropriate workloads for students and staff.

Assessment strategies must allow the school to certify student achievement of learning objectives at the level of the programme and individual units of study.

Methods of formative and summative assessment must be valid and reliable and comprise a variety of approaches. Direct assessment of clinical skills (some of which may be on simulated patients), must form a significant component of the overall process of assessment in the clinical disciplines.

Assessment standards and quality assurance

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.

Schools must have 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.

The school must be able to demonstrate that there are appropriate measures in place to ensure that grades awarded reflect an appropriate standard of performance by students against the relevant learning objectives.

145. Governance and oversight of the College's assessment strategy lies with LTAC chaired by the Vice Principal (Learning, Teaching and Assessment). The TQC has oversight of assessment procedures, to ensure compliance with quality assurance processes. Policies, regulations, guidance and procedural information regarding exams and assessment are available on the College website.

146. A range of assessment methods are used across the curriculum including MCQ, Problem-solving questions, essays and orals in the preclinical curriculum, and MCQ, DOPS, OSCE, EMQ and long-answer written papers in the clinical phase. Critical and scientific thinking are assessed by the research project(s). A combination of formative and summative approaches are used to scaffold student learning and progression through the course.

147. Students' performance in each clinical rotation is graded under the following categories: Professional Activity; Practical Skills; Clinical Reasoning and Knowledge. Each of these areas is graded as 'Pass' or 'Fail', with the additional option to award a "cause for concern" grade.

148. The Practical Skills Examination (Finals summative OSCE) assesses a sample of clinical and communication skills. Student assessment workload is managed through the College's Guidance on Assessment Tariffs. Staff assessment workloads are managed by Heads of Department, their Departmental Teaching Coordinators and assisted by non-academic staff within the Examinations Office.

Ensuring fairness, validity and reliability

149. Guidelines relating to the production of examination papers are published on the College website.

150. Assessments are blueprinted by Year Leaders to ensure content validity. After comprehensive internal review, completed question papers are submitted to external examiners for further scrutiny.

151. Post-assessment item analysis data are scrutinised independently by the Examination Board Chair and one of the Directors of Assessment. And appropriate actions taken following academic discussion.

152. Standard setting of MCQ and EMQ papers is performed using a sound, internally developed approach. Internal examiner marking of free-text questions is scrutinised by objective (reliability statistics) and more subjective (sample marking) means.

153. External examiners moderate assessments to confirm they are fair, valid and reliable. External examiner reports are scrutinised by TQC and appropriate responses are required from Year Leaders, documented and published in their AQIR, with clear Actions and Outcomes. TQC is responsible for ensuring compliance with any changes. External Examiner policies, procedures and reports/responses can be found on the College website

Comments

154.   The College has adopted a clear and well-resourced approach to the management and academic oversight of assessment

155.   Robust standard setting procedures are used where appropriate.

156.   Students attend practical classes in animal handling in years 1 and 2 of the curriculum. Summative assessment of the animal handling skills learnt does not occur until after completion of AHEMS. These assessments are carried out in Year 3 using Direct Observation of Practical Skills (DOPS).

Recommendations

157.   The College must conduct some summative assessments of student animal handling skills to ensure student safety before they begin AHEMS placements.

Standard 11 – Outcomes assessment

Outcomes of the veterinary medical degree program must be measured, analysed, and considered to improve the program. New graduates must have the basic scientific knowledge, skills, and values to provide entry-level health care, independently, at the time of graduation. Student achievement must be included in outcome assessment. Processes must be in place to remediate students who do not demonstrate competence in one or more of the nine competencies.

The school must provide evidence that all of its graduates have (or for a new school, will have) achieved the level of competence required of an entry-level veterinarian (AVBC Attributes of Veterinary Graduates and RCVS Day 1 competences) and the program's stated learning outcomes.

Procedures must be established to review this evidence, and demonstrate implementation of change on the basis of such review. Outcomes of the review process must be communicated to relevant internal and external stakeholders.

