

## **Visitation to the School of Veterinary Medicine and Science University of Nottingham**

25 October – 29 October 2021

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

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## List of Visitors

Dr Susan Paterson FRCVS (Chair)

Professor Susan Dawson FRCVS

Dr Hannah May Fitzsimmonds MRCVS (RCVS Student Representative)

Professor Emeritus Edward James Hall FRCVS

Mrs Lynne Victoria Hill MRCVS

Dr Cheryl Scudamore FRCVS

Also attending:

Mr Jordan Nicholls - RCVS Lead of Undergraduate Education

Mr Kieran Thakrar - RCVS Education Administrator

Ms Kirsty Williams - RCVS Education Quality Improvement Manager

## Introduction

The Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons has a statutory duty to supervise veterinary degree courses under Section 5 of the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966, *“for the purpose of securing that the courses of study to be followed by students training to be veterinary surgeons and the standard of proficiency required for registration in the register shall be such as sufficiently to guarantee that persons registered in the register will have acquired the knowledge and skill needed for the efficient practice of veterinary surgery”*. The Council of RCVS may appoint persons *“to visit the universities for which recognition orders...are proposed to be made...and to report on the courses of study, staffing, accommodation and equipment available for training in veterinary surgery and the other arrangements and facilities for such training.”*

For UK veterinary degrees, it is the UK's Privy Council which grants recognition to a degree enabling it to be recognised for registration purposes. Recognition is based on advice from RCVS. The Visitors' report is first considered by RCVS's Primary Qualifications Sub-Committee (PQSC), then by the Education Committee which makes its recommendation to Privy Council.

The School of Veterinary Medicine and Science at the University of Nottingham had their previous visit in 2017 where it had been awarded Full Accreditation for seven years. In 2019 it was announced that the School would be introducing a second cohort of students each year and, after consideration, RCVS committees agreed that it would be necessary to review the impact of the increased student numbers on the programme. It was decided that once the school had two years of the dual cohort underway, a full visitation against all accreditation standards should take place.

The visitation team was present at the University from Monday 25th October to Friday 29<sup>th</sup> October 2021. The school had prepared a Self-Evaluation Report (SER) in accordance with the RCVS standards and procedures for the accreditation of veterinary degrees which was circulated to the visitation team well in advance of the visit and which formed the basis of discussions with staff during the week. The visitation team met with the veterinary school staff and students, toured all the relevant facilities at the school, and spoke with both alumni and employers of Nottingham graduates.

The visitation team would like to thank Professor Gary England for the School's hospitality during the visit, as well as Karen Braithwaite, Simon Clifford, Vanessa Williamson, and their teams for their professionalism and local arrangements. Administration, faculty, staff, partner practices and students were very accommodating throughout, and their openness was appreciated.

The findings in this report are based on the visitation team's review. The Visitors are not the decision-makers and their commendations, recommendations and suggestions may be subject to amendment during the committee process.

## Summary of Visitors' Findings

### Standard 1 – Organisation

There are no commendations, recommendations or suggestions for this standard.

### Standard 2 – Finances

There are no commendations, recommendations or suggestions for this standard.

### Standard 3 – Facilities

#### Commendations

1. The refurbished abattoir at the School is to be commended as a valuable resource for VPH teaching and offers resilience against any potential lack of access to commercial facilities.
2. The visitation team commend the commitment to education at the RSPCA Radcliffe.

#### Recommendations

3. The School must ensure that Health and Safety (H&S), and biosecurity standards, at Clinical Associates (CAs) are at least equivalent to those expected on University premises.
4. All CAs providing core clinical rotations must be part of the PSS or an equivalent quality assurance scheme.

#### Suggestions

5. The School should provide the RCVS with annual updates on the progress of the Phase 4 building.
6. The School should ensure that all SOPs are signed and dated.
7. The School should ensure that all H&S and biosecurity documents are appropriately affixed.
8. The School should consider extending opening hours of the Clinical Skills Centre for student practice.

### Standard 4 – Animal Resources

#### Suggestions

9. The School should continue to monitor the availability of small animal cadavers to ensure that sufficient numbers are available for the dual student cohort.

10. The School should endeavour to ensure that all students are exposed to live, healthy and diseased pigs.
11. The School should produce a policy on the use of animals in teaching. This should include the restrictions of individual animal use to ensure their welfare.
12. Mechanisms should be put in place to record the actual number of animals seen by each student during their clinical years.

## **Standard 5 – Information Resources**

### **Commendations**

13. The School is commended for their response to the Covid pandemic and their ability to maintain teaching delivery.
14. The School is commended for its development of the Veterinary Innovation Resources Laboratory for the design and manufacture of veterinary clinical task trainers and teaching aids.

## **Standard 6 – Students**

### **Suggestions**

15. The School should ensure that students wishing to be involved in University activities that run during the standard University calendar are given the opportunity to enter the September cohort. This may particularly, but not exclusively, apply to elite sporting students who want to be involved in competitive sport at a University level.
16. Whilst accommodation within the area surrounding the Sutton Bonington campus is currently adequate for student demand, the School should continue to monitor the availability of reasonably priced accommodation that is well served by public transport.
17. The School should ensure that students without cars are not disadvantaged with regard to travel to placements or in their choice of accommodation.
18. The School should ensure that requests from students for support from their personal tutor are responded to in a timely manner.

## **Standard 7 – Admissions**

### **Suggestions**

19. Information on the costs of EMS should be given on the School's website for applicants as well as the indication that certain items can be bought secondhand.
20. The School should make sure that the Training of Staff Marking Applications document is up to date and follows current practise.
21. The School should aim to have a wider range of stakeholders involved in recruitment.

## **Standard 8 – Academic and Support Staff**

### **Suggestions**

22. The School should continue to monitor and review staffing requirements, and the impact of the dual entry programme on staff workload. If shortfalls are identified, further staff recruitment should take place in a timely manner, to maintain staff wellbeing and protect time for research and scholarship.
23. The School should ensure all practical class teaching is adequately staffed.

## **Standard 9 – Curriculum**

### **Commendations**

24. The ethos of the School in delivering a student-focussed curriculum is commended.
25. The level of support for and the management of the students' EMS is exceptional. The available resources and the assistance offered by the staff is to be commended.

### **Suggestions**

26. The effect of the curriculum changes on student outcomes should continue to be monitored and reported in the RCVS Annual Monitoring Report. In particular, the impact of the proposed changes to the Year 3 research project on student engagement with research, should be continuously assessed, with consideration of modification if the impact is adverse.

## **Standard 10 – Assessment**

### **Suggestions**

27. The School should continue to monitor and assess the impact of open book examinations on grade boundaries, in order to continue to improve the reliability and validity of these written assessments.

## **Standard 11 – Research**

There are no commendations, recommendations or suggestions for this standard.

## **Standard 12 – Outcomes Assessment**

### **Suggestions**

28. Employer's survey data should be analysed in order to inform the curriculum.
29. The School should find additional ways to remain in touch with their graduates, to encourage them to complete surveys.
30. Mechanisms should be put in place to record the actual number of animals seen by each student during their clinical years.



## Standard 1: Organisation

### Background

1. The School of Veterinary Medicine and Science (SVMS) was established in 2006 and is part of the University of Nottingham. The School is part of the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences, which also comprises the School of Medicine, School of Health Sciences and School of Life Sciences. The School has the same recognition, status and autonomy as other University Schools. The veterinary programme is owned and operated entirely by the School, with some aspects of the curriculum taught and overseen by veterinary clinicians in a community-based model in partner Clinical Associate (CA) organisations.
2. The Dean of School, Deputy Head of School, Clinical Director and Director of Education are qualified veterinary surgeons and members of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons.
3. The University allows Faculties freedom to run their operations as they see fit and as directed by the Faculty Pro-Vice-Chancellor.
4. The primary decision-making Committees are the weekly Faculty Management Board (the Dean and Heads of Operations are members along with other School Heads, the Faculty Pro-Vice Chancellor (PVC), Faculty Associate PVC for Education and Student Experience, Faculty Associate PVC for Research, Faculty Finance Manager) and monthly Faculty Board (membership as per Management Board, Faculty Associate PVC for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, Faculty Global Engagement Lead and Faculty HR Manager).
5. The School is led by the Dean of School who is fully responsible for the strategic direction, quality management and operational and financial performance of the School. The School is organised into four Academic Divisions (Divisions of Veterinary Clinical Sciences, Biomedical Sciences, Global Health and Population Science) and an Operations Division, which primarily act to provide a line management structure. A number of Sub-Deans have been appointed to provide strategic input into discrete functional activities; these are supported by an administrative team or individual, normally in the School, although for Student Welfare these staff are part of central Student Services.
6. The Dean of School is appointed by the University, whilst the Deputy Head of School, Heads of Divisions and Sub-Deans/Directors, and other leadership roles are appointed by the Dean of School, normally in consultation with the Faculty PVC or School Executive Team as appropriate.

### Clinical Associates (CA)

7. SVMS has developed a community-based teaching model, in which clinical teaching is delivered at a number of CAs. Rotations are overseen by School staff and students are taught by both School and CA staff. Use of these CAs negates the need for an on-site hospital at the Veterinary School and, consequently, both financial and personnel resource is redirected

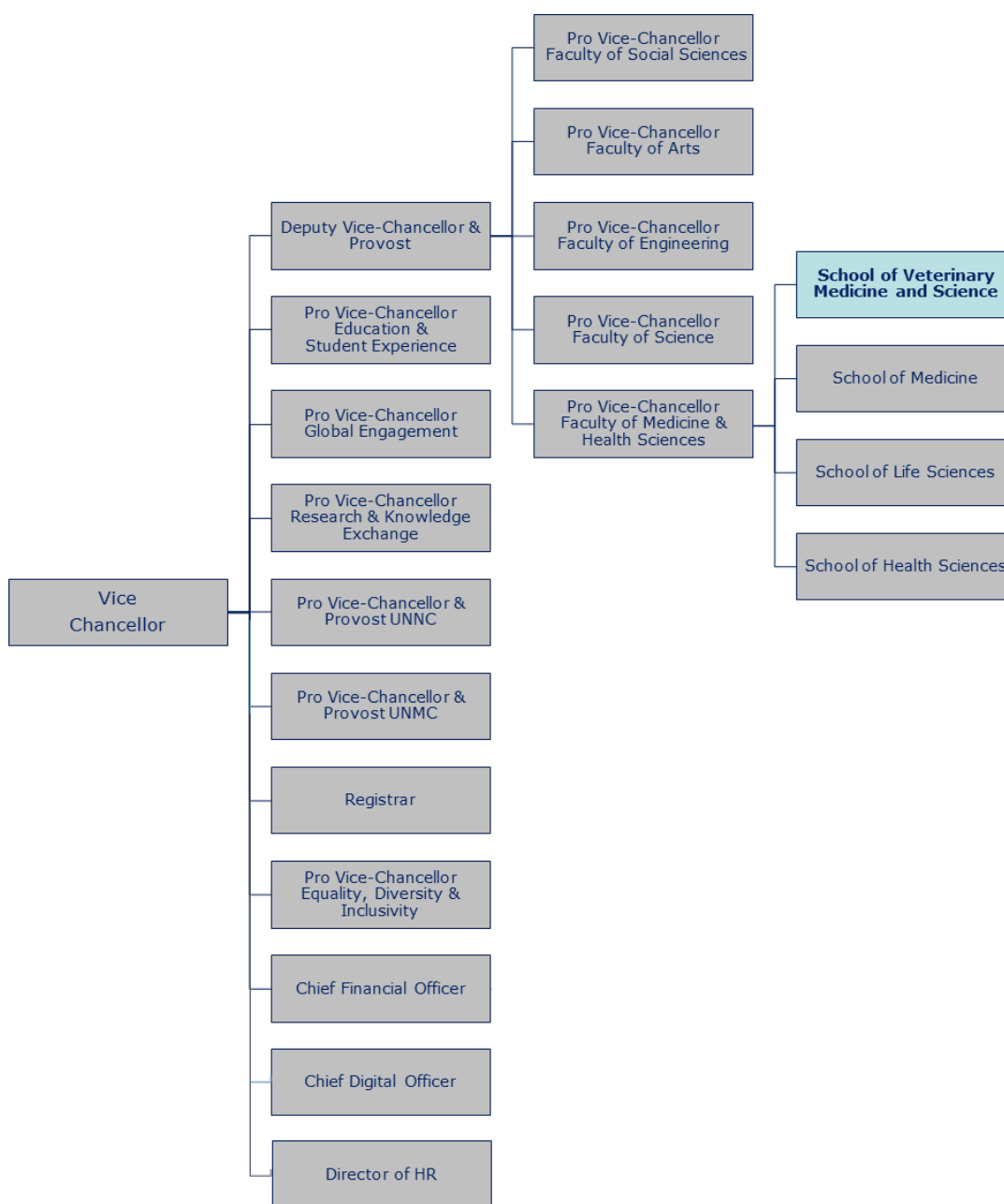
into supporting an effective experiential learning environment around a caseload appropriate for teaching Day One competences. The School has contractual relationships with a number of CAs to deliver core rotations:

- Oakham Veterinary Hospital, Oakham (Equine, Small Animal)
  - PDSA, Derby (Small Animal)
  - PDSA, Nottingham (Small Animal)
  - Pinfold Vets (Small Animal)
  - RSPCA, Ratcliffe (Small Animal)
  - Scarsdale Veterinary Group, Derby (Farm Animal, Small Animal)
8. The individual contract varies per Clinical Associate in terms of the financial, resource and staff investment, and also the length of term of the contract.
  9. The community-based teaching activities (Intra-Mural Rotations - IMR) are planned overall and assigned by the Clinical Director, supported by a senior administrator. The Clinical Director is aided by 4 species/discipline leads (Pathology and Veterinary Public Health, Farm, Small Animal and Equine) and by Rotation Leaders, who have responsibility for developing and overseeing the delivery of learning outcomes and the overall organisation and student experience for each rotation.
  10. The School has established several Committees, normally chaired by either a Sub-Dean/Director or a Head of Division. These Committees act to advise the Dean and Executive Team on policy and process, have a remit for quality and also have decision-making power (with strategic decisions or decisions with budgetary impact referred to Executive Team), and comprise staff from across Divisions, with student and external representation where appropriate. All Committees ultimately report into the weekly School Executive Team Meeting, which considers all strategic and operational concerns. Staff are empowered to deal with issues as they arise, such that issues are resolved at the lowest levels, escalating as needed to Sub-Deans, line managers or School management.
  11. The Schools Teaching, Learning and Assessment (TLA) Committee, is the major mechanism to ensure that the overall alignment of the veterinary programme is maintained. Learning objectives developed for each teaching session, link to RCVS, EAEVE and AVMA criteria and overall module learning outcomes. Changes in specific learning outcomes are reviewed in an extensive module review process; when new learning objectives are proposed they are reviewed by the School teaching staff on the TLA Committee to ensure that they are relevant to clinical outcomes.
  12. The curriculum is overseen by the Director of Education and her Deputies, both supported by a TLA team which comprises 9.6 FTE administrative staff, who support all academics, and have a quality assurance and control remit across all years of the veterinary programme.
  13. Risk is managed explicitly by quarterly review of the School's Risk Register at a Management Team Meeting; in addition there is quarterly review of both School performance and risk by Faculty Board. Risk associated with normal School operations is managed by Standard

Operating Procedures, and Risk Assessments and also implicitly by quality assurance and control.

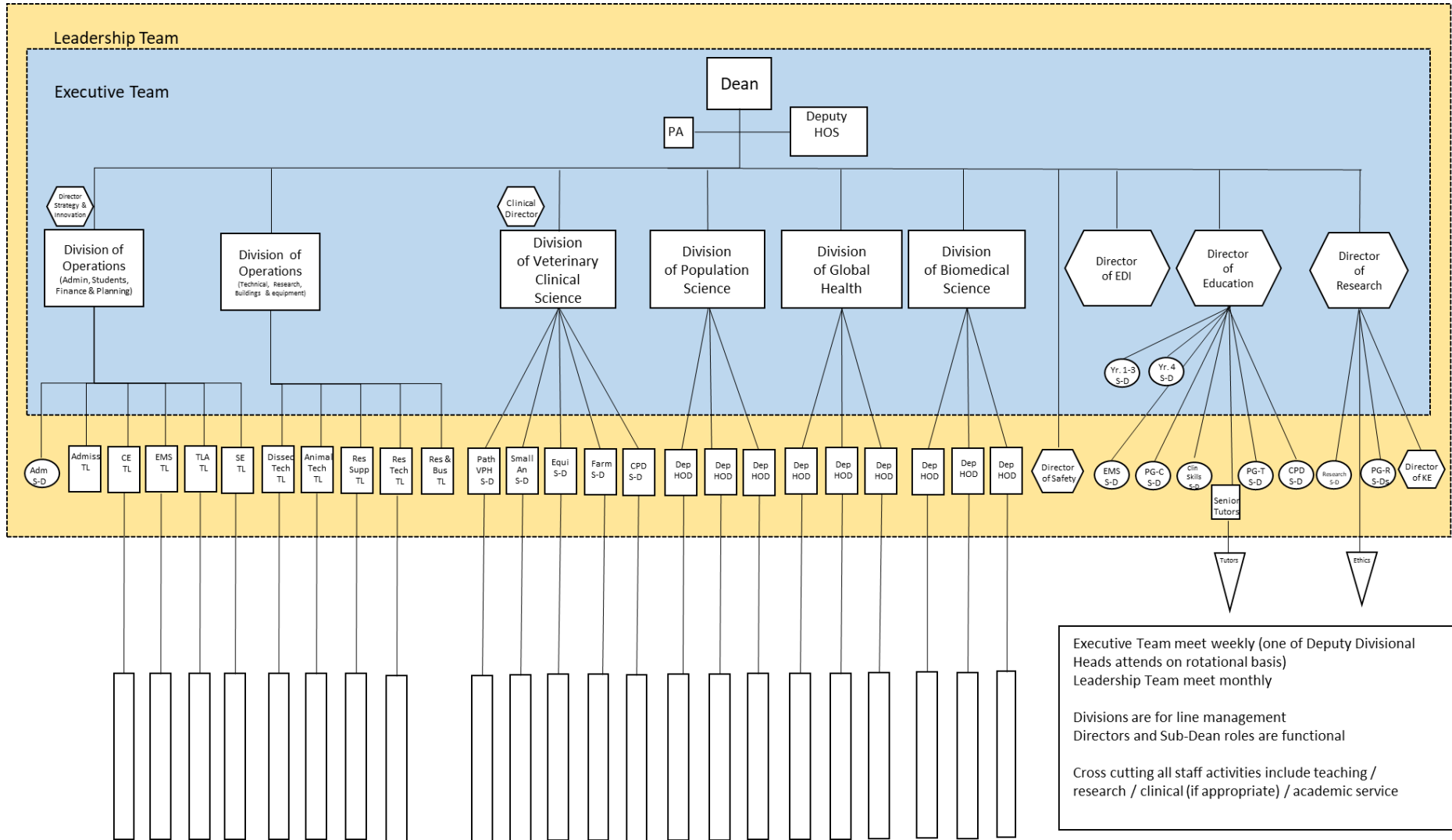
14. The Dean and Heads of Operation are also members of transient project groups associated with the School, Campus and wider University initiatives; currently these include groups to improve the campus student experience, development of a fourth veterinary building, campus development plan, and University student experience.

