Wrexham Glyndwr University

15 January 2020

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

Contents

List of Visitors

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Summary of the Visitors' findings

- Wrexham Glyndwr University was visited on 15 January 2020 for consideration of accreditation for the following programme:

    FdSc Veterinary Nursing

- The programme has been developed and designed following a review of existing provision and a perceived market demand. The University team were very committed to the delivery of a higher education Veterinary Nursing programme in North Wales.

The visiting panel found the following:

- The programme team are to be **commended** for the variety of modules included, specifically the inclusion of modules aimed at the development of veterinary nurses above and beyond the clinical requirements.

- The team are to be **commended** for their knowledge, energy, drive and enthusiasm while developing and presenting the programme for accreditation and their commitment to widening higher education provision in Wales.

- The University team are to be **commended** for the protocol utilised for the placing of students onto their placements using Targetconnect.

- The staffing of the programme was discussed at length and highlighted concerns in relation to delivery of every accreditation standard, however, the University took this feedback on board and is committed to addressing the concerns identified.

Standard 1 – Organisation

Suggestions

None

Actions

a. Confirmation by WGU that it accepts changes to the validated programme requested by the RCVS.

Standard 2 – Sustainability

Suggestions

None

Actions

a. Resubmit proposed budget, including reference to a full time member of staff for the Clinical Placement Support Tutor role and other lecturers delivering on the programme, as well as further consideration of financial provision for placement support and visits.
b. Undertake more thorough market research to demonstrate the need for the course in Wales, and how the course will recruit students who would not have otherwise studied at other Universities. Ideally include more detailed statistics regarding progression from local areas.

Standard 3 – Qualification design and delivery

Suggestions

a. Consider moving the more advanced aspects of the pharmacology content to sit within the Emergency, Critical Care and Specialised Nursing module.
b. Consider incorporating more academic research and writing assessment components throughout the programme.
c. Amend all VN specific literature to gender neutral pronouns.
d. Consider the requirement for a group presentation to be completed as a formative assessment, instead of a summative assessment.

Actions

a. Provide clear guidance to staff and students regarding the timeframe for completion of the NPL and practical training hours.
b. Review the weighting allocated to the OSCE within the Clinical Skills and Professional Practice module.
c. Provide Module Handbooks for the VN programme.
d. Update module reading lists and learning outcomes, as detailed within the report.
e. Review placement visit strategy in line with amendments to staffing.

Standard 4 – Qualification quality management

Suggestions

  a. Consider delivery of a Fundamentals of Biology programme in order to prepare students who have not completed A-Level Biology.

Actions

  a. Confirm which aspects of the programme are going to be taught by veterinary nursing specific experts.
  b. Provide details and CPD and CV record of External Examiner once recruited.
  c. Provide up to date CPD and CV records for all members of staff delivering on the VN programme.
  d. Review the number of days and locations of work experience required to gain entrance to the programme.
  e. Amend reference to 2,990 GLH in the Programme Specification.
  f. Review Clinical Placement Support Tutor role and provide a person specification and role outline.

Standard 5 – Assessment

Suggestions

None

Actions

  a. Glyndwr University to provide a timeline showing how and when it will develop OSCE station documentation. An update must be given to the RCVS each quarter.
  b. Review and amend OSCE Procedures Handbook as indicated within the report.
  c. Review the viability of the Borderline Regression Method and justify the method of standard setting for potentially low numbers.
  d. Develop a quality assurance policy and procedure document, detailing relevant quality assurance processes for the programme as a whole and specifically the NPL.

Standard 6 – Centre approval and quality assurance

Suggestions

None

Actions

  a. Glyndwr University to provide a timeline showing how and when it will develop OSCE station documentation. An update must be given to the RCVS each quarter.

b. Review and amend OSCE Procedures Handbook as indicated within the report.
c. Review the viability of the Borderline Regression Method and justify the method of standard setting for potentially low numbers.
d. Develop a quality assurance policy and procedure document, detailing relevant quality assurance processes for the programme as a whole and specifically the NPL.

