



VISITATION REPORT

**To the Department of Veterinary Medicine of the University of Bari Aldo Moro,
Valenzano, Italy**

On 16 - 20 October 2023

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Contents of the Visitation Report

Introduction

1. Objectives, Organisation and QA Policy
 2. Finances
 3. Curriculum
 4. Facilities and equipment
 5. Animal resources and teaching material of animal origin
 6. Learning resources
 7. Student admission, progression and welfare
 8. Student assessment
 9. Academic and support staff
 10. Research programmes, continuing and postgraduate education
 11. ESEVT Indicators
 12. ESEVT Rubrics
- Executive Summary
Glossary

Introduction

The first two-year course in veterinary medicine was established in Bari in 1943. The teaching was suspended for several years but the Degree Course in Veterinary Medicine (DCVM) at the University of Bari, Aldo Moro (UniBA) was established by ministerial decree in the Academic Year (AY) 1971-72.

The DiMeV (Dipartimento di Medicina Veterinaria, called the Veterinary Education Establishment or VEE in this report) is located in a 12-ha area in the municipality of Valenzano, about 12 km from Bari city centre and consists of 6 educational and research buildings, plus the Veterinary Teaching Hospital (VTH).

The VEE is one of 19 departments that constitute the UniBA, with 3 of them having teaching and support staff working in the Valenzano campus.

The VEE autonomously organises and oversees educational activities.

The VEE serves as one of the basic units of the UniBA, fostering and coordinating research activities, while each individual staff member has the right to pursue funding for research directly, at local, national and international levels.

In 2004, the VEE was awarded Full Approval by the EAEVE. The VEE was periodically evaluated by EAEVE in January 2014 with Conditional Approval due to one major deficiency (Lack of strategic objectives). The major deficiency was fully corrected by the VEE and therefore ECOVE issued Full Approval in 2016. The current strategic plan is in full accordance with the UniBA strategic plan.

In 2018, the VEE had a compulsory visitation from the Italian agency ANVUR (National Agency for the Evaluation of the University and Research system) leading to a positive outcome. ANVUR is formally accredited as an ENQA member and its accreditation process follows the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG 2015).

In 2022 the VEE received the recognition of Department of Excellence, making it the only department at the UniBA and one of the five Italian VEEs in the 2018-22 selection promoted by the Italian Ministry of Universities (MUR). This recognition was followed by further financial resources from MUR.

The financial situation is well balanced between expenditures and revenues (SER, Table 2.1.3.).

The development programme focused on One-Health. The funding made it possible to invest in the quality of veterinary research and teaching, in the reorganisation of some facilities (Vinci Pavilion) and in planning new facilities and services (One Health Center).

The Degree Course Council (DCC) is composed of all professors, researchers, adjunct professors responsible for teaching in the current AY, as well as elected student representatives. The DCC is chaired by the Coordinator, elected by all the DCC members.

The DCC decides on the organisation and planning of course Degrees, on the lesson timetable, the calendar of exams and final tests, and draws up Teaching Bylaws and the Study Plan. The curriculum programme is periodically reviewed and adjusted according to the requirements of several internal and external bodies of Quality Assurance. The VEE and DCC annually monitor and cyclically review the curriculum in accordance with ANVUR guidelines.

The DCVM is a single-cycle degree course lasting 5 years that is defined by Ministerial Decree No. 270/2004.

Major modifications of the VEE's curriculum were implemented in 2018 and 2021 with a completely redesigned study plan, monitoring feedback from students and training external tutors from private and public bodies. All practical activities have been increased and a compulsory biosecurity course has been introduced.

A new approach to studying and acquiring English language skills has been adopted. Students are expected to reach level B1 (PET) after the first year and level B2 (FCE) before graduating. The new degree course provides extramural stages, practical training in clinical and non-clinical activities, modulated for three veterinary specialisation areas (pet and non-conventional clinics, farm animal and horse clinics, public health and food safety).

The veterinary assistance 24/7-service at the VTH was temporarily discontinued in 2017 due to insufficient financial and human resources. The VEE promptly adopted strategies starting in the same year to ensure a continuous and effective service. New UniBA funding secured reactivation of the service. However, this was partly disrupted due to the COVID-19 lockdown, but fully completed in 2022.

The QA System adopted by the VEE is part of the broader framework of the QA System of the UniBA. Strengths and weaknesses are detected and improvements are made public in the Annual Monitoring Report (SMA), and in the annual reports of the TSJC and the CRR.

Many of the VMC facilities have been renovated with a focus on biosecurity standards. Further to this the VEE operates an environmentally friendly strategy with respect to energy, and campus maintenance.

The 2020-2022 strategic plan has focused on the need to increase the number of teachers with clinical skills, achieved through new recruitments. Support staff for clinical activities at the VTH have also been reinforced.

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted the VEE's activities, including education, research and Third Mission (TM). A major consequence of the lockdown was a temporary reduction of clinical cases and necropsies.

The ESEVT SOP 2019 as amended in September 2021 was valid for this visitation.

Area 1. Objectives, Organisation and QA Policy

Standard 1.1: The VEE must have as its main objective the provision, in agreement with the EU Directives and ESG recommendations, of adequate, ethical, research-based, evidence-based veterinary training that enables the new graduate to perform as a

veterinarian capable of entering all commonly recognised branches of the veterinary profession and to be aware of the importance of lifelong learning.

The VEE must develop and follow its mission statement which must embrace all the ESEVT Standards.

1.1.1. Findings

The VEE offers three courses: Veterinary Medicine, Animal Science, and Food Safety. The one in Veterinary Medicine is a single-cycle degree course lasting for 5 years that is regulated by Ministerial Decree No. 270/2004 (Degree Course - Class LM-42), and is accredited by the national accreditation agency (ANVUR). The design of the curriculum ensures the acquisition of competencies required by the EU Directive 2005/36/EC (as amended by Directive 2013/55/EU) and its Annex V.4.1, and the Day One Competences listed in Annex 2 of the ESEVT SOP 2019. There are ministerial constraints on curriculum development. However, compliance with the ESEVT requirements is regularly checked by the Degree Course Council (DCC), which also plans and proposes the necessary adjustments (see also SER 1.2.1).

The vision of the VEE, as expressed in its presentation, is creating a world in which animal and human health are two sides of the same coin (<https://www.uniba.it/it/ricerca/dipartimenti/dipmedveterinaria/Dipartimento/brochure-dimev.pdf>), and its mission is “to be the benchmark for excellence in research and high-quality education across regional, national and international levels”. The efforts of the VEE to fulfil this mission were rewarded by MUR awarding it with the “Department of Excellence” (2018-2022) title and resources allocated to it.

The VEE’s strategic objectives for the period 2022-2024 are the following:

Educational and training objectives:

- a. Enhance the attractiveness of our educational offering;
- b. Ensure the sustainability of our educational offering;
- c. Expand opportunities for postgraduate education.

Research objectives:

- a. Elevate research competitiveness and the ability to attract external funding;
- b. Improve the quality of the PhD programme.

Internationalisation objectives:

- a. Strengthen the international scope of our training offering;
- b. Strengthen the internationalisation of DiMeV’s research efforts.

Third Mission objectives:

- a. Foster closer ties with the economic-social sector;
- b. Promote a culture of sustainability;
- c. Facilitate scientific and cultural dissemination across diverse stakeholders and social contexts.

Human, Structural and Infrastructural Resources:

- a. Cultivate well-being and human capital development within DiMeV;
- b. Encourage the development and usage of digital services;
- c. Optimise and enhance the DCVM library assets;
- d. Promote sustainable development initiatives.

1.1.2. Comments

The VEE has a mission statement and a medium-term strategic plan which enhances the improvement of the quality of education. The acquisition of competencies required of a new graduate is ensured by a committee (DCC) responsible for monitoring compliance with the

ESEVT standards, including Day One Competences and the EAEVE Committee verifying that the course is adapted to ESEVT standards.

1.1.3. Suggestions for improvement

None.

1.1.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Standard 1.1.

Standard 1.2: The VEE must be part of a university or a higher education institution providing training recognised as being of an equivalent level and formally recognised as such in the respective country.

The person responsible for the veterinary curriculum and the person(s) responsible for the professional, ethical, and academic affairs of the Veterinary Teaching Hospital (VTH) must hold a veterinary degree.

The decision-making process, organisation and management of the VEE must allow implementation of its strategic plan and of a cohesive study programme, in compliance with the ESEVT Standards.

1.2.1. Findings

The VEE is one of the 19 departments of the UniBA, which is a public university supervised by the Ministry of Universities and Research (MUR) which certifies degrees including the veterinary degree and determines the general policy for higher education in Italy. The organisation, the administrative background and the curriculum are regulated by the MUR to a great extent. The VEE autonomously organises and oversees education and coordinates research.

The majority of the academic staff have a veterinary degree including the persons responsible for curriculum development and the head of the VTH.

There are three organisational levels related to the veterinary study course: university, department and course level. The administration and regulations of the UniBA as well as a number of central services are provided by the University.

At department level the Department Council is the ultimate decision-making body which meets every month. The Department Council elects the Head of the Department (Director) who chairs and fosters the activities of the Department, presides the Council and the Giunta, represents the VEE, and exercises the powers given by the Statute and Regulations of the UniBA. The Head has a Deputy replacing the Head and performing tasks delegated by the Head.

The Giunta (the Administrative Board) is also elected by the Department Council and assists the Head in carrying out its functions and tasks, following the General Regulations of the University. The Administrative Coordinator of the Department attends the Board's meetings as a recording secretary and advisor.

The VetBoard consists of the Head's delegates, formulates and presents the strategies, policies and improvements of QA in teaching, research and third mission to the Department Council. It ensures the implementation, monitoring and verification of QA processes, and meets whenever a problem has to be addressed, or urgent improvement is required. Its members are entitled to set up working groups addressing specific problems.

The QA committee has elected members representing different categories of the academic staff. It is responsible for overseeing the administration of the VEE and contributes to the definition of strategic objectives.

There are different councils and commissions which play important roles in the quality

management:

a) The Degree Course Council (DCC) made up of all professors, researchers, adjunct professors active in teaching in a given academic year, and elected student representatives. It meets 3-4 times a year, or when a decision is needed. It makes decisions concerning the organisation and planning of Course Degrees, timetables, calendar of examinations and final tests, draws up Teaching Bylaws and the Study Plan. Its resolutions are published by the VEE on the VEE's and DCC's websites. It monitors the curriculum regularly on the basis of ANVUR guidelines. It is chaired by the Coordinator elected by DCC members from among the professors. The DCC Coordinator is responsible for the implementation of QA processes and has the authority to intervene in case of non-conformities. S/he drafts the annual and cyclic reports on the VEE. To enhance this the DCC appoints its QA Group and a Review Group. The Review Group checks the consistency of the courses' educational objectives with the standards and to the indicators provided by ANVUR, ESEVT and the opinions of external stakeholders. Their task is to monitor teaching activities and report to the Coordinator, organising scheduled evaluations, and summarise their findings in the Annual Review Report.

The DCC is also responsible for harmonising the curriculum with ESEVT standards, helped and monitored by the EAEVE Committee.

b) The Teacher Student Joint Commission (TSJC) consists of 5 teachers and 5 students, and its main tasks are:

- monitoring the educational offering, how teaching and related activities are delivered, the quality of student services;
- draw up indicators to assess teaching outcomes and student service activities;
- express opinions on the VEE' study programmes, make suggestions for amending the teaching system and regulations regarding each study programme.

c) The Research Evaluation Committee (REC) is appointed by the Department Council and is made up of professors. Its task is the monitoring and evaluation of research and Third Mission activities. It also enhances the dissemination of research results, and the participation in tenders.

d) The EAEVE Committee verifies that the course is compliant with ESEVT standards, and monitors indicators every three months. It is also charged with the monitoring of the use of animals and materials.

1.2.2. Comments

The QA organisation of the VEE, though fairly complex and not always distinctive so far as the role of the bodies are concerned, allows the implementation of the strategic plan and the educational programme. ANVUR has recently issued guidelines which allow the reduction of this complexity, and further clarify the roles and functions of QA bodies.

1.2.3. Suggestions for improvement

None.

1.2.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Standard 1.2.

Standard 1.3: The VEE must have a strategic plan, which includes a SWOT analysis of its current activities, a list of objectives, and an operating plan with a timeframe and indicators for its implementation.

1.3.1. Findings

The VEE has a strategic plan, along with the integrated strategic plan of the UniBA, for the

period 2022-2024 and also for 2023-2025 which can be found on its website together with earlier strategies (since 2016). Beside a quality policy, a SWOT analysis is made for each of the 6 strategic areas (Human Resources, Facilities and Infrastructures, Economic Resources, Education, Research and Third Mission, Biosecurity - see also 1.1.1) as well as for the VEE in general that can be read in the SER. The strategic plan includes goals broken down to objectives with attached weight, indicators, timeframe with expected achievements and the persons responsible.

The performance of the VEE is basically evaluated against the indicators required by MUR and ANVUR which are uploaded in a database available for the UniBA, which in turn provides the Department and courses with the available data. The trends regarding ESEVT indicators are also followed by the EAEVE committee.

1.3.2. Comments

The VEE has three-year strategic plans with SWOT analysis and an operational part.

1.3.3. Suggestions for improvement

None.

1.3.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Standard 1.3.

Standard 1.4: The VEE must have a policy and associated written procedures for the assurance of the quality and standards of its programmes and awards. It must also commit itself explicitly to the development of a culture which recognises the importance of quality, and quality assurance, within their VEE. To achieve this, the VEE must develop and implement a strategy for the continuous enhancement of quality. The development and implementation of the VEE's strategy must include a role for students and other stakeholders, both internal and external, and the strategy must have a formal status and be publicly available.

1.4.1. Findings

The QA system of the VEE is an integral part of the UniBA QA system which is described in the Statutes of UniBA. It is a publicly available document specifying the QA related structures and tasks of the departments, including the role of students involved in all committees. External stakeholders are constantly involved in the educational process and are in direct interaction with faculty members. They are asked for their opinion at formal meetings usually before the introduction of major curricular changes.

The integrated strategy of the UniBA and that of the VEE are both available on the websites of the institutions and give evidence of a culture of continuous development.

While there is autonomy in formulating the VEE's own quality policy, there is strong cooperation with the University Evaluation Committee which collects and analyses data from departmental QA committees (particularly TSJC), and the UniBA QA monitors and offers guidelines for departmental QA processes. These processes are described in the regulations of the UniBA, and also presented in the QA chapter of the UniBA website.

The Italian accrediting agency, ANVUR accredits universities' degree courses every five years in harmony with ESG 2015. The VEE was accredited in 2018. Annual reporting on the QA systems to ANVUR is mandatory both at University and at Departmental level. The next accreditation is due in 2024.

The VEE has its own strategic plan which contains its quality policy. The main points of this

policy are as follows (see also 1.1.1):

- continuous qualitative improvement, at both individual and collective level;
- application of new concepts, ideas and creative approaches to teaching and research;
- promotion of teamwork, recognising the important role played by each member of the teaching and administrative staff, technicians and external tutors, as well as students;
- behaving honestly and fairly, embracing diversity in terms of race, culture, gender and sexual orientation.

The strategic areas enjoying priority are as follows:

- the adaptability of teaching contents to the needs of students and society;
- promotion of research activities as essential for improving teaching quality;
- training academic staff based on self-assessment and QA;
- implementation of technologies to support teaching;
- services rendered externally by the VEE using its academic, research and clinical expertise; the VEE's social impact;
- development of initiatives aimed at improving the welfare of animals, humans and protecting the environment;
- promotion of the VEE's profile within international networks, in the various fields of veterinary medicine;
- improvement of external relations with customers and stakeholders;
- increase in the number of European graduates and postgraduates and related services.

The Quality Policy involves the entire organisation.

1.4.2. Comments

The VEE (and the UniBA) has a clear commitment to the continuous development of quality which is made explicit in their quality policy. The UniBA QA unit ensures that all QA procedures are carried out in a uniform manner throughout the UniBA. Students are members of the vast majority of committees, thus they have a clear role in the management of the VEE. There is also a strong informal and formal interaction between the VEE and stakeholders.

1.4.3. Suggestions for improvement

None.

1.4.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Standard 1.4.

Standard 1.5: The VEE must provide evidence that it interacts with its stakeholders and the wider society. Such public information must be clear, objective and readily accessible; the information must include up-to-date information about the study programme, views and employment destinations of past students as well as the profile of the current student population.

The VEE's website must mention the ESEVT VEE's status and its last Self Evaluation Report and Visitation Report must be easily available for the public.

1.5.1. Findings

The VEE encourages collaboration and involvement in different fields in the life of the region such as scientific and cultural dissemination of information, public health programmes, precision and quality animal breeding, technical and consultation services, etc. Third Mission activities are presented on the VEE and the UniBA website: <https://www.uniba.it/it/ricerca/>

[dipartimenti/dipmedveterinaria/terza-missione](#)

From time-to-time consultations are held with representatives of different veterinary organisations, clinics, companies, and other stakeholders (see also 1.4.1). Most of these professionals are alumni of the VEE. Several meetings of the Professional Order of Veterinary Physicians and other bodies are held at the VEE which can also be attended by students.