The college should have in place a system to gather outcomes data on recent graduates to ensure that the competencies and learning objectives in the program result in relevant entry level competencies.

The college must have processes in place whereby students are observed and assessed, with timely documentation to assure accuracy of the assessment for having attained each of the following competencies:

1. comprehensive patient diagnosis (problem solving skills), appropriate use of diagnostic testing, and record management

2. comprehensive treatment planning including patient referral when indicated

3. anesthesia and pain management, patient welfare

4. basic surgery skills and case management

5. basic medicine skills and case management

6. emergency and intensive care case management

7. understanding of health promotion and biosecurity, prevention and control of disease including zoonoses, and principles of food safety

8. ethical and professional conduct; communication skills including those that demonstrate an understanding and sensitivity to how clients' diversity and individual circumstance can impact health care

9. critical analysis of new information and research findings relevant to veterinary medicine

Data to demonstrate outcomes of the educational and institutional program(s) may be collected by a number of means that may include, but not limited to, subjective and objective measures such as surveys, interviews, focus groups, self-assessments, observation and evaluation of skills and competencies. Data reported to the COE must be summarized for brevity.

The school also must use and present a process for the continuous improvement of the quality of the veterinary program

Background

<u>Clinical and practical competency</u>

158. Animal handling skills are formally assessed via Direct Observation of Procedural Skills (DOPS) in year 3 of the programme. Students must achieve a minimum of "competent" in each DOPS station from either the 1st, 2nd or 3rd opportunity in order to progress.

159. If feedback obtained from EMS placements regarding the students performance is unsatisfactory, the Director of EMS arranges a meeting with the student to discuss plans for improvement.

160. A formative OCSE with feedback is delivered in Year 4 of the programme, prior to commencement of clinical rotations. Once students have progressed to rotations, verbal feedback is provided informally on an ongoing basis with formative feedback at the mid-point of two-week rotation blocks with further feedback and their grade (Pass, Pass but with a cause for concern, Fail) at the end of the rotation. Any causes for concern are discussed with the student and their tutor. Failed students are required to re-take the rotation at a later point, prior to graduating.

<u>Graduate and Employer surveys</u>

161. The College conducts an annual survey of graduates 12 months after graduation and a survey of those who graduated five years earlier. Employer surveys are also carried out and overseen by TQC, resulting in changes to the curriculum such as increasing exotics and dentistry teaching, changes to professional skills curriculum and overall assessment strategy. Employment data are collected routinely via the Destination of Leavers of Higher Education (DLHE) survey.

<u>Faculty surveys</u>

162. A faculty survey was introduced in 2018 to gather feedback on adequacy of resources and student preparation for clinical years.

<u>Benchmarking</u>

163. The College was last reviewed in February 2015 and the QAA confirmed that academic standards, the quality of its student learning opportunities, and the quality of information about its learning opportunities all meet UK expectations. Additionally, the enhancement of student learning opportunities was commended.

<u>Attrition rates</u>

164. The College's attrition rate average over a five-year period for all entry routes does not exceed 20%. Attrition rates are monitored annually via the AQIR process for the BVetMed programme, including comparison via entry route. There is a higher attrition rate for those students entering the BVetMed via the widening participation Gateway programme.

Comments

165. The College has robust QA processes to review outcomes from graduate, employer and faculty surveys overseen by the Teaching Quality Committee. These outcomes inform curriculum

development. The college performs well in external reviews of provision as evidenced by QAA reviews and the Gold award in the recent Teaching Excellence Framework process.

166. Clinical competency outcomes are assessed by OSCEs, observation on rotations, EMQ, MCQ, written exams and student self-reflection. The College maps rotation learning objectives to the RCVS Day One Competences and the AVMA nine clinical competencies. Tracking of individual student performance across the clinical competences is recorded on spreadsheets with appropriate action taken where 'cause for concern' or 'fail' is noted.

167. Whilst the college appears to have adequate methods for assessing clinical competences, it does not have a method to systematically observe, record, and audit student achievement across the clinical year at the level of specific procedural competences.