Standard 1 – Organisation

> **A senior member of AO or HEI staff (the official correspondent) responsible for the overall delivery of RCVS-approved licence to practise qualifications, in veterinary nursing, must be designated.**
>
> **Details of the location(s) at which the qualification is to be administered must be provided.**
>
> **Licence to practise qualifications must be accredited by a UK University/HEI or by an AO recognised by the UK national regulatory authorities.**
>
> **Applications must be made by the principal or chief executive of the AO or HEI.**

1.1   The proposed delivery address for the licence to practise qualification is:

Glyndwr University:
Holywell Road
Northrop
Mold
Flintshire
CH7 6AA

1.2   The completed application for accreditation by the RCVS has been submitted by Professor Maria Hinefelaar, Vice Chancellor of Wrexham Glyndwr University. The official correspondent is Dr Jane Furness, Programme Leader.

1.3   The proposed programme title is Foundation Degree in Veterinary Nursing (FdScVN)

1.4   The programme was validated by Wrexham Glyndwr University (WGU) on 5 November 2019. The validation report was provided following the RCVS event. There were three conditions of validation which appear to have been met. It should be noted that following the RCVS accreditation key documents such as the Programme Specification and Module Specifications will need minor changes. These are detailed within this report. Confirmation will be required that the University has accepted these changes to the programme.

1.5   The University shares some of its facilities with Coleg Cambria but there is clear signage showing which areas are University owned. This means that there is no doubt that students attend WGU.

1.6   The organisational structure is detailed below:

Dr Caroline Hughes ASSOCIATE DEAN (Student Engagement)	Prof Mandy Robbins ASSOCIATE DEAN (Research)	Madi Ruby ASSOCIATE DEAN (Enterprise, Partnerships & Employability)		Sue Horder ASSOCIATE DEAN (Academic Affairs)	Melanie Jackson FACULTY BUSINESS MANAGER
Criminology Dr Caroline Gorden Fiona Wilson Prof Iolo Madoc-Jones Joanne Prescott (GTA) Dr Karen Washington-Dyer Dr Sarah Dubberley Tegan Brierley-Sollis **Policing** Andy Crawford Andy Jones Darren Jacks **Therapeutic Child Care** Dr Vivienne Dacre **Social Work** David Nulty Dr Dawn Jones Liz Lefroy Nick Hoose Dr Wulf Livingston **Public Health & Well-Being** Catherine Hewins Justine Mason Nina Patterson Rachel Byron Dr Sharon Wheeler **Sports** Chelsea Moore Chris Hughes Jonathan Hughes Julian Ferrari Richard Lewis (Tech) Sara Hilton Tom King	**Psychology** Amy Curtis Emily Karim (GTA) Fern Mitchell (Admin) Gwennan Haf Barton (Tech) Dr Jo Turley Josh Payne Dr Libby Gaskell Dr Natalie Roch Rebecca Reid (GTA) Dr Sara Wheeler Dr Shubha Sreenivas Tom Crawford (GTA) **Youth & Community** Gillian Wilde Hayley Douglas Jess Achilleos Sally Baker **Counselling** Jackie Raven Ed Hewitt-Symonds	**Nursing** Alison Williams Angela Williams Dr Chris O'Grady Deborah Cheadle Diana Hughes-Morris Eleri Mills Gilly Scott Helen Smith Janet Gargiulo Jayne Beech Jenny Jacobsen (Tech) Dr Joanne Pike Dr Nikki Lloyd-Jones *Rebecca Jones* Rhiannon Griffiths-Williams Teresa Davies Victoria Graham Yolanda Evans **Occupational Therapy** Bethan Owen-Booth Dr Helen Carey Lauren Porter Liz Cade Neil Robdale Neil Roberts Rhiannon MacPherson	**North Wales Business School** Dr Alexis Mason Dr Ben Binsardi Chunmei Guo Dr Donglin Pei Delyth Wyndham Emma Taylor Gaenor Roberts Prof Graham Jackson Harry Houlden Dr Jan Green Marcus Hansen Neil Pritchard Owen Dale Dr Sarah Evans **Physiotherapy** Julie Wilkins Karen Cartwright Madeleine Nicholson **Complementary Medicine** *Daniel Morris* Gemma Jones Dr Richard Chamberlain Steve Warburton Victoria O'Donnell	**Education & PCET** Abigail Schwarz Chris Taylor Emma Constantine David Vittle Thomas Helen Coleman Jo Williams John Luker Judith Ellwood Julian Ayres Karen Rhys-Jones Kelly Smith Thomas Llywarch (Tech) **Childhood Studies** Gillian Danby Liz Sheen **Land-based Studies** Angela Winstanley Denise Yorke Dr Jane Furness Dr Tamsin Young	**Faculty Office** Rachel Jones Nicola Collins

Suggestions

None

Actions

    a. Confirmation by WGU that it accepts changes to the validated programme requested by the RCVS.