The VEE's website gives accurate information about the admission process, the study programme, and the degree. It helps the career orientation of students by a so-called "Job placement" service and website which offer personal guidance and information to finding a job in the region, in Italy or in Europe. The VEE offers orientation courses consisting of presentations and discussions of the variety of professional traits open to veterinary graduates. The results of student satisfaction surveys regarding individual study courses are open to the public on the UniBA website. From time to time consultations are held with representatives of different veterinary organisations, clinics, companies, and other stakeholders.

All EAEVE-related documents and certifications can be found at the opening webpage of the VEE.

1.5.2. Comments

The VEE has multiple and vivid connections with the local community, commercial, non-profit and professional organisations. There is ample and reliable information on such activities as well as on the veterinary programme.

It is commendable that the VEE is involved deeply and in many ways in the scientific, cultural, economic and social life of the local and regional community.

1.5.3. Suggestions for improvement

None.

1.5.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Standard 1.5.

Standard 1.6: The VEE must monitor and periodically review its activities, both quantitative and qualitative, to ensure that they achieve the objectives set for them and respond to the needs of students and society. The VEE must make public how this analysis of information has been utilised in the further development of its activities and provide evidence as to the involvement of both students and staff in the provision, analysis and implementation of such data.

Any action planned or taken as a result of this data analysis must be communicated to all those concerned.

1.6.1. Findings

The QA system of the VEE is based upon the PDCA cycle thus an element of checking, self-assessment, monitoring is built into most of the teaching, research and Third Mission processes. The indicators both in the strategic plan, and the ones used by ESEVT are monitored regularly and corrective actions are taken if necessary. The indicators required by MUR and ANVUR also serve as a guidance.

Quantitative data and qualitative information are gathered and forwarded to the Evaluation Committee of the UniBA. The most important surveys made in order to provide information for committees which find the ways for correction and continuous development are:

- anonymous student opinion surveys (by the UniBA),
- Teaching Course Evaluation Forms,

- evaluation of external tutors by trainees,
- complex assessment of trainees by external tutors,
- surveys to assess the suitability of external practical training places,
- post-lecture and post-exam surveys,
- customer satisfaction survey of students before discussing their thesis (recently introduced),
- research evaluation systems (SUA-RD, VQR)
- survey of satisfaction and organisational well-being of teaching and technical-administrative staff,
- surveys of graduates after 1, 2, 3 years by ALUMNIAUREA.

Since all commissions and committees have student members, students are involved not only in gathering data, but also in the analysis and the elaboration of corrective actions.

The survey results and the steps made for correction are made public in the Annual Monitoring Report (SMA), the Cyclic Review Report (CRR prepared every 5 years), and the Teaching Course Unique Annual Report (Sua-CdS). These are compiled by the DCC coordinator aided by the Review Group, and the teaching offices respectively. The TSJC also prepares an Annual Report. Regular self-assessment reports made for ANVUR and EAEVE can also be found on the website of the VEE.

1.6.2. Comments

The VEE systematically gathers and analyses qualitative information which offers firm bases for corrective actions and continuous development. Students and staff are involved in the provision, analysis, and implementation of survey results as members of committees.

It is commendable that the results of student satisfaction surveys carried out by the UniBA regarding the veterinary study course are above 90%.

1.6.3. Suggestions for improvement

None.

1.6.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Standard 1.6.

Standard 1.7: The VEE must undergo external review through the ESEVT on a cyclical basis. Evidence must be provided of such external evaluation with the assurance that the progress made since the last ESEVT evaluation was linked to a continuous quality assurance process.

1.7.1. Findings

The VEE regularly undergoes external reviews by ANVUR and by EAEVE (in 2014, revisit in 2016). The major deficiency found in 2014 was rectified, and improvements were made in the fields in which indicators showed that the performance of the VEE falls behind the standard.

The QA system of the VEE has developed a lot since the last EAEVE visitation. An EAEVE Committee was set up which constantly monitors if the curriculum and the performance of the VEE are compliant with ESEVT standards and indicators and makes suggestions for corrective actions if necessary.

1.7.2. Comments

The VEE regularly undergoes external reviews by the national accrediting agency (ANVUR) and by EAEVE.

1.7.3. Suggestions for improvement

None.

1.7.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Standard 1.7.

Area 2. Finances

Standard 2.1: Finances must be demonstrably adequate to sustain the requirements for the VEE to meet its mission and to achieve its objectives for education, research and services. The description must include both expenditures (separated into personnel costs, operating costs, maintenance costs and equipment) and revenues (separated into public funding, tuition fees, services, research grants and other sources).

2.1.1. Findings

Table 2.1.1 (SER) gives a representation of the annual expenditures during the last 3 academic years (in Euros). The personnel costs represent the largest percentage of the total expenditure, between 84.2 and 92.2% of the total amount of expenditures. From 2020 to 2022, there has been an important increase in the personnel costs, due to an increase of Full time equivalent of academic (FTE) staff involved in veterinary training. The FTE of academic staff was 55 in 2019 and 68.6 in the academic year 2021-2022, with a mean of 61.45 for the three last years. The increase in personnel costs is explained by the increase of recruitment of staff, but also by increase in the value of salaries and wages. Staff recruitment has also been increased given the opening of the veterinary clinic which is open and available 24/7 (at least for companion animals). Salaries are paid directly by the UniBA. The increase in staff recruitment is also the result of the VEE being granted a department of excellence status by the Italian Ministry of Universities and Research (MUR).

The operating costs are between 4.7 and 5.8% of the total expenditure. The budget for equipment represents 1.2 to 4.7%, depending on the academic year. Electricity and water costs are covered by UniBA and the rest is covered by the VEE. The costs relating to water and electricity have undergone a very significant increase during the last 3 years.

Maintenance costs attributable to buildings (e.g. electricity wiring, plumbing, water system, elevators, fire protection, communication systems) are covered by UniBA, while minor running costs for equipment are covered by the VEE.

Many building renovations were undertaken during 2022, which explains a considerable increase in the building maintenance budget.

Due to the designation of the VEE as Dept. of Excellence extra funding was made available to equip the Vinci pavilion and supply extra equipment to the small animal clinic.

The revenues are specified in Table 2.1.2. (SER).

The revenues come from different sources: public funding, tuition fees, clinical services, diagnostic services, other services, research grants, post-graduate education, and other sources. In 2022, the revenues in total were 12,352,000 euros and represented an increase of 14% in comparison with 2021 (24.3% in comparison with 2020).

The UniBA keeps 90% of the amount received from the MUR and uses it for personnel costs, operating costs, maintenance costs and then redistributes the remaining 10% across the 20 departments of UniBA after application and also according to research activity. The MUR calculates, for each Italian university, a financing protocol according to a complex algorithm.

The VEE has benefited from a significant contribution thanks to its One Health project. This amount is 7,325,000 euros for five years (2008 to 2022).

Tuition is paid each year directly to the UniBA. The maximum amount paid by a student is 2,000 euros and the minimum can be 0. The non-EU students have the same rules and the same principle applied for the fee calculation.

The services provided by the VEE are diverse (clinical, diagnosis, advice, etc.) and are provided either for companies, for individuals or for public bodies.

For these services, overheads are levied and returned to the UniBA, to the Department and to the service of the department. A distribution key is provided for this and depends on the nature of the services provided by the VEE. For the distribution of revenues resulting for services to the community, the aliquots of overheads due when there are clinical services are the following: 10% remained in the UniBA, 5% for the VEE and 85% for the service belonging to the VEE (for non-clinical services, these percentages are 19, 4 and 77% respectively).

Research grants saw a substantial increase between 2020 and 2022. They now amount to 1,139,000 euros, which represents an increase of 65% compared to the year 2021 and 69.7% compared to the year 2020. Also in this case, overheads are planned and range between 5 and 15%. These amounts ultimately return to the UniBA and with a small return to the VEE.

A variable part from post-graduate fees is also returned to the Department itself.

The balance of income is positive with surpluses between 250,000 euros and 1,100,000 euros/year over the years covered by the SER. This balance mainly reflects research activity which has increased substantially.

2.1.2. Comment

The budget for the VEE is based on annual negotiations with the central administration of the UniBA. The VEE's financial history has shown that the VEE has run a surplus for the last three years. The balance is always positive at this level.

The VEE has used the maintenance budget and extra financing budget to improve the facilities (e.g. Vinci building and the 24/7-service in the VTH).

The VEE is commended for the financial balance and the management of financial resources. The significant increase in the research grants and the reward for being a Department of excellence received from the MUR is commendable.

2.1.3. Suggestions for improvement

None.

2.1.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Standard 2.1.

Standard 2.2: Clinical and field services must function as instructional resources. Instructional integrity of these resources must take priority over financial self-sufficiency of clinical services operations.

The VEE must have sufficient autonomy in order to use the resources to implement its strategic plan and to meet the ESEVT Standards.

2.2.1. Findings

The VEE has a certain autonomy to be able to dispose of the income generated by its own services. This makes it possible to have an investment policy in terms of equipment for the faculty.

The SER explains the system set in place in order to sustain the clinical and field service. Indeed, clinical activities take place within 6 entities, one of which is based on the location of the VEE (24/7 clinic).

Funding for the clinic comes from 3 essential sources: overheads for services, the ordinary budget allocated by the UniBA and exceptional allocations from the UniBA.

This is how the UniBA provided, in 2021 and 2022, additional funding for the day-to-day operation of the 24/7 clinic.

The VTH revenues amounted in 2022 to 459,000 euros, while they were 199,000 euros in 2021. The contribution of UniBA is still significant at this level but tends to decrease (29% in 2022 against 50% in 2021). The balance is 28,513 euros in 2022 and 1,071 euros in 2021.

2.2.2. Comments

Although the VEE is not an autonomous financial entity, it retains full independence in terms of its operations. Specifically, it has control over how its allocated budget is managed and utilised. The VTH almost exclusively serves the students for educational purposes and not for primary financial reasons. The general budget of the VEE is based on the number of admitted students per year and the budget is then managed independently. This includes funds allocated for research purposes. The instructional resource priority is given over financial self-sufficiency of clinical services operations. The VEE has sufficient autonomy to use its resources and implement its strategic plan and hence meets the ESEVT Standard.

For the VTH, the portion of revenue that comes from the UniBA has fallen from 50% to 29% in one year, which shows a trend towards increasing autonomy of the clinic in relation to the VEE. UniBA is aware of the fact that veterinary training is very expensive compared to other less expensive courses. This is supported by regular meetings between the Department Head and the Rector of UniBA to discuss this subject.

Funding for the new Equine Breeding Center has been secured.

2.2.3. Suggestions for improvement

None.

2.2.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Standard 2.2.

Standard 2.3: Resources allocation must be regularly reviewed to ensure that available resources meet the requirements.

2.3.1. Findings

For research-related expenses, the institution manages its expenses on a day-to-day basis. There is constant monitoring. The VEE has been awarded the “Department of excellence” status which implies additional funding.

For expenses related to teaching, this is a process that directly involves the Director of the VEE and the administrative coordinator. The Giunta is involved in this process. The final proposals are debated and validated by the Department Council. Before submission to the Board, the Director may request additional assistance from the UniBA itself if the budget does not fully cover the expenses related to teaching.

At the end of each accounting year, there is an internal evaluation process to see if the resources have been correctly used. This is carried out by the UniBA but also by the VEE. Within the VEE, the evaluation is carried out with attention to the VEE's strategic plan and using a SWOT-type analysis.

For future years, a series of investments have already been considered and planned. These include: renovation of the VTH, investments in the skills lab, investments relating to the “One Health centre”, photovoltaic panel, sports field, etc.

In some cases, the UniBA provides exceptional and additional funding to make investments within the VEE.

The VEE also estimated future expenses and income. It is planned to promote 2 professors and hire a person under RTDB-status. Growth is expected in the clinics’ activity. A budget of 50,000 euros was obtained from the Orienta VET project.

2.3.2. Comments

There is an annual negotiation with UniBA in order to have the resources allocated. The VEE has credits from research grants, which are complementary to the budget offered by UniBA.

The institution monitors its research and teaching expenses on a daily basis. There is a commendation regarding this aspect. In addition, the VEE plans to constantly improve the services provided and the quality of teaching, thanks to different calls at Italian or European level.

In general, the VEE has shown a good ability to attract additional funding either from UniBA or from other sources.

The SWOT analysis is very useful for analysing past expenses and predicting future expenses based on different constraints.

The VEE provides a balance between reasonable and planned investments, the training of students and the recruitment of supervisory staff.

2.3.3. Suggestions for improvement

None.

2.3.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Standard 2.3.

Area 3. Curriculum

Standard 3.1: The curriculum must be designed, resourced and managed to ensure all graduates have achieved the graduate attributes expected to be fully compliant with the EU Directive 2005/36/EC (as amended by directive 2013/55/EU) and its Annex V.4.1. The curriculum must include the subjects (input) and must allow the acquisition of the Day One Competences (output) listed in Annex 2. This concerns Basic Sciences, Clinical Sciences in companion animals (including equine and exotic pets), Clinical Sciences in food-producing animals (including Animal Production and Herd Health Management), Food Safety and Quality, and Professional Knowledge.

3.1.1. General findings

Landmark reforms of the MUR (in 1999, 2004 and 2010) have directly affected the overall organisation of the veterinary medicine curriculum by defining the length of the programme (5 years, 300 ECTS), the number of core subjects and the maximum number of exams (30), the minimum number of ECTS for basic sciences subjects (58 credits) and characterising veterinary courses (130 credits).

The entire study cycle is structured over a period of five years, subdivided into 20 so-called “bimesters”, for a total of 300 ECTS, across the following domains: basic subjects and basic sciences (min 62 ECTS), characterising veterinary courses (min 162 ECTS), integrative subjects (min 22 ECTS), PPT (30 ECTS), optional courses (8 ECTS), other activities (8 ECTS), graduation thesis (8 ECTS). The ratio of contact (i. e. on site) and independent (i. e. self-study) work is not fixed, but depends on the subject.

Optional courses are courses outside the core curriculum plan. They are a part of the student experience and are selected according to personal interests. The students can follow the optional courses during the 5 years. For a successful completion of the curriculum, students must have passed optional courses corresponding to 8 ECTS (optional courses are therefore compulsory), which may include: seminars or conferences organised by or approved by the VEE, or courses on transversal skills recently set up by UniBA. Only one of these courses per AY may be used for ECTS.

Generally, the academic year starts in mid-September and finishes in June. With a bimester system, each subject lasts approximately 7 weeks, interspersed with periods of so-called “didactic silence” (about 3 weeks) in which the students take their exams.

Theoretical knowledge, pre-clinical and clinical practical skills are specifically assessed. The achievement of learning outcomes is verified through ongoing assessment and specific exams at the end of each subject.

The first two years are devoted to basic veterinary sciences and to introductory skills in handling and examining companion animals, including horses, and farm animals. Starting from the third year, exposure to professional subjects gradually increases with a greater emphasis on the preclinical/clinical disciplines, herd health management and food inspection. The last bimester of the fifth year is devoted to 6 Professionalising Didactic Paths (PDPs) which students can choose on the basis of their own vocation and on practical activities (10 ECTS): Dogs and Cats Clinic, Farm Animals, Wild and unconventional animals, Emergency Medicine and Intensive Care, Equine Clinic, and finally Public Health and Food Safety. Currently, the minimum number of applicants per track has not been determined since the fragmentation of students enrolling in the 5th year across the six paths makes it possible to run practical activities in small groups.

The curriculum has recently been modified by moving some teaching from 4th or 5th years to the 2nd or 3rd years, because the VEE received feedback from students that the last years of the curriculum were too overloaded, compared to the first years of the curriculum.

The primary responsibility for the development, management, review and self-assessment of the curriculum lies with the DCC. The DCVM Coordinator represents the primary and most important level of oversight, being able to identify critical issues right away and ensuring timely action. The Coordinator is also responsible for involving the DCC, keeping its members abreast of the UniBA strategies and the decisions taken with regard to the degree course. Proposals of the DCC about planning, monitoring and revision activities are then shared with the DiMeV Council which must provide adequate resources and support, so that a quality curriculum can be attained in a cost-effective manner.

The Coordinator works with selected DCC members, QA group and a Review Group (RG) in the QA process to verify the adequacy of the objectives and learning outcomes and the effectiveness of the way in which the course is managed. The QA group and RG (a) draft the annual review report, called SMA, and CRR (every few years; it contains the main inputs for corrective actions and changes to the curriculum), (b) define, adopt and implement corrective actions and changes following the review activity, (c) monitor the results of improvement actions, and (d) ensure interaction with the QA group of the DiMeV and the UQA.

Self-assessment exercises, especially student feedback, enables the Coordinator to work with the QA Committee and TSJC to remove any redundancy or overlap between teaching courses, particularly core courses, as well as to identify any gaps between courses and include such topics that are regarded as important to fill in these gaps.

Although the constraints imposed by national regulations severely limit institutional discretion in terms of characterising veterinary courses, autonomous decisions may be taken regarding the ratio of contact and independent work in theoretical and practical teaching; hours per ECTS that must be dedicated to different learning activities (such as lectures, seminars, supervised self-learning, work on animals, etc.); the number of ECTS to be attributed to specific subjects; the organisation of subjects into integrated courses, with two or more teaching units, or into single-topic courses. However, some of these changes require a long lasting process of evaluation at the National University Council (CUN). This bureaucratic burden together with centralised ministerial control over content actually limits the flexibility of the curriculum, as well as its ability to interpret and respond to a rapidly changing and competitive job market. The curriculum conforms to the EU Directive 2005/36.