### Position of School within University Structure





# School Organisation Chart

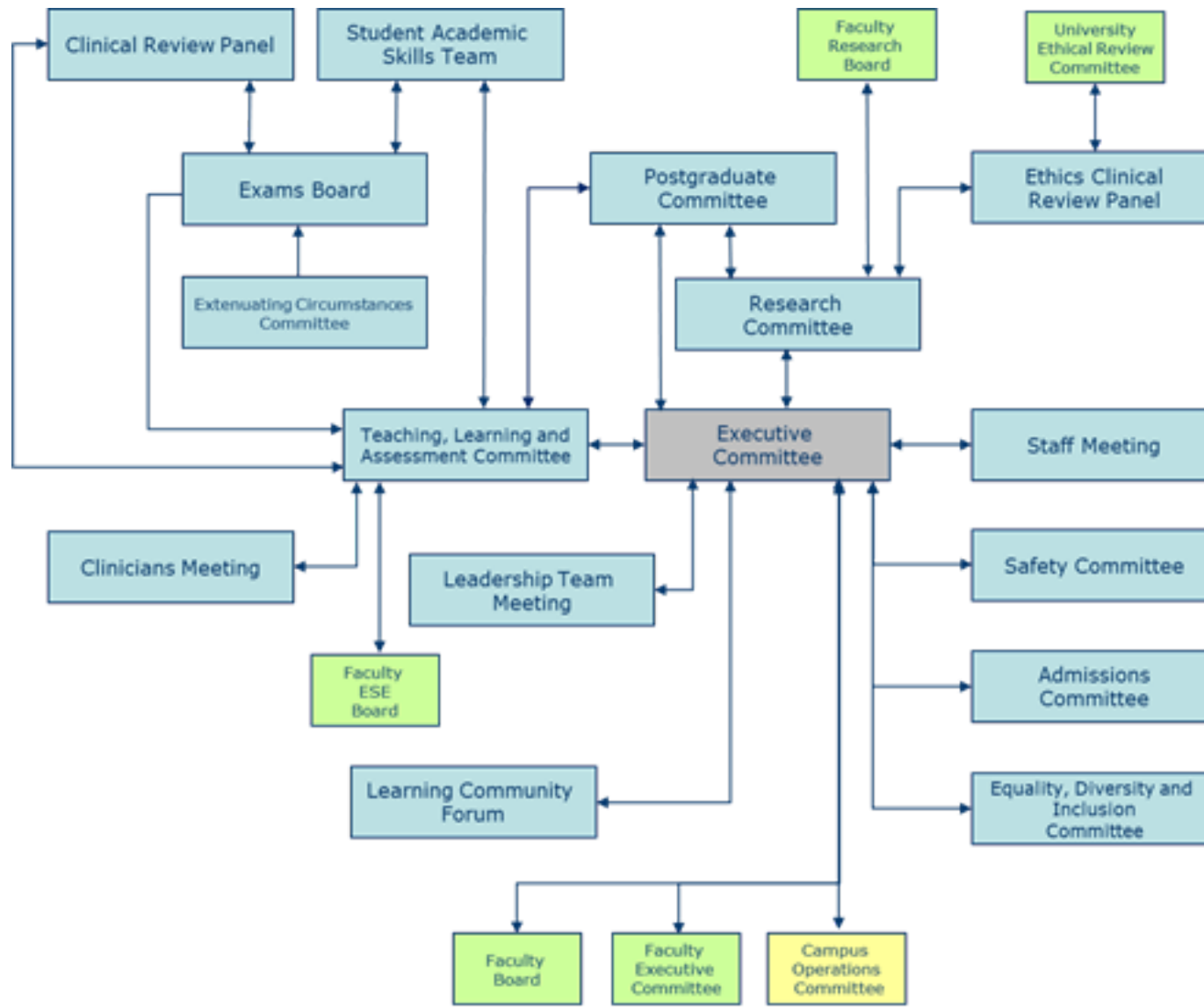


Executive Team meet weekly (one of Deputy Divisional Heads attends on rotational basis)  
 Leadership Team meet monthly

Divisions are for line management  
 Directors and Sub-Dean roles are functional

Cross cutting all staff activities include teaching / research / clinical (if appropriate) / academic service

School Committees



## Comments

15. The organisational structure of the School ensures that it has a high degree of autonomy.
16. The School is part of the wider University and is guided by the strategies, procedures and policies set by the Faculty. There is a strong representation by senior members of School staff on university committees.
17. The School's high level strategic and business plan is articulated within the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences. Strategic priorities are clearly defined within the School's individual plan.
18. The School has implemented an annual review process of the contracts of the Clinical Associates which includes assessment of caseload numbers and trends. In addition, quarterly meetings with the clinical director and Clinical Associate staff have been scheduled to raise and address any issues.
19. Core rotations are overseen by appropriately qualified School staff embedded within each practice. In addition to the current Clinical Associate network, further primary care and charity placements are being contracted to increase the School's caseload capacity for their dual cohort.
20. The School's internal committee structure and terms of reference are well set out. All staff show good engagement with key committees. There is strong student representation across a wide range of committees.
21. The School's performance and risk is reviewed quarterly by the Faculty Board and the School Risk Register is reviewed at a quarterly School Management Team meeting.

## Commendations

None.

## Recommendations

None.

## Suggestions

None.

## Standard 2: Finances

### Background

22. The University allows Faculties freedom to run their operations as they see fit and as directed by the Faculty Pro-Vice-Chancellor (PVC). The Faculty PVC is assigned an overall budget and within that Schools are provided their own budget on an Activity Based Costing (ABC) basis. The School has >300 projects each of these are considered individually and costs per driver are established (e.g., travel cost per student headcount).
23. Income and expenditure is therefore delinked, with no expectations of contribution percentages by differing income streams to the University. Any increase or decrease in income will be reflected in a corresponding increase or decrease in budget (at quarterly forecast) on an ABC basis.
24. Separate budgets detailing expected income and expenditure are established and agreed with the PVC for services rendered and educational contracts (e.g., apprenticeship, CPD), and are outwith the core School budget process.
25. The School receives no income from hospital activities undertaken by School staff; all income associated with clinical activity undertaken by our academics, clinical Residents and Interns remains with the Clinical Associates as part of the contractual relationship.
26. Budget for all aspects of the School's operations (except for research grants) is administered and flexibly managed centrally in the School by the Head of Operations, and allocated, with discussion with Dean of School, to individual project budgets each year, based on activity based costing basis including spend required on any replacement, maintenance or planned procurement of new equipment or buildings. Budgets are locally directed and utilised as required within the relevant budget envelope, by, for example, technical staff for consumables, the Research Manager for school-funded research, with procurement supported by a campus Finance Team. Research projects are funded as per the funder's commitment and are managed by the Principal Investigator.
27. The School has a Management Accountant who compiles monthly reports with oversight by a Faculty Finance Manager. Non-pay spend over £5,000, outwith normal expected operations (for example a request for a new piece of equipment), is reviewed and considered by the Management Team. Equipment over £30,000 is capitalised; in theory there is no set capital budget, albeit the depreciation charge must be sustainable within future operational budgets.
28. The Dean and Head of Operations discuss the School's financial performance and plans quarterly with the Faculty PVC, Management Accountant and Faculty Finance Manager and are able to make the case for additional spend in relation to any increased income, in line with the target contribution. The School is able to secure funds for small building developments from various University Estates Committees depending on the level of funding required, in addition there is a central University Strategic Development Fund process for consideration of



funding new research or educational ideas (e.g. the School was successful in gaining funding to establish the dual intake ahead of student recruitment).

29. The School has invested in Clinical Associate teaching hospitals, as it does not own a teaching hospital. Investments vary from capital investment in buildings to equipment. Staff and/or postgraduates are placed at Clinical Associates, or in occasional cases a payment is made in lieu.
30. Tuition fees are charged to all undergraduate and postgraduate students.
- All HEU undergraduate students pay a University fee of £9,250 per year (2020/21 entry). This fee also applies to graduates undertaking the undergraduate programme
  - International undergraduate students on the 5-year programme are charged £35,220 per year (2020/21 entry)
  - HEU postgraduates on taught programmes pay a fee as per the price of the course, currently this is £4,320 (Veterinary Medicine and Surgery), £2,670 (Veterinary Education) and £14,715 (Veterinary Physiotherapy). HEU postgraduates on research programmes pay £4,121 fees
  - International postgraduate taught students pay fees of £14,910 (Veterinary Medicine and Surgery), £2,670 (Veterinary Education) and £24,390 (Veterinary Physiotherapy). Postgraduate Research students pay fees varying between £23,760 and £43,500 per year dependent on the type of research project
31. There is University capital being invested to develop a fourth teaching building and also a new PDSA Nottingham Pet Wellbeing Centre.

## Comments

32. The School Dean has a high degree of autonomy over the budget. The budget is agreed with the Pro Vice Chancellor (PVC) and is assigned on an activity-based costing model and so there is no set contribution. The School has flexibility within the budget and if further resource is needed this is requested through quarterly finance meetings with the PVC and if required a business case. The School has sufficient funds for its current activities and has benefited from a business case submitted for the dual intake and overall annual increase in student numbers. This includes a planned increase in staff numbers which is underway and a £7M investment in the estate.
33. The Clinical Associates (CAs) retain the clinical income, however, the School has contracts with the CAs ensuring delivery of teaching. The School recruits and embeds staff in the CAs whose priority is to deliver teaching for the veterinary undergraduates. In addition, there is regular oversight at the CAs by senior staff.
34. The School Executive Team review the budgets regularly and any requirements for relevant resource at CAs are fed into this review.

**Commendations**

None.

**Recommendations**

None.

**Suggestions**

None.

## Standard 3 – Facilities

### Background:

35. The School is based at the University's Sutton Bonington (SB) campus which also includes the School of Biosciences, central teaching and research facilities, the James Cameron-Gifford Library, student residences, music room, sports centre and essential amenities.
36. The School has 4 buildings, together with access to animal and farm facilities and shared teaching and research facilities. Through the use of Clinical Associates it has access to veterinary hospitals for intra-mural rotations.
37. The three-storey Academic Building is the main hub of the School and comprises:
- 400-seat, 160-seat and 30-seat lecture/seminar spaces with AV facilities and lecture capture
  - 30-seat computer room, which can be used flexibly as a seminar room
  - 15 small-group teaching rooms
  - Laboratories and support facilities
  - Staff, research fellow, postgraduate and visitor offices, and social space
38. The predominantly single storey Clinical Teaching Building provides:
- 160-seat dissection room, and an adjacent 30-seat cadaver surgery suite
  - 13 small-group teaching rooms, with a Year 5 hub comprising 2 small-group teaching rooms
  - 40-seat seminar room with AV facilities, electronic whiteboard and videoconference facilities
  - 13 bay / 78-seat Clinical Teaching Lab
  - Clinical Skills Centre.
  - 30-seat Surgical Skills Centre containing 12 operating tables and ultrasound machines
  - Simulated radiography suite, containing 3 decommissioned full size and dental x-ray machines
  - Museum
  - Staff offices
  - Support facilities including 16 walk-in dog and 6 cat kennels, laundry, locker and changing rooms
39. The three storey Gateway Building provides:
- 120-seat seminar room
  - 120-seat computer room
  - Staff offices
  - Other offices, laboratories and facilities for the School of Biosciences
40. The Pathology Building provides:
- Post mortem suite with associated cold storage facilities
  - Seminar/teaching room with multi-headed microscope facility
  - Staff offices

41. The School also utilises additional campus lecture theatres and a 200-seat campus general teaching laboratory for the delivery of basic science practical sessions.
42. The school has a fleet of vehicles for use by students travelling to Clinical Associate (CA) practices.

### **Facilities at Clinical Associates**

43. The School uses CA practices for core and track IMR rotations, where, dependent on the terms of the contractual relationship the School has invested in facilities and equipment. Facilities at the CAs include pharmacy, diagnostic imaging, anaesthesia, clinical pathology, primary care settings, intensive/critical care, surgeries and treatment facilities, ambulatory services and necropsy:

### **Oakham Veterinary Hospital**

44. The Oakham Veterinary Hospital is a RCVS tier 3 Hospital and includes equine and small animal departments.

### **PDSA Derby**

45. The Derby PDSA Pet Wellbeing Centre.

### **PDSA Nottingham**

46. The school has invested in the capital phase of building the new Nottingham PDSA Pet Wellbeing Centre that will open in 2022.

### **RSPCA Radcliffe**

47. The re-homing centre at RSPCA Radcliffe includes an education centre in addition to clinical facilities.

### **Pinfold Vets**

48. Pinfold Vets is a first opinion small animal practice in East Leake, Leicestershire.

### **Scarsdale Veterinary Group (Markeaton: Farm)**

49. Scarsdale is RCVS accredited as an Equine and Farm Animal General practice.

### **Scarsdale Veterinary Group (Pride Veterinary Centre)**

50. Scarsdale's Hospital at Pride Park, Derby, is a RCVS accredited Small Animal Hospital and Emergency Services Clinic.

### **Scarsdale Veterinary Group (Shelton Lock practice)**

51. The Shelton Lock practice is a branch practice which also hosts Blue Cross charity cases, it is accredited by the RCVS Practice Standards scheme.

### **Defence Animal Training Regiment**

52. The Defence Animal Training Regiment (DATR), specialises in military equine and canine veterinary medicine and surgery. Up to 140 horses can be stabled at the DATR, whilst a

further 260 can be at grass. There is an equine training facility and the Army School of Farriery has a purpose built facility for both students and instructors. The Canine Division has facilities for kennelling over 200 dogs, training barns and training houses. The Veterinary Division facility has equipped hospitalisation, imaging, operating and treatment facilities for both canine and equine care and canine hydrotherapy, canine post mortem facilities and a horse walker.

#### **Dick White Referrals**

53. Dick White Referrals is a small animal veterinary referral hospital, based near Newmarket, Cambridgeshire. The centre combines clinical facilities with intensive care facilities,

#### **Dovecote Veterinary Hospital**

54. The Dovecote Veterinary Hospital is a RCVS tier 3 Hospital

#### **Pool House Equine Clinic**

55. Pool House equine hospital is a RCVS tier 2 equine clinic.

#### **Scarsdale Veterinary Group (Langley Mill practice)**

56. Scarsdale Langley Mill is an RCVS accredited practice with a small animal focus but with a large exotic pet caseload. Students on the exotic track spend 2 weeks at the practice.

#### **Your Vets – Sheldon**

57. Your Vets is an RCVS accredited practice.

#### **East Midland Zoological Society - Twycross Zoo**

58. Twycross Zoo contains over 1,000 animals of 200 species. Working out of a dedicated veterinary unit most work is carried out in animal enclosures and the necessary anaesthesia and other equipment is taken to the patient. In the veterinary unit, there is a clinical treatment/surgical area, recovery room and pharmacy/laboratory, digital radiography, ultrasound, endoscopy. There is a small post mortem room, access to library and computers and basic laboratory facilities, with microscopes, a conference room and a seminar room, together with a dedicated student room.

#### **Strategy and programme for upgrading and maintaining buildings and equipment**

59. School facilities are managed through a combination of in-house process and support from central University Estates; formal oversight is by the School Head of Operations/Technical and Facilities Manager. An online reporting system exists within the School so that any staff member can report a facilities issue/defect – in addition to this, regular audits are carried out to identify and report issues or areas for improvement. The University Estates Office provides a range of professional services via a dedicated helpdesk. Emergency requests for maintenance which occur outside of normal working hours can be made via the University 24 hour Security Control Room.

60. The School upgrades facilities as required, in conjunction with University Estates. Where CA facilities are expanded embedded staff provide input into design plans, these are monitored

by the School through regular meetings between clinical sub-deans and Clinical Associate partners.

### Health and Safety measures and compliance

61. The University has a documented H&S Policy, Codes of Practice and Guidance. The University Safety Office is the primary contact point with the H&S Executive, The Environment Agency and the Fire Service. It also oversees all aspects of H&S, advises in developing safety policies or procedures and monitors the implementation of safety policies.
62. An outline of the School H&S Management is provided in the School Staff Safety Handbook and Student Handbooks. New staff and students have an induction into the building safety and the emergency procedures of the University by the School Director of Safety (DoS). H&S is a standing item on the weekly Executive Team agenda and Monthly Staff Meeting agenda.
63. Consistent with University policy, the School maintains a School Safety Committee (SSC) chaired by the Dean of School, with student representation and coordinated by the School Director of Safety (DoS). The SSC reports directly to the University Central Safety Office to ensure H&S complies with University and UK requirements. The role of the DoS is to create and maintain the H&S management system on behalf of the Dean. Assisting the DoS are area specific safety assistants covering; radiation safety, biological safety and administration, research and teaching area activities. In addition to specific safety committee members all Principal Investigators and teaching leads have a responsibility to ensure the work/teaching they lead complies with School, University and national requirements.
64. Safety management in CA practices is under their local safety management process. All CAs have H&S policies and procedures in place to meet national requirements. The School undertakes to advise and assist CAs with implementation of policies and procedures. Staff and students receive a detailed induction and undertake to adhere to local protocols. CA safety issues are reported to the Schools Safety Committee by the DoS.
65. Students attend compulsory training on placement safety and animal handling. Placement providers are required to sign a H&S agreement to confirm standard safety and insurance requirements. On placement, students complete a personal standardised H&S review to highlight risks. Prior to agreement for non-UK placements a standard checklist of requirements is completed and signed off by the student and School.
66. The University Estates Office develops, services and manages the University estate. The Estates Service Level Agreement (SLA) defines the roles and responsibilities of the Estates Office and building occupiers. The SLA comprises a list of maintenance, servicing and safety activities and their responsibilities in relation to those activities. The Head of Operations, DoS and Estates representatives sit on the Campus Operations Group which reviews any campus-wide H&S issues. On a day to day level, the School Management Team and DoS have a duty to ensure Estates provide a safe and efficient working environment within the School.
67. First aid is provided by trained First Aiders within the school. The call out of emergency services is facilitated through the University security team and they will support the first aiders

and coordinate the most rapid response to locations on campus. The security team also attend and manage fire and security alarms.