Standard 2 – Sustainability

> **Finances must be demonstrably adequate to sustain the educational programmes.**
>
> **AOs and HEIs must be able to demonstrate that the delivery of the proposed qualification is cost effective.**
>
> **AOs and HEIs must demonstrate that there is a sufficient need for all new qualification(s).**

2.1   There is an initial aim to recruit fifteen students onto the programme with an intention to increase this over time. Applications to the programme currently exceed this. WGU confirmed that at six students or less the programme would become unviable, but based on the current applications the University is confident this will not be an issue.

2.2   It was unclear from the accreditation application how the programme will increase the number of Registered Veterinary Nurses (RVNs). WGU explained that national pride means that degrees delivered at Glyndwr University tend to attract local students, and thus there was evidence that students choose the University and then select a course. This in turn means that with a local provision available, students who may not have had the opportunity to become veterinary nurses in the past would now have that option. The evidence to support this is required.

2.3   WGU suggested that staffing in Welsh veterinary practices may currently be impacted by limited provision in Wales, as students attending other UK based universities may not return back to work in Wales once qualified. WGU felt that by keeping students in Wales while they complete their studies could provide an increase in veterinary nurses working in Wales and increase the supply of RVNs to Welsh practices once qualified. The evidence to support this is required.

2.4   WGU explained that it also intends to market the programme in Northern Ireland where they already have strong links. There are close transport links with both Belfast and Dublin.

2.5   The programme will also be marketed to students attending Coleg Cambria, which delivers animal science courses. Two of the four students met by the Visitors confirmed that they would have chosen a Veterinary Nursing degree programme had there been one available at WGU.

2.6   WGU is confident in its ability to deliver Veterinary Nursing to a high standard following excellent results in the 2019 National Student Survey – the overall satisfaction score from students for the Animal Science degree programme was 100%. The University is commended for this exceptional feedback from students.

2.7   Although WGU had provided a thorough financial overview, with budgets and costings for the programme clearly identified, the Visitors did not feel that the allocation of funds for staffing was sufficient. This was particularly relevant for the Clinical Placement Support Tutor role, which had been identified as a part-time member of staff within the budget. The Visitors advised WGU that with the workload identified for the Clinical Placement Support Tutor, the

University should be looking to employ someone on a full-time basis and the budget needed to be updated to reflect that and other staffing considerations for the programme. Additionally, the budgeting for placement support and visits was unrealistic and requires further consideration, especially with the proposal of placement availability in Northern Ireland.

2.8   The Visitors questioned the rationale for the development of a Foundation Degree programme as opposed to a Bachelor's Degree programme. WGU confirmed that it had considered the development and delivery of a Bachelor's Degree, however, it felt that starting the provision at level 6 did not align with the current higher education provision offered at WGU and it was keen to explore further progression opportunities for RVNs within its portfolio in the future.

Suggestions

None

Actions

a.   Resubmit proposed budget, including reference to a full time member of staff for the Clinical Placement Support Tutor role and other lecturers delivering on the programme, as well as further consideration of financial provision for placement support and visits.

b.   Undertake more thorough market research to demonstrate the need for the course in Wales, and how the course will recruit students who would not have otherwise studied at other Universities. Ideally include more detailed statistics regarding progression from local areas.

Standard 3 – Qualification design and delivery

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

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

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

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

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

3.1.   The qualification was designed by WGU with input from veterinary nurses working in practice. An RVN who has experience delivering VN qualifications at several universities attended the University validation event and provided further advice on the design of the programme.

3.2   The proposed programme contains six level four modules delivered in the first two semesters of year one and the first semester of year 2. Six level five modules are delivered in the final semester of year two and the final two semesters in year three. Each module is worth 20 credits.

3.3   The Visitors suggested that the introduction to pharmacology and pharmacodynamics within the Foundations of Nursing Practice module was more than an introduction, and further teaching may be required at a more advanced level. One learning outcome covered all of the following requirements: pharmacology terminology, drug interactions, adverse reactions, VMD procedures, drug formulations, drug groups, handling and legislation, veterinary surgeons direction, prescribing cascade, prescriptions, labelling, dispensing, storage and disposal, controlled drugs, calculations of drugs, recording and documentation, client compliance and the nurses role. The Visitors therefore proposed that some of the more advanced aspects of the pharmacology content could be included in the Emergency, Critical Care and Specialised

Nursing module, which will reduce the knowledge requirement for the learning outcome as well as allowing students to further develop their understanding at a higher academic level.