3.1.1.1. Findings

The number of hours on site (ie, “contact work”) are 510h, 441h, 633h, 805, and 829h, for year 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5, respectively.

The proportion of lectures to practicals in basic subjects is almost 100% (128h/138h in total). This proportion is 66% (849h/1281h in total) for basic sciences, 49% (474h/977h in total) in clinical sciences, and 67% (206h/367h in total) in animal production, food safety and quality, veterinary public health, and one health concept.

Biosecurity in laboratories and the relationship with animals, Statistics, and Anatomy are taught in year 1; Veterinary Physiology, Veterinary Microbiology and Immunology, General Pathology, and Animal Nutrition in year 2; Veterinary pharmacology and toxicology, Parasitology, Infectious Diseases, and Animal Productions in year 3; Animal Production, Veterinary Pathology, Clinical examination and medical pathology, Veterinary Surgery, Obstetrics and Pathology of Reproduction, and Food Safety in year 4; Food Safety, Obstetric Clinic, Veterinary Surgery, and Veterinary clinical medicine in year 5. Clinical rotations (30 ECTS) can be carried out both intramurally and extramurally, and are in the 4th (Infectious and Parasitic Diseases, Animal Production, Avian Pathology and clinical rotations in emergency services) and 5th (Veterinary Pathology, Internal Medicine, Surgery, Obstetrics and Food Safety) years. PDPs (elective tracks) are carried out in the 5th year.

3.1.1.2. Comments

The curriculum is designed by a Ministerial decree, which imposes a curriculum of 5 years for a total of 300 ECTS, the maximum number of exams and the allocation of ECTS between basic and characterising subjects.

The curriculum is managed to insure that all graduates achieve the expected level at the end of each year of the curriculum and the acquisition of the day-one-competences through the following mechanisms: (1) the knowledge and competencies are assessed two times per semester and the assessments and specific exams are based on learning outcomes accessible to students online ([here](#)); (2) the learning outcomes are precisely described for each teaching unit, and the corresponding ESEVT Day One Competences are provided; (3) an overall QA process that verifies the adequacy of the learning outcomes and identifies a need for corrections of overlaps or gaps between courses. The human resources for this overall QA process include the DCVM coordinator, the DCC, the QA group, the TSJC, the PPT, the EAEVE committees, all of them including students.

The VEE will be introducing a new curriculum in 2024-2025, but this refers to an administrative restructuring to link the organisation of the curriculum with the structure stipulated by the new national legislation that will not affect the achievement of competences and training process.

It is commendable that the day-one-competences of EAVE concerned by the teachings of the teaching unit are listed in each programme of the teaching unit. It is also commendable that the VEE has been able to take into account the feedback from the students about the overloaded 4th and 5th years of the curriculum, proving the impact of students participation in the various committees.

3.1.1.3. Suggestions for improvement

None.

3.1.1.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Standard 3.1.1.

3.1.2. Basic Sciences

3.1.2.1. Findings

The number of hours of lectures in basic subjects represents almost 100% of the total number of hours (128h/138h in total). This number of hours in lectures represents 66% of the total number of hours for basic sciences (849h/1281h in total).

Basic subjects and basic sciences are taught in year 1 (biology, chemistry, physics, informatics, statistics, economics, biochemistry, anatomy, and biosecurity in laboratories and in the relationship with animals), in year 2 (veterinary physiology, veterinary ethology, veterinary endocrinology, veterinary bioethics, English, microbiology, immunology, bacteriology, virology, general pathology, agronomy, and animal nutrition), and in year 3 (veterinary pharmacology, toxicology, veterinary chemotherapy, parasitology, mycology, infectious diseases, epidemiology, veterinary law, zootechnical ethology, husbandry and ethnography).

3.1.2.2. Comments

All basic subjects and sciences described in the ESEVT SOP are covered in the curriculum. The teaching in professional ethics and communication is incorporated in a number of the courses in clinical training.

3.1.2.3. Suggestions for improvement

None.

3.1.2.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Standard 3.1.2.

3.1.3. Clinical Sciences in companion animals (including equine and exotic pets)

3.1.3.1. Findings

Students are gradually involved in companion animal clinical activities from the 3rd year mainly. This involvement is increased during the 4th and 5th years. EU-listed subjects related to clinical sciences (977 hrs.) are covered in the curriculum from the 3rd year. Courses on

Professional ethics and communication are incorporated in those of clinical training, whereas Propaedeutics of common animal species are part of courses related to Medicine and Surgery. Core clinical training prior to the start of the clinical rotations involve e.g. animal handling, clinical examination and diagnostic procedures, laboratory work, discussing clinical cases with a problem-solving approach, semen collection, anaesthesiology, basic surgical procedures, principles of ovariohysterectomy and caesarean section, and interpretation of radiographic and ultrasonographic exams. At the beginning of the 5th year students may choose from 6 elective tracks (180 hrs.) including Equine clinic, Wild and unconventional animals (with the Sea Turtle Clinic and the extramural fauna observatory), Emergency medicine and intensive care and Dog and Cat clinic. In addition, all students can also voluntarily attend the Sea Turtle Clinic, Fauna Observatory (a wildlife rescue and research centre) and the experimental apiary, even if they have chosen another elective track.

Clinical rotations (540 hrs.), both intramurally (IPT) and extramurally (EPT; 198 hrs), are part of the mandatory professional practical training. Until March 2022 (end of the COVID-19 period), rotation in emergency services (180 hrs.) was carried out in private veterinary clinics under the supervision of an external tutor, due to the absence of a 24/7 service at the VEE. AY 2022-2023 was a transition year from EPT to IPT for the emergency medicine services, with a maximum of 36 hrs in private clinics.

5th year students carry out 15 shifts (each 8 hrs-shift holding 2-4 students) at the VTH, equally divided over internal medicine, surgery, and obstetrics and gynaecology. Rotating students have to fill a daily log with all their patients and performed activities and signed by the supervising teacher. Their presence and accomplishments are assessed by the supervising teacher. Students actively participate in daily activities, including history taking, physical examination, collecting samples, suggesting differential diagnoses, making a diagnostic plan, image analysis, patient follow-up, clinical records editing, and drug prescription. They also present cases to other students and staff. Emergency service is part of the VTH rotation and offered 24/7 for dogs, cats and equine.

3.1.3.2. Comments

It is commendable that, during the COVID-19 period, the VEE arranged student's rotations in emergency services in private clinics.

3.1.3.3. Suggestions for improvement

None

3.1.3.4 Decision

The VEE is compliant with Standard 3.1.3.

3.1.4. Clinical Sciences in food-producing animals (including Animal Production and Herd Health Management)

3.1.4.1. Findings

In the first two years, there is an introduction to skills in handling and examining farm animals. Commencing in the third year, students will experience a gradual increase in exposure to professional subjects, with a stronger focus on preclinical and clinical disciplines, as well as herd health management.

Before commencing clinical rotations (Tirocinio), students receive training in animal handling methods, biosafety, clinical and laboratory examinations, including Farm Animals.

Additionally, students practise clinical examination techniques using simulation devices and strategies. For food-producing animals, the curriculum includes the following subjects: Biosecurity in laboratories and in the relationship with animals (1st year); Animal Nutrition (2nd year); Infectious Diseases 1 & 2 (2nd year); Animal Productions 1 & 2 (3rd and 4th years); Obstetrics and Pathology of Reproduction (4th year); Obstetric Clinic (5th year).

In the final bimester (7 weeks) of the 5th year, students dedicate their time to six Professionalizing Didactic Paths (PDPs) (elective subjects), allowing them to make choices aligned with their individual vocations, one of which includes PDP: "Farm Animals".

For the allocation of hours for the various subjects for the **clinical science** curriculum: refer to table 3.1.2 (SER).

During **practical rotations** supervised by academic staff (excluding EPT), 4 ECTS credits are allocated for Animal Production, and 6 ECTS credits are allocated for Clinical rotations in VTH, including Surgery, Internal Medicine, Obstetrics, and Gynecology (with no specific allocation mentioned for food-producing animals).

Clinical rotations constitute an integral part of the Professional Practical Training (PPT) activities, which can be conducted both within the institution (intramural or IPT) and outside the institution (extramural or EPT). Students are required to acquire 30 ECTS credits (equivalent to 18 hours per credit) through practical experiences across various aspects of the veterinary profession.

In the context of food-producing animals, the PPT activities are structured as follows: in the 4th year: Focus on Infectious and Parasitic Diseases, Animal Production, Avian Pathology, and clinical rotations in emergency services; in the 5th year: emphasis on Veterinary Pathology, Internal Medicine, Surgery, Obstetrics, and Food Safety.

During the PPT training period, activities involving farm animals, including occasional equines, are also conducted through Mobile Clinic (MC) initiatives. In addition to clinical rotations, the Professional Practical Training (PPT) program equips students with competencies and skills in Public Health and Animal Production, encompassing Parasitic Diseases (1 ECTS), Infectious Diseases (2 ECTS) and Animal Production (4 ECTS)

Students engage in Extramural Practical Training (EPT) activities on farms under the guidance of an external tutor, typically the farmer or a farm veterinarian. This training spans a duration of three weeks. For students who cannot participate in EPT, the programme offers Intramural Practical Training (IPT) within laboratory facilities at the Animal Production Section. IPT training extends over four weeks, with each group consisting of up to five trainees. Nevertheless, students are actively encouraged to pursue on-farm training, where they can cultivate expertise in reproduction management, herd health oversight, milking hygiene and technology, animal welfare evaluation, and the utilisation of advanced management and PLF (Precision Livestock Farming) tools, among other skills.

Within the **elective** curriculum hours available to each student, the following subjects are offered under the Professionalizing Didactic Path (PDP) "Farm Animals" in the last bimester of the 5th year: Management Medicine and Animal Welfare Certification (30 hours), Necropsy Investigations (15 hours), Prophylaxis of Infectious Diseases in Cattle Breeding (15 hours), Clinical-Diagnostic Approach to Production Diseases in Dairy Cattle (30 hours), Diagnostics and Surgery of Production Animals (15 hours), Theriogenology (45 hours).

3.1.4.2. Comments

All subjects listed in the EU Directive 2005/36 as amended by EU Directive 2013/55 related to clinical sciences in food production animals are covered in the Curriculum. During the first two years, there is an introduction to skills in handling and examining farm animals.

It is commendable that there is a summary of the knowledge and skills (day-one-competences)

described in the study plan for each discipline.

It is commendable that following wishes expressed by students the revised curriculum includes an increased clinical teaching component, aimed at enhancing students' clinical and procedural skills.

3.1.4.3. Suggestions for improvement

None.

3.1.4.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Standard 3.1.4.

3.1.5. Food Safety and Quality

3.1.5.1. Findings

Courses relating to food sciences are divided into 5 subjects: veterinary legislation including official controls, controls, zoonoses, food hygiene and food microbiology, food technology. According to SER Table 3.1.2. hours per student are 367 out of a total of 2763 hours in all, which represents 13.3%. Of the 367 hours in total, there are 206 hours of theoretical lessons (56%).

The shows the courses devoted to food safety and the number of hours followed by each student. The courses are divided into 5 main parts where 171 hours are devoted to veterinary legislation including official controls and regulatory veterinary services, forensic medicine and certification; 66 hours to control of food, feed and animal by-products; 38 hours for zoonoses; 57 hours in food hygiene and food microbiology and 35 hours in food technology.

Food science courses are taught from the 4th year and throughout the 5th year of study.

Following the information on lectures available on Internet ([Elenco programmi - corso LM 42 - IV Anno - 2023/2024 — Corso di laurea in Medicina Veterinaria](#)), during the first bimester of the 4th year, classes relating to hygiene and food safety begin. The course is named “Food safety 1” and contains two main parts: “Hygiene and safety of milk and eggs” (3 ECTS, 41 hours of teaching) and “Beekeeping sector Hygiene and Safety Control” (2 ECTS, 28 hours of teaching).

During the second bimester of the 4th year, another course is given to students with the two following topics: “Fish and fishery products hygiene and safety” (3 ECTS; 41 hours of teaching) and “Hygiene and safety of bivalve molluscs” (3 ECTS; 59 hours of teaching).

During the 1st bimester of the 5th year, an additional course is given to students with the two following topics: “Hygiene and safety of meat and derived products” (4 ECTS; 54 hours of teaching) and “Meat production technologies” (3 ECTS; 41 hours of teaching).

For practical training supervised by one or more academic staff, 4 ECTS (of a total of 27 ECTS) are devoted to food science, during the 5th year.

This is added to 150 hours of optional courses. During the last bimester (5th year of the course) each student can choose between 6 different subjects, PDPs (Professionalising Didactic Paths). The subjects of these PDPs are the following: Dogs and Cats Clinic; Farm Animals; Wild and unconventional animals; Emergency Medicine and Intensive Care; Equine Clinic; Public Health and Food Safety.

3.1.5.2. Comments

The VEE provides sufficient courses related to food sciences. The proportion between theoretical courses and practical work is good given that this ratio is 56%. The VEE has also

entered into a significant series of agreements with companies or research centres. The web-page document

<https://www.uniba.it/it/ricerca/dipartimenti/dipmedveterinaria/didattica-1/offerta-formativa/tirocini/strutture-convenzionate> mentions 44 agreements with external organisations.

The VEE devotes a significant proportion of these courses to the teaching of food science. The VEE has established a collaboration agreement with one of the largest Italian slaughterhouses. This allows students to be familiar with the manufacturing process (from unloading of live animals to processed meat products) and to study the food health issues that could arise in an establishment and how to control them.

3.1.5.3. Suggestions for improvement

None.

3.1.5.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Standard 3.1.5.

3.1.6. Professional Knowledge

3.1.6.1. Findings

The first two years are devoted to basic veterinary sciences and to introductory skills in handling and examining companion animals, including horses, and farm animals. Professional didactic paths (PDPs) are made up of different subject blocks which deal with areas of most common interest in veterinary medicine - Dogs and Cats Clinic, Farm Animals, Wild and unconventional animals, Emergency Medicine and Intensive Care, Equine Clinic, Public Health and Food Safety - and include blended learning approach. Prior to the beginning of clinical rotations (Tirocinio), students are trained on methods of animal handling and biosafety, clinical/laboratory examination and diagnosis for Companion Animals, including Equines, Farm Animals. Students also practise clinical examination procedures through simulation devices and simulation strategies. Some ECTS of the PDPs are attributed to external practitioners on contract, who are selected via a public call and selected on the basis of any teaching qualifications, scientific production and professional skills. Communication and professional ethics are part of clinical subjects, however, the VEE organises additional optional courses in soft skills. For example, during AY 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 events were organised as part of the project #DiMeVAltuofianco on effective communication strategy, communication for relational, interpersonal and intrapersonal bonds, empathy and professionalism.

3.1.6.2. Comments

It is commendable that the VEE encourages students from the very first years of their studies to get into practice by implementing introductory skills in handling and examining companion animals, including horses, and farm animals. The VEE strives to ensure that students are trained on methods of animal handling and biosafety, clinical/laboratory examination and diagnosis before starting their rotations. Enhancing soft skills for the graduates via additional courses on practice management, communication and professional ethics is also applied. The VEE will introduce a new curriculum in 2024-2025, but this mainly relates to an administrative restructuring to link the organisation of the curriculum with the structure stipulated by the new national legislation that will not affect the achievement of competences and training processes.

3.1.6.3. Suggestions for improvement

None.

3.1.6.4 Decision

The VEE is compliant with Standard 3.1.6.

Standard 3.2: Each study programme provided by the VEE must be competency-based and designed so that it meets the objectives set for it, including the intended learning outcomes. The qualification resulting from a programme must be clearly specified and communicated and must refer to the correct level of the national qualifications framework for higher education and, consequently, to the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area.

The VEE must provide proof of a QA system that promotes and monitors the presence of an academic environment highly conducive to learning including self-learning. Details of the type, provision and updating of appropriate learning opportunities for the students must be clearly described, as well as the involvement of students.

The VEE must also describe how it encourages and prepares students for self-learning and lifelong learning.

3.2.1. Findings

The mapping of Day One Competences to the subjects taught (see Annex II) ensures that all the necessary competencies are covered during the course. Learning outcomes are described in the syllabi provided for students in the format specified by the UniBA QA. The programmes are reviewed annually and published on the VEE's website. The qualification (master degree), the course details and the career options are clearly described in the annually renewed Teaching Bylaws (TB) (Regolamento didattico), https://www.uniba.it/it/corsi/cdl-medicina-veterinaria/corso/organizzazione-e-qualita/regolamento-cds/reg_ord/n/regolamento-didattico-cds-lm42_a-a-2023_24.pdf) which includes references to the legal background provided by the MUR.

The programme is reviewed annually by competent teachers who publish the study programmes on the website. On the basis of student feedback, the TSJC and the QA group review the syllabus for coherence, redundancy and overlaps, suggesting corrective actions. Students, as committee members, may express their opinions and suggestions. The results of annual consultations with stakeholders contribute to the revision of training objectives in the light of practice.