Recommendations

168. The College must develop a robust method to consistently record, track, and audit student attainment of clinical competences by direct observation.

ESEVT Indicators

	Raw data from the last 3 full academic years	Year -1	Year -2	Year -3	Mean
1	n° of FTE academic staff involved in veterinary training	216	216	216	216
2	n° of undergraduate students	1295	1251	1211	1252
3	n° of FTE veterinarians involved in veterinary training	153	153	153	153
4	n° of students graduating annually	213	241	241	232
5	n° of FTE support staff involved in veterinary training	470	470	470	470
6	n° of hours of practical (non-clinical) training	483	483	483	483
7	n° of hours of clinical training	1120	1120	1120	1120
8	n° of hours of FSQ & VPH training	71	71	71	71
9	n° of hours of extra-mural practical training in FSQ & VPH	32	24	20	25
10	n° of companion animal patients seen intra-murally	27862	30508	32111	30160
11	n° of ruminant and pig patients seen intra-murally	113	89	102	101
12	n° of equine patients seen intra-murally	1101	1130	1176	1136
13	n° of rabbit, rodent, bird and exotic patients seen intra-murally	2139	2190	1661	1997
14	n° of companion animal patients seen extra-murally	3082	3036	2525	2881
15	n° of individual ruminants and pig patients seen extra-murally	4398	1654	1678	2577
16	n° of equine patients seen extra-murally	8632	7952	7701	8095
17	n° of visits to ruminant and pig herds	288	169	954	470
18	n° of visits of poultry and farmed rabbit units	0	24	10	11
19	n° of companion animal necropsies	328	376	359	354
20	n° of ruminant and pig necropsies*	300	225	258	261
21	n° of equine necropsies	70	68	61	66
22	n° of rabbit, rodent, bird and exotic pet necropsies	68	110	126	101
23	n° of FTE specialised veterinarians involved in veterinary training	102	102	102	102
24	n° of PhD graduating annually	29	24	29	27

* Includes 48 necropsies p.a. performed at Synergy Farm Health Rotation as corrected during visit

	Calculated Indicators from raw data	Establishment values	Median values[1]	Minimal values[2]	Balance[3]
I1	n° of FTE academic staff involved in veterinary training / n° of undergraduate students	0.172	0.16	0.13	0.046
I2	n° of FTE veterinarians involved in veterinary training / n° of students graduating annually	0.660	0.87	0.59	0.071
I3	n° of FTE support staff involved in veterinary training / n° of students graduating annually	2.029	0.94	0.57	1.462
I4	n° of hours of practical (non-clinical) training	483.000	905.67	595.00	-112.000
I5	n° of hours of clinical training	1120.000	932.92	670.00	450.000
I6	n° of hours of FSQ & VPH training	71.000	287.00	174.40	-103.400
I7	n° of hours of extra-mural practical training in FSQ & VPH	25.333	68.00	28.80	-3.467
I8	n° of companion animal patients seen intra-murally / n° of students graduating annually	130.188	70.48	42.01	88.179
I9	n° of ruminant and pig patients seen intra-murally / n° of students graduating annually	0.437	2.69	0.46	-0.026
I10	n° of equine patients seen intra-murally / n° of students graduating annually	4.902	5.05	1.30	3.604
I11	n° of rabbit, rodent, bird and exotic seen intra-murally / n° of students graduating annually	8.619	3.35	1.55	7.074
I12	n° of companion animal patients seen extra-murally / n° of students graduating annually	12.436	6.80	0.22	12.213
I13	n° of individual ruminants and pig patients seen extra-murally / n° of students graduating annually	11.122	15.95	6.29	4.828
I14	n° of equine patients seen extra-murally / n° of students graduating annually	34.942	2.11	0.60	34.347
I15	n° of visits to ruminant and pig herds / n° of students graduating annually	2.030	1.33	0.55	1.483
I16	n° of visits of poultry and farmed rabbit units / n° of students graduating annually	0.049	0.12	0.04	0.004
I17	n° of companion animal necropsies / n° of students graduating annually	1.529	2.07	1.40	0.129
I18	n° of ruminant and pig necropsies / n° of students graduating annually	1.127	2.32	0.97	0.156
I19	n° of equine necropsies / n° of students graduating annually	0.286	0.30	0.09	0.194
I20	n° of rabbit, rodent, bird and exotic pet necropsies / n° of students graduating annually	0.437	2.05	0.69	-0.255
I21*	n° of FTE specialised veterinarians involved in veterinary training / n° of students graduating annually	0.440	0.20	0.06	0.377
I22*	n° of PhD graduating annually / n° of students graduating annually	0.118	0.15	0.09	0.030
1	Median values defined by data from Establishments with Approval status in April 2016				
2	Recommended minimal values calculated as the 20th percentile of data from Establishments with Approval status in April 2016				