68. All incidents and near misses within the School are reported and recorded online. All reported incidents are investigated by the School Safety Officer and reviewed by the Central Safety Office and report to the School Safety Committee where appropriate follow-up actions will be reported and monitored. Required actions and notifications are made and a summary of all incidents are reviewed at the quarterly SSC meetings. Incident reports are maintained by the central University.
69. Annual safety audits of the School are undertaken by the University Central Safety Office. Local audits and checks are carried out at the required intervals by a combination of external contractors, University Fire Inspector, DoS and the technical team to ensure compliance with safety policies and insurance requirements. School-managed derogated CL3 facilities are audited biannually by the University Safety Office.
70. The DoS reviews and records audits, incident reports and other activities of the School in relation to H&S, the minutes are uploaded on the workspace for accessibility for all staff and students. Training records are maintained for individual staff and research students, these are reviewed by line managers/research leaders dependent on staff activities (minimum annual frequency).

### **Recreational, study and locker facilities available for staff and students**

71. Each student has 24/7 access to a Small Group Teaching Room (SGTR) equipped with a wide range of teaching resources and computing facilities. The on-site James Cameron-Gifford Library provides further facilities for study. The School provides locker facilities for all veterinary students and staff.
72. Food facilities are available on campus including the Mulberry Tree Café, The Square Restaurant and Costcutter Convenience Store. Students also have access to a range of facilities provided through the SB Guild. The School also provides vending machines. A refurbished staff room is provided within the Veterinary School for use by both staff and postgraduate students and facilities for the preparation and consumption of food. A further campus staff room is available in the Barn Building. Students have 24 /7 access to the Atrium.
73. The Sutton Bonington Sports Centre houses a range of sporting facilities for both staff and students. Further sporting facilities are available on the University Park campus. Students have access to sports societies and other societies through the SB Guild.

### **Premises for Animals**

#### **Dogs and cats**

74. The School has 16 kennels for dogs and an outdoor exercise pen and 6 cages for cats.

#### **Children's pets and exotic animals**

75. The School has a dedicated facility to house children's pets and exotic animals. These facilities will be moved to new, purpose-built facilities within the new Mock Veterinary Practice planned for 2023.

### **Laboratory and research animals**

76. An animal house and research surgery complex (Bio Support Unit (BSU)) has facilities for holding and managing large and small research animals. BSU provides facilities for multi species animal research and teaching and services.

### **Equine**

77. The School has sixteen loose boxes and associated yard, tack and feed rooms for students' horses, 20 acres of turn-out, a floodlit indoor menage and an EziWeigh equine weigh scale. Students pay a charge for DIY livery, in return there is an expectation that their animals are used for teaching. The school also houses 3 horses on a long-term loan which are used for handling and non-invasive examination purposes.

### **Smallholding**

78. A purpose-built smallholding for animal handling classes contains accommodation pens for cattle, sheep and pigs, an examination area and static crush and student changing and wash room facilities. Outside the unit on hard standing there are further teaching areas and a sheep handling system with race and shedding gates. Adjacent to the smallholding is a multipurpose teaching facility used for the examination of small mammals/exotics as well as housing a variety of farm animal related pieces of equipment.

79. Chickens are housed in a securely fenced coop. The School also has an apiary.

### **Farm**

80. The 1,000 acre University Farm comprises several animal facilities including barns, sheep polypens and 2 environmentally controlled commercial pig fattening houses.

81. The Dairy Unit comprises 350 Holstein/Friesian cows and 250 followers. Cows are milked through 4 Lely Astronaut A3 robotic units. The facility also contains an automatic individual feeding system for one quarter of the herd which allows nutritional research to be conducted. The Unit is also a Home Office designated research facility. The unit has recently undergone a £6million expansion which resulted in an increase in herd size of 50%.

### **Diagnostic Laboratories**

82. Across the School and its Clinical Associates facilities are available for:

- Necropsy
- Histology, Immunohistochemistry, Cytology
- Histopathology
- Microbiology, Parasitology, Serology
- Nutritional analysis
- Clinical biochemistry, Haematology, Endocrinology



## Pathology

83. The School Pathology unit is capable of handling a variety of companion, livestock, exotic, zoo and wildlife species.
84. Gross teaching material can be stored chilled, frozen or in Klotz solution in the cold room, and general cadaver disposal is via skips removed by a licensed provider. A local 'knacker' supplies equine carcasses to the School and removes waste. Other material is obtained from Clinical Associate sites and clients. Material is securely stored in clinical waste bags and transported in a School vehicle licensed for transport of this type of material. Further necropsy facilities are available at Twycross Zoo and Oakham (equine), students may also undertake necropsies on farm animal rotations.

## Histopathology

85. In the pathology building there is a seminar room with a 10 headed microscope with live projection and a histology laboratory. Further facilities for processing histology, histochemical and immunohistochemical stains exist within the School. Transmission and scanning electron microscopy, microCT and MRI are available on the Sutton Bonington Campus or at University Park.

## Microbiology

86. Within the School there are Containment Level 2 and 3 facilities. Diagnostic bacteriology, virology, mycology and parasitological investigations arising from post mortem examinations are performed at private diagnostic labs.

## Clinical Pathology

87. A clinical chemistry laboratory exists within the School; it is primarily used for the assessment of the nutritional status of farm animals.
88. Clinical pathology is included as part of the clinical rotations at locations which possess clinical pathology laboratories: Oakham, Pool House, Scarsdale, Pride Veterinary Centre, Shelton Lock, YourVets, Dovecote, and Dick White Referrals.

## Slaughterhouse and food stuff processing

89. The School has recently refurbished its on-site abattoir, and is currently having it re-licensed. A virtual abattoir is used in combination with abattoir visits and food hygiene practical teaching.
90. Off site visits currently include a red meat abattoir where students observe the process from lairage to chiller (including ante-mortem and post mortem inspection). Pre-Covid, students also visited a poultry abattoir. The School also currently utilises a number of local slaughterhouses to provide material for teaching in the VPH and other modules.
91. Rotation students also spend a day visiting a dairy producer, either a dairy farm that makes cheese from unpasteurised milk, or a dairy cooperative producing a Protected Designation of

Origin (PDO) cheese. The focus of this visit is the monitoring and inspection of these businesses and Hazard Analysis Critical Control Points (HACCP) analysis.

### Waste disposal

92. Clinical waste is disposed of via licensed contractors managed by the Estates Department.
93. Infected clinical waste is disposed of on site or by a licensed contractor. Infected glassware is autoclaved using certified autoclaves in-house before being washed and sterilised.
94. Hazardous chemicals are disposed of as detailed in COSHH assessments. Bulk chemical disposal is carried out via the University Safety Office by a licensed contractor. Radioactive material is disposed of as appropriate depending on the radioactive source
95. Manure from the livery yard and associated grazing is moved to the designated muck heap for regular collection by the University Farm. Waste (excrement) from the kennel facilities is collected in faeces bags and disposed of as described under clinical waste (above). Vet bedding is cleaned in house using the clinical building washing machines. Any areas contaminated by faeces or urine are cleaned and disinfected.
96. At all Clinical Associates, external contractors are employed to collect cadavers and for disposing of clinical waste and sharps.

### Developments

97. As part of the move to a dual entry model, a 4 phase investment in facilities has been made by the University to the value of £7M:
98. Phase 1 – Now complete
  - Reconfiguration of Clinical Small Group Teaching Rooms
99. Phase 2 – Now complete
  - Expansion of the Clinical Skills Laboratory and kennels facilities
  - Expansion of the cold storage facilities within anatomy along with the creation of a purpose-built embalming area
  - Expansion of the student locker room
100. Phase 3 – Now complete
  - Refurbishment of the on-site abattoir,
  - Relocation of the school histology laboratory to purpose designed facilities
  - Refurbishment of the school staff room
  - Upgrade of atrium furniture for student social/study use
  - Increased provision of meeting room space
101. Phase 4 – In planning, with completion anticipated in early 2023

- Creation of a “mock” veterinary practice split across 2 dedicated buildings to include:

Two storey small animal/academic building

- Two consultation rooms with associated viewing room
- Two fully equipped theatres and physiotherapy suite
- Clinical investigation area with associated diagnostic laboratory space
- Live x-ray
- Pharmacy
- Kennels and cattery
- Changing rooms
- Six small group teaching rooms
- Seminar room
- Staff offices
- Kitchen facility

Single storey equine/farm animal building

- Equine examination and trot up area
- Farm skills area
- Secure storage
- Two small group teaching rooms

## Comments

102. The School on the Sutton Bonington campus provides facilities for teaching, research and animal housing and is supported by university services for maintenance and H&S. In addition, the School benefits from access to multiple CAs for core and track rotations.
103. The University has made significant investment in facilities at Sutton Bonington to cater for the increased student and staff numbers resulting from the dual intake e.g., expanding clinical skills facilities, refurbishing the abattoir, providing increased small group teaching space, office space and locker space (Phases 1-3).
104. The visitors were shown plans and architects drawings of the Phase 4 development (mock practice) which will provide additional clinical skills teaching facilities for small animal and equine rotations, as well as required improvements in accommodation for small mammals and reptiles. The development has gained planning permission and has an expected completion date in 2023.
105. The School has comprehensive on site H&S policies and procedures but during the visit displayed SOPs that were not dated or signed, and were secured with temporary fixings.
106. The School’s clinical skills centre is well equipped but only accessible to students during restricted hours when under direct supervision of a member of staff.

107. The visitors were impressed by the new facilities and commitment to feline and rabbit welfare at the RSPCA Radcliffe Rehoming Centre and by the enthusiasm and passion of the Centre's manager for public engagement and education, in particular, for young children.
108. During the visits to CAs, a number of deficiencies in H&S, biosecurity, isolation facilities and handling of controlled drugs were noted e.g., the failure of students to wear hard hats when handling equine patients at Oakham, poor biosecurity practices around farm animal inpatient facilities at Scarsdale and deficits around controlled drug recording at Oakham. There was also no visible signage or SOPs at the isolation facilities at Pool Equine Hospital.
109. During visits to CAs, potential student welfare issues were noted e.g., the student room at Scarsdale has poor access for students with mobility issues and there is no land line in the student accommodation at Pool Equine Hospital.
110. The Pinfold practice which provides core clinical rotation experience is not part of the RCVS Practice Standards Scheme (PSS).

### **Commendations**

111. The refurbished abattoir at the School is to be commended as a valuable resource for VPH teaching and offers resilience against any potential lack of access to commercial facilities.
112. The visitation team commend the commitment to education at the RSPCA Radcliffe.

### **Recommendations**

113. The School must ensure that H&S and biosecurity standards at CAs are at least equivalent to those expected on University premises.
114. All CAs providing core clinical rotations must be part of the PSS or an equivalent quality assurance scheme.

### **Suggestions**

115. The School should provide the RCVS with annual updates on the progress of the Phase 4 building.
116. The School should ensure that all SOPs are signed and dated.
117. The School should ensure that all H&S and biosecurity documents are appropriately affixed.
118. The School should consider extending opening hours of the Clinical Skills Centre for student practice.

## Standard 4 – Animal Resources

### Background:

#### Anatomy

119. Fresh and preserved complete and part cadavers of the major domestic species, are used for practical teaching of anatomy in Years 1 and 2. These dissections are supplemented with material from other species as required. Further use of cadavers is made in the teaching of surgical techniques in Years 3, 4 and 5.
120. Animal cadavers are sourced from the UK and the technical staff have been trained in preservation techniques.
121. Live animals are used during anatomy classes and comprise animals owned by the School, staff, students and the Sutton Bonington Dairy Unit.

#### Pathology

122. Teaching material for pathology and veterinary public health is obtained from formal necropsies and local abattoirs and slaughterhouses particularly. The School has entered into a contract with DEFRA to provide post mortem examination services for farm animal disease surveillance.
123. The average number of post mortems undertaken by an individual student would be around 6 per student however students on the pathology rotation see more cases

#### Animal handling and husbandry

124. Live animals are used in classes during years 1 to 4 and resources comprise:
- The School has a register of staff and student owned animals (horses, dogs, cats, rabbits, birds, hamsters, lizards, tortoises, fish, etc) which are used for classes (e.g. ophthalmology, cardiology, animal handling). Students are able to livery their horses at the School, and the School holds its own collection of children's pets and common exotic species
  - All the major farmed species are available for teaching animal health and welfare on site. The 1000-acre University farm comprises dairy cows and sheep. The School has a dedicated smallholding comprising cows, pigs, sheep, chickens and bees. All Year 1 students (in groups of 4 or 5) are required to care for the animals for 2 weeks each
  - Visits to the Guide Dogs Breeding Centre for basic animal handling, dog care, dog behaviour, drug administration and reproduction
  - Laboratory animals are provided on site for handling and animal health and welfare teaching
  - Clients of local practitioners visit with animals for practical and client communication sessions
  - Ante-mortem inspection and visits to local abattoirs (red and white meat)

## Food hygiene and public health

125. Students gain practical teaching in food hygiene, inspection and technology in Year 3 during the Veterinary Public Health module, the Year 5 Veterinary Public Health One Health One Welfare rotation, and as of 2021, a new elective VPH rotation.
126. Students normally gain experience in the local abattoirs (red and white meat), markets and dairies/cheese plants. During Covid, there were difficulties in visiting non-University sites during rotations. The School has carried out refurbishment of the small onsite abattoir to give students exposure to all stages of the slaughter process in controlled conditions, in years 1, 3 and 5.
127. Practicals, supporting lectures and self-directed learning (SDL), in Year 3 include ante mortem inspection and inspection of fresh materials from ruminants, pigs, poultry and fish, proper captive bolt guns use (for emergency slaughter), food microbiology and small group scenario sessions on the control of zoonotic and notifiable outbreaks. Year 5 rotation students have bee practicals (at the School).
128. A new track rotation in VPH allows further hands-on experience through farm and other visits, focussing on food safety, and sessions on risk analysis, audit and disease ecology/modelling.

## Organisation of clinical services

129. The School has formal contractual relationships with a number of veterinary practices and organisations giving access to their caseload for year 5 clinical teaching. In the lecture-free final year students spend 2 weeks in each, in a total of 10 core Intra-Mural Rotations Students spend a further 6 weeks on track rotations in small animal, mixed, farm, exotics or One Health One Welfare. All students undertake a one-week introduction week prior to rotations starting.
130. Intra Mural rotations are planned and assigned by the Clinical Director, supported by a senior administrator. The Clinical Director is aided by 4 species leads (Farm, Small Animal, Equine and Pathology/VPH) and by Rotation Leaders, who have responsibility for developing and overseeing the delivery of learning outcomes and the overall organisation and student experience for each rotation, including evaluation of caseload.
131. Students can define preferred tracks from Year 3, and the colleagues with whom they would like to undertake rotations. Final year rotation groups are 10 students or less, which are then split into smaller groups at the rotation site. Most rotations students are taught by School or Clinical Associate clinicians in groups of 3 or less, in many cases students are taught on a 1:1 basis.
132. The School and its CA practices employ many American, European and RCVS Specialists. School Specialist staff deliver across the clinically integrated curriculum, with predominant focus on year 5.

133. At CAs, teaching is predominantly overseen and monitored by School personnel. Safety management in CA practices is under their local safety management process. University rules can supersede practice ones if there is seen to be a need.
134. Training is provided to staff at all levels in the CA Institutions.
135. There are formal review meetings held yearly with CAs, and student feedback (which is compulsory) is reviewed at the end of every 2-week rotation and acted on as necessary by the Rotation Leader and Clinical Director. There is systematic review and reflection on the effectiveness of the clinical educational experience, which includes normal TLA Committee quality assurance and control mechanisms such as 6 monthly rotation review and annual module review process and graduate outcomes analysis. In addition, there are monthly meetings of Clinical Sub-Deans and twice-yearly Clinicians Meetings to review common themes and issues across rotations.
136. Since February 2021 SVMS has been the 3rd party provider for APHA surveillance in the East Midlands. This is an area with a diverse livestock sector and final year students see farm cases whilst on their pathology rotation. The in-house, pathology service provides pathology rotations with small animal, equine, poultry and farm caseload and occasionally exotics and wildlife.
137. To ensure sufficient caseload, discussions are advanced with an additional Clinical Associate farm animal practice and equine practices, particularly with the dual intake.
138. Due to the dual intake, additional CAs have been recruited at Pinfold, RSPCA Radcliffe and Pool House Equine to facilitate excellent exposure to clinical cases.
139. The community-based teaching model aims to provide a balance between first opinion and referral cases, with students being involved in the clinical management of both types of cases.
140. Core rotations:
- Oakham Equine Hospital and Ambulatory– first and second opinion consulting
  - Pinfold / Shelton Lock Primary Care – first opinion consulting.
  - Pride Referral – consulting, clinical reasoning, case management planning, assisting with case investigation, communicating with owners and referring veterinary surgeons, and in-patient care.
  - PDSA Nottingham/Derby and RSPCA Radcliffe – first opinion practice.
  - Pride Out of Hours– out of hours (emergency) consulting.
  - Defence Animal Training Regiment (DATR) first opinion veterinary work Access to dogs (approximately 200) and horses (approximately 250).
  - Equine skills – first opinion skills.
  - Scarsdale Farm Practice –ambulatory farm practice.

- Farm skills – mostly farm skills acquisition/refinement and coverage of minor farm species.
- Veterinary Public Health One Health, One Welfare - abattoir visits.
- Anatomic and clinical pathology – performing gross necropsies, contacting submitting veterinary surgeon with initial verbal report, completion of formal written report under supervision. Elements of pathogen surveillance are also covered. This rotation is also dedicated to clinical pathology in the second week.