The relatively low number of students make practical work in small groups possible. As students progress in their studies, the different kinds of tasks requiring active participation on behalf of the student from self-directed learning to clinical practice occupy an increasing part of the study programme. From the very beginning their practical training is built up so that they are introduced step-by-step into actual veterinary work. Beside elementary training in animal handling and laboratory work, a skills lab, simulators, interactive softwares, the library, etc. contribute to the development of their competencies. Not only professional skills are being developed but also soft skills (transversal competencies) such as critical thinking, communication, reflection on their learning process.

Since many students are involved in curriculum development and shaping the educational process, they learn to take responsibility for their own learning. The VEE also considers contact with leading researchers of the field inspirational for students. It is also important that they create a friendly, relaxed, safe atmosphere for learning (see more details under Area 7), and emphasis is laid on environmental and sustainability issues. The feeling of belonging to such

an academic and professional community encourages students' educational success and increases their motivation for lifelong learning.

3.2.2. Comments

The VEE has an increasing focus on competency-development which is enhanced and supported by students in small groups for practical work, skills labs, simulators, softwares, library etc. Students are involved in the continuous evaluation and development of the teaching and learning processes, and efforts are made to establish and foster their motivation for learning and continuous professional development.

3.2.3. Suggestions for improvement

None.

3.2.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Standard 3.2.

Standard 3.3: Programme learning outcomes must:

- **ensure the effective alignment of all content, teaching, learning and assessment activities of the degree programme to form a cohesive framework**
- **include a description of Day One Competences**
- **form the basis for explicit statements of the objectives and learning outcomes of individual units of study**
- **be communicated to staff and students**
- **be regularly reviewed, managed and updated to ensure they remain relevant, adequate and are effectively achieved.**

3.3.1. Findings

The VEE has limited autonomy in developing its curriculum since the regulations of MUR are mandatory for every veterinary school and concern the curriculum as well. However, the VEE has some influence upon the formation of the curriculum through the national board of the directors of VEEs. The VEE has to write a Teaching Course Unique Annual Report (SUA CdS, <https://www.uniba.it/it/corsi/cdl-medicina-veterinaria/corso/organizzazione-e-qualita/regolamento-cds/sua-cds/scheda-unica-annuale-del-corso-di-studi-lm-42>) for the MUR which contains detailed information concerning the main objectives of the veterinary course and its subunits, the resources used, the results obtained, the roles and responsibilities involved in the QA system. This is a tool of self-assessment and a periodical review of the structure of the course and its effects in order to identify possible areas for improvement and achieve a cohesive framework. TSJC and DCC have to approve of the report before it is submitted and made publicly available. An EAEVE Committee is working on the analysis of learning outcomes and subject programmes, providing suggestions for their better alignment with and matching the Day One Competences.

The 'Study plan, programmes and teachers' site of the VEE (<https://www.uniba.it/it/corsi/cdl-medicina-veterinaria/studiare/piano-di-studio-programmi-e-docenti>) describes the programme of each year and guides students to the forms of each subject which describe (among others) the objectives of the subject, the knowledge and understanding, skills (applying knowledge), soft skills involved with the subject. There is also a "*Summary of the knowledge and competences that the integrated course concurs to let the students acquire (Day One Competences) as scheduled by EAEVE*" in which the codes of Day One Competences related to the given subject are enumerated. The publicly available study plan is updated for every

academic year.

3.3.2. Comments

The objectives and learning outcomes in terms of knowledge and competencies are clearly stated in the syllabus. They are annually reviewed, evaluated and updated by the relevant committees, who participate in the preparation of the report due every year to the MUR.

3.3.3. Suggestions for improvement

None.

3.3.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Standard 3.3.

Standard 3.4: The VEE must have a formally constituted committee structure (which includes effective student representation), with clear and empowered reporting lines, to oversee and manage the curriculum and its delivery. The committee(s) must:

- **determine the pedagogical basis, design, delivery methods and assessment methods of the curriculum**
- **oversee QA of the curriculum, particularly gathering, evaluating, making change and responding to feedback from stakeholders, peer reviewers and external assessors, and data from examination/assessment outcomes**
- **perform ongoing and periodic review of the curriculum at least every seven years by involving staff, students and stakeholders; these reviews must lead to continuous improvement. Any action taken or planned as a result of such a review must be communicated to all those concerned**
- **identify and meet training needs for all types of staff, maintaining and enhancing their competence for the ongoing curriculum development.**

3.4.1. Findings

Supervisor teachers responsible for each year of the study programme work with the DCC Coordinator to organise and monitor teaching activities for a specific year, and it is him/her to whom students turn first with their study-related problems.

The committees involved in the shaping of the curriculum are the following:

- **TSJC** plays an important role in curriculum improvement and the preparation for external evaluations. Student members provide feedback on good practices and areas that they consider need to be reviewed;
- **PPT Committee** deals with all the aspects related to both intramural and extramural practical training, and analyses each kind of feedback in order to improve the service for the students;
- **Review Group** carries out yearly and periodic review of the degree programme; drafts the Annual Monitoring Report (SMA) which is approved by the TSJC, the DCC and DC;
- **QA group** carries out the monitoring and review activities of the Degree Programme in order to identify opportunities and actions for improvements, together with the timing, methods and responsibilities. It is made up of the Coordinator, four teachers of DCC, two students and the teaching manager. The QA group drafts the QA documents such as the annual form (SUA-CdS) for MUR, the annual monitoring form SMA and Cyclic Review Report;
- **The EAEVE committee** works on increasing compliance of the curriculum with the ESEVT SOPs;
- **The Department Council** bears the final responsibility for all teaching activities, for maintaining and promoting excellence in teaching/learning activities relying on the work of

TSJC, DCC, QC, and the EAEVE Committees in monitoring the curriculum and its realisation. Students provide anonymous feedback on teachers and courses through the UniBA online evaluation platform (student opinion survey) and through students' Teaching Course Evaluation Forms at the end of each bimester. The outcomes of the surveys are submitted to the DCC Coordinator and discussed by the TSJC in order to propose corrective actions.

To supplement this, student representatives of each year administer a survey for each exam passed to all the students of the class. The survey is anonymous and investigates several aspects related to exams (respect of date and time, availability of tutoring, behaviour of the examination commission in case of difficulties, assessment strategies compared to those declared in the programmes and in class at the first lecture, etc.). This new project is totally managed by students for students.

Students are also asked to fill in a survey following each extramural practice on the quality of the teaching experience, on the overall suitability of the external facility for passing on specific skills and competencies. This survey goes to the PPT Committee which analyses and evaluates external facilities.

Annual meetings with external stakeholders offer opportunities for them to express their opinion and contribute to curriculum development.

Major modifications to the curriculum were implemented in 2018. The curriculum has been completely redesigned with a new study plan, setting up a system for monitoring feedback from students and training external tutors from private and public bodies. From AY 2023-24 a new curriculum will be adopted in order to comply with the national provision (MUR Decree n. 652 del 5-7-2022) according to which the programme in Veterinary Medicine qualifies graduates to exercise the profession by merging degree and state exams and simplifying the entry of graduates into the job market. This has provided an opportunity to review the curriculum, also securing a continued alignment with learning outcomes from ESEVT and stakeholders' suggestions.

3.4.2. Comments

The last major curriculum change took place in 2018, and a new one is being introduced in 2023/24 upon the regulations from MUR. There are committees (TSJC, DCC, Quality Committee, and EAEVE Committee) monitoring the organisation, implementation and realisation of the curriculum.

3.4.3. Suggestions for improvement

None.

3.4.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Standard 3.4.

Standard 3.5: External Practical Training (EPT) is compulsory training activities organised outside the VEE, the student being under the direct supervision of a non-academic person (e.g. a practitioner). EPT cannot replace the core intramural training nor the extramural training under the close supervision of academic staff (e.g. ambulatory clinics, herd health management, practical training in FSQ and VPH).

Since the veterinary degree is a professional qualification with Day One Competences, EPT must complement and strengthen the academic education inter alia by enhancing students' professional knowledge.

3.5.1. Findings

EPT is compulsory and available for all the students and the VEE ensures the availability of several placements for the students to select. Students can choose the structure from the list of collaborating private or public units offering EPT in a wide range of areas. EPT placements are checked for their ability to offer successful training. The list of all placements can be found on the VEE web site. The students start the EPT during the 4th year. From AY 2023-2024, they will start during their 3rd year. They can select the affiliated external facilities in which to carry out the EPT according to the expected learning outcomes. The academic tutor assigns the selected facility on the basis of its availability. EPT complements the core curriculum activities and practical training.

3.5.2. Comments

EPT is obligatory for all students. Placements approved as EPT providers are carefully selected and evaluated to be up to the acceptable standard.

3.5.3. Suggestions for improvement

None.

3.5.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Standard 3.5.

Standard 3.6: The EPT providers must have an agreement with the VEE and the student (in order to state their respective rights and duties, including insurance matters), provide a standardised evaluation of the performance of the student during their EPT and be allowed to provide feedback to the VEE on the EPT programme. There must be a member of the academic staff responsible for the overall supervision of the EPT, including liaison with EPT providers.

3.6.1. Findings

All EPT providers on the DiMeV web site have an agreement with the UniBA. The area responsible member of the PPT Committee supplies students with the programme of the training activities that they are going to attend at the external structure (Individual Training Project) by itemising the modalities for training, activities to be performed, duties of the students and name of the external tutor supervisor. Each teacher responsible for EPT activities periodically collects constructive feedback from the external tutor supervisor in order to propose adjustments and better suit the student's needs.

3.6.2. Comments

All EPT providers have an agreement with the VEE. They are constantly evaluated by the students, the VEE collects the students' reviews and based on the feedback continues or declines the collaboration with the EPT provider.

3.6.3. Suggestions for improvement

None.

3.6.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Standard 3.6.

Standard 3.7: Students must take responsibility for their own learning during EPT. This includes preparing properly before each placement, keeping a proper record of their experience during EPT by using a logbook provided by the VEE and evaluating the EPT. Students must be allowed to complain officially and/or anonymously about issues occurring during EPT. The VEE must have a system of QA to monitor the implementation, progress and then feedback within the EPT activities.

3.7.1. Findings

Students are aware of the features of the external facilities before the beginning of the activities, as they sign a Training Project, setting out timings, facilities, external tutor info, location and insurance details, as well as biosecurity tools needed (if any). This document allows the academic tutor to share such info with the trainee before EPT begins. Each trainee records daily activities in the diary, and each record is validated by the external tutor. At the end of each EPT experience, each trainee is asked to fill in a survey on the quality of the teaching experience, on the overall suitability of the external facility for passing on specific skills and competencies. This survey is collected by the area members of the PPT Committee and the same body analyses and evaluates the overall experience of each external facility. Each student directly (or indirectly through the student representatives on the PPT Committee) can report any difficulties or problems encountered during their EPT experience in order to solve the problem or to terminate the agreement.

3.7.2. Comments

Students receive all necessary information before their placement and their obligation to provide a proper record of their experience during EPT by using a logbook/template provided by the VEE. Upon approval of the logbook, the hours/ECTS are credited to the student's record. Students are obliged to provide feedback evaluating the EPT experience and provider. Students' feedback for each placement is used by the VEE to monitor the implementation, progress and then feedback within the EPT activities and decide on continuation or ceasing of the collaboration with each EPT provider.

3.7.3. Suggestions for improvement

None.

3.7.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Standard 3.7.

Area 4. Facilities and equipment

Standard 4.1: All aspects of the physical facilities must provide an environment conducive to learning, including internet access. The veterinary VEE must have a clear strategy and programme for maintaining and upgrading its buildings and equipment. Facilities must comply with all relevant legislation including health, safety, biosecurity, accessibility to people with reduced mobility, and EU animal welfare and care standards.

4.1.1. Findings

The VEE is located in Valenzano 12 km from Bari city centre (with the Administrative Buildings) and 10 km from the second main location of UniBA scientific Degree Courses

(pharmacy, mathematics, agronomy, etc.), and it is connected to the main town by public transportation. The VEE area comprises approximately 120,000 m² with 6 educational and research buildings.

Main intramural facilities include the VTH, the Vinci Pavilion, the Sea Turtle Clinic (a research and training centre focussing on the care and rehabilitation of turtles), the Experimental Apiary, the LabDog (to study dog's behaviour and cognition and includes an outdoor area), lecture theatres, laboratories, the library, cafeteria and additional buildings for housing staff and research labs. Since the last visitation (2016) the facilities remained unchanged with the exception of the re-organization of the VTH and the Vinci Pavilion. The latter has been functionally divided into two areas in order to ensure biosecurity standards: the Pathology area with necropsy rooms (avian pathology and necropsies/veterinary pathology) and the Anatomy area (dissection room and research). Necropsy rooms are well-designed and fully-equipped. Biosecurity procedures are described in a manual, explained at course lectures, repeated several times during the curriculum and available on the VEE website.

All buildings and green areas are covered by wi-fi connection (Eduroam). General maintenance is the responsibility of UniBA. The cleaning contract provides specifications for routine and deep cleaning of the VTH. There are regular checks of teaching equipment and of equipment in clinics and laboratories. Upgrading of equipment depends on its necessity and the available resources. In the last few years older buildings have been renovated and adapted to current energy and health standards. A medium- and long-term maintenance programme for the VEE facilities (including the financial resources for the execution of the maintenance) is available (2022-2024 Plan).

All facilities are accessible to people with reduced mobility. Animal welfare rules are followed in the VEE. Parking for staff, students and visitors is available and the Veterinary Medicine campus is monitored during working hours (7am – 8pm) by a security service.

4.1.2. Comments

Facilities guarantee a working environment for students and staff in line with EU and national regulations.

The VEE has no teaching farm *per se* but a number of cows, sheep and goats for basic, non-invasive clinical training; related practical activities are also carried out extramurally under the supervision of both academic and external tutors.

4.1.3. Suggestions for improvement

None.

4.1.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Standard 4.1.

Standard 4.2: Lecture theatres, teaching laboratories, tutorial rooms, clinical facilities and other teaching spaces must be adequate in number, size and equipped for the instructional purposes and must be well maintained. The facilities must be adapted for the number of students enrolled. Students must have ready access to adequate and sufficient study, self-learning, recreation, locker, sanitary and food service facilities.

Offices, teaching preparation and research laboratories must be sufficient for the needs of the academic and support staff.

4.2.1. Findings

The VEE has 13 teaching rooms (1392 m²; range 27-447 m²) holding a total of 1052 seats. All

premises for lecturing are equipped with computerised projection and sound systems and wifi connection. Moreover, there are several rooms for “work in groups” (191 m², 80 seats), and 8 premises for practical work including 2 necropsy rooms (628 m², 197 seats). All of these are adequately equipped.

In addition, there are 3 skill labs with a total of 65 seats, and 65 research and clinical laboratories: histology, physiology and animal behaviour, hormonal immunoassay lab, embryo culture lab, haematology and clinical biochemistry, cell therapy lab, clinical chemistry, food microbiology, veterinary pharmacology and toxicology, veterinary pathology, etc. The VTH provides facilities for clinical activities including consultations, diagnostic services, housing of hospitalised animals, emergency units and isolation units. Staff offices (25 m²; 2-3 desks) are usually on the same floor as the research laboratories.

In addition, there are premises for self-learning (288 m², 139 seats) and study such as the library and multimedia centre. Plenty of locker rooms and toilets are available at relevant sites. Moreover, there are catering facilities (canteen and cafeteria offering complete meals, vending machines, selling also phone chargers, sanitary pads and USB sticks), a students’ sport centre, and accommodation for on-call students and staff at the VTH (including a small kitchen and separate bedrooms).

4.2.2. Comments

The number and equipment of facilities for theoretical and practical teaching are adequate for the number of students in each class.

Students have easy access to a sufficient number of self-learning facilities, recreation, lockers, sanitary and food services, and accommodation for on-call students.

4.2.3. Suggestions for improvement

None.

4.2.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Standard 4.2.

Standard 4.3: The livestock facilities, animal housing, core clinical teaching facilities and equipment used by the VEE for teaching purposes must:

- **be sufficient in capacity and adapted for the number of students enrolled in order to allow safe hands-on training for all students**
- **be of a high standard, well maintained and fit for the purpose**
- **promote best husbandry, welfare and management practices**
- **ensure relevant biosecurity and biocontainment**
- **be designed to enhance learning.**

4.3.1. Findings

As the VEE has no teaching farm or slaughterhouse, agreements have been made with livestock farms, slaughterhouses, a kennel (shelter and care of stray dogs), and a recovery centre for wild fauna. At farms, students carry out hands-on activities and get practical training on birth management and postpartum evaluation, herd management, clinical case management, drugs administration, anaesthesia, pasture management, artificial insemination, etc. under the supervision of academic staff. In addition, students can spend longer periods on farms under supervision of an external tutor in order to acquire skills and competences regarding process-based events, such as births, milking, biosecurity, animal welfare, etc. Access is also available to slaughterhouses and food processing companies for meat, dairy and fish products (see also

Area 5).

Clinical activities are concentrated at the VTH, involving companion animals & exotics, food animals (sheep, goats, and swine; only hospitalisation), equines, and wild animals. The VTH provides facilities for consultation, diagnostic purposes and hospitalisation of companion animals, equines, and exotics. Management of a sanitary dog kennel, planning of prophylaxis and clinical examination of dogs housed in the kennel, are part of the training.

Premises for housing of healthy animals include facilities for horses (boxes and an external paddock) and ruminants (stables and paddocks), which animals are used for learning activities ranging from containment to clinical examinations.