3.4 It was clearly identified within the Clinical Skills and Professional Practice module that students must complete 1,800 hours of work placement and their Nursing Progress Log (NPL) before they can enter the OSCE. However, it was unclear how far in advance of the OSCE examination these elements of the programme need to be completed in order for quality assurance to be completed. It is essential that this is clearly indicated to students and staff alike.

3.5 Within the Clinical Skills and Professional Practice module the OSCE is allocated 70% of the module marks. It was unclear how this would be applied and the Visitors felt that the provision of a weighting for this component may skew the overall module outcome. WGU is invited to review this and consider a 0% weighting for the OSCE with a pass/fail requirement.

3.6 The Visitors were advised that the assessment resit period is in August which will allow for an October graduation.

3.7 Students spend their first two semesters at university, which allows them to settle into student life at the University and gives an opportunity for them to be prepared for clinical placement. The students who met with the Visitors during the accreditation event confirmed that they felt fully integrated into the student lifestyle, and they had excellent access to the Wrexham campus, with a free shuttle bus available to them at least three times per day.

3.8 The programme team were commended for their utilisation of varied assessment methodologies, however, the Visitors were concerned in relation to the lack of academic research and academic writing. This concern was based upon potentially leaving graduates insufficiently prepared for progressing onto postgraduate qualifications, with only five out of 25 assessments based around academic writing. The academic writing requirements for assessments appeared to be primarily focused towards the end of the programme, although WGU confirmed that academic writing is introduced in semester one.

3.9 The Visitors queried the inclusion of a group presentation as a summative assessment, discussing that it possibly lends itself more to a formative assessment. Whilst group work can help develop team work, team work can also be promoted in other ways, such as on placement and without a summative mark being awarded. WGU is invited to consider whether the group presentation should be moved to a formative assessment, with the summative assessment perhaps either an individual presentation or an alternative assessment entirely.

3.9 The module descriptors did not clearly identify how students would be provided with feedback following submission of formative assessments. WGU confirmed that this would be clarified within the Module Handbooks, which were under development for the VN programme.

3.10 The module content, aims and learning outcomes required edits and minor rewords, as detailed below. WGU is required to fully consider the FHEQ level of the modules and ensure the learning outcomes sit within Bloom's taxonomy. Additionally, all modules need a more extensive indicative and suggested reading list.

- Diagnostic Procedures and Parasitology: unclear how LO 3 'review lab tests' could be assessed in an in-class test – consider changing to identify and discuss.
- Foundations of Patient Care: assessment of a student's ability to 'review' would be challenging to assess during in-class test – consider changing to identify.
- Nursing the Medical and Infectious Patient: clarification required on what the assessment 'Infectious versus medical case comparison assessment' means.
- Anaesthesia and Surgical Nursing Practice: as the first module at level 5, the Visitors felt there was a significant gap between the learning outcomes within the previous module. Additionally, the requirement for students to 'critically evaluate' perhaps sits better within a level 6 module, so WGU may wish to change this wording to review.

3.11   WGU confirmed that it had a policy in place regarding the use of gender specific personal pronouns. It is currently working though all documentation to make the necessary amendments. WGU confirmed that documents specific to the Veterinary Nursing provision would be amended before the start of the programme.

3.12   The programme is fully referenced to the RCVS Day One Skills (DOS) and Day One Competences (DOC) for Veterinary Nurses. It should be noted that the QAA benchmarks had also been referenced. The Visitors explained that subject to the recent update to the UK Quality Code for Higher Education, the subject benchmark statements are not a mandatory requirement but can be used as guidance for programme development. However, it is good practice to have the QAA benchmark statements included and referenced, as in this case.

3.13   A derogation was in place for all modules, ensuring no compensation within or between modules with RCVS DOC or DOS components. This was confirmed during validation of the programme.

3.14   Students commence their first work placement in April of year one. The programme is designed to make sure that students will be able to demonstrate basic skills such as communication, hygiene and animal handling before they go into their first placement.

3.15   The Visitors queried why a block placement approach had been identified, and whether the delivery team foresaw potential issues with overlap of placements in year 1 and 2 and year 2 and 3. Training practices (TPs) may not want, or be able, to offer placements to multiple students at the same time, which can hinder year 2 and 3 students in finding subsequent placements. Upon further discussion, WGU assured the Visitors that TPs who have already agreed to support students did not consider this to be an issue. The block placements can make it difficult for students to fully integrate into practices, however this is going to be addressed during Clinical Coach (CC) training and with coaching contracts, so that the practice and student can build a relationship from the beginning of the placement.