141. On track rotations students may experience:

- Langley Mill – first opinion practice, 40-50% proportion of exotic pets.
- Your Vets – first opinion practice.
- Dick White Referrals – second opinion. Students are able to choose the service they wish to join during this track rotation. This is a track rotation
- Dovecote Veterinary Hospital - first and second opinion practice. This is a track rotation with a neurology/surgery/primary care emphasis.
- Oakham Small Animal Primary Care – first opinion practice. This is a track rotation
- Twycross Zoo - Students are involved in aspects of veterinary care of the zoo's collection. This is a track rotation
- Defence Animal Training Regiment – first and second opinion equine consulting and investigations.
- Pool House Equine first and second opinion consulting and investigations. This is presently a track rotation
- Advanced Herd health – data driven population medicine. Visit to farm, discussion of problem and assessment of stock with owner, data review and plan generation – delivery of plan to stock owner at the end of the rotation. Sheep flock health planning. Rounds at the end of the two weeks with all farm rotation groups
- Advanced Farm Skills – high level farm skills acquisition aimed at those intending to work in clinical farm practice. Rounds at the end of the two weeks with all farm rotation groups
- Advanced Farm Practice – provided in conjunction with 4 XLVets farm practices. (Tyndale, Wright and Morten, Paragon Farm, Bishopton Veterinary Group). Track rotation

142. Students (particularly during year 4) will often undertake anatomy/pathology based teaching scenarios using specimens.

### Comments

143. The number of post mortem cases has been increased by the appointment of the School as a third party provider for APHA surveillance in the East Midlands.

144. The supply of small animal cadavers for anatomy is currently sufficient but this may be a challenge as student numbers in the dual cohort increase.



145. Adequate numbers of live animals across all species are available for teaching across all aspects of the curriculum, with the exception of low numbers of pigs. Students do gain exposure to pigs and pig diseases through post mortem examination.
146. SER data presented the overall number of animals seen by the student cohort. However, this data did not show the number of animals seen by an individual student. The visitation team were informed that the numbers could be collected with relative ease.
147. The use of animals for animal handling and clinical skills at the School is monitored and reviewed but during the visit no evidence was presented of a policy outlining the number of times or duration that an individual animal could be used for any given class/procedure.
148. The small number of community based practices with embedded academic staff allows the School to oversee the rotational teaching and assessments directly. There is close communication between the CA practices and the Clinical Director's team with visits every two weeks to discuss rotations, caseload and any issues that may arise.
149. There is a good variety of first opinion and referral caseload in the practices allowing students to see and take part in a wide range of cases.
150. Students are exposed to a range of medical record systems at CA practices and have access to case histories and can retrieve data for research either directly or via staff members.
151. Twycross Zoo has moved from core to track rotation, therefore, the numbers of exotic animals seen by students in core rotations appear to have dropped. These numbers are now included in track rotations.

### **Commendations**

None.

### **Recommendations**

None.

### **Suggestions**

152. The School should continue to monitor the availability of small animal cadavers to ensure that sufficient numbers are available for the dual student cohort.
153. The School should endeavour to ensure that all students are exposed to live, healthy and diseased pigs.
154. The School should produce a policy on the use of animals in teaching. This should include the restrictions of individual animal use to ensure their welfare.
155. Mechanisms should be put in place to record the actual number of animals seen by each student during their clinical years.

## Standard 5 – Information Resources

### Background:

#### Library facilities

156. All staff and students have access to all University libraries as part of the Libraries, Research and Learning Resources (LRLR) function. The James Cameron Gifford (JCG) Library based at Sutton Bonington offers seating for 324. Opening hours are: Monday to Friday 8am - 9.45pm; Saturday 9am - 4.45pm; Sunday 9.30am - 4.45pm. The library is open 24 hours at key points of the year, including during examination periods. There is wireless access throughout the library and self-service printing and photocopying facilities are available. There is also self-service check out and return facilities. The JCG holds a wide range of resources associated with animal biology, animal welfare and care, veterinary sciences and allied subjects such as food production and agriculture etc. The JCG holds at least one copy of all the books on student reading lists, and multiple copies of key textbooks, together with veterinary journals and access to veterinary eBooks, eJournals and databases.
157. Staff and students can access library resources using the NUsearch library discovery system that allows students to search for books, reports and journals that are held across all eight University of Nottingham libraries. NUsearch provides a single interface through which all members of the University can access not only material held in the University libraries but also electronic resources available globally and relevant to their subject (including access to databases such as Web of Science, Scopus, Medline, CAB Abstracts and Vetstream). Remote access to subscription-based journals is enabled for University staff and students through a browser plug-in.
158. The JCG Library is staffed by 6.1 FTE customer services staff who are available during core hours. Librarians are qualified and hold Professional Library and Information Studies degrees or postgraduate degrees and/or are Associate or Fellow of Advance HE. The staff comprise of one full time supervisor plus a team of Library Advisors who offer the front-line service to students. Further support is offered from Senior Librarians from the STEM libraries. Funding for library materials is held by the library and is based on the number of staff and students. The School liaises closely (via the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Team) with the Library team leader for the JCG Library. On a quarterly basis, the TLA work with Module Convenors to collate a list of resource requirements for the library, which are then procured by the Library. Any feedback from the various School Committees (e.g. Learning Community Forum, Postgraduate Committee etc) is considered when formulating a list of requirements. The School has also representation by the Head of Operations on the Campus Operations Committee which provides a function to quality assure, monitor and review learning opportunities, and provide a mechanism for two way feedback.
159. The School is actively supported by teams from central libraries, IT and e-learning. The University has a central IT Services function responsible for all aspects of IT provision, supported operationally by local campus-based teams. IT Services operates an email and telephone helpline, which is manned 24 hours. The local IT Support team provide support for

a wide range of equipment and operating systems and operate an open-door policy for students and staff to visit for assistance. The local team comprises 5 staff – a Group Leader and four IT technicians, one of which has a speciality in Audio Visual systems. The Head of Operations is the IT Representative for the School and has regular meetings with the IT Group Leader.

### School information resources

160. Students have 24 hour access to a range of learning resources in small group teaching room mini-libraries. The resources include all course textbooks, all British Small Animal Veterinary Association (BSAVA) Manuals, specialist and reference textbooks, skeletons, models and posters. Mini-libraries have been set up at each of the CAs used for placement in Year 5, together with the Year 5 teaching hub. In addition to hard copy material, the Virtual Learning Environment, Moodle, hosts a range of learning resources including embedded image and video resource hyperlinks to other sites and reusable resources.

### IT and technology support for learning

161. The School uses the Digital Learning Group (DLG) to support learning and horizon scans to identify ideas, packages and applications both within the veterinary and medical sector and wider afield. New technologies are identified by staff and students and piloted on a small scale with feedback sought from teachers and learners. Benefits to learning are evaluated and if a large-scale purchase is required for implementation, a business case produced for Management Team approval of financial spend. Training is then provided by either TLA staff, relevant academics or the central LRLR Learning Technologies team. Staff in the School have been recognised both internally in the University and externally in their promotion and use of new technology.

162. The clinically integrated nature of the curriculum necessitates extensive use of part task trainers and simulation-based learning. The clinical skills centre and laboratory are equipped with a range of models for developing various techniques (e.g. venepuncture, rectal examination, ophthalmological examination, CPR) which are a mix of commercially available and school produced.

163. The Clinical Skills Lab space is provided with 12 iMac computers enabling students access to online and software resources, during their teaching sessions. A range of software resources are available to students. The School leads and manages the “DigiVetTools” catalogue, which collects and organises free online tools to support student learning. This resource has been shared with veterinary educators, students, clinicians.

### Virtual learning environment

164. All teaching materials are delivered online and supported through the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE), Moodle. Moodle is used to organise and distribute course materials and schedules from a central location, as well as enhance students learning through interactive activities and resources. No paper handouts are provided to students; all relevant resources are available online, including presentations, briefing notes, and links to relevant videos,

databases and web resources. Students and staff can access Moodle on and off campus through the internet. The School also uses audio recording (podcasting) and video recording (vodcasting), including Echo360 lecture capture, and video resource libraries to support the learning experience and disseminate information.

### Learning and information technology support

165. A Libraries, Research and Learning Resources (LRLR) team has a specific responsibility for delivery of Information Skills, which is a series of in person and online teaching sessions designed to help students develop their learning techniques and access resources; these are mapped against key points in the student lifecycle. Staff and postgraduates can access advice direct from Librarians and IT Services (as can undergraduates) but can also attend a wide range of courses run by LRLR and by Staff Development.
166. The School Teaching, Learning and Assessment (TLA) team supports all academics, including providing specialist advice on development of new learning technologies and techniques. TLA liaise closely with a LRLR specialist Learning Technologies team who provide a systems, content and special projects function. The remit of the Learning Technology department of LRLR is to support staff and students in the area of technology enabled learning. This includes: developing, maintaining and upgrading the core University teaching and learning systems and providing multi-media and video production services for staff to develop creative and interactive learning resources. The 1.0FTE Digital Innovations and Media officer (DIMO), liaises with TLA, DLG, student bodies, and central University teams to identify current and future needs and provide solutions for these. The DIMO also provides support for public engagement for example via social media.
167. The School Student Academic Skills (SAS) team has developed and delivered over 20 study skills session to support students with their study strategies with over 1200 students attending these sessions. The SAS-vet team also liaises with TLA on ways to make the curriculum accessible to all students.
168. Within the school, students can access a PC and smartboard within in each of the 24 small group teaching rooms, the school Computer room (A28) provides access to 30 desktop PCs (across the campus students can access over 195 desktop PCs). Lecture theatres across campus are fully equipped with audio-visual facilities including lecture capture facilities (Echo360) and audio capture for podcasting etc. Additional facilities include teaching microscopes, and overhead high-definition visualisers. Teaching rooms at Cas include computing facilities and, in some cases, electronic whiteboards or LCD screens for presentations. Teaching rooms at Cas are equipped as per small group rooms or lecture theatres as required.
169. The school also provides 12 iPads for use in practical classes and the clinical skills centre for student use. Staff are also supported with IT to enhance their teaching and student assessment with 58 iPads (18 support student clinical reasoning sessions, 40 used in assessments. All students on the 5 year course are currently provided with a £400 voucher for purchase of a laptop for their own use at all times, however the School have been asked to desist this practice by the University. Postgraduate students are provided with a desktop or

laptop computer, as required for their research. Staff are provided with a laptop or desktop computer as requested, replaced on a 3 year cycle.

170. There are wired and wireless Eduroam networks across the campus. The School has established a dedicated high-speed data network between the School and Clinical Associates, which mirrors the learning environment of the School to the CAs, such that students (and staff) have access to the same support and resources offered when on the campus; where this has not been possible students are provided with BT wi-fi dongles.

### Comments

171. The School's extensive use of IT and the University's commitment to IT infrastructure allowed the School to respond rapidly in the face of the Covid pandemic to maintain student support and educational delivery as well as staff activities.
172. There is a commitment to develop and evaluate new instructional materials and technology to support the teaching programme.

### Commendations

173. The School is commended for their response to the Covid pandemic and their ability to maintain teaching delivery.
174. The School is commended for its development of the Veterinary Innovation Resources Laboratory for the design and manufacture of veterinary clinical task trainers and teaching aids.

### Recommendations

None.

### Suggestions

None.

## Standard 6 – Students

### Background

175. The School offers 2 undergraduate BVM BVS veterinary programmes: a 5-year course (with September and April entry, each of 150 students) and a 6-year, 25-intake course including a Preliminary Year (for widening participation and also high-achieving, non-science students). The majority of students are from the UK, with normally <10 from EU countries and <5 from other international countries in each year group. There is no specific number of places available for international students or graduates; they are considered within the overall pool of candidates.
176. The School has increased the total student numbers for the 5-year programme to 300 per year but decreased the cohort sizes by introducing a dual intake. There are no plans to increase student numbers above 300, to ensure that resources are effectively used and the student experience is maximised. The 6-year course will remain at an intake of 25 and a  $\geq 60\%$  pass mark required to progress to Year 2, to ensure quality students for the remainder of the course.
177. Students who do not meet the BVM BVS progression requirements in years 1 and 2 but meet lower University progression requirements can continue but are required to exit with a BVMedSci degree after year 3. All students graduate with a BVMedSci degree in year 3. Students on both the April and September cohorts are able to intercalate degrees, most commonly after year 3, but occasionally after year 4.

### Student induction

178. Students are provided with a wide range of information to help induction and enculturation into the School (e.g. campus map, clothing and equipment brochure, congratulations card, Guild brochure, equine livery reservation form, new student information guide, student entry agreement, student handbook, study skills booklet, survival leaflet, Vet Society information, module details). Students are contacted by their Personal Tutor to welcome them to the School.
179. A welcome week (Fresher's Week) is replicated for both dual intake cohorts and provides a wide variety of induction events including an Opening Ceremony, School tour, initial animal handling practical on Day 1, Tutorials, Social events, Tutor group social events, a visit to Twycross Zoo, together with introductory talks on safety, School structure, the curriculum, assessment, student support and EMS. In addition, students receive profiles of all staff members, together with their equipment and clothing. Students are introduced to the School's commitment to the values of equality, inclusion and diversity; and this is reinforced through mandatory training.

### Student support

180. The School, the University centrally and other students provide academic and pastoral support to the students from pre-acceptance to the end of the course. The School employs a number of measures to ensure that students experiencing difficulties with their studies or with

any non-academic problems are identified and supported. In addition, students are directed to establish and maintain individual Portfolios and Skills Diaries for self-support both during and after their studies.

181. Academic support is provided predominantly by the School, and provides support to learning utilising:

- Pre-registration information packs and online registration
- Pre-term animal husbandry training for international students
- School-based identification of dyslexia and other learning difficulties
- Induction and orientation weeks at the beginning of each year, including a Day 1 meeting with the Personal Tutor, followed by timetabled Tutorials to review academic progress
- Student handbook
- Portfolio and Skills Diary
- Provision of web-based learning environment that incorporates core curricular material and details, and facilities for learning support (e.g. self-assessment, learning objectives) and student feedback
- Provision of Employment Tutors for specialised career pathway advice
- Student Academic Skills for support of students with academic difficulties
- Students in higher years (via the veterinary family and Vet Soc run Big Vet, Little Vet peer mentor scheme)
- Extensive staff contact in practical classes
- Small group case studies with dedicated group facilitators
- Dedicated Student Placement team to facilitate EMS
- Student Experience focussed administrative staff
- One-to-one access to a Year 3 project supervisor
- Library facilities (paper-based and electronic) and Twitter
- Provision of a £400 computer voucher to all 5-year course students
- Computing facilities, and basic IT skills training with access to computer-based self-learning packages
- 24 hour access to study room and museum with extensive teaching resources
- An open door policy providing access to all teaching and administrative support staff
- Access to University support services (e.g. study support, dyslexia support, disability support)

182. Pastoral and welfare support is provided by the following means:

- Personal Tutor, supported by Senior Tutors providing pastoral support and advice, and Senior tutors for Professionalism
- Dedicated Student Welfare Manager with the role to advise and support students, liaising as necessary with other University support agencies
- Disability Liaison Officer to provide a point of reference, advice and guidance for staff and students in the School about disability issues and support
- Pre-arrival Health Declaration questionnaire, reviewed by the University's Occupational Health team, identifies support requirements for each student and assures fitness to study
- Veterinary family and Vet Soc-run Big Vet, Little Vet schemes with trained older students providing mentoring for younger students
- Veterinary Professional Skills module covering aspects of work-life balance
- Welfare Week to promote support available across the School and University
- Access to University support and advice services (e.g. disability support, confidential counselling, mental health advisors, career development, advice and support on financial matters, accommodation advice, legal advice, visa advice to international students)
- The VetSoc, Student Guild and Student Union offers an extensive range of social and sporting activities together with various support services including 24 hour telephone help lines
- International student global café
- Chaplains and prayer rooms for various faiths
- Sutton Bonington Hall tutors
- University Warden for off-campus affairs
- Promotion of outside agencies, e.g. local Doctor, Samaritans, VetLife, Vet helpline

183. The pastoral system around Halls is being changed. Halls no longer have a Hall Warden, but are managed by a team of Residential Managers and Coordinators cross all Halls, with a dedicated Student Experience Manager.

184. The Student Welfare Team (Senior Tutors and Student Welfare Manager) meet weekly to discuss and action general matters in terms of professionalism, pastoral and academic progress across the student body. Members of this meeting also have contact with external bodies such as VetLife.

185. The School complies with the Faculty's dual 'Expression of Concern' process, which is divided into welfare and behaviour/professionalism issues. Students recognised as struggling with the course, mentally or physically by a concerned staff member or peer may be raised



formally via this process or directly to the Welfare Manager or Senior Tutors who may informally meet with a student. Any concern raised relating to a student is reviewed by Senior Tutors (there are two arms to the Senior Tutor team (a) providing pastoral and welfare support (n=5 tutors) and (b) providing professionalism support (n=2 tutors)) and is acted on as appropriate to the circumstances.

186. In addition to the University Support mechanisms available for undergraduates, postgraduates are able to access the support of the on-site Graduate Centre, the Graduate School as well as campus Postgraduate Society. Complementary to the support provided by the two Postgraduate Sub-Deans, the School has appointed two Senior Tutors, dedicated to postgraduate pastoral and welfare support. Student elected Postgraduate Representatives attend Postgraduate Committee meetings, raising any issues and receiving advice or feedback on resolutions.

### **Disability support**

187. The School expects all students to declare any requirements for disability support (including dyslexia) early in the admissions process and also meets students prior to admission to provide review and advice on potential reasonable adjustments that can be made to the course. Applicants who declare a disability on their UCAS form are reviewed by the University Disability Support Team. The team, together with a Senior Tutor and Welfare Manager will meet students at, or prior to Assessment Centres if needed for further discussion, particularly around the potential demands of the veterinary course.

188. All students are required to complete a medical assessment form which is reviewed by the University Occupational Health Team prior to joining the course. This may result in referral to Occupational Health prior to admission or assessment by University of Nottingham Academic or Disability Support staff. Occupational Health will provide recommendations on the suitability of the applicant to study on the course. These assessments may result in reasonable adjustments to be put in place for teaching or examinations, which will be discussed with the School to determine whether providing these adjustments is feasible. The Occupational Health team assesses students against national Higher Education Occupational Physicians guidance to ensure that students are able to meet RCVS Day 1 competences.