4.3.2. Comments

The absence of a teaching farm is compensated fully by the extramural facilities and enables students to acquire the appropriate skills and competencies.

Facilities for clinical activities are sufficient in capacity and are balanced between companion animals, equine and exotics to permit hand-on training for all students.

4.3.3. Suggestions for improvement

None.

4.3.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Standard 4.3.

Standard 4.4: Core clinical teaching facilities must be provided in a veterinary teaching hospital (VTH) with 24/7 emergency services at least for companion animals and equines. Within the VTH, the VEE must unequivocally demonstrate that standard of education and clinical research are compliant with all ESEVT Standards, e.g. research-based and evidence-based clinical training supervised by academic staff trained to teach and to assess, availability for staff and students of facilities and patients for performing clinical research and relevant QA procedures.

For ruminants, on-call service must be available if emergency services do not exist for those species in a VTH.

The VEE must ensure state-of-the-art standards of teaching clinics which remain comparable with or exceeding the best available in the private sector.

The VTH and any hospitals, practices and facilities (including EPT) which are involved with the curriculum must meet the relevant national Practice Standards.

4.4.1. Findings

Clinical services are integrated in the VTH and include primary care, general and referral (internal medicine, obstetrics, and surgery) consultations (Mo – Fri), ICU, hospitalisation and isolation. Students (5th year) take part in all activities within the VTH, such as assist hospitalised patients, and perform medical and surgical procedures. There is an effective electronic medical record system wherein also laboratory results can be retrieved. Images of e.g. X-rays and MRI are available in a parallel electronic system. Postgraduate students, contracted practitioners (6), PhD students, and academic staff are involved in clinical training of students.

Emergency, hospitalisation and ICU are offered 24/7/365. The VTH has a 24/7 emergency service for companion animals and equines. For food animals, an on-call service is available. If needed, specialised academic staff can be additionally consulted during night-time and on weekends.

The clinical service provided to patients and devoted to the training of students is compliant

with national Practice Standards.

4.4.2. Comments

The VEE facilities and trained staff create the conditions for adequate research- and evidence-based clinical training of students.

It is commendable that specialised academic staff can also be consulted during night-time and on weekends.

4.4.3. Suggestions for improvement

None.

4.4.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Standard 4.4.

Standard 4.5: The VEE must ensure that students have access to a broad range of diagnostic and therapeutic facilities, including but not limited to: diagnostic imaging, anaesthesia, clinical pathology, intensive/critical care, surgeries and treatment facilities, ambulatory services, pharmacy and necropsy facilities.

4.5.1. Findings

Students' clinical rotations (4th and 5th year) involve Surgery and Anaesthesia (e.g., assistance and performing surgery and anaesthesia, management of postoperative recovery, clinical consultations), Diagnostic imaging (e.g., ultrasonography, radiology, CT), Obstetrics (e.g., performing basic reproductive surgery procedures, nursing activities after caesarean section, sterilisation of medical instruments, adding medical reports to the electronic patient system), Internal medicine (e.g., clinical rounds, planning daily activities, participation in performing diagnostic tests such as ECG and ultrasound, handling blood samples), and the hospitalisation and emergency service (e.g., management, monitoring, performing therapy). In addition, students are involved in performing necropsies and histopathological examinations. All activities are carried out under the supervision of academic staff.

4.5.2. Comments

Students have access to all new or renovated diagnostic and therapeutic facilities, and actively participate in the various procedures during the evidence-based clinical training.

4.5.3. Suggestions for improvement

None.

4.5.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Standard 4.5.

Standard 4.6: Appropriate isolation facilities must be provided to meet the need for the isolation and containment of animals with communicable diseases. Such isolation facilities must be properly constructed, ventilated, maintained and operated to provide for animal care and for prevention of spread of infectious agents. They must be adapted to all animal species commonly handled in the VTH.

4.6.1. Findings

The VEE maintains two isolation units (with an examination room) for companion animals

with individual cages for 8 dogs and 8 cats in total and located at the VTH. The isolation units are adequately equipped and operate under approved biosecurity guidelines and protocols (Isolation unit SOP).

Technicians, veterinarians and other academic staff are trained and training reviews are conducted on a bi-annual basis. Students are instructed about the protocols and have only access to the isolation units under academic supervision.

4.6.2. Comments

The isolation units for companion animals are adequate.

Biosecurity guidelines and protocols are properly communicated and applied.

Isolation units for equine or ruminants are available. These units are being renovated in order to better comply with the current legislation and biosecurity measures. Consequently, equines and farm animals with suspected or confirmed infectious diseases are not accepted to the VTH. For those animals developing clinical signs of infectious diseases during their hospitalisation, a temporary procedure has been set up, whereby animals are isolated by delimiting the infected area by mobile barriers and disinfecting the contaminated areas. This sort of makeshift solutions gives the students a realistic view on isolation procedures in practice.

4.6.3. Suggestions for improvement

None.

4.6.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Standard 4.6.

Standard 4.7: The VEE must have an ambulatory clinic for production animals or equivalent facilities so that students can practise field veterinary medicine and Herd Health Management under academic supervision.

4.7.1. Findings

Practical training in field veterinary medicine is provided during visits to livestock farms (2 times/week) and involves all aspects of surgical, obstetric and medical activities under academic supervision. Apart from direct hands-on training, Day One skills such as communication with clients, effectively working in a team, etc. are part of the training. In addition, emergency services are provided to ruminant, equid and swine farms aided by the farm veterinarian. Students can sign up for mobile clinic activities from the 1st year, whereas 5th year students can participate as well during their clinical PPT. Mobile clinic (regular and emergency) service is provided on weekdays (8 am - 8 pm). On other moments the case is managed by the farm veterinarian who can ask the MC responsible for advice.

For herd health management 4th year students (4-5/group) carry out routine husbandry procedures related to e.g. animal welfare, feeding, milking, and management of farm animals, all supervised by academic staff.

For ambulatory practical training a fully-equipped 9-passenger van (Opel Vivaro) is available.

4.7.2. Comments

Students can sufficiently practise field veterinary medicine in small groups examining many animals under academic supervision.

The mobile clinic is adequately equipped.

4.7.3. Suggestions for improvement

None.

4.7.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Standard 4.7.

Standard 4.8: The transport of students, live animals, cadavers, materials from animal origin and other teaching materials must be done in agreement with national and EU standards, to ensure the safety of students and staff and to prevent the spread of infectious agents.

4.8.1. Findings

There are two 9-passenger vehicles used for students' transport to off campus facilities: a Opel Vivaro and a Ford Transit. The first van has medical and surgical equipment, such as Doppler, surgical instruments, vaginoscope, laparoscope, coagulation device, etc. This van is also used for transport of small-sized cadavers and organs. Proper sanitation is done in between different transports. In the event of larger groups, buses are hired.

Live animal transport (all patients, including equine) to and from the VTH is carried out only by the animal's owners. The VEE has no separate vehicle for this purpose.

A UniBA-authorized waste collection company supplies all research units with special bins which are collected weekly. Procedures for handling and transport of biological samples and risk materials are described in and executed according to SOPs.

4.8.2. Comments

The vehicles available are adequate to ensure safe transport for students and all types of material transported to and from the VEE.

4.8.3. Suggestions for improvement

None.

4.8.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Standard 4.8.

Standard 4.9 Operational policies and procedures (including e.g. biosecurity, good laboratory practice and good clinical practice) must be taught and posted for students, staff and visitors and a Biosafety manual must be available. The VEE must demonstrate a clear commitment for the delivery of biosafety and biosecurity, e.g. by a specific committee structure. The VEE must have a system of QA to monitor and assure clinical, laboratory and farm services, including a regular monitoring of the feedback from students, staff and clients.

4.9.1. Findings

From 2020, the VEE has reviewed and updated biosecurity issues in all relevant facilities.

A so-called (online available) Regulation is operational for the laboratories regarding access, attendance and functioning. In addition, curriculum courses on biosecurity in the laboratory and in relationship with animals (with a final exam to certify the skills) are implemented from the 1st year. In subsequent years the acquired knowledge and skills are continuously updated in relevant course programmes and at access to practical activities. A similar course on biosecurity in laboratories and in relation to animal handling is available for PhD students, research fellows and scholarship holders. Technicians undergo training about the various SOPs (and have a final

questionnaire to fill). Academic and support staff must attend the mandatory online courses on biosecurity every 5 years, as required by national legislation.

From January 2022, a Biosecurity Delegate is responsible for the supervision, monitoring, management, implementation of biosecurity protocols, and reporting. The Delegate reports to the Head of DIMeV, the Biosecurity Committee, and the DCC and DiMeV Council.

Based on in-depth risk analyses by laboratory managers, biosecurity manuals (also illustrated) have been composed for each area/risk. The manuals are in Italian and translated to English.

The manuals are available at the laboratories, the VTH and all other educational activity areas, and online. Biosecurity SOPs include best practices for waste handling and management. At the VTH, videos illustrate the main hospital SOPs at strategic points (to be viewed via QR codes).

In November 2022, a Biosecurity Committee was set up with the Biosecurity Delegate and 9 managers representing each area. Each manager is responsible for monitoring, management and implementation of biosecurity protocols/SOPs for his own area. In addition, announced and unannounced audits are carried out under the supervision of the Biosecurity Delegate three times/year along the lines of a general checklist, including PPE and equipment, animal-related items, facilities, management of equipment and materials, and behaviour and waste management. The audits aim to verify that what is reported in the Biosecurity Manuals is effectively applied and followed. Results of audits are recorded and non-conformities with recommendations are reported to each manager for internal communication and corrective actions, and to the Biosecurity Committee, the Head of DiMeV, all structured staff and student representatives in order to collectively discuss the interventions to be planned in the short and long term. In subsequent audits resolution of former critical issues are checked and commented on.

The procedure in case of accidents and incidents re biosafety, occupational safety, and health issues, provides the involvement of specifically trained personnel (UNIBA FireFighting and Emergency Teams, and First Aid Teams). Teams must take a mandatory theoretical and practical training course every 5 years in order to continue qualification. Interventions are reported in detail to the Head of the Department and to the Central Administration. In all common places of the VEE there are informational posters (in Italian and English) showing the numbers to contact and the behaviour to adopt in case of an emergency.

4.9.2. Comments

Biosecurity policies and procedures are implemented and easily accessible in all laboratories and other places where relevant according to state and national legislation. Students are trained and instructed before performing duties at relevant sites, such as laboratories.

4.9.3. Suggestions for improvement

None.

4.9.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Standard 4.9.

Area 5. Animal resources and teaching material of animal origin

Standard 5.1: The number and variety of healthy and diseased animals, cadavers, and material of animal origin must be adequate for providing the practical and safe hands-on training (in the areas of Basic Sciences, Clinical Sciences, Pathology, Animal Production,

Food Safety and Quality) and adapted to the number of students enrolled.

Evidence must be provided that these data are regularly recorded and that procedures are in place for correcting any deficiencies.

5.1.1. Findings

The VEE is actively involved in ensuring that students have access to an adequate variety of animals and materials of animal origin, to achieve their degree of competence (DOCs).

They provide materials for pre-clinical training, such as anatomy and pathology, as well as for food safety and quality training. These materials often come from external sources like farms, regional slaughterhouses, kennels, cat associations, pet owners, practitioners, and the Regional Fauna Observatory. Clinical training materials, including those for practical courses, are primarily provided by the VTH.

At the start of the academic year, each teacher informs the DiMeV logistics delegate about their specific requirements for animal-origin materials, including quantity, variety, and type.

The DCVM Coordinator and the Quality Assurance (QA) Committee supervise the diversity and quality of animals and animal-origin materials intended for use in various subjects and practical training sessions, which are scheduled at the start of each academic year.

The academic staff responsible for each teaching activity are tasked with the practical execution and utilisation of these animals and animal-derived materials.

Student training to achieve their DOCs occurs through practical activities in both pre-clinical and clinical subjects, elective courses, and specific clinical practical skills courses (**Tirocinio/Professional Practical Training -PPT**). During practical activities, students work in small groups to ensure hands-on training.

Non-clinical animal work begins with foundational subjects, involving the acquisition of organs, carcasses, and models, and continues throughout the core subjects until the 4th and 5th year rotations in PPT, providing training in veterinary medicine across all fields.

In the **Anatomy** room within the Vinci Pavilion, practical sessions involve two types of learning activities: one focuses on bones and teaching models, and the other on non-pathological biological materials like carcasses and organs. Learning about bones and teaching models is facilitated through multiple cabinets cataloguing skeletal materials, offering students opportunities for self-directed learning. These materials include bones from various skeletal regions and mounted skeletons of horses, small ruminants, and dogs. Additionally, there are anatomical models, both fixed and detachable, to aid in the study of organs and muscles. Typically, during practical training in the Veterinary Anatomy course, students are divided into two groups of 30 students each, further split into 6-student groups. This division enhances interaction between students and teaching staff during these sessions.

In the **Applied Anatomy** course, groups of 15-20 students participate in the study and application of anatomical concepts in surgical practice. These practical lessons involve the use of cadavers, including those of carnivorous and equine animals. Through dissection and practical examination of these specimens, students gain knowledge of anatomical structures relevant to surgical procedures.

During **clinical practical** sessions, as well as in anatomy subjects applied to **clinical sciences**, students have the opportunity to engage in propaedeutic activities such as surgical anatomy, ultrasonography, simulated surgery, and simulated access to urinary and reproductive tracts. The carcasses used come from animals that died naturally or were euthanized, without infectious diseases.

For both **pre-clinical activities** (e.g., Animal handling, Physiology) and **clinical sciences**, healthy animals are utilised. Healthy companion animals often belonging to students and teachers are brought in for teaching purposes. Healthy cows, horses, sheep, and goats, mainly

reared in the VTH, are used for Obstetrics and Animal Production subjects. In some cases, healthy animals from farms are also included, with students transported to these farms under the supervision of academic staff.

Regarding **Clinical Science**, students become actively involved in VTH activities in their 4th year (this will change to the 3rd year starting from the academic year 2023-24). Their involvement in the core curriculum takes two forms:

1. **Practical activities** related to specific clinical courses, such as surgery, internal medicine, and obstetric medicine. These activities are conducted in small groups, enabling students to directly assist in cases and engage in fundamental activities. These sessions cover surgery, internal medicine, obstetrics, and involve **small and farm animals, equines, and exotics**. They are scheduled based on the availability of appropriate clinical cases at the VTH, specific course topics, or teacher scheduling. **For farm animals and equines, students may be transported to external facilities** under the teacher's supervision.
2. In addition to practical activities, students also participate in **clinical rotations**, which are mandatory components of the course and occur in the fourth and fifth years of their programme. During these rotations, students are individually assigned to different clinical disciplines, including surgery, internal medicine, obstetrics, hospitalisation, and emergency care. They earn mandatory ECTS for their participation in these rotations. Students play a direct and active role in clinical tasks and case management under the guidance of experienced staff. To document their activities and experiences, students maintain a case log that is signed off by a member of the PPT (Practical and Professional Training) committee. For these rotations, **companion animals and equines are typically provided by the VTH. Equines and farm animals are usually available directly on farms**, and students are transported to these locations using the MC (mobile clinic).

Utilisation of animals for both educational and research purposes adheres to national and European regulations, specifically D.Lgs No. 26/2014, which is the Italian law implementing EU directive 2010/63/UE. Every activity involving animals, including animal-based teaching, is subject to authorization by the Italian Ministry of Health.

Even in cases of non-experimental clinical or livestock activities, the VEE ensures authorization through its Animal Ethics Committee (CESA DiMeV), which includes a student from the DCVM. This approach ensures that students, interns, and PhD students are well-informed about animal procedures and the ethical management of animals, thereby acquiring important soft skills in veterinary bioethics.

Both non-pathological and pathological materials from farm animals and equines are obtained from accredited slaughterhouses through established agreements. The transportation of this material is conducted by VEE technicians using authorised vehicles equipped with approved containers. Cadavers and materials from companion animals are procured from the VTH, affiliated kennels, veterinary clinics, and directly from pet owners. It is the responsibility of pet owners and practitioners to transport the materials to the VEE.

For anatomy practical activities, carcasses and organs are preserved for extended periods in a freezer unit. When needed, the material is thawed and temporarily stored in a refrigerator cabinet available within the Anatomy room.

All materials designated for Pathology are recorded upon arrival, distinguishing between infectious (or suspected) cases and non-infectious ones. They are then stored in a freezing room, accessed through a dedicated entrance for loading and unloading purposes. The material allocated for upcoming practical activities is subsequently transferred to a cold room for gradual thawing.

For disposal, a specialised and certified company is contracted, and they collect the containers upon request.

Healthy horses and ruminants are accommodated within the VMC's stables. There are two horses occupying two separate stalls, each with access to an external paddock. Students, with the assistance of groomers, take these horses to the paddock daily. Additionally, there are two cows and 13 small ruminants housed in two distinct stables, also with access to external paddocks. Students engage with these animals in various learning activities, ranging from containment to clinical examinations, while always prioritising their well-being and care.

According to national regulations, transporting pigs, ruminants, and equines necessitates permits and certifications, leading to a significant administrative burden for both owners and veterinarians. Furthermore, recent years have seen farmers dealing with heightened economic challenges. Consequently, the transportation of animals has become notably arduous and expensive. As a result, the occurrence of intramural clinical cases involving pigs, ruminants, and equines is relatively infrequent.