3.16   Placement support was identified as being delivered by the Clinical Placement Support Tutor. WGU proposes visiting all students twice during each block, but as the programme grows, the current staffing proposals would make this number of visits unfeasible. WGU is required to review the allocation of work identified for the Clinical Placement Support Tutor (further detailed within Standard 4) and ensure that its proposed placement strategy is feasible.

3.17   Concern was raised by the Visitors that if students were sick or had other unexpected leave during their clinical placement then they would not meet the requirement to progress. WGU felt that there was ample time during non-study periods for students to make up this time. However, it should be noted that practices may not be willing to accommodate students outside of the normal placement pattern and if this is agreed for a student, WGU must ensure there are sufficient staff available to support the student. This may put additional strain on staffing and must be considered on a case by case basis.

Suggestions

a. Consider moving the more advanced aspects of the pharmacology content to sit within the Emergency, Critical Care and Specialised Nursing module.
b. Consider incorporating more academic research and writing assessment components throughout the programme.
c. Amend all VN specific literature to gender neutral pronouns.
d. Consider the requirement for a group presentation to be completed as a formative assessment, instead of a summative assessment.

Actions

a. Provide clear guidance to staff and students regarding the timeframe for completion of the NPL and practical training hours.
b. Review the weighting allocated to the OSCE within the Clinical Skills and Professional Practice module.
c. Provide Module Handbooks for the VN programme.
d. Update module reading lists and learning outcomes, as detailed within the report.
e. Review placement visit strategy in line with amendments to staffing.

Standard 4 – Qualification quality management

> **AOs and HEIs must be compliant with all criteria stipulated by their accrediting national regulatory authority.**
>
> **Student selection criteria must be in place including the minimal acceptable qualifications to be achieved prior to commencing the qualification. The number of students registered for the qualification must be consistent with the resources available including the availability of sufficient Training Practices to enable the required clinical experience to be undertaken**
>
> **AOs and HEIs must allow the RCVS access to people, premises and records relevant to the management and delivery of the accredited qualification, and must cooperate with RCVS quality assurance activities in relation to the delivery and assessment of such qualification(s).**
>
> **AOs and HEIs must employ sufficient suitably qualified staff to administer and quality assure the qualification(s).**
>
> **Quality assurance personnel must demonstrate, maintain and provide evidence to RCVS of relevant occupational and academic competence in relation to the evaluation of assessment materials and decisions.**

4.1   Currently there is only one Registered Veterinary Nurse employed to deliver aspects of the proposed programme. Other highly qualified staff with animal science backgrounds are named as module leaders for some modules that contain content specific to veterinary nurses. It would therefore be difficult for this content to be taught by someone who does not hold a veterinary nursing qualification and have experience working in that environment. WGU confirmed that module leaders do not teach the entire content of their module, guest lecturers would be appointed to assist with this. This was not clear in the application and WGU is required to confirm which aspects of the programme will be taught by veterinary nursing experts.

4.2   CV and CPD records were provided for most of the delivery team, however, these were not all up to date or providing sufficient detail on educational training and development. WGU confirmed that all new staff undergo stringent educational training and are regularly updated. Evidence of this is required via the provision of up to date CV and CPD records for all staff delivering on the VN programme.

4.3   A Clinical Skills tutor has been identified, although this individual appears to have no formal educational experience or training. As above, WGU was confident that its process of inducting and supporting all staff will ensure that this individual is fully prepared for the role.

4.4   WGU confirmed that consideration has been given to co-teaching with related subjects, although this would require review once the programme is established. Currently, the proposal indicates that all veterinary nurse teaching is separate. In order not to overload their

staff, WGU utilises a workload allocation model, so even with separate teaching, WGU is confident that they have appropriately allocated their staff.

4.5   The role of the Clinical Placement Support Tutor has not yet been recruited for, but based on the workload for this role, WGU was advised to ensure this is recruited as a full-time position. WGU was hopeful that upon recruiting someone with significant experience, many aspects of the programme, specifically management of placements and quality assurance of the NPL would be well managed. However, should an appointment be made to a less experienced person, WGU was advised to consider mentorship and collaboration with an existing higher education programme to ensure those aspects do not become problematic.