3	A negative balance indicates that the Indicator is below the recommended minimal value
*	Indicators used only for statistical purpose

University Response

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1 April 2019

Dear Jordan,

The Royal Veterinary College Joint Reaccreditation Visit November 2018 – Report Comments

Thank you for providing the final report, received 26 February 2019, on the Joint Reaccreditation Visit. Further to our pervious correspondence on the draft report, we hereby provide comments on the final version in anticipation of consideration at the April 2019 meeting of the RCVS Primary Qualifications Sub-Committee and May 2019 meeting of the Education Committee.

1) Commendations

We note the commendations relating to Standard 3, Physical Facilities, Standard 5, Information Resources, and Standard 6, Students, and are particularly gratified that our student-centred approach to delivery and design of both our estate and support services has been recognised. We will continue to engage our student body in future enhancements - of particular importance as we build on our recent Camden campus upgrade with a major redevelopment of our Hawkshead campus over the next three years.

2) Suggestions

We recognise the need to "continue our work in succession planning and support increased diversity within the College" as suggested for Standard 1, Organisation. We have continued to explore succession planning principles and practice in recent workshops and are committed to completing the actions contained within our Athena Swan action plan.

For Standard 3, Physical Facilities, we note the suggestion to "implement approaches to ensure adequate radiation safety monitoring at EMS sites" and will discuss an appropriate approach with other UK veterinary schools to devise and share best practice in this area.

Cont.,

We remain committed to the "innovation and development of e-learning tools and ideas supporting student learning" in order that we can meet the expectations of the student body and evolution of veterinary practice and will utilise our networks, including the Veterinary Schools Council, to realise further advancements.

We also understand the need to review both the didactic and practical content of our curriculum in relation to production animals, food safety and public health as suggested for Standard 9, Curriculum.

3) Recommendations

With regard to the recommendations within the report, we confirm that for Standard 3, Physical Facilities, we have already installed a barrier in the vehicle used to transport students on rotation at Kingston Maurward College and will ensure that all current and future College vehicles used for transporting students will be similarly equipped.

In response to the recommendation for Standard 9, Curriculum, to provide "a more comprehensive abattoir experience, including hands-on post-mortem inspection" we are currently assessing the required changes to our rotation schedule to accommodate an increase in this area and are already in initial discussions with potential commercial partners to support us in this provision.

We are also reviewing the earlier years of the programme to ensure we can conduct, at the earliest opportunity, summative DOPS assessments of students prior to embarking on AHEMS placements, as recommended for Standard 10b, Assessment.

We acknowledge the recommendation relating to Standard 11, Outcomes Assessment, and, in addition to the current assessment of clinical competence as outlined in the attached grid, we will introduce further direct observation of procedural competences at appropriate points in the rotation cycle. We would welcome further discussion with the RCVS to identify these in light of the expectations of an entry level veterinary surgeon role.

In conclusion, we thank the visiting panel for their time and considered views both during and after the visit. We recognise the significant effort that accreditation visits require and are highly appreciative of the panel's deliberations and reflections. The College is committed to continuous improvement and innovation; visits and external critique are welcomed as key opportunities to refine our offering for the benefit of both our students, staff and the wider profession.

With all best wishes,

Stuart W.J. Reid
Principal