The introduction of the MC was aimed at mitigating these constraints, facilitating extramural training opportunities at various farms and equine stables. Despite the challenges, there has been a steady and consistent increase in the clinical caseload.

VEE's approach to materials of animal origin underwent significant changes during the academic years 2019-2020 and 2020-2021, driven by the **outbreak of the pandemic** and the need for renovations to ensure biosecurity standards in the Vinci pavilion. These factors had a profound impact on indicators related to necropsies and practical activities in Anatomy and Pathology during those years, with a reduced number of necropsy cases and the diminished availability of materials for Anatomy and Pathology.

During those two years, different units implemented strategies to tackle these shortcomings. The Anatomy Unit employed software, videos, and live-streamed practical sessions through the Teams platform. For necropsy activities, the utilisation of video content extended to live-streaming autopsies conducted in an alternate area within the IU. Meanwhile, avian and rabbit pathology activities were conducted at the Regional Fauna Observatory, pursuant to an agreement established in 2018.

Additionally, an e-learning initiative known as the Interactive Lessons At Home (I.L.A.H.) project, funded by UniBA in 2016, facilitated the interactive sharing of autopsy activities. This allowed students to participate remotely, ask real-time questions, and record sessions from their own homes. This tool was temporarily disrupted due to renovations in the Vinci Pavilion and reinstated upon completion of the construction.

The I.L.A.H.-project introduced a video system within the Vinci Pavilion for local recording, projection, and streaming of educational activities conducted during scheduled courses and practical training sessions, both core and elective.

Following the reopening of the Vinci Pavilion, a new initiative called 'Autopsy Wednesday' was launched. Every week, students from any year of the programme could book and participate in autopsies, divided into small groups (maximum 8-10 for Veterinary Pathology and 5 for Avian Pathology). At the conclusion of these activities, each group shared their findings first within their peer group and then with the academic supervisor. Following discussions, students compiled autopsy reports, which were added to the autopsy register.

Furthermore, field autopsies were organised with groups of up to 8 students at farms, veterinary clinics, and stables, utilising authorised vehicles provided by DiMeV.

Starting from the academic year 2021-2022, there has been an increase in the number of necropsies performed.

Quantitative data on animal resources and teaching materials of animal origin

For Cadavers and materials of animal origin used in practical anatomical training: refer to SER Table 5.1.1.

For Healthy live animals used for **pre-clinical training** (animal handling, physiology, animal production, propaedeutics,...): refer to SER Table 5.1.2.

For Number of **patients** seen **intramurally** (in the VTH) for different animal categories over the specified years: refer to SER Table 5.1.3.

For Number of patients seen **extra-murally** (in the ambulatory clinics): refer to SER Table 5.1.4.

For percentage of first opinion patients used for clinical training, both in the VTH and ambulatory clinics, remained consistent for several animal categories over the specified years: refer to SER Table 5.1.5.

For Cadavers used for necropsy: refer to SER Table 5.1.6.

For Number of visits in herds/flocks/units for training in Animal Production and Herd Health Management: refer to SER Table 5.1.7.

For Number of visits to slaughterhouses and related premises for training in FSQ: refer to SER Table 5.1.8.

5.1.2. Comments

Due to national regulation, pigs, ruminants and equines require permits and certifications prior to transportation which hinders intramural clinical cases of pigs, ruminants and equines.

As compensatory measure, students do mandatory and teacher supervised pre-clinical and clinical training during visits to livestock farms.

It is commendable that the students, during the visits to the farms, come into contact with a large number of clinical activities and livestock management and are motivated to engage in these activities.

The number of companion animals seen extramurally after the COVID-19 pandemic increased and then decreased.

The number of companion animal patients seen intramurally is suboptimal in relation to the number of students enrolled (indicator #8). However, this has been compensated by a huge rise in the number of companion animal patients seen extramurally. And by excluding the COVID-19-year 2019/20 (where the number was compensated by a huge rise in extramural cases) the Establishment value for I8 will be 49.82 (Median value 62.31/Minimal value 43.58) will be well within range.

The number of ruminant and pig necropsies is suboptimal in relation to the number of students enrolled (indicator #18). As compensatory measures, students do mandatory and teacher supervised pre-clinical and clinical training also in necropsy procedures during visits to livestock farms.

5.1.3. Suggestions for improvement

The VEE is encouraged to continue to increase the number of companion animal patients seen intramurally.

The VEE is encouraged to continue to collaborate with local and national authorities to facilitate access to ruminant and pig cadavers for students to train necropsy procedures on whole carcasses.

5.1.4. Decision The VEE is partially compliant with Standard 5.1. because the number of companion animal patients seen intramurally is suboptimal in relation to the number of students enrolled (indicator #8). Also, the number of ruminant and pig necropsies is suboptimal in

relation to the number of students enrolled (indicator #18).

Standard 5.2: In addition to the training provided in the VEE, experience can include practical training at external sites, provided this training is organised under direct academic supervision and following the same standards as those applied in the VEE.

5.2.1. Findings

The VEE does not possess its own teaching farms or food processing plants. Therefore, various activities, spanning from animal production to clinics, as well as Veterinary Public Health (VPH) and Food Quality and Safety (FQS) practices, are conducted at external facilities with official agreements to host students under academic supervision.

The external facility activities fall into the following categories:

1. **Non-clinical training** under academic supervision: Students travel to external facilities using VEE-provided buses or departmental vehicles, accompanied by academic supervisors. They execute planned activities and return to the VMC (Veterinary Medical Center).
2. **Clinical training** under academic supervision: The primary approach involves the use of the MC (Mobile Clinic). Students sign up through Telegram® groups, and academic tutors select them based on case availability. On farms, students participate in various tasks, ranging from animal handling to clinical case management. They diagnose, administer medications, manage anaesthesia during surgeries, assist surgeons, and perform reproductive examinations on farm animals, including overseeing births, neonatal care, and postpartum evaluations. Academic staff transport students using a 9-seater van, equipped for clinical field visits.
Also, during Tirocinio (PPT) students participate in external small animals clinics where they have hands-on experience with small animal cases by working alongside experienced clinicians. These clinics involved in this programme are chosen and assessed by the VEE.
3. **Unsupervised training:** This component is part of the Practical Professional Training (PPT) and involves students spending extended periods at external facilities (farms, food processing plants, public health offices, etc.) under the guidance of an external tutor. This core training phase equips students with skills and competencies related to process-based events, such as births, milking procedures, quality control during slaughter, production and reproductive monitoring, biosecurity, animal welfare, and quality procedure protocols.

For all these activities, students engage in hands-on experiences through informal agreements, coordinated by academic staff before supervised visits and through the Training Project before unsupervised sessions. As a result, academic staff plan activities for each student before they visit external facilities. In the case of the MC farm veterinarians inform academic staff about clinical cases.

5.2.2. Comments

Non-clinical and clinical training in farm animals are made in external facilities under academic supervision.

Unsupervised training in farm animals as part of the Practical Professional Training (PPT) is done at external facilities.

5.2.3. Suggestions for improvement

None.

5.2.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Standard 5.2.

Standard 5.3: The VTH must provide nursing care skills and instruction in nursing procedures. Under all situations students must be active participants in the clinical workup of patients, including problem-oriented diagnostic approach together with diagnostic decision-making.

5.3.1. Findings

Nursing care skills and procedures are integrated throughout the undergraduate curriculum, starting from the first year. Students begin by acquiring essential knowledge, including biosecurity protocols for proper animal handling. The Veterinary Teaching Hospital (VTH) actively involves students in clinical and animal management activities, whether for outpatient visits or inpatient care. These activities are closely supervised by academic teaching staff and support personnel.

During practical training, students are assigned clinical cases with available medical records and diagnostic data. After examining the patient and reviewing the medical records, students discuss diagnostic and therapeutic approaches with their supervisors. They complete their tasks by practising the formulation of discharge letters. In the management of hospitalised animals, students learn to handle, examine, and treat animals under the guidance of medical and technical staff. Students also practise maintaining accurate medical records. Special attention is given to conducting all student activities in accordance with safety, biosecurity, and environmental compliance principles, including the proper management of waste and pharmaceuticals. Manuals and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) are readily accessible at the VTH through printed versions and QR codes that can be accessed using Android, iPhone, tablet, and iPad devices. In collaboration with students, a multimedia channel has been developed to share explanatory videos demonstrating essential hospital procedures.

Hands-on training with small animals and equines primarily takes place at the VTH. However, clinical training involving farm animals and equines also occurs off-campus, under academic staff supervision. During clinical rotations at the VTH, each clinical service typically accommodates 1-4 students. For extramural professional clinical training involving equines, ruminants, and swine, the maximum group size is limited to 7 students, matching the number of seats in the VEE's vehicles, which are used for transportation. This small-group organisation ensures that each student actively participates in all activities.

With respect to companion animals at the VTH, students engage in daily clinical tasks across various services, including internal medicine, reproduction, and surgery. They are involved in managing emergency cases and hospitalised patients, actively participating in clinical procedures such as blood sampling, therapy administration, anaesthesia induction and maintenance, and routine surgeries. Additionally, they assist academic staff in creating and discussing diagnostic and therapeutic protocols and complete electronic patient records. This comprehensive approach allows students to follow every aspect of the clinical examination, from patient identification to treatment protocol implementation.

In the case of farm animals and equines, students are involved in activities such as setting up the mobile clinic (MC), animal identification, proper restraint, history taking, clinical examinations, biological sampling, diagnosis discussions, therapeutic protocol development (both pharmaceutical and surgical), and follow-up monitoring. Students also participate in reproductive examinations, assist with births, provide neonatal care, and manage the postpartum period.

During clinical rotations, students engage in discussions about clinical cases, spanning from

diagnosis to therapy, with the academic staff participating in the activities. These discussions occur briefly during the clinical examination and in more detail at the end of the clinical visit. Moreover, during MC activities, students are encouraged to write clinical case reports in groups, which are then uploaded to the MC's official blog. This practice allows other students who did not attend the case to learn about the clinical procedures conducted.

5.3.2. Comments

The VTH has implemented a robust and student-centred approach to teaching nursing care skills and procedures. Students are actively involved in clinical workup, problem-orientated diagnostic approach and comprehensive patient care.

5.3.3. Suggestions for improvement

None.

5.3.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Standard 5.3.

Standard 5.4: Medical records must be comprehensive and maintained in an effective retrieval system (preferably an electronic patient record system) to efficiently support the teaching, research, and service programmes of the VEE.

5.4.1. Findings

Since January 2022, the VTH has implemented an electronic records system known as SMARTVET. This cloud-based software allows data input and assessment from any device. Client and patient information is recorded in this system by academic and support clinical staff, including teachers, PhD students, technicians, and practitioners. Additionally, students can update clinical records in the system, but only under the supervision of academic staff.

The system is organised into various services, encompassing clinical pathology, internal medicine, behavioural medicine, imaging diagnostics, wild animal clinic, surgery, emergency and intensive care, reproduction, and anaesthesia. Each service offers the option to specify whether the visits are conducted within the facility (intramural) or outside (extramural).

Starting from September 2023, students have access to review the clinical cases recorded in the system. Any personal or confidential client data will be anonymized to ensure privacy. These capabilities are designed to facilitate the comprehensive study of cases, from diagnosis to treatment, and to maintain a complete clinical history of patients, even for cases in which the student was not directly involved.

5.4.2. Comments

A cloud-based software (SMARTVET) allows clinical data input and assessment by students and academic and support clinical staff. The system allows students to retrieve the complete clinical history including diagnostic imaging results via a PACS. The system is structured into clinical services.

Student input to medical records is always controlled and certified by a teacher before being stored.

5.4.3. Suggestions for improvement

None.

5.4.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Standard 5.4.

Area 6. Learning resources

Standard 6.1: State-of-the-art learning resources must be adequate and available to support veterinary education, research, services and continuing education. When the study programme is provided in several tracks/languages, the learning resources must be available in all used languages. Timely access to learning resources, whether through print, electronic media or other means, must be available to students and staff and, when appropriate, to stakeholders. State-of-the-art procedures for bibliographical search and for access to databases and learning resources must be taught to undergraduate students.

6.1.1. Findings

A well-established Library System (Sistema Bibliotecario di Ateneo - SiBA) runs centrally. The Veterinary Medicine Library (VML) is a part of it. There are multidisciplinary databases and the discovery tool (esploraRE) provides access from a single interface to most of the electronic resources of SiBA, including the UniBA catalogue. The UniBA Library System enables the VML and its users to access periodicals and electronic books. By entering one's personal UniBA credentials, students and staff get access to several thousands of scientific journals and platforms.

Students are introduced to it and other e-learning resources from the beginning of their studies. There is dedicated staff allocated to run the library services and ensure timely access to students and staff. That include the Head of the library (SIBA): Rector Delegate at UniBA level, the Library manager: responsible for the med – vet pole, the VLC: VEE academics (three professors) and the veterinary medicine library manager, at VEE level, the 1 volunteer with contract and 2 IT technicians provided by the DiMeV and in charge for resolving VEE IT problems. Continuity of the services provided by the volunteer is ensured by the Ministry that launches annually a call for a one-year job without discontinuity. Usually when a volunteer ends the one-year service, another volunteer starts their service. Resources are regularly updated in consultation with the VLC. The VEE allocates an annual budget for this purpose. When the budget is estimated, an email is sent to all VEEs to collect the requests. The VLC evaluates and decides on purchases fairly (equally) considering the cost of the requests of the students. The 4000€ budget is exclusively dedicated to the purchase of books, while there is a UniBA subscription to the main scientific journals.

Academic staff and students can study at the central library using the resources there but some VEE departments provide additional reading rooms with thematic bibliographic collections, e.g. 1 at Infectious diseases and Parasitology Sections with books on Infectious diseases and Parasitology; 1 at Obstetrics and Physiology Sections with books and periodicals on animal reproduction and physiology; 1 at Internal Medicine Section with books and periodicals on Internal Medicine.

Stakeholders, e.g. veterinarians, have the possibility to consult library resources on-site. Local borrowing is not allowed. If stakeholders need to acquire any of the resources, they can request an interlibrary loan in any local library, which can provide document delivery from the VEE's library resources.

6.1.2. Comments

UniBA and VEE provide ample resources to staff and students both online and on hard copies (journals, books). They make these resources available to veterinarians as well either via a

national system that links public libraries with the academic online libraries, or by allowing access to the VEE's library (it is possible for an external stakeholder to request a book/journal and study on site but cannot borrow it).

6.1.3. Suggestions for improvement

None.

6.1.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Standard 6.1.

Standard 6.2: Staff and students must have full access on site to an academic library administered by a qualified librarian, an Information Technology (IT) unit managed by an IT expert, an e-learning platform, and all the relevant human and physical resources necessary for the development of instructional materials by the staff and their use by the students.

The relevant electronic information, database and other intranet resources must be easily available for students and staff both in the VEE's core facilities via wireless connection (Wi-Fi) and from outside the VEE through a hosted secured connection, e.g. Virtual Private Network (VPN).

6.2.1. Findings

Students have access to all library resources. Students are introduced to it and other e-learning resources from the beginning of their studies and information sessions are also organised annually by the library manager. Library resources are available both within and outside the faculty via special VPN connection.

In addition the VEE library allows access to 3 PCs on site which allow the use of anatomic atlases for their study. In addition, the students have access to anatomical models in the anatomy department and can exercise in the 3 skill labs on mocks and alternatives to animals.

6.2.2. Comments

The VEE supports students with the necessary resources for studying and developing their competences adequately.

6.2.3. Suggestions for improvement

None.

6.2.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Standard 6.2.

Standard 6.3: The VEE must provide students with unimpeded access to learning resources, internet and internal study resources, and equipment for the development of procedural skills (e.g. models). The use of these resources must be aligned with the pedagogical environment and learning outcomes within the programme and have mechanisms in place to evaluate the teaching value of changes in learning resources.

6.3.1. Findings

There are multidisciplinary databases and the discovery tool (esploraRE) provides access from a single interface to most of the electronic resources of SiBA, including the UniBA catalogue.

The UniBA Library System enables the VML and its users to access periodicals and electronic books. By entering one's personal UniBA credentials, students and staff get access to several scientific journals and platforms.

6.3.2. Comments

The VEE provides resources and tools to support science-based education of staff and students.

6.3.3. Suggestions for improvement

None.

6.3.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Standard 6.3.

Area 7. Student admission, progression and welfare

Standard 7.1: The VEE must consistently apply pre-defined and published regulations covering all phases of the student "life cycle", e.g. student admission, progression and certification.

In relation to enrolment, the VEE must provide accurate and complete information regarding all aspects of the educational programme in all advertisings for prospective national and international students.

Formal cooperations with other VEEs must also be clearly advertised.

7.1.1. Findings

There is a national system for admission to universities in Italy. General information on the admission requirements, procedures, and rules as well as conditions for student progression and information on welfare are provided on the UniBA website.

Student admission is and has been based on the national selection procedures elaborated by the MUR. From AY 2023-2024 it is based on TOLC-VET, an online test run by the Inter UniBA Consortium for Integrated Access Systems (CISIA). There are help and preparatory tests on the CISIA website, while a chapter of the UniBA website is meant for Italian and international students, providing all the necessary information. Currently the VEE proposes 60 places for Italian and EU students who reside in Italy, and 5 places for non-EU/Chinese citizens.