4.6   The programme is designed with a minimum of 200 hours practical teaching delivered in the university. The clinical facilities for this aspect of delivery were viewed and found to be exceptional. WGU is to be commended for the financial and time resource it has already committed to the development of this programme.

4.7   The RCVS visitors were impressed with the QAA reports and 100% student satisfaction identified within the National Student Survey 2019 for overall course satisfaction in relation to Animal Science.

4.8   The Northop campus is a small campus with around 100 students. Students can access student health and wellbeing services at all campuses if required. The Student Health and Wellbeing team are based at the Wrexham campus but they visit Northrop on a weekly basis and the students met with confirmed that this was sufficient.

4.9   The University is currently in the process of recruiting the external examiner. Details including an updated CV and CPD record must be provided to the RCVS once the recruitment is confirmed. There is a comprehensive handbook for External Examiners, an Academic Quality Handbook for external examining and a detailed process around the appointment of examiners.

4.10   Entry requirements are published in the programme specification. These requirements reference the work experience details that students need to complete prior to application. The current requirements stipulate five days' work experience in a veterinary practice, which the Visitors queried as being extraordinarily low and not encouraging potential students to identify with the role of RVN. The Visitors strongly suggested that this time period should be increased and include work in other animal environments. This may allow students to have a better understanding of the RVN role and the programme requirements, which may in turn ensure students apply who are genuinely committed to qualifying and gaining RVN status.

4.11   The Programme Specification also contains detail of the 48 tariff points required for entrance onto the programme. The university confirmed that this did not necessarily focus on particular subjects, although the Visitors discussed that without the underpinning knowledge and understanding of Biology, students may struggle to grasp the fundamentals of anatomy and physiology, which is critical to all aspects of veterinary nursing. It was agreed that the WGU

would consider delivering a 20 credit Foundations in Biology course over the summer break, which would be free of charge.

4.12   On page 5 of the Programme Specification document there is an indication that the degree has a required minimum of 2,990 hours spent as Guided Learning Hours (GLH). However, there is no requirement for 2,990 GLH, the 2,990 hours requirement refers to total training for veterinary nurses, 1,800 hours of which must be spent in a TP. WGU is required to amend the documentation to reflect this.

Suggestions

a.   Consider delivery of a Fundamentals of Biology programme in order to prepare students who have not completed A-Level Biology.

Actions

a.   Confirm which aspects of the programme are going to be taught by veterinary nursing specific experts.
b.   Provide details and CPD and CV record of External Examiner once recruited.
c.   Provide up to date CPD and CV records for all members of staff delivering on the VN programme.
d.   Review the number of days and locations of work experience required to gain entrance to the programme.
e.   Amend reference to 2,990 GLH in the Programme Specification.
f.   Review Clinical Placement Support Tutor role and provide a person specification and role outline.

Standard 5 – Assessment

Qualification assessment strategies must be appropriate, valid and fair. A pass must be achieved in each assessment assessing the RCVS Day One Competences for Veterinary Nurses and RCVS Day One Skills for Veterinary Nurses.

Reasonable adjustment, mitigating circumstances, fitness to practise policies and an appeals procedure must be in place, taking into account the licence to practise requirement for all students to achieve all competences contained in the RCVS Day One Competences for Veterinary Nurses and RCVS Day One Skills for Veterinary Nurses.

Mechanisms must be in place to allow Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL) to be taken into consideration.

Appropriate security arrangements must be in place to safeguard the integrity of assessment processes.

The design and quality assurance of assessments must be carried out by personnel who are specifically qualified to execute these functions.

There must be procedures in place to maximise the fairness, validity and reliability of assessment outcomes, including but not limited to academic peer review of assessment content, proofing of scripts, supervision and invigilation, maintenance of records and moderation processes.

There must be appropriate moderation processes in place to ensure parity within and between individual units of study, across the programme, with other institutions; and to ensure that each student is fairly treated.

All modules or units of a qualification that address the RCVS Day One Competences for Veterinary Nurses and RCVS Day One Skills for Veterinary Nurses must include unseen independent examination as an element of the assessment strategy.

Independently assessed Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE), or a similarly robust, objective and evidence-based form of examination, must be employed to test the safe and effective acquisition of clinical skills.

Practical assessment must be carried out by individuals who are specifically qualified to evaluate practical skills and performance, and who have sufficient occupational experience and qualifications to support safe and effective judgements of clinical competence.