189. All students undertake a mandatory online dyslexia assessment during year one.

190. Students who become ill or disabled during the course are supported in school by the Student Welfare Team or out of school by the University Student Service Centres. These teams can provide guidance and signposting to appropriate support services either within the University, including counselling, mental health, academic support and disability support services, or external to the University. Students may be referred to the University Academic or Disability Support staff who may suggest reasonable adjustments so that the student is able to manage their illness or disability (for example additional time in exams, rest breaks etc). Students with long term illnesses or disabilities who engage with the School Welfare Team are offered regular reviews appropriate to their condition, especially prior to starting clinical rotations.

191. Students who believe that their performance in examinations or during teaching has been impaired can apply online for extenuating circumstances. These applications are considered against University of Nottingham procedures by a committee within the school which can make recommendations to the relevant Exam Board that the student should be allowed a further attempt at the affected assessment as if for the first time.

### **Academic support**

192. All students gain feedback for all forms of summative assessment. Students who fail examinations are offered individual feedback from the module leader (in years 1-4) and are also contacted by the Student Academic Skills team. Year 5 students who fail a Rotation Professional Assessment are required to meet with the Clinical Review Group to understand reasons for failure and ways to improve, and also whether further assessment is required (which may include repeating a rotation). Students who fail end of year assessments in year 5, may be able to repeat rotations prior to reassessment.

### **Student feedback**

193. Students are involved in quality assurance at national, University and School level. The School's student engagement policy follows the University's arrangements to ensure that students are fully involved and represented in all aspects of their learning experience and have a range of opportunities to engage in the University's quality assurance systems, at University, programme and academic level. Students are able to influence the School's direction and decision-making processes by a number of means, including making comments as to compliance with RCVS/EAEVE standards. Students are involved in influencing the School's direction, providing suggestions, comments and complaints by the following methods, with consideration and action as appropriate:

- Attendance at staff recruitment interviews
- National Student Survey (NSS)
- Association of Veterinary Students Survey on teaching, learning and student support
- Student Evaluation of Module questionnaires (SEM) completed on every module to provide feedback on overall delivery and learning, with outcomes considered in module reviews
- Student Evaluation of Teaching questionnaires (SET) completed on all academic staff teaching to provide feedback on teaching by individual, scores are considered by the Dean and also in promotion
- Student Evaluation of Year questionnaire is structured as per the NSS and is run by the School to gather feedback from students on their experience of the year of programme as a whole
- Rotation feedback questionnaires are compulsory for year 5 students and are completed at the end of every 2 week clinical rotation, reviewed by the Clinical Director
- Learning Community Forum (LCF) meetings, held termly to discuss any matters (academic, welfare or social) that are raised by either students or staff, matters are often resolved at the meeting but can be referred to an appropriate committee

- Committee meetings including Teaching, Learning and Assessment and Postgraduate Committee
- Yearly student survey conducted by the University
- Undergraduate and postgraduate student membership of other relevant Committees and Sub-Committees at Faculty, Campus and University level
- Year representatives meet the TLA Sub-Dean and Head of Operations regularly to discuss various topics and provide feedback
- Veterinary students also commonly directly contact relevant Sub-Deans, the Clinical Director, the Head of Operations or the Examinations Officer with feedback on an ongoing basis
- *Ad hoc* focus groups convened around particular topics
- The School also has an open door policy providing access at any time during the working day to all teaching and support staff; any student feedback is either directed to the appropriate review mechanism or addressed and actioned if appropriate
- Anonymous suggestion boxes
- For the April cohort weekly meetings between Year Reps and Senior School Staff were established.

194. Undergraduate students elect a School Educational Representative, who is the lead representative for the students. Each undergraduate year and each postgraduate programme also elect two Course Representatives, who represent student views at Committees including:

- Learning Community Forum meetings
- TLA Committee meetings
- Postgraduate Committee
- Student membership of other relevant Committees and Sub-Committees at Faculty, Campus and University level

195. In addition, the School funded Veterinary Education interns act as Student Liaison Officers, liaising between staff and students to help improve teaching and pastoral support.

196. In all routes of student feedback the relevant School Committee consider information and implement any required actions, with the exception of any negative feedback received as a result of SET, in which case the Dean, the Director of Education, and member of staff would consider required improvements and/or development needs, in conjunction with the relevant Divisional Head. Feedback on student feedback is provided, (e.g. as part of the examination feedback process). In addition, at the start of each academic year, a dedicated session is held so that the students are provided with a summary of their feedback and how issues raised have been addressed for the prior year and also details changes in their forthcoming year based on student feedback raised by students in the year above them.

## **Student complaints**

197. The School follows University regulations on student complaints although formal University process is only started if informal resolution fails. Appeals against examination results are only allowed for procedural issues, and not on academic decisions.
198. The School follows University regulations on harassment, abuse and discrimination which provides access to clear mechanisms for report and support. In addition, the School provides specific guidance for students on AHEMS and CEMS placements.

## **Career development support**

199. Career development and job selection and application techniques are taught within the Year 4 Personal and Professional Skills module, topics include CV writing, and interview techniques; students can also access the University careers team for advice and training. A “Careers Day” is held yearly for all students but especially year 4 students. This exposes students to a range of careers in the veterinary profession and hosts a job fair and talks from practitioners from across the profession.
200. Students work with their Personal Tutor to plan a variety of experience during their EMS study appropriate to their career and personal interests; students commonly build up strong relationships with hosts, which lead to job offers before graduation. Students can also work with species or areas focussed Employability tutors for guidance and advice.
201. The School has developed an optional Nottingham Advantage Award module “Careers skills for vet students”. This module aims to provide students with knowledge and a range of skills that will allow them to reflect upon issues surrounding personal development and professional aims in relation to a career in the veterinary profession.
202. Undergraduate and Postgraduate students can access support from the University Careers Service. The Central Careers team provide a wide range of both veterinary focussed and alternative careers support for all students, with a website, 1:1 appointments and CV reviews offered year-round to any student. Nottingham alumni have an active Facebook group where job offerings are also posted.

## **Comments**

203. The School has decreased the individual cohort size to 150 but moved to a dual intake in September and April each year, resulting in a total yearly intake of 300.
204. The School has worked hard to provide the same quality of experience for both the September and April cohorts. Whilst the School has been able to replicate campus activities provided for the September cohort for students starting their course in April, there are still challenges for students who want to participate in some University activities which run on an annual cycle starting in September.

205. Accommodation is available on the Sutton Bonington campus for both cohorts during their first year. From second year, the majority of students live off campus and many live in nearby villages, especially Kegworth. Kegworth and Sutton Bonington have good social facilities and good public transport links. However, as numbers increase it is anticipated that students will need to seek accommodation further away from the campus where public transport may not be available. To avoid the necessity for all students to have cars, the School currently ensures that within each group of students attending an external clinical placement, at least one of the group has a car, or a School electric car is available.
206. A range of postgraduate programmes have been developed within the School which includes the PG Certificate in Veterinary Medicine and Surgery, MVM, MVS programme and the DVetMed, DVetSurg programme.
207. The School has a strong sense of community and the staff and leadership team practise an open door policy. The School has scored highly in the National Student Survey (NSS).
208. The School has numerous mechanisms available to provide students with comprehensive support. All students are assigned a personal tutor who provides both academic and pastoral support, for the entirety of the students' course. In addition, all new students are allocated to a veterinary family which comprises the tutees from two personal tutor groups. The family network provides both horizontal (across the year) and vertical (between the years) peer support. Whilst students are encouraged to contact their own personal tutor for help and support, they have access to both tutors in their family as well as a Senior Tutor. Some students have needed to contact the other tutor in their family where their personal tutor has been slow to respond or has not responded to a request for support.
209. Careers advice can be accessed from the University Careers Service or through a member of Vet School staff who acts as a dedicated "Careers link".
210. Student complaint policies and procedures are clearly signposted, well-established routes are in place to facilitate student feedback and mechanisms are in place to resolve student grievances.

### **Commendations**

None

### **Recommendations**

None

### **Suggestions**

211. The School should ensure that students wishing to be involved in University activities that run during the standard University calendar are given the opportunity to enter the September cohort. This may particularly, but not exclusively, apply to elite sporting students who want to be involved in competitive sport at a University level.

212. Whilst accommodation within the area surrounding the Sutton Bonington campus is currently adequate for student demand, the School should continue to monitor the availability of reasonably priced accommodation that is well served by public transport.
213. The School should ensure that students without cars are not disadvantaged with regard to travel to placements or in their choice of accommodation.
214. The School should ensure that requests from students for support from their personal tutor are responded to in a timely manner.

## Standard 7 – Admissions and Progression

### Background:

215. The School has a formal Admissions policy, approved by the Admissions Committee, which comprises School and University staff, external veterinary professionals and local secondary school teachers. The policy defines requirements and processes, including training of assessors. It reviews annual data relating to the prior admissions cycle and proposed changes.
216. The admissions policy for the veterinary courses aims to encourage diversity within Veterinary Medicine.
217. The School provides a range of information to pre-applicants: all UK Secondary Schools are provided with marketing material (available for viewing during the visitation), detailed information is available on the School website. The School holds 4 interactive Open Days for pre-applicants per year. The School hosts a Summer School for students from disadvantaging backgrounds, and supports a number of local lower achieving schools through staff and student visits.
218. Information on the website includes many details of the course including some on EMS and materials e.g., clothing, books, suggested for the course. There is no information on the cost of these items or an average cost for EMS. There is no information that some items can be bought second hand. Whilst some of this information is provided at Open Days, Assessment Days and in pre-joining information, this is not included on the website.
219. The minimum requirements for undergraduate admission are detailed in school brochures, the University website and through the Universities and Colleges Admissions Services (UCAS).
220. The School will consider on an individual basis qualifications taken by international students.
221. Other qualifications, including alternative routes into education are considered. The School offers a 6 year programme (which includes a Gateway or Preliminary Year) to widen participation by accepting students who are high achievers with non-science backgrounds or may have been disadvantaged during their education.
222. All applicants are required to have a minimum of 4 weeks animal-related work experience prior to application. The School counts study on the Work Experience MOOC as 2 weeks.
223. The School expects all students to declare any requirements for disability support (including dyslexia) early in the admissions process, in order that the School can evaluate and implement support needs throughout the admissions process and /or as soon as the student commences the courses so appropriate adjustments can be made if necessary.

224. All students are required to complete a medical assessment form which is reviewed prior to joining the course. This may result in referral to Occupational Health.
225. All students undertake a mandatory online dyslexia assessment during year one.
226. The admissions process has been designed to assess a range of personal and practical skills including animal orientation, communication, enthusiasm and professional potential as well as academic ability for the courses. The admissions process has been developed with consideration of attributes and qualities required of a new veterinarian as articulated in the RCVS 'Day One Competencies' and 'Code of Professional Conduct for Veterinary Surgeons'.
227. **Phase 1 – Academic Review:** All Students must apply through UCAS. All applications are initially reviewed to check that applications meet minimum academic standards. The School does not consider predicted grades.
228. **Phase 2 – Non-Academic Personal Qualities Review:** Personal and Referees Statements on the UCAS form are reviewed to assess understanding of the profession, motivation, interests.
229. **Phase 3 – Widening Participation and Work Experience Detail Collection (via online survey):** Applicants are requested to complete an on-line information paper in order to supply further information for Widening Participation criteria and work experience.
230. **Phase 4 – Motivation, ability, attitude and attribute assessment:** The on-line questionnaire provides an opportunity to provide further evidence that the applicant has the motivation, ability, attitudes and attributes for a career in the veterinary profession.
231. **Phase 5 - Situational Judgement Test:** The Situational Judgement Test (SJT) assesses key attributes that have been identified as important for veterinary students. The SJT builds on UK medical doctor selection methodologies and was developed in conjunction with psychologists.
232. **Phase 6 - Assessment Centre:** Candidates are ranked on their scores and approximately 1000 of the candidates are invited to attend the Assessment Centre. The Assessment consists of an interview which will normally be conducted by a staff member and either Nottingham alumni or a Clinical Associate vet and a practical aptitude assessment.
233. Staff receive initial training, are offered refresher training yearly and are briefed in detail at every ahead of every session.
234. **Phase 7 – Offers:** All Assessment Centre data is compiled and standardised to reduce any differences in marking between assessors. Students are then ranked. The information is reviewed by the Admissions Team and Admissions Sub-Deans. Applicants are considered solely based on their merits, abilities and potential, regardless of gender, ethnic or national origin, age (subject to the University regulations on minimum age), disability, religion, sexual orientation or any other characteristic.



235. International applicants must also meet English language criteria (British Council IELTS test with a minimum overall score of 7.5).

### **Widening participation and enhancing diversity**

236. The School was established with a remit to increase diversity in the veterinary profession in the UK, and implements a range of measures (e.g. online work experience, summer workshops, School visits, contextual offers, Preliminary and Gateway Year course) to enhance diversity. Male student numbers are consistently low reflecting low application numbers nationally.

237. The Admissions process for undergraduate students is overseen by the Admissions Sub-Deans and reviewed annually by the Admissions Committee, which considers information such as demographics and admissions performance.

238. Admissions policies and procedures validation is an ongoing process.

239. Progression criteria are made clear to students at the start of the course, in their student handbooks and yearly through the circulation of an addendum to the handbook which covers all aspects of assessment. All information is available to students via Moodle.

240. Progression is automatic from year 0 to year 1 on meeting the pass mark of 60% for each module; in addition, students are required to undertake 2 weeks Animal Husbandry EMS placements. On average 10-20% of the Preliminary Year exit the course due to failure to progress academically.

241. For students on the 5-year course, to progress between years students must pass all modules at 50% and pass the Portfolio and practical assessments. Students are required to pass 70% of OSCE / OSPE stations. To ensure standards are maintained students have one opportunity to resit their assessments before they are required to leave the 5-year veterinary course, with the exception AHDOPS (Animal Handling Directly Observed Procedural Skills), held in years 1 to 3 where there is no limit to the number of resits available.

242. In addition to passing all year 3 exams, students are required to have passed all Animal Husbandry DOPS, completed Animal Husbandry EMS and gain a minimum of a 2.2 BVMedSci degree in order to progress to year 4.

243. Year 5 students need to have passed RPAs, met the minimum DOPS requirements and completed all EMS to be eligible to sit finals exams.

244. Students who transfer course mostly transfer to the BVMedSci only course. Absolute attrition reasons are predominantly due to long term ill health or decisions to change career. There are ongoing reviews of reasons for attrition in order to inform admissions requirements and also welfare support.

245. Students must complete the veterinary course within 10 years and cannot take more than 3 years to complete 1 year.
246. Fitness to Practise is regulated by the University of Nottingham Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences Fitness to Practise Board.
247. The School is enrolled in the Excluded Student Database of the Medical, Dental, Pharmacy and Veterinary Schools Councils and the details of any student excluded from the course will be entered into this database.
248. The School abides by the University policy for appeals against academic decisions and progression. Students cannot appeal matters of academic judgement. Students are made aware of the appeals procedure through their student handbook, in an assessment addendum and are given advice as required.
249. The School has extensive support mechanisms in place to support students who are not progressing satisfactory.

### Comments

250. Information for students regarding the costs of the course are available on the website and are provided to attendees of an Open Day, and at interview. However, additional costs, specifically those relating to EMS, are not provided in more detail on the website.. Insufficient information could deter potential Widening Participation (WP) applicants. No mention is made that the suggested clothing e.g. branded items, can be bought second-hand or that the suggested reading list can be borrowed from the library or bought second-hand. These items may give a false idea of the additional costs for students looking to attend this course.
251. The “Training of Staff Marking Applications” document provided to the visitation team had content that no longer fits current practises and was inappropriate as training material.
252. A number of stakeholders are used at interviews and many are alumni from the School. As the School is looking to increase diversity, this may have the potential to limit their ambition.

### Commendations

None.

### Recommendations

None.

### Suggestions

253. Information on the costs of EMS should be given on the School's website for applicants as well as the indication that certain items can be bought secondhand.
254. The School should make sure that the “Training of Staff Marking Applications” document is up to date and follows current practise.

255. The School should aim to have a wider range of stakeholders involved in recruitment.

## Standard 8 – Staff

### Background

256. There are currently 191.3 FTE / 222 headcount staff in the School, of which 73.7 FTE / 95 headcount are vets (24.7FTE/37 headcount Specialists). The School has an ongoing recruitment programme phased in relation to the development of the School; academic staff work within Strategic Research Areas well as contributing to or leading teaching modules. The allocation of additional staff to the School is based on incremental growth (and replacement of any exiting staff) associated with the dual intake and apprenticeship business cases. Any additional recruitment above these plans would be considered through further business cases and/or agreement with the Faculty PVC.
257. Academic staff are recruited to one of three main career paths within the research and teaching job family dependent on the focus of the role:
- A combination of research and teaching;
  - Wholly or mainly involved in research;
  - Wholly or mainly involved in teaching and learning.
258. Technical staff are either entirely dedicated to supporting teaching (e.g., the preparation of material for dissection, organising and demonstrating clinical equipment, looking after animals etc.) or in a combined research/teaching role, where the majority of focus is on supporting staff with research and also providing input and guidance to postgraduate students and Year 3 project students. There are 5 levels of technician recruited in the School. The administrative staff in the School undertake a range of activities. There are 6 levels of administrative staff in the School.
259. Staff are appointed to permanent or fixed-term contracts. Most are appointed on open-ended permanent contracts, with funding ultimately by the Office for Students (OfS) and student fees. Staff on fixed-term contracts are predominantly recruited to Research Associate/Fellow positions on fixed-term research grants or recruited to provide cover for example to cover maternity leave.
260. The major challenge to the School, as is common at all UK Veterinary Schools, is the recruitment and retention of suitably qualified clinical staff; there is little difficulty in recruiting non-clinical or support staff. The pool of suitable candidates for clinical positions is small, due to increased competition. The School has maintained its approach of only appointing those candidates who understand and meet the School ethos and culture. There has been an average staff turnover of 3.7% over the last 5 years.
261. The School has put in place financial incentives to attract clinical staff including a consolidated and pensionable 10% or 15% market supplement. In addition, a further clinical supplement is available for staff based at Clinical Associates.