Students leaving secondary school complete an application in which one or more VEEs can be indicated in order of preference. Applicants scoring at least 20 are ranked. Those whose score allows admission to their first option must enrol within four days. Those whose results allow admission to their second, third, etc. choice do not have a time limit. Admitted students register with the Student Secretariat which assigns them an enrolment number.

Non-EU students can apply with the necessary documents proving their proficiency in Italian language and have to sit for a language test later.

Students enrolled to different academic programmes may also enrol to the VEE either by going through the national selection procedures, or – coming from other degree courses in para-veterinarian subjects – by enrolling to the 2nd-5th years in case they have a sufficient amount of ECTS in the relevant subjects. The latter opportunity is provided by a public call but is very rarely used.

Students with disabilities have the possibility of asking for special arrangements during the admission procedure.

All the regulations concerning the student lifecycle (admission, grants and awards, student

rights and duties, opportunities, sport, associations, etc.) and forms that must be used can be found on the UniBA homepage grouped for prospective students, enrolled students, graduates, international students, staff and companies.

The UniBA has a University Committee for Orientation and Tutoring (CAOT) which manages future student orientation events. Activities are offered for would-be students which are advertised on the homepage and in social media. The VEE in particular holds orientation courses for future students, upon an agreement with the regional school system and the UniBA. Students of the local secondary school are also invited to spend some hours at the VEE. There are videos presenting the VEE available for the public.

The UniBA has a section on its homepage for internationalisation providing information on LLP/ERASMUS programme, international training offers, teaching/training staff mobility (incoming), visiting professors, and cooperation agreements. These bi- or multilateral agreements cover practically the whole world in a diversity of fields including veterinary subjects.

7.1.2. Comments

The VEE and the UniBA provide accurate and detailed information for prospective and current students on all aspects of the student life cycle in a variety of forms and media.

7.1.3. Suggestions for improvement

None.

7.1.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Standard 7.1.

Standard 7.2: The number of students admitted must be consistent with the resources available at the VEE for staff, buildings, equipment, healthy and diseased animals, and materials of animal origin.

7.2.1. Findings

The number of students that can be enrolled in a VEE has been regulated by Law 264/1999 and defined by the MUR through the national selection procedure. The number of places allocated to each of the 13 VEEs is set by MUR after consultation with the National Federation of Veterinary Professional Associations (FNOVI). The VEE in turn approves the maximum number of students based on the proposal of DCC in the light of resources available (such as teaching capacity, structures, facilities). This proposal is based on evaluations and proposals discussed by DCC and TSJC and is approved by the Senate of the University.

The following factors are considered for the purposes of the proposal:

- Positioning of the DCVM with respect to the ESEVT indicators in relation to the number of graduating students;
- Adequacy of the classrooms, the library, the students' areas, and general facilities (canteen, cafe, beverage vending machines, transport services, etc.) in relation to student well-being;
- Dimensions of didactic laboratories in relation to biosecurity;
- Monitoring of student satisfaction results (currently from post-lecture students' opinion survey);
- Organization of the PPT and of the activities at the VTH;
- Economic availability to guarantee the needs for professors (e.g., teaching materials and consumables);

- The number of academic staff needed to ensure compliance with the teacher/student ratio set by ANVUR;
- The number of technical staff available to support teaching and organisational activities.

The critical point limiting the possible student number is the splitting of classes into smaller groups for training activities.

The average number of undergraduate students admitted per year is 60 (with a peak of 80 during the COVID-19 pandemic with special respect to One Health issues). The average number of students graduating per year is 31.3.

7.2.2. Comments

The number of undergraduates is set by the MUR, and has long been established and calibrated in an ongoing process including annual meetings between all the Italian VEEs and the MUR to meet the resources and teaching capacity available for each VEE.

7.2.3. Suggestions for improvement

None.

7.2.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Standard 7.2.

Standard 7.3: The selection and progression criteria must be clearly defined, consistent, and defensible, be free of discrimination or bias, and take into account the fact that students are admitted with a view to their entry to the veterinary profession in due course. The VEE must regularly review and reflect on the selection processes to ensure they are appropriate for students to complete the programme successfully. If the selection processes are decided by another authority, the latter must regularly receive feedback from the VEE.

Adequate training (including periodic refresher training) must be provided for those involved in the selection process to ensure applicants are evaluated fairly and consistently.

7.3.1. Findings

The selection and admission process is established by the MUR following the proposals of FNOVI and the DCC of each University through their Academic Senates. Admission tests (TOLC VET) are regulated and organised by the MUR at national level. The admission criteria are specified in annex to the MUR Decree, and CISIA provides the interactive tools for self-assessment and course materials for candidates. The test and its assessment methods are clear and public. Each applicant can take the test (50 items in 90 minutes) twice a year and submit the higher score. The MUR draws up the ranking list, while the VEE must approve the maximum number of new enrolments.

The admission procedure is enhanced internally by the admission committee which is responsible for ensuring the proper application of general procedures and of the policy for students with disabilities. It has only supervisory and management roles. It used to be chaired by the Coordinator of the VEE, however, since 2021-2022 it is composed solely of the UniBA technical staff selected by the General Head of the University. There is a preliminary meeting for the admission committee to get familiar with the procedures set out in the MUR Decree.

Students may appeal in connection with the admission process to the Lazio Regional Administrative Court on the first, and to the Italian Council of State on the second level. The local Admission Committee is obliged to communicate any problems to MUR.

There is limited influence on the MUR decision concerning the number of students that can be

admitted. The Board of the Heads of Departments of Veterinary Medicine is in the negotiating position, while each department head may suggest the maximum number of students that can be admitted.

7.3.2. Comments

Admission and progression criteria are clear and free of bias.

7.3.3. Suggestions for improvement

None.

7.3.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Standard 7.3.

Standard 7.4: There must be clear policies and procedures on how applicants with disabilities or illnesses are considered and, if appropriate, accommodated in the programme, taking into account the requirement that all students must be capable of meeting the ESEVT Day One Competences by the time they graduate.

7.4.1. Findings

Students with a disability or a Specific Learning Disorder get special attention throughout their academic career. They must provide official certification of their problem during their application for TOLC-VET. According to national law, they get additional and/or compensatory support for their entrance exam (e. g. additional time, non-scientific calculators, video-magnifiers, tutor assistance) upon the decision of the Admission Committee of the University. Once admitted, they get help for their studies (see also standard 7.7). The UniBA offers special services to these students, and there is dedicated staff and a coordinator to care for their needs. Besides, every department has a Referent Teacher to ensure easier contact with special-needs students. There is a brochure on the website presenting the forms of support which include didactic tutoring aids and support services for academic life; aids and measures for examinations. The UniBA also provides materials for the teaching staff about how to deal properly with special needs in order to be capable of the acquisition of DOCs in the case of the veterinary course.

7.4.2. Comments

Students with disabilities or learning disorders get help to overcome their difficulties, but are supposed to meet the same requirements as all the students.

It is commendable that UniBA provides support to any special-needs student to be able to follow their studies until the acquisition of the degree.

7.4.3. Suggestions for improvement

None.

7.4.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Standard 7.4.

Standard 7.5: The basis for decisions on progression (including academic progression and professional fitness to practise) must be explicit and readily available to the students. The VEE must provide evidence that it has mechanisms in place to identify and provide

remediation and appropriate support (including termination) for students who are not performing adequately.

The VEE must have mechanisms in place to monitor attrition and progression and be able to respond and amend admission selection criteria (if permitted by national or university law) and student support if required.

7.5.1. Findings

The Teaching Bylaws (TB) contain progression criteria and procedures. This document is mandatory for each degree course and describes the rules, rights and duties of students in a specific academic year, during the whole course up to reaching the degree. It is renewed by the DCC, evaluated by the TSJC, approved by the VEE's Council, and finally by the Senate of the University. It is uploaded onto the SUA-CdS system and is available online both from the VEE website, and from the national University platform for prospective students.

Progression criteria are clearly described as follows:

- First year students passing the admission test but scoring under 50% in biology, chemistry-physics, and mathematics-logic, have to fulfil Additional Educational Obligations (AEO). Attendance in the course is compulsory (at least 70% of the lessons), and students must pass an exam in the first year. Besides, students must demonstrate their English language competence on B1 Level (PET) before the end of the first year as well. Students failing to pass the AEO can enrol for the second year but are not allowed to take any exams until they have fulfilled the AEOs.
- Students must attend at least 70% of the lectures and practicals in each subject to earn the attendance signature required for sitting for the exam. Students may book exams through the Esse3 System after the Student Secretariat attested the 70% attendance.
- Students must adhere to the propaedeutic exam requirements as set out in the TB.
- To enrol from the second year on, the student must meet the following requirements:
 - second year: at least 15 first-year ECTS;
 - third year: passing of the following exams: Veterinary Physiology I and II, Microbiology and Veterinary Immunology, General Pathology;
 - fourth year: at least 24 of the third-year ECTS and passing of all 1st year exams;
 - fifth year: at least 14 of the fourth-year ECTS.

Students are able to graduate upon completion of all subjects and requirements included in their study plan (with PPT, free ECTS, graduation thesis, etc.). Students who fail to graduate in the graduation session of the 5th year become off-course students and have to pay a new annual fee. Students can find all information regarding their studies in the UniBA-Esse3 system (including timetable for exams) and the App MyUniBA where they can check and verify their own progress (e.g., obtaining the signatures of the attendance, exams passed, marks of the single subjects and media, validated ECTS).

Students not performing adequately receive support through the Tutoring service. The DCC assigns a tutor for each year of the degree course who is a teacher lecturing in the given year, and who supports students with planning exams; gives advice on how to overcome learning difficulties or deficiencies in skills, competencies; how to contact and interact with professors of different subjects. This service is available for all, and the Tutor can be reached by phone, e-mail, or the Teams Platform.

The University Committee for Orientation and Tutoring (UCOT) coordinates and finances tutoring activities. The Department Council, having consulted the TSJC, finds the subjects and areas in which specific actions are needed. Tutoring activities include information tutoring (providing information on UniBA life by a student enrolled in the same course) and teaching tutoring (additional support in disciplinary areas, provided by PhD students, researchers, or

recent graduates). Usually subjects in the first two years, and students with AEOs are involved. A special type of teaching tutoring is the 'Pre-Corsi' project where PhD students hold online lessons on subjects identified by the TSJC which tend to be challenging for students. These tutors help students with their difficulties and produce teaching materials for students with learning difficulties (such as dyslexia). Subject tutoring belongs to the responsibilities of lecturers. In this framework they are available to help students previously failing an exam. Tutoring can be in person or online. Finally there are special projects for inactive students. These are proactive outreach programmes run by the teaching administration staff to talk to inactive students and set up individualised plans for resuming their studies and completing the course.

The attrition rate of the VEE is stable and low according to ANVUR data (SMA). The main causes of attrition are considered to be the intensive teaching schedule (leaving minimal time for self-study) and the short exam periods.

There is great fluctuation among the student numbers as a class is progressing from year to year (SER Table 7.2.2) and half of a graduating group finished their studies in 7 or 8 years (SER Table 7.2.4).

Student satisfaction is a priority of the QA policy, thus actions are taken to remedy the situation.

7.5.2. Comments

The criteria and procedures for progression are clearly stated in the teaching bylaws and published every year. Students have access to all relevant and current information through the Esse3 system and the application elaborated for students.

7.5.3. Suggestions for improvement

None.

7.5.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Standard 7.5.

Standard 7.6: Mechanisms for the exclusion of students from the programme for any reason must be explicit.

The VEE's policies for managing appeals against decisions, including admissions, academic and progression decisions and exclusion, must be transparent and publicly available.

7.6.1. Findings

Students who fail to achieve ECTS in the previous 8 academic years or fail to pay fees and taxes over the same period are excluded by national law. At the UniBA a student is excluded from the programme upon his/her application to discontinue his/her studies. The student has the right to discontinue the studies and to enrol again in the same or another course of study. Since both causes are due to the voluntary actions of students, no appeal procedures are provided.

Students may appeal against the decision regarding their admission to the regional or national courts (see standard 7.3). Other appeal procedures are regulated in the Teaching Bylaws.

Student grievances (disagreement with exam results, disagreement regarding signature, etc. can be addressed through the Esse3 system, and consecutively the examination committee, the students' secretariat, the QA Committee, TSJC, DCC, the Department Council. Furthermore, the small number of students as compared to the number of teaching staff also enhances the detection of the difficulties of students.

Students with personal problems can solve their own problems by discussing with the year tutor, students' representatives, TSJC members, and the DCVM coordinator. When all these possibilities do not satisfy the student's needs, they can refer to the Student Guarantor or, if needed, the Rector directly. However, during the last 10 years it has not been necessary for any student to go beyond the VEE to find remedy. Close relationships with students allow for solving problems usually at the lowest level.

7.6.2. Comments

There are clear rules for appeal procedures by the TB of the UniBA. However, employees and students prefer handling grievances personally at the lowest level.

7.6.3. Suggestions for improvement

None.

7.6.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Standard 7.6.

Standard 7.7: Provisions must be made by the VEE to support the physical, emotional and welfare needs of students. This includes, but is not limited to, learning support and counselling services, career advice, and fair and transparent mechanisms for dealing with student illness, impairment and disability during the programme. This shall include provision of reasonable adjustments for disabled students, consistent with all relevant equality and/or human rights legislation.

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

7.7.1. Findings

There are many services for students, mainly provided by the UniBA. Information on the services is available on the websites.

- Forms and documents – all forms needed to apply for services and related documents are available on the website through the UniBA or the VEE.
- Online services: Single Sign-On (SSO) authentication system used for accessing the Esse3 platform for study affairs; the WI-FI network; e-mail; Microsoft Teams; tax and fee payment; enrolment procedures; orientation on degree courses.
- UniBA canteens: 4 canteens in Bari, VEE canteen for lunch and cafeteria.
- Transportation: discounted rates for travelling to the VEE's Campus from Bari.
- Social and study areas: 'Auletta' - for the association of student representatives, meeting area and technological devices provided by the UniBA; Aula Carelli – a study area for 50 students; Verderinaria – tables and seats in the pinewood area.
- Psychological Counselling Desk to help students cope with stress and difficulties of their university life.
- Resting room: for relaxation useful for mental and physical welfare.
- Islamic praying room for students.
- Anti-violence desk as part of the city's anti-violence network.
- UniBA library system and the Veterinary Medicine Library.
- University Language Centre open to students and teaching staff.
- Events organised by students.
- Part-time jobs offered for students.
- Sustainable mobility agreements between the UniBA and mobility companies.

- University Sports Centre.
- Career orientation service.

Students with disabilities or learning disorders are offered special services:

- A contact person at the VEE is supporting students with disabilities or learning disorders throughout their university career. They can also contact the University Disability Service.
- Such students may request Individualised Educational Treatment after filling out an online form for an interview at the psychological desk. (Help is provided with filling out the form.) After an in-depth analysis of the student's problems, suggestions are made for the best remediation of the given difficulties, and the suggested compensatory steps, etc. which enable the student to cope with the requirements (such as recording lessons, receiving materials and slides in advance, provide for accessing the classroom, having a sign language interpreter in the class, accessible desk, transformation of oral exam into written and vice versa, additional time provided to take a written test, division of exams into several parts, using concept maps on the day of the exam, etc.). It is not possible to request programme reductions or exemptions from exams. Detailed information is available as well as guides for teachers and students on the VEE's homepage.

The Regional Agency for Students Rights provides accommodation facilities for students which are assigned to students according to family income and merit. The UniBA also publishes a call every year for accommodation rental for students with low income. Both students and staff enjoy insurance arrangements that cover risks related to learning and teaching activities. Annual medical checkup is compulsory for the staff and is extended to students. There is first aid available for staff and students.

Students have several opportunities to present and resolve their grievances. They usually contact the student representatives first, then they can contact the Year Tutor; the Coordinator; the Coordinator of the TSJC or each member of this Committee; the Head of the VEE or Teaching Activity Delegate; the University Student Guarantor (responsible for any initiative aimed at reporting and removing irregularities, deficiencies, dysfunctions, delays, and any abuses against students, doctoral students, and postgraduates); and finally the Rector. The students' representatives in the different committees (PPT, EAEVE Committee, Council, DCC, and TSJC) and the Academic Senate may suggest putting problems on the agenda, which happens. However, the tried and tested procedures and the wealth of experience of the persons in the structures and the close connection between teachers and students create a very cooperative environment, thus grievances are often solved in a friendly and effective way.

7.7.2. Comments

A great variety of services are available for students, and for students with disabilities all serving the welfare of students, and all the necessary information is provided to enhance the use of these possibilities. However, the frequency of the bus service between Bari and the VEE should be increased to enhance the mobility of students living in the city. Student grievances may be reported to student representatives of the years, student members of different committees or responsible teachers and the management. The steps that can be taken up till the Student Guarantor or Rector of the University are described in the study regulations.

The VEE's focus on all aspects of student support is commendable.

7.7.3. Suggestions for improvement

None.

7.7.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Standard 7.7.

Standard 7.8: Mechanisms must be in place by which students can convey their needs and wants to the VEE. The VEE must provide students with a mechanism, anonymously if they wish, to offer suggestions, comments and complaints regarding compliance of the VEE with national and international legislation and the ESEVT Standards.