5.1   The pass mark for the written examination and assessments will be 40%. The programme leader indicated that they had investigated methods of standard setting suitable for written examinations but had felt that these would be difficult to apply. WGU is confident that it will be able to apply mechanisms to ensure that students who are competent will achieve a mark of 40% or over and those who are not yet competent will achieve a mark below 40%. WGU must ensure that that the method of setting the pass mark is defensible.

5.2   It was unclear from the application what the difference was between an 'Examination' and an 'In class test'. It was explained that 'Examinations' were set in discrete weeks set by the WGU. These examinations are held in large halls at the Wrexham Campus. 'In-class' tests are exactly the same as 'Examinations' but they are set locally at an appropriate time. The use of 'In class' tests' means that the course team can plan these to coincide with the end of a module and students will not need to sit examinations during their placement time. It was confirmed that the same regulations are followed for both the 'Examinations' and 'In class' tests.

5.3   WGU has in place a comprehensive guide detailing how examinations / in class tests are delivered.

5.4   The Academic Regulations indicate that students whose first language is not English or Welsh are permitted to bring their own basic dictionary. The university confirmed that a basic dictionary was one that contained a direct translation only and no definition.

5.5   The Visitors queried the availability of the programme delivery in Welsh, however, WGU confirmed that the delivery will be in English but students may complete their assessments in Welsh if they choose. There is a translation service available at WGU for this purpose, and any assessments completed in Welsh will be translated for review by the External Examiner. Both staff and students were clear that whilst this is offered and available, it is not common practice for any university student to access this.

5.6   WGU has robust Fitness to Study and Fitness to Practise documentation, as well as transparent guidance on appeals, academic misconduct and extenuating circumstances. The Visitors all agreed that the documentation was sufficiently clear to allow students to follow it correctly.

5.7   WGU submitted a draft of its policies and procedures to the RCVS for comment well ahead of the accreditation event. They also attended OSCEs delivered by other organisations. The proposed policy and procedures are well thought out. It is envisaged that the documents will be amended as the team commence work on developing examination materials and have a run through of the process. In particular it is suggested that WGU consider the following:

- The OSCE Procedures Handbook contains a section on the development of the examination blueprint – within that there is a reference indicating that an overall examination length in the region of 3-4 hours is sufficient to achieve reliability. The proposed examination is around 90 minutes in length. This type of statement could ultimately generate appeals from students so it is best removed from the document. The University should ensure that at an early stage it uses a mechanism to ensure that its examination is reliable.
- Individual steps within the OSCE stations will be weighted. There is an indication that steps will be weighted between zero and five. It is not clear why a step would be weighted zero, thus WGU is advised to consider that a minimum of 1 mark is available for each step.

- Throughout the policy and procedure documents there is reference made to other documents such as a confidential statements and student labels. It would be useful if examples of these were included as an annex to the documents.
- There is an indication that there will be a mock OSCE in year two of the programme. It is unclear if this is solely for the purpose of the RCVS or if it will continue for other cohorts.
- The university should ensure at the earliest opportunity that their proposed method of standard setting will be the most appropriate, given the expected low number of students in the initial years of the programme.

5.8   The OSCE blueprint is in development. This will be completed as OSCE stations are finalised.

5.9   One OSCE station was provided as an example. In order to deliver the examination the University will need to further include scenarios and marking criteria. The team should also make sure that specific instructions are provided detailing how the OSCE stations should be set up, the equipment required and specific instructions for the examiner. The team should also consider how they will ensure that the OSCE stations are suitable for the level of the qualification and prevent rote learning. It is also advisable that where a specific breed is named in the station, the University should ensure that a model is available to represent that breed.

5.10   The application did not sufficiently evidence the proposal for quality assurance of the NPL; when this will take place, what this will include, who is responsible for this, how it is monitored and progression flagged. WGU confirmed that it anticipates this aspect of the programme will be developed by the Clinical Placement Support Tutor, who has not yet been recruited. As previously identified, the Visitors were concerned that should WGU not recruit a member of staff with sufficient experience to develop and deliver this aspect of the programme, the programme as a whole may become untenable. WGU is therefore required to devise and develop a quality assurance policy and procedure document, which will allow the newly recruited Clinical Placement Support Tutor to understand what the programme requires and this can then be developed as the programme evolves. WGU is advised to consider seeking support from existing higher education provision to ensure this is developed to the appropriate standard.