262. The School ensures that School staff based at CAs undertake a full role in the School's activities and are part of the collegiate community through the following:
- Twice yearly clinician meetings take place at the School
  - Monthly Clinical Sub-Dean meetings take place at the School
  - Staff are expected to attend monthly staff meetings
  - A member of Leadership Team visits each Clinical Associate regularly
  - Clinical staff are fully included in all normal School operations and have opportunities to contribute to a range of activities, such as TLA Committee, student recruitment etc.
263. The School has put in place a number of measures to embed EDI in the School's culture and these are overseen by the EDI and Athena Swan committees.
264. The University requires that all newly appointed academic staff undertake the Postgraduate Certificate in Higher Education (PGCHE); 39 staff possess at least a PGCHE and 73% of staff have a teaching qualification (compared to 68% in the wider University). The School actively encourages staff to seek recognition as Fellows of the Higher Education Academy (HEA): 75% of the staff have a HESA-recognised teaching qualification.
265. Appropriate training is provided to staff at all levels including in the CA institutions. The School is developing videos for CAs to use on induction of their staff. CA staff have been supervised by School staff to undertake residencies.
266. Staff who teach are given the opportunity to be observed by an experienced academic from outside their school via the Teaching and Learning Observation College (TLOC). TLOC aims to support colleagues who wish to improve their teaching through observation of their teaching and learning practice. A 'buddy' Peer Observation of Teaching process is also in place within the School. All academics are assigned to work in a group of 2-4 and are encouraged to observe teaching of other members of the group annually.
267. Appraisal and Development Conversations (ADC) ensure personal development is a key action. Progress, achievements and delivery are reviewed and assessed on how they have contributed to the faculty/school/department. The University Professional Development Unit provides development advice and courses for all groups of staff through a varied programme of short courses and accredited qualifications.
268. Support staff are appraised by their line manager. Excellent performance is recognised by staff nomination through the Nottingham Reward Scheme; additional increments can be awarded resulting in accelerated progression within a band, together with an option to award bonuses up to 9% of salary. Poor performance results in a review of development and support needs within the context of University guidance on managing underperforming staff.
269. Each academic member of staff has a yearly fund to attend scientific meetings or professional development plus a centrally held training budget, which is also used to subsidise additional attendance at relevant professional development opportunities. The School also supports staff to undertake academic and clinical qualifications. Support staff also access this funding.,

270. The School has joined the School of Medicine Mentoring Scheme and contributes financial support and mentors to the programme. The programme matches the skills, interests, and requirement of mentees with mentors and will allow cross-school pairing from across the three job families.
271. The University encourages members of staff to undertake external professional work. Interaction with industry, business, public organisations and the community in general (whether regionally, nationally or internationally) has the dual benefit of broadening the experience of (and providing additional income for) staff and enhancing the reputation of the University. Non clinical staff are able to devote up to a maximum of 50 working days a year to outside work with not more than 30 days falling within University term-time.
272. The University has instigated a workload planning (WLP) system. The underlying ethos driving WLP framework is to allow effective planning of academic time and to enable a more open and transparent view of planned workload. The workload plan is populated centrally in the School and staff can comment on their assignment to correct inaccuracies. Research data are made available to line managers and the Dean via an Academic Profile Tool. An individual's workload is discussed at ADC, with changes made as necessary for the subsequent year.
273. The University's promotion process for academic staff recognises a high level of achievement in 3 broad areas of activity:
- Research and scholarship: research activity (including research income and publications), and standing within the UK and international research community
  - Teaching and curriculum leadership: teaching quality, teaching leadership, educational research, teaching innovation and good citizenship, including PhD supervision, outreach etc. For clinical staff, clinical activity is also considered within teaching
  - University/Academic service and good citizenship: e.g., leadership, management, administration, collegiality, knowledge transfer or pastoral care within the University, or by engaging with the wider community on behalf of the University.
274. All academic staff may put themselves forward for promotion if they consider they match the relevant criteria as detailed in the relevant Academic Staff Promotion Criteria & Career Pathway Framework. Progress towards promotion is discussed with all staff at their ADC, and the School provides support through the promotion process with workshops and mentoring. For promotions to level 7, applications supported by a University Promotions Committee are sent for external review prior to a second meeting of the University Promotions Committee. Feedback and further support is given to unsuccessful staff. Detailed criteria were available to view during the visitation.
275. There are no promotion opportunities for support staff, instead they can apply to a higher-grade role, or the role is regraded (rather than the individual).
276. Residents, Interns and DVetMed students are integrally involved with year 5 clinical teaching. They may work closely with the students on an informal daily basis, and may be involved in scheduling activities, and feedback, with academic staff and other members of CAs about

student performance to Rotation Leaders. Residents may be involved in assessing DOPS, however otherwise no students are involved in assessment. Other non-clinical postgraduates (e.g., PGCertificate, MRes, PhD) act as demonstrators in practical sessions in years 1-4. It is normally expected that students undertake university courses in teaching and demonstrating and school teaching induction courses. Some students may undertake the Teaching and Learning Development Programme and gain HEA status.

277. In order that the School can ensure a pipeline of clinical applicants to fill positions the School is considering whether it is possible to establish a programme where students can undertake a residency programme that culminates in tenure as a full clinical academic, subject to satisfactory performance.

### Comments

278. Planned staff numbers are adequate for the School to deliver its mission. The School is currently delivering on a recruitment plan approved as part of the business case associated with the dual cohort of students. Measures have been put in place to encourage recruitment to and retention in clinical posts and staff turnover rates across the School are relatively low.

279. The School has an EDI policy and holds an Athena Swan Bronze Award with plans to submit for a Silver Award in 2022.

280. Training and development opportunities are available, including for staff at CAs, and these include training in education and assessment.

281. The visitation team were able to observe the beginning of a cattle hoof trimming class. Whilst students were encouraged to participate and work independently, the visitors were concerned that there were tangible safety concerns as students were seen to be using equipment in a way to compromise their personal safety.

### Commendations

None.

### Recommendations

None.

### Suggestions

282. The School should continue to monitor and review staffing requirements, and the impact of the dual entry programme on staff workload. If shortfalls are identified, further staff recruitment should take place in a timely manner, to maintain staff wellbeing and protect time for research and scholarship.

283. The School should ensure all practical class teaching is adequately staffed.

## Standard 9 – Curriculum

### Background

#### Curriculum design

284. The 5-year veterinary curriculum at the School of Veterinary Medicine and Science culminates in the award of two separate degrees:
- Bachelor of Veterinary Medical Sciences (BVMedSci) at the end of Year 3
  - Bachelor of Veterinary Medicine (BVM) and Bachelor of Veterinary Surgery (BVS) at the end of Year 5 (awarded jointly)
285. The original, clinically integrated curriculum was designed to deliver learning outcomes that focus on RCVS Day One competences and proscribed Subject Areas to enable students to develop problem-solving, team working and communication skills and attributes for further professional development including self-audit and continual lifelong learning. The curriculum is delivered in a vertically (clinically) and horizontally (subject) integrated programme.
286. A problem-oriented approach ensures integration. Each major body system is delivered within Years 1 and 2 covering structure and function in the healthy animal. These systems-based modules cover all basic science subjects and are complemented and reinforced by additional teaching in a Year 3 Fundamentals of Clinical Practice Module. In Years 1 to 3, clinical material is used to reinforce and contextualise the basic subjects and sciences, and practical skills which are core to later development of clinical competence that are taught, practised and assessed.
287. Animal production is primarily covered within the Animal Health and Welfare long module that aims to provide:
- An introduction to the health and husbandry of the common species.
  - A basic understanding of UK animal industries and the role of the different species in society.
  - The key animal handling and practical skills to enable students to effectively and efficiently learn during AHMS and CEMS.
288. Year 3 is a transition year between clinical science and clinical modules with students studying veterinary public health (VPH), the fundamentals of clinical practice and veterinary professional skills. A six-week, free choice research project at the start of year 3 allowed students to develop scientific curiosity and research skills.
289. The principles of food and milk production, epidemiology, microbiology are delivered alongside the body systems in years 1 to 4 where appropriate. In Year 3, the VPH module integrates the principles and concepts of food hygiene, population medicine and veterinary epidemiology, defining the management and surveillance of zoonotic and notifiable in the context of current legislation and enforcement. The students develop a working knowledge of the basic food sciences including food technology, processing and preservation as well as the relevant environmental and economic issues associated with food production, with food hygiene knowledge being applied in context during the year 5 VPH rotation.



290. In Year 4 students revisit the major body systems covering the diagnosis, management, prevention and treatment of disease. Preventative medicine topics are integrated within the curriculum and consolidated during final year, where students lead vaccination/wellness consultations and design farm animal health preventative strategies.
291. Veterinary professional skills are delivered in each year of the curriculum, ensuring a strong emphasis on communication and teamworking skills, ethical reasoning, mental health awareness and business. This material is taught both as stand-alone Veterinary Professional Skills (VPS) modules, and is integrated through the curriculum, for example in clinical relevance sessions. Within the VPS modules, teaching is often experiential or discussion-based and uses techniques such as the use of medical actors for communication skills sessions.
292. Delivery methods are diverse and include core 'signposting' lectures and practical classes, alongside facilitated small group problem-based learning sessions. The development of lifelong learning skills is supported through the inclusion of self-directed and group work. In addition to 'block' system-based modules, there are 'long' vertical modules covering key skills and knowledge in Animal Health & Welfare and Veterinary Professional Skills. Curriculum mapping allows identification of intended learning outcomes across the programme.
293. Year 5 is lecture-free and students undertake a series of Intra-Mural Clinical Practice Rotations (IMR) that comprise small-group clinical teaching in a range of establishments both within the University and in Clinical Associates' premises. Key to the delivery of the IMRs is the identification of clinical situations in a community-based model that provides appropriate and authentic learning and assessment opportunities through structured, quality assured clinical teaching by embedded School staff, and delivered in the context of a large, varied caseload.
294. The 26 weeks of rotations include:
- 8 weeks of core small animal rotations
  - 4 weeks of core equine rotations, including a clinical skills week
  - 4 weeks of core farm animal rotations
  - 2 weeks of veterinary public health
  - 2 weeks of pathology
  - 6 weeks of track rotations chosen by students including 2 weeks of CEMS in a relevant area
295. Students undertake Animal Husbandry and Clinical Extra-Mural Studies (EMS) integrated into the curriculum:
- A minimum of 12 weeks Animal Husbandry EMS (AHEMS) in Years 1, 2 and 3
  - A total of 26 weeks Clinical EMS (CEMS) is scheduled from the end of Summer of Year 2
296. The temporary RCVS requirements for EMS during the Covid pandemic have been followed.

#### **Curriculum changes since the 2017 accreditation**

297. The School, commenced a dual intake model in 2019, i.e. the admission of September and April cohorts within an academic year. The planning and development of the dual intake

curriculum has involved teaching staff, support staff and students. At the time of this accreditation visit, years one to three were following the new dual intake curriculum and years four and five were following the pre-2019 curriculum.

298. The institution of this dual intake programme has enabled review and refinement of the curriculum content, allowing removal of repetition and reduction in the assessment burden:
- The total teaching time has been reduced in years 1 and 2 by two weeks and modules consolidated into four compulsory modules in each year.
  - Year 3 has been extended by 2 weeks to accommodate some of the year 4 content from the pre-2019 curriculum.
  - Veterinary professional skills have been given an increased emphasis and brought together in a synoptic fashion at the end of the year in a 6-week teaching block
  - The year 3 research project module has already been reduced from 10 to 6 weeks, but further changes are planned for the dual intake curriculum: the research project will be replaced with an introductory week covering literature searching, experimental design, analysis of data and scientific writing techniques, followed by three one-week blocks in different research areas, and two weeks writing a research proposal.
  - A new year 3 module, Fundamentals of Clinical Practice, runs for 10 weeks and consolidates Years 1 and 2 teaching in pharmacology, microbiology, parasitology, immunology, diagnostic imaging, anaesthesia and surgery.
  - Veterinary Professional Skills 3 is delivered over 5 weeks and includes key business skills, clinical reasoning, consultation skills and euthanasia teaching.
  - VPH teaching in year 3 remains unchanged and is also taught and assessed in Year 4.
  - From 2022/23, the previous eight systems-based modules in Year 4 will be taught within three species-based clinical modules (equine, farm and small animal) with a consequent reduction in the assessment burden.
299. Mapping of learning outcomes in the revised curriculum has been undertaken and indicates that any of these changes and the new modules are effectively just re-timetabling the previous systems-based clinical module teaching with no change in the learning outcomes.
300. Final year comprises the existing clinical rotations clustered into 3 clinical practice modules (farm animal, equine and small animal) and a VPH module, delivered across 20 weeks of core and 6 weeks of track rotations. A Veterinary Professional Skills (VPS) module is delivered and assessed programmatically across the entire year. Students spend 2 weeks on a VPH/One Health/One Welfare rotation in Year 5. This VPH rotation reinforces the teaching in Year 3 in a hands-on manner and includes red meat and white meat abattoir visits. All students will visit a refurbished small through-put abattoir at the School as well as medium or full throughput slaughterhouses accompanied by a staff member. Students also have the opportunity to use a virtual slaughterhouse and visit both a high throughput animal market and a dairy food producer.
301. In the revised curriculum, students will complete their core rotations in the first half of the year, followed by a clinical reasoning exam for each clinical practice module. The remainder of the year will be spent completing their chosen track rotations and CEMS before

undertaking the Veterinary Professional Skills assessment which comprises the reflective Portfolio and an MCQ assessment based on the RCVS Code of Professional Conduct.

302. The changes associated with year 5 include:

- Students will now undertake all core rotations before completing their chosen track rotations and remaining CEMS.
- A compulsory introductory week prior to rotations starting has been restructured to offer all the H&S information and pastoral support for the final year, including a day on mental health in preparation for learning in the clinical workplace.
- Students attend Pinfold Vets and Shelton Lock as one small animal practice rotation
- Time at Pinfold Vets is spent in a small animal preventative health clinic, led entirely by students under the guidance of embedded School staff
- A new site at the RSPCA Radcliffe-on-Trent rehoming centre has been introduced to the PDSA rotation and provides increased opportunity for surgical (neutering) experience for all students.
- The Pride hospital is the site for the 2-week core small animal referral rotation, which now consists of medicine (clinical cases and ward duties), anaesthesia (and pain clinics) and diagnostic imaging. Track rotation opportunities at Dick White Referrals are also available.
- Scarsdale Equine no longer delivers equine teaching, so all students undertake a 2-week equine skills rotation based at the School and 2 weeks at Oakham Veterinary Hospital as their core equine rotations.
- The core Farm rotations comprise 2 weeks Farm Health Skills based at the School and 2 weeks of farm animal practice at Scarsdale Veterinary Hospital
- In addition to 21 weeks of IMR, students can now 'track' for 6 weeks in small animal (primary care, charity or referral), farm animal, equine, mixed practice, veterinary public health or research, with 2 weeks of the track period being CEMS in a relevant establishment.
- Equine track rotations are completed at a new clinical associate site, Pool House Equine, the DATR and a further 2 weeks at Oakham Veterinary Hospital
- Farm animal track rotations include farm animal practice based at XL vets and advanced herd health and farm skills based at the School.
- Small animal track students can spend an additional week at the RSPCA site combined with a week at the Sheldon branch of YourVets.
- The Zoo/exotics track includes a new skills rotation based at the School. Exotics teaching on the track rotation includes time spent at a branch practice of Pride for primary care exotics teaching, and referral practice teaching at Pride in addition to time at Twycross Zoo.

### **Curriculum QA processes**

303. Acting on behalf of the Dean of the School, the Teaching, Learning and Assessment (TLA) Committee has responsibility for the design, development, implementation of teaching, learning and assessment. The TLA Committee receives regular reports from Examinations Board, Postgraduate Committee, Clinicians Meeting, Rotations Leaders Meeting, Student Academic Skills Committee, Clinical Review Panel and Faculty Teaching and Learning Board; it reports to Executive Team.

304. The TLA Committee oversees multiple mechanisms for ongoing review of the curriculum modules (and their assessment):
- Student evaluation of module and rotation feedback
  - Student evaluation of teaching
  - Student focus groups
  - Weekly debriefing of facilitators reviewing material delivered in Clinical Relevance sessions
  - Output from meetings with technicians and key administrative support staff
  - Observation of teaching delivery by Module Convenor, de-briefing of facilitators
  - Feedback from external deliverers on the course
  - Bi-annual module and rotation reviews (e.g. student feedback, external review, focus groups etc)
  - Evaluation of individual teachers by student evaluation of teaching and peer observation
  - External Examiner reports on each assessment
  - Annual programme reviews, including student feedback on their experience of the year
  - Annual School Enhancement Plan as required by the University
  - Periodic Education Enhancement and Assurance Reviews (EEARs) as required by the University
305. Frequent meetings are held at the year and module level, with regular updates provided to the University Programme and Operational working groups. Timetable and learning outcome documents have been developed by the module convenors and made available to all teaching staff via Microsoft Teams for comment. Learning outcome documents include tracking where content has moved between modules and years. External examiners are updated with any changes to the curriculum (and assessment) as a result of the new curriculum.
306. Outcomes of module review meetings are presented to the TLA Committee for discussion. Any changes in specific learning outcomes are reviewed and any proposed new learning objectives are reviewed to ensure that they are relevant to learning outcomes. Programme and module specifications, defining aims, delivery methods, assessment and learning outcomes for the programme are reviewed annually as an output of the component module review process to ensure alignment and integration between years and modules. The School is also required to submit a report as part of the University's Annual Monitoring process for all degrees.
307. The School identifies the need for any teacher training at appointment, at appraisal and on an ongoing basis (either proactively suggested by staff member or in a response to a change in circumstances, for example taking on a new educational leadership role). The TLA Committee provides input into teaching training needs identification and processes.
308. Twelve weeks of animal husbandry EMS are required to be undertaken in Years 1 and 2 in order to meet the requirements of the BVMedSci degree. Students are required to undertake 26 weeks of Clinical EMS (CEMS) in order to graduate with the BVM and BVS degrees. They can only undertake CEMS once AHEMS is completed and are only allowed to complete up to 6 weeks of preparatory CEMS before their 3rd year examinations.

309. The organisation of EMS is supported by a 4 FTE administrative team, with academic and strategic input from the Student Placement Sub-Dean. This team aids students in selecting suitable EMS placements from an extensive database if required, and provides administrative support around booking of placements, guidance for hosts, insurance and safety information and assessment of and feedback from, and about, students.

### Comments

310. The visitation team noted a range of organisational changes to the curriculum but were reassured that the introduction of a dual intake has led to refinement and enhancement of much of the programme, with no noted significant impact on the learning outcomes. However, the visitation team have concerns that the proposed changes to the Year 3 research project might adversely affect the student experience and diminish the educational impact and validity of a research-informed science degree.

311. Development of core rotations at a preventative health clinic at Pinfold led by students and the new surgical experience at the RSPCA Radcliffe have enhanced the programme.

312. EMS is fully integrated within the curriculum, and students are supported by the School in its completion.

### Commendations

313. The ethos of the School in delivering a student-focussed curriculum is commended.

314. The level of support for and the management of the students' EMS is exceptional. The available resources and the assistance offered by the staff is to be commended.

### Recommendations

None.

### Suggestions

315. The effect of the curriculum changes on student outcomes should continue to be monitored and reported in the RCVS Annual Monitoring Report. In particular, the impact of the proposed changes to the Year 3 research project on student engagement with research, should be continuously assessed, with consideration of modification if the impact is adverse.

## Standard 10 – Assessment

### Background

316. The School assessment strategy is a coordinated programme designed to align student progress with ultimate achievement of clinical competency in order to meet RCVS Day 1 competencies. The School ensures a blueprinted range of skills and behaviours are demonstrated via examination using a range of assessment types such as coursework, OSPEs (Objective Structured Practical Examinations), OSCEs (Objective Structured Clinical Examinations), AHDOPS (Animal Handling Directly Observed Procedural Skills), individual research projects, and reflective ePortfolios and ePortfolio viva assessments. Specific assessment methods are selected based on the content to be assessed and stage of the course. Professional skills and professionalism are examined throughout the curriculum through an annual ePortfolio assessment and communication skills OSCEs and DOPS.
317. The University introduced exceptional regulations in 2019/20 and 2020/21 in response to the Covid pandemic. Examinations for years 1 to 3 were delivered in a remote open-book format; for years 4 and 5 examinations have been open-book, invigilated and sat on campus. Students received guidance and support in preparation for the open-book format. All practical and clinical assessments were delivered in 2020/21.
318. Following concerns of External Examiners about an uplift in the marks distribution when using open-book examinations, the style of questions has been adjusted to be more suitable, and all open-book assessments are now undertaken at the School with restrictions on the amount of material students can access and the time available. Analysis of comparative performances across years indicates that the mark distribution is now more closely aligned with results obtained historically.
319. All staff are trained in the relevant assessment technique prior to acting as an assessor for a summative assessment. Assessment training is a core component of general teacher training. Staff undertaking the PGCHE qualification (a university requirement) cover general principles of assessment during this training. Specific school courses are then delivered throughout the year e.g., OSCE training, MCQ writing. *Ad hoc* training is also delivered as required e.g., Clinical Associate staff assessing DOPS.
320. All staff teaching on a module or rotation are required to submit questions for the module's formative and summative assessments; staff are advised of the number and format of questions per module or rotation based on the credit weighting of the module or time allowance of a rotation. Each module is blueprinted to the module learning objectives (and therefore inherently programme outcomes) by the Module Convenor. All questions and papers are reviewed by the Module Convenor, and then by the Director of Education or Programme Leads before formal review and sign off with External Examiners.
321. Knowledge is principally assessed in formative and summative assessments held online. All modules in years 1 and 2 include a single best answer (SBA) paper and a short answer paper. SBA question formats include MCQs, EMQs, drag and drop, "fill in the blanks". In

years 3 to 5 clinical reasoning is assessed in a unidirectional case based online exam in addition to the SBA format.

322. Practical skills taught in years 1 and 2 are assessed during an OSPE at the end of year 2; a formative OSPE opportunity is provided in year 1. A range of skills including clinical exam, diagnostic skills, lab skills, communication, anaesthesia and surgical skills are tested.
323. AHDOPS exams (held in years 1 to 3) assess animal handling in a realistic situation. There is no limit to the number of attempts at practical assessments available. However, all students must have attempted the assessment and received feedback on their handling skills in the relevant species area before attending AHEMS. Students are required to demonstrate that they are competent in handling small animals (cat or dog, small mammal or exotics), horse, cattle, sheep or pig before progressing into year 4 of the course.
324. Year 3 skills are assessed in year 4 OSCEs and include professional practice, clinical exam, emergency situations, diagnostic skills, lab techniques, anaesthesia and pain control, surgical skills and case management.
325. The school has an emphasis on the development and assessment of professionalism and this is carried out through a longitudinal portfolio tool. ePortfolio software, 'PebblePad', is used by all students throughout the course, and the content is submitted at the end of each year as part of the assessment for the Veterinary Professional Skills modules. The Portfolio is discussed with personal tutors and regular formative feedback is given. Annual qualitative feedback is provided to ensure the development of reflective writing skills.
326. Core clinical skills are assessed in Year 5 through Directly Observed Procedural Skills (DOPS) using case material in the performance of normal duties and activities and assessed by an appropriate, trained clinician. There are 49 skills each representing core skills mapped to the RCVS day one competencies and divided into six skill areas. The students drive the assessment process for their DOPS examinations by indicating when they feel they are ready to be assessed and receive feedback on their performance. There is no limit to the number of times a student can attempt each assessment or the number of assessments they attempt. Each DOPS is rated on an entrustability scale and carries no marks towards Finals. To qualify to sit the Finals examination, students must have completed a minimum of six DOPS assessments, one from each skill area and 2 from each species area and demonstrated their performance at the level of 'reactive supervision' in at least six.
327. End of Year 5 examinations (Finals) evaluate knowledge through an on-line SBA examination. This tests higher order learning outcomes through a series of cases scenarios or vignettes. These skills are further examined via an online clinical reasoning (written) exam, which is delivered uni-directionally, with additional information becoming available on each subsequent screen.
328. At each clinical rotation a Rotational Professionalism Assessment assesses the professional skills and behaviours of each student. It is undertaken by all staff working with the student (including academic, Clinical Associate clinician and support staff), with reference to the

RCVS Code of Professional Conduct. The outcomes are that the student either passes (exemplary, good or borderline) or fails that assessment (in need of improvement or poor). Failure results in a referral to a clinical review panel, where an action plan is developed which may or may not entail repeating that rotation. The professionalism of students is also assessed through the Portfolio viva which is based on five portfolio pieces, and assessment of the written content which consists of case studies, action plans and reflective pieces. Students reflect on their DOPS assessments within a clinical skills asset in their Portfolio.

329. The School ensure assessment is appropriately embedded and aligned to the curriculum so that as well as benchmarking performance, students can use assessment to inform their learning and map their progression to competency. Regular formative assessments, both in class (often utilising voting software) and as assessments in their own right, provide students with feedback which is then discussed in wrap-up sessions and with tutors. Students are able to identify areas of strength and weakness, and plan accordingly assisted by tutors and module convenors. Summative assessments are also supported with timely individual feedback mapped to learning objectives, ensuring results feed forward into future study plans.
330. Students who are struggling to achieve the learning outcomes of the programme are offered support from the Student Academic Support Committee if additional support is required. All assessments are mapped to session and subsequently module outcomes, ensuring students can benchmark their achievements and map their attainment of the Day One Competencies. The ePortfolio further supports this process through a compulsory academic progression action plan in years 1 – 3 and a clinical progression and employability action plans in years 4 and 5.
331. Assessments are scheduled to minimise the burden on students and this is supported by feedback from the student body and is kept under constant review by an Assessment Working Group of the TLA Committee. All assessments are implemented, coordinated and delivered by the TLA Team and Examinations Officer, in conjunction with academic and other staff as required, for example, the Clinical Skills Sub-Dean for OSPEs. Various contingency plans are in place to deal with any problems if they arise (e.g., queries over questions, loss of electrical power, injury, computer failure etc.).
332. Assessment underpins decisions on progression; students are unable to progress if they fail a module. Standard progression is a 50% pass mark per module, with one resit allowable, with the exception of students with Extenuating Circumstances. Additional must pass assessments required for progression are OSPE/OSCE exams and AH DOPS.
333. SBA questions are standard set, using Ebel's method, for a module and are normalised to the required 50% pass mark. The end-of-year SBA, short answer and clinical reasoning exams are delivered online using bespoke eAssessment software (Rogo); this allows access pre- and post-examination and review of questions by External Examiners and tracking of question modification and performance over time. The University has developed a system to track assessment of learning objectives which is integrated with Rogo and provides increased feedback to students on the basis of their exam performance.



334. Other assessments, for example OSPEs, OSCEs and short answer papers are trialled against marking criteria, ahead of the assessment being delivered. OSPEs and OSCEs are subsequently standard set using a borderline regression method.
335. Examination guidelines are provided to all students in their Student Handbook, available online and in hard copy and supplemented by information available online in the University's Quality Manual. In addition, the assessment type (and progression requirements) for the programme overall and each module is published on MyNottingham (the University's student administration system) and is further reinforced at the start of each module. Mark schemes and criteria for non-online assessments are also provided to all students. The Student Handbook details clear criteria and expectations across the full range of available marks.
336. Rules, regulations and processes for assessment and progression including, for example, disability requirements, e-assessment, moderation, and External Examiners are set in the context of external quality assurance frameworks and comply with the guidelines in the University's Quality Manual. Any changes to regulations or arrangements for examinations are ratified by the TLA Committee and, if the change is outside normal guidelines, by the University Quality and Standards Committee. The School ensures that the rules and regulations for progression and for graduation are publicised to students.
337. During Examination Boards, performance data are considered by both internal and external examiners. Figures from the previous five years of examinations are available for comparison during this process. External examiners report annually to the school, and these reports are responded to and changes implemented as required through the TLA committee.
338. After assessment, all marks are moderated by a range of methods:
- A standardisation process where a sample of scripts are marked by all assessors followed by a standardisation meeting where the mark scheme is amended so that its interpretation is consistent between examiners. Scripts are then marked using the amended mark scheme
  - Sampling, either by an External Examiner or by an internal second marker
  - Additional marking of borderline students, high marks and fails
  - Additional marking where there is significant disparity between the different elements of assessment for an individual student, in a unit or across the programme
  - Additional marking or standardisation where there is significant disparity between the marks of different markers in a particular unit or programme
339. There are internal quality assurance and control process associated with the marks for modules and rotations. This involves:
- Initial data input and review by the TLA Team
  - Marks collation and calculation by the Examinations Officer
  - Students being able to feedback on any assessment queries or issues directly to the Examinations Officer
  - Review of the performance of each summative question for the module against available data (e.g. performance of cohort for each question against the standard or mark assigned)

by the Module Convenor, and further review by the Director of Education or Programme Leads

- Review meeting between Director of Education, Programme Leads, Examinations Officer and Module Convenor, at which any potential changes where problems have been identified (such as removal of poorly performing questions, student comments) are discussed
- Verification checks of module marks and year marks by the TLA team
- Internal Exam Board review of marks and discussion of any changes
- Exam Board, with the attendance of External Examiners to review and confirm marks and progression.

340. The School appoints two or three External Examiners for each year of the 5-year course. The External Examiners contribute significantly to the assessment process and are key to ensuring a robust and appropriate assessment of the course. Comments from External Examiners are considered and responded to by the Director of Education or Programme Leads and reported at Exam Boards. A Final Exam Board for each year of the programme, attended by External Examiners confirms the marks and/or any extenuating circumstances and the progression decision for each individual student.

341. All results from examinations are entered onto Campus Solutions (the University's student administration system) and form the official University record of student performance. Students are able to access this transcript from their student portal through a system termed Bluecastle. Results for each cohort are also released by the School TLA team on Moodle following the exam board. Failing students from all years are advised to get contact their Personal Tutor to receive information relating to resits or pastoral support; students are informed by letter of resit requirements and are offered an invitation to a supportive meeting with a member of the Student Academic Support Committee.

342. The pass mark for modules in the Preliminary/Gateway Year is 60%, and 50% on the 5 year course. Students have to pass all examinations before they enter later years of the course, and also gain at least a 2.2 BVMedSci degree in order to progress to year 4. Students must complete the veterinary course within 10 years and cannot take more than 3 years to complete 1 year. Students are allowed only one retake opportunity for a module. Students are required to pass 70% of year 2 OSPEs and year 4 OSCEs stations.

343. The School abides by the University policy for appeals.

344. In addition to curricular changes associated with the dual intake programme there have been related changes in assessment:

- In years 1 and 2, all spot tests have been replaced with online short answer papers which are equally weighted with the MCQ papers in each module.
- Practical skills delivered in years 1 and 2 are now summatively assessed at the end of year 2
- Practical skills delivered in both years 3 and 4 will be summatively assessed in an OSCE at the end of year 4 prior to the start of clinical rotations.

- The six-week, free-choice research project at the start of year 3 allowed students to develop scientific curiosity and research skills. In the dual intake curriculum, the revised research project will be assessed by a written research proposal.
- There is no change to the assessment of clinical skills via DOPS in year 5.
- The reflective Portfolio, delivered through PebblePad software, is now credit-bearing and is the method of assessment for Veterinary Professional Skills in years 1 and 2 and in year 3 in combination with the business plan task. The structure of the Portfolio has been revised: students are given less free choice in years 1 and 2 and must complete a number of compulsory reflective pieces (assets) which cover topics such as work-life balance, communication, ethics, research and clinical and practical skill development.
- The Fundamentals of Clinical Practice module in year 3 is assessed by an MCQ paper, the practical and clinical skills taught within this module will, in future, be assessed in an OSCE at the end of year 4.

### Comments

346. A range of formative and summative assessments are used throughout the programme and are appropriate methods for the specific learning outcomes being tested.
347. Reflective learning is assessed, particularly in Year 5, through the students' online Portfolios.
348. The visitation team noted the efforts of staff to deliver online examinations during the Covid pandemic, and the changes introduced to improve the fairness and reliability of open-book examinations in response to External Examiner comments and *post hoc* analysis of results.

### Commendations

None

### Recommendations

None

### Suggestions

349. The School should continue to monitor and assess the impact of open book examinations on grade boundaries, in order to continue to improve the reliability and validity of these written assessments.

## Standard 11 – Research

### Background:

#### Research environment

350. Four major Strategic Research Areas (SRAs) are the foci for research within the School and inform student learning:

- **Diagnostics and Therapeutics**  
Students gain exposure to research work on non-communicable disease during teaching throughout years 1 to 4, and also through clinical cases on Small Animal year 5 rotations
- **Translational Infection Biology**  
Students are informed about genomics research throughout the curriculum and particularly in infectious disease and disease control sessions.
- **One Virology**  
Students develop an understanding of the diagnosis, treatment and control of viruses that affect people and animals.
- **Ruminant Population Health**  
The outcomes of the research from the national Centre for Innovation and Excellence in Livestock, hosted at Nottingham, in this SRA are delivered across all years of the programme with a special focus in year 5.

351. In addition, the School hosts or co-hosts a number of University centres of excellence whose staff deliver research-informed teaching:

- Centre for Applied Bioethics
- Centre for Dairy Science Innovation
- Centre for Evidence-based Veterinary Medicine
- Centre for Large Animal Biotechnology
- Advanced Data Analysis Centre

352. The quality of the School's research was evidenced by its three Impact statements included in its REF submission (in conjunction with the School of Biological Sciences), and the ranking of its overall score benchmarked against other institutions in Unit of Assessment 6.

353. All staff (with the exception of 0.2 FTE facilitators) are involved, to varying extents, in research including educational research and supervision of year 3 student projects. Research-focused staff are expected to teach on the curriculum with the latest research findings informing teaching.

#### Undergraduate research training

354. The School exposes undergraduate students to research through a range of activities:

- Year 1, using the library
- Year 2, writing a literature review on a research topic and planning of the year 3 project
- Year 3, conducting a research project module; plans for revision of the module were available.
- Year 5, conducting BestBETs (Evidence-based veterinary medicine analyses)

- Optional research-track CEMS
- Funded vacation research scholarships; a doubling of the number of scholarships available is aspired to, so that equal opportunities are available to both cohorts of the dual intake

355. Intercalation typically occurs at the end of Years 3 or 4 and will continue to be available for students in both cohorts in the dual intake model.

### **Postgraduate research opportunities**

356. The School offers postgraduate opportunities to study on an academic track for MRes and PhD degrees, in a wide range of veterinary, biomedical, biological, educational and statistical research fields. All postgraduate research students are integrated into the University of Nottingham's Researcher Academy which has centres based at all University campuses including Sutton Bonington.

### **Taught postgraduate courses**

357. The School currently offers a range taught postgraduate courses:

- A PG Certificate in Veterinary Medicine and Surgery aimed at new or recent veterinary graduates to develop further clinical experience through an Internship
- Clinical residencies aligned to MVM / MVS and DVetMed / DVetSurg degrees which are commonly combined with a clinical Certificate or a Diploma (awarded by European Specialty Colleges), and typically based at one or more of the Schools' Clinical Associates or with the School's pathology team.
- A 36-month part-time taught MSc programme in Veterinary Physiotherapy accredited by the Animal Health Professions' Register (AHPR) and recognised by the Recognised Education Provider (RAMP).
- Degree apprenticeship in Bioinformatics
- Degree apprenticeship in Advanced Clinical Practice (Veterinary) which allows graduates in practice to:
  - complete their VetGDP.
  - gain an RCVS Certificate of Advanced Veterinary Practice (CertAVP); the School's aim is to offer standalone RCVS A, B and C Modules from 2022.
  - develop key knowledge, skills and behaviours leading to eligibility of Advanced Practitioner status.

### **Quality assurance**

358. Programme specifications for each of the postgraduate programmes offered adhere to the University's Quality Manual. Its Postgraduate Research and Postgraduate Taught Committees, on which there is student representation, monitor student progress and also discuss student welfare, support and operational issues associated with postgraduates.

359. The TLA Committee is the main quality assurance process route for all programme matters associated with taught postgraduate programmes after review by the Postgraduate Committees. Programme specifications for each of the postgraduate programmes offered are published in the University's Quality Manual. Postgraduate students are also represented on

the Learning Community Forum and Safety Committee, where they are able to discuss any matters (academic, welfare or social).

### **Continued Professional Development**

360. The School offers a range of Continued Professional Development (CPD) courses for veterinary surgeons and allied professionals. Dedicated space for practical instruction has been developed.

### **Comments**

361. The visitation team found evidence of a range of postgraduate and CPD courses including innovative apprenticeship programmes.

### **Commendations**

None.

### **Recommendations**

None.

### **Suggestions**

None.