Suggestions

None

Actions

a. Glyndwr University to provide a timeline showing how and when it will develop OSCE station documentation. An update must be given to the RCVS each quarter.
b. Review and amend OSCE Procedures Handbook as indicated within the report.
c. Review the viability of the Borderline Regression Method and justify the method of standard setting for potentially low numbers.
d. Develop a quality assurance policy and procedure document, detailing relevant quality assurance processes for the programme as a whole and specifically the NPL.

Standard 6 – Centre approval and quality assurance

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

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

AOs and HEIs must conduct a minimum of one site visit to each approved Centre/delivery site and/or its affiliated Training Practices, annually, based on a documented risk assessment policy.
Centres delivering a licence to practise qualification must be notified to the RCVS.

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

6.1   The delivery of the proposed programme will be from the Northop campus, a satellite campus of Wrexham University. However, although in different locations it was clear from the application and the University representation at the accreditation that there are strong links between the two sites. As a main delivery site of WGU, the Northop campus is not subject to additional approval for delivery.

6.2   WGU is aiming to recruit 16 TPs initially, which will provide one spare placement should the programme recruit the proposed 15 students. WGU is required to provide confirmation of this number prior to delivery of the programme.

6.3   The delivery team confirmed that Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) have been signed by five placements, which are likely to offer eight placements between them. The MOUs were fit for purpose and covered all requirements relating to the support of placement students.

6.4   The TP approval process was clear and had sufficient documentation to allow a WGU visitor to make an informed decision as to whether the practice would be suitable as a TP. The Visitors did recommend that WGU consider utilising tick boxes for the clinical section of the form, in order to reduce the amount of writing required and thus speed up the process.

6.5   The Visitors advised the University to ensure that students were integrated in to the practice team, which will hopefully ensure they would get the most from the experience. It was also suggested that students should not be prevented from receiving payment while they were in placement and documents indicating that placement would be unpaid should be amended.

6.6   A suitable TP risk assessment was evidenced within the application, however, it was unclear how TPs would be further supported should they be deemed medium or high risk. WGU confirmed that this would be reported to the academic programme team and the Health and Safety Officer. The Visitors suggested inclusion of an 'actions to be addressed' section to the risk assessment, so TPs are clear on what they must address and WGU can then follow up to

ensure they have been met. It is good practice to communicate the risk status of the TP with the senior staff in the TP, allowing for the development of trust and confidence between WGU and its TPs.

6.7   The allocation of placements for each student was unclear within the application, however, WGU detailed its use of Targetconnect, which was described as allowing each student to be matched to the most appropriate placement for them. This includes consideration of the geographical requirement, the confidence of the student, whether the TP is suitable for first, second or third year students and if the student is wanting to work there. WGU clarified that the student can self-source their placement should they choose to, but they anticipate most placements being secured via the Targetconnect system. WGU was commended on this very thorough and well utilised placement tool, and the Visitors were fully reassured that appropriate placements would be sourced for all students, providing sufficient TPs are recruited.

6.8   WGU confirmed that it has already purchased core texts to support students across levels 4 and 5, and all students will be trained by Library staff on how to use 'Resource Finder' an online portal which can be accessed on and off site. The resources were reviewed during the campus tour and textbooks and journals were clearly available for student use.

6.9   Within the application, WGU had identified that CCs would need to have been registered for at least one year – the Visitors recommended that WGU review this stance, as newly registered RVNs and Veterinary Surgeons can often make very good CCs, having recently been through the qualification process themselves. WGU must ensure that if newly registered professionals are utilised in this capacity, they have the knowledge, skills and confidence in their own abilities to make judgements on others' competence. It is, therefore, imperative that WGU ensures newly registered professional are fully supported in their role as CC, should it decide to remove the requirement of having been registered for one year.

Suggestions

a. Consider removing the requirement for CCs to have been registered for one year.
b. Consider adding tick boxes to TP Approval form for clinical facilities.

Actions

a. Confirm the number of TPs affiliated to WGU and evidence via MOUs.
b. Amend placement specific documentation to reword content relating to payment for placement time.
c. Amend TP risk assessment to include 'actions to be addressed'.

Standard 7 – Self evaluation and reporting

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

7.1   No reporting or evaluation currently available due to the programme not yet being delivered.

7.2   WGU is aware that it is required to submit a self-evaluation report annually to the RCVS, detailing successes and areas for improvement, as well as feedback from the External Examiner. A template is provided by the RCVS to facilitate this.

Suggestions

None

Actions

None