## Standard 12 – Outcomes Assessment

### Background:

362. The School uses a number of quality-related outcome assessment measures.
363. Decisions regarding curriculum development are driven by the exit learning outcomes that students are required to display at the end of the course. The veterinary curriculum at Nottingham is student centric.
364. Outcome assessment at School level is an ongoing activity to ensure regular appraisal of data in order to monitor and inform curriculum development and graduate competency. It also informs School strategy and includes data collected from students, staff and external stakeholders. Data are collected at year, module and activity level (e.g., facilitated sessions, practicals), methods employed are:
- Surveys (School/University managed: Year survey, SET, SEM, graduate survey, employers, University all student survey (NSES). External: NSS, RCVS/VSC graduate and employer surveys)
  - Data analysis (assessment results, admissions qualifications)
  - Individual feedback (e.g., student, staff, External Examiners, EMS host)
  - Committees (e.g., Student Progress, TLA, LCF)
  - Ad-hoc focus groups convened around particular topics
  - Peer observation (e.g., teaching)
365. Outcome findings are considered and responded to through ongoing operations. Examples of changes made following feedback are:
- Consolidation of modules to reduce the assessment burden in response to feedback from students and External Examiners
  - Financial support for all final year students to cover travel costs associated with IMR and EMS
  - Compulsory out of hours emergency care rotation incorporated into year 5 rotations – decision informed by graduate survey
366. The School has put in place a wide range of mechanisms to collect outcomes data around Day 1 competence, including an assessment strategy designed to test knowledge, skills and professionalism, benchmarking by External Examiners and feedback from employers.
367. The whole curriculum is carefully mapped to the RCVS Day 1 Competencies and summative assessments aligned with teaching ensure the Day 1 Competencies are taught, assessed and achieved by all students. For example:
- The final year assessment strategy examines practical competencies and professionalism in the workplace (through DOPS and the Rotation Professionalism Assessment), mapping to RCVS Day 1 competences and RCVS Guiding Principles
  - Knowledge and clinical reasoning skills are assessed in final examinations which are blueprinted to ensure species and topic coverage, mapped to RCVS Skills, Knowledge and Professionalism

- Students link all Portfolio assets to RCVS Day 1 Competences; the Portfolio is defended in a viva.
368. Year 1 graduates have been surveyed annually by the School and asked how well prepared they feel for different aspects of clinical practice and on their general experience post-graduation and also space for free text comments. Response rates have ranged from 21% to 37% over the last 5 years. No clear overall trends are discernible, however there are areas of lower scores.
369. The data from the graduate survey are considered at TLA Committee, and changes are made to the curriculum as necessary, for example are increased opportunity for surgical experience: developed a relationship with RSPCA as a clinical associate site for IMR; improved surgical experience through Small Animal primary care rotation.
370. In addition the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) collects data annually from graduates 15 months after graduation.
371. The School receives data from the VSC and RCVS employer and graduate surveys.
372. The School has yearly performance targets in common with all University Schools which relate to NSS overall satisfaction, University student surveys, staff engagement, Athena Swan, research awards, REF and HESA qualified staff.
373. The School undertakes a wide range of activities to gain outcome information, however benchmarking is provided through 5 main mechanisms.
- National Student Survey (NSS). Data from the survey have resulted in a number of changes, for example an increase in feedback mechanisms and volume
  - The Association of Veterinary Students survey is conducted every 3 years and evaluates various aspects such as teaching, learning and support.
  - External Examiners provide benchmarking and assurance that the programme outcomes are of a comparable level to other Veterinary Schools. Change made have shown the School acts on feedback received.
  - The University undertakes Educational Enhancement and Assurance Reviews (EEARs) to ensure high quality, competitive, and well managed academic programmes are maintained – these 3-yearly reviews include external representation to ensure benchmarking.
  - The University provides benchmark data to support strategy and plan development, this includes, degree classifications and entry tariff data .
374. A number of other indicators of quality have been made internally and externally in the form of awards and achievements, the School would use these outcomes in assessing that the School is delivering on educational strategy and quality. The School has received a number of teaching awards including the ASPIRE award for student engagement and the Guardian Award for Employability.



375. Staff and students can raise comments on their perception of adequacy of resources, facilities and equipment which support the educational process by a number of mechanisms within the School:

- Directly to relevant technical and administrative staff to resolve operational issues, and through line managers, Module Convenors as relevant and/or ultimately to the Senior Technical and Facilities Manager or Heads of Operations.
- Through various Committees (TLA, Research, LCF, Staff Meeting, etc) with onwards decision making by Management Team
- As part of surveys such as SEM, Year, NSS, University or School staff surveys
- Anonymously through a feedback box in reception.

376. Results of surveys/analysis of outside opinion (including alumni and other stakeholder groups) as to whether the school is achieving its objectives.

377. The Portfolio leads into the VetGDP in that students have demonstrated competence in reflective practice which is essential for VetGDP.

378. Education research in the School has conducted in-depth projects, for example on communications skills, outcomes based assessment and anatomy teaching. The Veterinary Education Research Group (VERG) meets regularly and has developed a strategy to prioritise research within the School under three main themes: teaching learning and assessment; readiness for the profession and the staff and student experience. Within the theme of student experience, research has been conducted on mental health and wellbeing. This has resulted in the integration of mental health awareness within the curriculum, for example mental health first aid sessions within the veterinary professional skills module, and the addition of mental health and wellbeing as an embedded module.

379. The School intends to review the success of the Dual Cohort programme, as part of a Post Investment Appraisal for the University.

## Comments

380. The data from the 2019 employers' survey was presented in raw form and had not been analysed. This was a large spreadsheet with multiple entries. To make use of such information, the School needs to analyse the data in order to use it to inform the curriculum and make any necessary changes in teaching.

381. The response rate from graduates to surveys is poor. The School needs to find further ways to stay in touch with recent graduates in a more effective manner to ensure returns are higher.

382. MyProgress is used by students to record DOPS and PebblePad is used to collect data for their Portfolios. The visitation team were shown how both these were used by students.

383. The School gathers internal and external data on their course including surveys and Educational Enhancement and Assurance Reviews (EEARS). The visitation team noted that

the majority of issues identified and commented on in the EEARS review had been addressed.

### **Commendations**

None.

### **Recommendations**

None.

### **Suggestions**

384. Employer's survey data should be analysed in order to inform the curriculum.

385. The School should find additional ways to remain in touch with their graduates, to encourage them to complete surveys.



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29 March 2022

Dear Kieran

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Nottingham Visitation Report.

We would first like to state our deep appreciation for the professionalism of the RCVS Visitors and the constructive nature of the Visit, and to you for your work in coordinating the Visit.

We are extremely pleased that the team recognised our excellent work and commended the School in several areas. We would like to make the following comments on the report, particularly, the recommendations and suggestions:

### **Standard 1 – Organisation**

#### **General**

We are pleased to note the acknowledgement of the School's high level of autonomy and that the Visit recognised well-structured committees with great staff engagement and strong student representation.

There are no commendations, recommendations or suggestions for this standard.

### **Standard 2 – Finances**

#### **General**

We note that the Visitors recognize the autonomy the School has over the budget and that there is flexibility to acquire further funds to support the curriculum and Clinical Associates.

There are no commendations, recommendations or suggestions for this standard.



## Standard 3 – Facilities

### General

We are pleased the Visitors recognised the investment made and planned into facilities at Sutton Bonington and our Clinical Associates.

### Commendations

*The refurbished abattoir at the School is to be commended as a valuable resource for VPH teaching and offers resilience against any potential lack of access to commercial facilities.*

We are delighted that the abattoir has been commended. We are very fortunate to have this facility available for our students.

*The visitation team commend the commitment to education at the RSPCA Radcliffe.*

We are pleased that RSPCA Radcliffe have been commended for their commitment to education; the Radcliffe team are extremely student-oriented.

### Recommendations

*The School must ensure that Health and Safety (H&S), and biosecurity standards, at Clinical Associates (CAs) are at least equivalent to those expected on University premises.*

The School has high regard for staff and student health and safety and expects that the standards at Clinical Associates are as comprehensive as those within the School and are enforced appropriately. Following this recommendation, the school has:

- Ensured that all SOPs are displayed and fixed appropriately and dated (note that SOP review dates are also held electronically so that the appropriate staff members can be notified when SOPs are to be updated).
- Formally reviewed and revised the safety guidance document on PPE Policy around horses. This was approved by the University Health and Safety Advisor and the School's Safety Committee in March 2022, and the new system will roll out at the start of the next year 5 cohort in May 2022.
- Reinforced the requirements associated with health and safety around equine patients at all Clinical Associates.
- Reviewed processes and policies associated with biosecurity practices with Scarsdale staff in relation to farm animal inpatient facilities.
- Reviewed processes and policies associated with controlled drug recording at Oakham Hospital.
- Put in a land telephone line at the student accommodation at Pool Equine Hospital.
- Ensured that alternative work space will be available at Scarsdale for any students with mobility issues



The School believes that it has completed this recommendation.

*All CAs providing core clinical rotations must be part of the PSS or an equivalent quality assurance scheme.*

This action is ongoing, the School is in discussions with Pinfold to ensure that it is part of the RCVS PSS. It is worth noting that Pinfold is the Petplan Practice of the Year 2022.

### **Suggestions**

*The School should provide the RCVS with annual updates on the progress of the Phase 4 building.*

The RCVS will be informed of the progress of the Phase 4 building.

*The School should ensure that all SOPs are signed and dated.*

As detailed above this suggestion is complete.

*The School should ensure that all H&S and biosecurity documents are appropriately affixed.*

As detailed above this suggestion is complete.

*The School should consider extending opening hours of the Clinical Skills Centre for student practice.*

The Clinical Skills Centre is an additional resource to the curriculum where students already receive an integrated programme of clinical skills teaching across the five years. By extending the opening hours of the Centre, we would be asking staff to work outside core hours, and potentially compromise their health and wellbeing. It is also important that students are encouraged to have a healthy work life balance.

The School will therefore not be extending opening hours, but will look at ways of optimising student use during working hours.

## **Standard 4 – Animal Resources**

### **General**

We are pleased the Team recognised that the students see a wide variety of first opinion and referral caseload.

### **Suggestions**

*The School should continue to monitor the availability of small animal cadavers to ensure that sufficient numbers are available for the dual student cohort.*



The School continues to monitor small animal cadaver availability and has sought new providers and sources as required. The use of cadaveric material in the curriculum is continually reviewed to ensure optimal use of specimens.

*The School should endeavour to ensure that all students are exposed to live, healthy and diseased pigs.*

The School rears groups of piglets for slaughter in the on-campus abattoir. During the visit the abattoir was closed for refurbishment, but this activity has re-commenced. Prior to COVID-19 students undertook visits to pig farms, we will look whether these can be reinstated or additional exposure can be provided to pigs.

*The School should produce a policy on the use of animals in teaching. This should include the restrictions of individual animal use to ensure their welfare.*

This information was sent to the visitors upon request during the Visit; however, this has also seen further review since the Visit and a new policy on monitoring and restricting animal use has been implemented. The School would also like to point out that many animals enjoy the student interaction and would prefer to be handled in classes rather than waiting in kennels to be used for teaching and thus there is no direct link to restricting use and welfare.

## **Standard 5 – Information Resources**

### **Commendations**

*The School is commended for their response to the Covid pandemic and their ability to maintain teaching delivery.*

We are delighted to receive a commendation for our efforts in maintaining teaching delivery to our students throughout the challenge of Covid-19

*The School is commended for its development of the Veterinary Innovation Resources Laboratory for the design and manufacture of veterinary clinical task trainers and teaching aids.*

We welcome the commendation for our recently developed Veterinary Innovation Resources Laboratory

## **Standard 6 – Students**

### **General**

We are pleased to see the efforts that the School has put in to establish and develop the student experience have been recognised.



## Suggestions

*The School should ensure that students wishing to be involved in University activities that run during the standard University calendar are given the opportunity to enter the September cohort. This may particularly, but not exclusively, apply to elite sporting students who want to be involved in competitive sport at a University level.*

This is already done. Applicants are provided with the opportunity to express their preference of cohort in the early stages of the admissions process. It is here that they are also able to provide us with information on their sporting levels and whether any circumstances should be considered when assessing their application for cohort entry. In addition, there is feedback from the Director of Sport for entry points for elite Sports scholarship students. It should be noted that there is no choice of entry point for those that join during Clearing, should any spaces arise.

*Whilst accommodation within the area surrounding the Sutton Bonington campus is currently adequate for student demand, the School should continue to monitor the availability of reasonably priced accommodation that is well served by public transport.*

The School works closely with the University Accommodation Team, and also local Property Rental Agencies to monitor and forecast demand, both on Campus and locally.

*The School should ensure that students without cars are not disadvantaged with regard to travel to placements or in their choice of accommodation.*

The School has purchased two electric cars to support year 5 student travel to rotations and also provides a rotation travel bursary to all year 5 students. We continue to support students in sourcing placement opportunities and accommodation through the Student Placements, Student Welfare and Student Experience Teams.

*The School should ensure that requests from students for support from their personal tutor are responded to in a timely manner.*

Whilst every effort is made to reinforce the importance of adequate response times, this is not always possible to implement. Therefore, students are provided with alternative options for contact, such as their paired Vet family tutor, Senior Tutors and welfare support.

## Standard 7 – Admissions

### Suggestions

*Information on the costs of EMS should be given on the School's website for applicants as well as the indication that certain items can be bought secondhand.*



Information is already provided at Open Days and Visit Days, however an estimation of costs has been published on each of the veterinary course web pages with an indication that some items may be purchased second hand.

*The School should make sure that the Training of Staff Marking Applications document is up to date and follows current practise.*

The School has established an Admissions Working Group to review the Admissions process due to the increasing number of applicants and the timescales of which the School has to process them. To date, this has involved discussions with students of their experiences of applying to UK Veterinary Schools, exploration of best practices and consideration of employer's opinion. The Training of Staff Marking Applications document has been updated.

*The School should aim to have a wider range of stakeholders involved in recruitment.*

The school has external representation on the Admissions Committee but we will consider further how external stakeholders can be more broadly involved, including from BAME and widening participation sectors.

## **Standard 8 – Academic and Support Staff**

### **General**

It is pleasing to note that the Visitors recognized that the measures we have put in place to encourage recruitment and retention have resulted in low staff turnover.

### **Suggestions**

*The School should continue to monitor and review staffing requirements, and the impact of the dual entry programme on staff workload. If shortfalls are identified, further staff recruitment should take place in a timely manner, to maintain staff wellbeing and protect time for research and scholarship.*

Whilst staff recruitment has been planned, the employment of new staff has been brought forward as required to assist in the management of the dual entry programme. Regular reviews are ongoing to proactively examine workload, and staffing requirements are actioned accordingly. Line Management and workload is a standing item on the agenda for Executive Team meetings.

*The School should ensure all practical class teaching is adequately staffed.*

The School feels that many practicals are overstaffed following the COVID-19 restrictions where student groups were reduced in size. Educationally, this results in an overreliance of staff direction and a more didactic format and detracts from fostering an independent approach. The School contests the comment on the cattle hoof trimming class where visitors were concerned that there were safety concerns. The group size was 40 students and there were 6 teachers in total and 2 members of the technical support staff [who monitor activity





from an H&S perspective]. The visitors observed the beginning of the class, not its entirety. All students were observed and feedback was provided during the class; the visitors were not in attendance long enough to witness this.

## **Standard 9 – Curriculum**

### **General**

It is notable that the team is reassured that the introduction of the dual intake has led to a refinement and enhancement of much of the programme.

### **Commendations**

*The ethos of the School in delivering a student-focussed curriculum is commended.*

We are pleased that the ethos of our School curriculum has been praised highly.

*The level of support for and the management of the students' EMS is exceptional. The available resources and the assistance offered by the staff is to be commended.*

We are delighted that the continued exceptional support of the EMS Team has been commended.

### **Suggestions**

*The effect of the curriculum changes on student outcomes should continue to be monitored and reported in the RCVS Annual Monitoring Report. In particular, the impact of the proposed changes to the Year 3 research project on student engagement with research, should be continuously assessed, with consideration of modification if the impact is adverse.*

The School will continue to report on curriculum changes and subsequent impact on student outcomes in the RCVS Annual Monitoring Report. We will evaluate the year 3 research project through our normal quality assurance processes (Student evaluation of module, Module review (e.g. student feedback, external review, focus groups etc, External Examiner reports etc)). We intend to review any impact there is with subsequent engagement with research (e.g. uptake of MRes/PhD intercalation opportunities, engagement with other research opportunities such as summer studentships).

## **Standard 10 – Assessment**

### **General**

We are pleased to note that the range of formative and summative assessment that the students undertake are deemed appropriate methods for the specific learning outcomes being tested.



## **Suggestions**

*The School should continue to monitor and assess the impact of open book examinations on grade boundaries, in order to continue to improve the reliability and validity of these written assessments.*

An Assessment Working Group has been set up to evaluate open book assessment processes and outcomes.

### **Standard 11 – Research**

There are no commendations, recommendations or suggestions to respond to.

### **Standard 12 – Outcomes Assessment**

#### **Suggestions**

*Employer's survey data should be analysed in order to inform the curriculum.*

The School has analysed the data and identified key issues and required actions.

*The School should find additional ways to remain in touch with their graduates, to encourage them to complete surveys.*

Response rates are in line with many other forms of indirect outcomes assessment at other institutions. The School continues to investigate the methods in which we can maintain engagement with our alumni, however the 2020 graduate response rate was poor as the graduation was online and so contact information was not collected as in previous years. We will in future use the RCVS VetGDP data as the response rate was higher and the content covers the same areas.

#### **Final comments**

We thank the RCVS Visitors for the commendations, comments and suggestions and will consider them further as necessary. There were two recommendations, the first around H&S and Biosecurity at Clinical Associates has been completed, and the second relating to the Practice Standard Scheme for one Clinical Associate is underway.

We do suggest that there should be improvements to the structure of the Visit meetings. At first, it was agreed that for each of the Standards, SVMS would deliver a 10-minute presentation and subsequently, have probing questions for the remainder of the allocated session. This, however, was changed by the Visitors after the first day and the School received no prior warning ahead of the meetings. This did result in questions being asked



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that would have been covered in presentations. It was disappointing as we feel the presentation approach provides a summary, improves understanding and allows for deeper and more insightful questions. We would like to propose that in the future, the RCVS provides a more suitable and consistent way for the meetings to be conducted.

Yours sincerely

Professor Gary England  
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