7.8.1. Findings

The primary channel for students to convey their needs, complaints, comments, and suggestions to the VEE is through their representatives in the different bodies of the UniBA and the VEE such as the Academic Senate, the VEE's council, the DCC, the TSJC, QA Committee, the EAEVE Committee, the PPTC; the CESA. In all of these committees they can ask for inclusion of a topic for the agenda for discussion or forward any complaints, suggestions, etc. to the competent body or responsible academic staff member. Documentation of several examples were presented during the visitation.

There is a relatively new Customer satisfaction survey anonymously filled out by students near their graduation. It is related to the services of the VEE. There are also open questions in post-lecture surveys where students may express their opinion or needs. Social media platforms are also great for sharing and discussing ideas and problems.

7.8.2. Comments

Students have multiple possibilities to convey their needs and problems to the management of the VEE mainly through their representatives in all bodies of the VEE and the UniBA.

7.8.3. Suggestions for improvement

None.

7.8.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Standard 7.8.

Area 8. Student assessment

Standard 8.1: The VEE must ensure that there is a clearly identified structure within the VEE showing lines of responsibility for the assessment strategy to ensure coherence of the overall assessment regime and to allow the demonstration of progressive development across the programme towards entry-level competence.

8.1.1. Findings

The responsibility for the assessment strategy is assigned to the DCC. The DCVM Coordinator is supported by the QA committee. The overall assessment strategy and its effectiveness is evaluated by the TSJC. Every year, the QA committee organises the teaching plan, the course timetable, the exam schedule and the graduation session programme. If there are issues in the assessment strategy for one course identified by the TSJC, then the QA committee makes sure that the issues will be solved.

The UniBA system allows them to subdivide the exam into a partial exam (where the student is assessed for one or more subjects), and a final one (where, other than completing the

assessment for the remaining subject(s), they receive a grade). Grades are defined by the exam commission, also considering the outcomes of the partial exam, not applying mathematical formulas (average, weighted average etc), but simply considering the evaluation of the partial exam.

The exams are held between bimesters, where lectures are not scheduled. This kind of organisation aims to stimulate students to take the exams soon after lectures and to allow students to subdivide teaching activities. So, students have periods exclusively dedicated to lectures and periods (called “teaching silence”) dedicated to exams at the end of each bimester: in November, February, April, June, July and September.

In the VEE, practical tests are carried out to assess skills and competencies that are not easily evaluable through oral and written tests. These exams are mainly related to subjects aiming to increase laboratory skills (i.e. microbiology, parasitology), specific veterinary base subjects (i.e. veterinary anatomy), preclinical subjects (i.e. animal handling) or clinical subjects.

When, at the end of April of each year, the PPT Committee receives the requests by the students available to carry out some parts of the PPT, each area representative schedules trainees for the whole year (from the 1st of June to the 1st of April of the next year). Moreover, each representative of each area of the PPT Committee assigns trainees to different academic tutors. Each academic tutor is responsible for the activities carried out by the trainees in the VMC and in external facilities. Each trainee edits a daily activity diary that has to be signed daily by the academic tutor (PPT) or by the external tutor (EPT). At the end of the period, the tutor writes a judgement on the skills and softs skills acquired by the trainee in the same module. The member of the PPT Committee receives by the trainee the module with the daily activities, signed by the tutor and with the evaluation and then recognizes the ECTS acquired for that area of PPT in a Case-Log.

The PDP has a particular assessment procedure. As this part of the curriculum is elective, students that choose a specific topic, follow practical activities in different areas and with different teaching staff members. During the course, students are put in a professional context (effective or simulated) and each member of the teaching staff assesses each student for the provided skills and competencies. From an administrative perspective, the PDPs are considered an exam. Therefore, at the end of the PDPs, all the teaching staff involved, coordinated by the PDP responsible, organises, according to the specificity of the PDP, an examination session aiming to evaluate the degree of acquisition of skills and competencies acquired by the students. The examination commission shares the individual evaluations and provides a final vote ranging, as the other exams, from 18 to 30 for allowing the student to pass the exam, and then recognizing related ECTS.

8.1.2. Comments

The VEE has an identified structure that has the responsibility for the assessment strategy, which is the DCC. The TSJC and the QA committee ensure coherence of the overall assessment strategy. All the integrated courses (i. e. teaching unit) are described for students in an online document the structure of which is the same for all integrated courses, including the learning outcomes and the corresponding Day One Competencies. This ensures coherence of the overall assessment regime. The QA committee verifies that this is the case for all integrated courses.

There is a wish from the VEE to reduce exam fragmentation, which limits the assessment of competencies (it assesses individual knowledge out of its medical context).

The VEE uses different ways to assess knowledge, skills and competencies: oral and written exams as well as assessment of practical pre-clinical and clinical skills. Because the practical clinical skills are assessed during the last two curricular years, there is a progressive development across the programme towards entry-level competence. To guarantee

transparency and objectivity, a new template of the teaching programmes has been introduced, where it is requested to describe the assessment and the grading of the marks accordingly, especially those that provide oral exams.

8.1.3. Suggestions for improvement

None.

8.1.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Standard 8.1.

Standard 8.2: The assessment tasks and grading criteria for each unit of study in the programme must be published, applied consistently, clearly identified and available to students in a timely manner well in advance of the assessment. Requirements to pass must be explicit.

The VEE must properly document the results of assessment and provide the students with timely feedback on their assessments.

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

8.2.1. Findings

Exams are public and the student can register for all the exams for which he/she has the certificate of attendance and in compliance with barrier exams. Dates of the exams of each course are published at the beginning of the AY. Any change to the exam schedule must be promptly communicated to the students with a suitable notice, through the online exam registration system (Esse3). The exams are placed at the end of each of the bimesters. If one student fails the exam, he/she can retake the exam at the end of the subsequent bimester (except for the 4th bimester, where the student must retake the exam during the month of July).

In each course programme, the teaching strategy, learning objectives, expected learning outcomes, the assessment strategy (including methods of assessment, passing requirements, and evaluation criteria) are provided. This course programme is updated annually by the DCVM coordinator with the support of the Teaching Manager, and after a revision carried out by the QA Committee.

Individual students are notified of exam grades at the end of oral and practical components or, for written exams, by electronic mail. If the student accepts the grade, this is recorded on the UniBA platform (Esse3). If the student does not accept the grade, there is an opportunity for the student to retake the exam.

Students may ask teachers directly for feedback on the outcome of the exam and any advice for their improvement (where necessary), although teachers are asked to give support and advice to all the students that are not able to pass the exam soon after the failed session.

The thesis supervisor and an independent co-advisor are responsible for evaluating the quality of the manuscript of the thesis. The remaining members of the Commission evaluate transversal and soft skills. The final grade is the sum of the starting grade point average plus the points awarded by the Commission. Students can appeal against any assessment outcome directly to the examination board. Once the grade is accepted, the student cannot appeal against it. If there are reasons related to non-respect of students' rights, they can appeal to the TSJC or directly to the Students Guarantor.

8.2.2. Comments

The assessment tasks, grading criteria, and requirements for passing, are precisely described in the course syllabi, accessible online, for each teaching unit (integrated course). The exams'

schedules are also published online and in advance of the assessment. Students are notified orally or by email of the exam grades. Mechanisms for students to appeal against assessment outcomes are explicit; they can appeal to the TSJC or directly to the Students Guarantor.

8.2.3. Suggestions for improvement

None.

8.2.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Standard 8.2.

Standard 8.3: The VEE must have a process in place to review assessment outcomes, to change assessment strategies and to ensure the accuracy of the procedures when required. Programme learning outcomes covering the full range of professional knowledge, skills, competences and attributes must form the basis for assessment design and underpin decisions on progression.

8.3.1. Findings

The VEE's activities are regularly monitored and reviewed through its QA System, in particular by the QA Committee and by TSJC. In recent years, with a view to continuous improvement, the QA Committee has launched a substantial revision of the methods for editing the course programmes (syllabus) with a specific focus on the evaluation methods and criteria. In this process, which is implemented every year, students are strongly involved, both by the nature of the QA Committee and TSJC, and by their participation and vote within the two boards (DCC and DiMeV Council). Furthermore, thanks to feedback from students on the conduct of the exams, an innovative project was started last year aiming to investigate how exams are conducted by the commissions, with a focus on the assessment strategies.

After the exams periods, each student representative in each year of the course administers a survey for each exam passed to all the students of the class. The survey is anonymous and investigates several aspects related to exams (respect of date and time, availability to tutoring, arguments dealt with during exam and their presence in the syllabus, behaviour of the examination commission in case of difficulties showed by the student, assessment strategies compared to those declared in the programmes and in class at the first lecture, etc.). This project is totally managed by students for students.

The review of the assessment process, as required by ANVUR, takes place annually during the monitoring activities carried out by the QA Committee first, and then by the TSJC in the evaluation and analysis of the indicators relating to assessment procedures. The DCVM coordinator can also propose corrective/improvement actions directly to the teaching staff member or in collegial sessions during the DCC meeting. Finally, the TSJC annually reviews the performance of the degree programme, with the drafting of an annual report. In this report there is the analysis of the reliability of the methods for assessing the knowledge and skills acquired by students in relation to the expected learning outcomes.

8.3.2. Comments

Every year, the QA Committee and the TSJC review the evaluation methods and criteria. They draft an annual report which analyses the reliability of the methods for assessing the knowledge and skills acquired by students in relation to the expected learning outcomes. The learning outcomes of each teaching unit are described in the syllabus of the teaching unit, and the teacher of the course is responsible to ensure the consistency between what is written and what is assessed during exams. Recently, all students were asked by an anonymous survey regarding

the assessment strategies. However, there are no formalised documents written by the teaching staff describing the improvements that are going to be made based on the comments from the students.

8.3.3. Suggestions for improvement

None.

8.3.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Standard 8.3.

Standard 8.4: Assessment strategies must allow the VEE to certify student achievement of learning objectives at the level of the programme and individual units of study.

The VEE must ensure that the programmes are delivered in a way that encourages students to take an active role in creating the learning process, and that the assessment of students reflects this approach.

8.4.1. Findings

According to the Italian University system, the certification of the achievement of the learning outcomes by students must occur for each individual subject. Achievement of learning outcomes is certified in four complementary ways: (1) positive grade (>18/30) in the final exam of any subject, (2) positive grade (>18/30) or "approved" in the partial test (where applicable), (3) signature by academic staff (PPT) and by external tutor (EPT) of the Case-Log and related judgement in relation to expected learning outcomes (in this case the judgement, that has a descriptive approach, is converted in a signature or not (binary approach) by the responsible for the area of PPT/EPT, member of the PTT Committee), (4) grade (in 110ths) assigned by the Committee following the discussion of the degree thesis.

The VEE always shows an active role of students in the teaching management and QA procedures, not only in highlighting criticisms, but also in actively participating in discussions and to setting actions for recovering from the critical point. Students are involved in curriculum management through participation in all decision bodies. Student representatives are, indeed, present in TSJC, DiMeV and DCC, QA Committee, PPT Committee, EAEVE Committee. In the TSJC, where students are present in equal numbers of teachers, they play a pivotal role in the revision of teaching strategies for increasing suitability of programmes.

8.4.2. Comments

The VEE uses many ways to certify the student achievement of the learning objectives, which are always listed in the syllabus of each teaching unit (oral and written exams, practical pre-clinical and clinical exams). Representative students participate in many committees that discuss the teaching strategies (TSJC, DCC, QA, PPT, DiMeV Council, and EAVE committees). They therefore take an active role in the learning process.

8.4.3. Suggestions for improvement

None.

8.4.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Standard 8.4.

Standard 8.5: Methods of formative and summative assessment must be valid and reliable and comprise a variety of approaches. Direct assessment of clinical skills and Day One

Competences (some of which may be on simulated patients), must form a significant component of the overall process of assessment. It must also include the quality control of the student logbooks in order to ensure that all clinical procedures, practical and hands-on training planned in the study programme have been fully completed by each individual student.

8.5.1. Findings

Theoretical knowledge is assessed through oral, and written exams. Oral exams are used to test theoretical knowledge, problem-solving, and communication skills, including the use of appropriate terminology. In order to reduce the subjectivity in the evaluation of this assessment method, evaluation criteria are provided by the teaching staff in each subject. The written exam may include: i) multiple-choice questions; ii) questions with short answers; iii) open-ended questions with limited writing space; iv) combinations of the previous methods; v) problem solving by using PC through specific softwares. Academic staff has improved the adoption of mixed methods of exams (oral-practical), partial exams, ongoing tests and the use of a grading criteria matrix.

For PPTs, each student has its own sheet for each clinical rotation, and writes her/his activities. The tutor must write whether the student acquired or not the clinical competencies, and must sign this document. The current case log in use (from 2019-2020 to 2022-2023) registers daily activities carried out by trainees and also has to be signed for validation by the tutor, that may be academic (PPT) or external (EPT). This logbook collects the information written in the individual sheet for each clinical rotation. At the end of the period, the tutor (both academic and external) describes in an analytic way the main learning outcomes of the trainee, including soft skills and assesses the degree of achieved competencies by each trainee. These documents are finally validated by the members of the PPT Committee expert in the teaching area. When all the activities provided by the PPT have been recognized by each PPT Committee member, the total amount of 30 ECTS is approved and assigned to the student by the Students' Secretariat. The VEE has established a temporary logbook from the AY 2023-2024, until an updated version is introduced (expected in 2024-2025).

8.5.2. Comments

The methods of summative assessments comprise a variety of approaches (the assessment of students reflects this approach). Formative assessments are left to the discretion of the teacher (some teaching units do not have formative assessments). Practical clinical skills are recorded and assessed in a specific and individual sheet, which certifies the acquired clinical skills. Then this information is collected in one individual logbook, signed by the teacher.

8.5.3. Suggestions for improvement

None.

8.5.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Standard 8.5.

Area 9. Academic and support staff

Standard 9.1: The VEE must ensure that all staff are appropriately qualified and prepared for their roles, in agreement with national and EU regulations and must apply fair and transparent processes for the recruitment and development of staff.

A formal training (including good teaching and evaluation practices, learning and e-learning resources, biosecurity and QA procedures) must be in place for all staff involved with teaching.

Most academic staff (calculated as FTE) involved in veterinary training must be veterinarians. It is expected that more than 2/3 of the instruction that the students receive, as determined by student teaching hours, is delivered by qualified veterinarians.

9.1.1. Findings

The VEE's strategy revolves around leveraging the expertise of its academic staff to provide comprehensive training for undergraduate and postgraduate students. In Italy, academic staff are categorised based on their expertise in specific Scientific Disciplinary Sectors (SSD) related to veterinary and animal production disciplines. There are fourteen SSDs associated with veterinary education, along with others related to basic sciences.

The academic staff comprises Full Professors, Associate Professors, Assistant Professors, as well as Research Fellows (RTDA and RTDB) who hold temporary positions. These researchers must hold a PhD and actively engage in teaching with a minimum teaching load requirement. Permanent academic staff hired after 2010 must undergo National Scientific Qualification (NSQ) processes in relevant SSD disciplines. NSQ involves evaluation by a National Committee, assessing candidates based on criteria like publications, citations, research activity, and other relevant qualifications. Parameters for NSQ are periodically revised by ANVUR in agreement with MUR.

Approximately two-thirds of the academic staff are veterinarians (49/73), with many holding PhD degrees and several possessing European (6) or national specialisations (12). Two RTDB researchers are currently residents.

Besides the core subjects taught by Academic staff belonging to the specific SSDs as mandated by national and UniBA rules, the majority of the veterinary programme's instruction is provided by qualified veterinarians.

The VEE prioritises continuous professional development, especially for young researchers like RTDA and RTDB, to enhance their teaching skills. There is a regulation for the continuous learning of academic teaching staff within the VEE.

To enhance teaching quality and introduce innovative methodologies, UniBA participates in programmes like PRODID (experimental programme developed by the University of Padua with the objective of setting up and developing strategies to support teacher expertise) and encourages academic staff to attend courses and seminars on teaching competencies. Staff is regularly updated on administrative and teaching matters through online formative courses.

Additionally, the UniBA provides training and support for academic and support staff on biosecurity, ensuring safety and protection. There are mandatory online courses on biosecurity that staff must attend every five years.

UniBA also offers personalised e-learning training through the "Syllabus portal" to enhance knowledge, productivity, and digital capabilities in administrative procedures.

Quality assurance procedures are communicated through various channels, including the DCVM and DiMeV Councils, as well as on the UniBA website and the DiMeV website. Representatives of students, PhD students, and technical/administrative staff are actively involved in these QA procedures

The VTH team is composed of six contract practitioners and academic staff teachers, with additional participation from postgraduate and PhD students in clinical services and student training at the VTH. Academic staff members handle the on-call service for food-producing animals. Altogether, the VTH team consists of 21 members, including technicians, groomers, and administrative staff.

9.1.2. Comments

The VEE has established a robust system for ensuring staff qualifications, fair recruitment processes, and formal training. The VEE's commitment to continuous professional development, biosecurity, and quality assurance further reinforces its dedication to delivering a high-quality educational programme in veterinary medicine.

From 2020 to 2022 there was an increase in both the number of academic and support staff, leading to an enhancement of service provision and the quality of education.

9.1.3. Suggestions for improvement

None.

9.1.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Standard 9.1.

Standard 9.2: The total number, qualifications and skills of all staff involved with the programme, including teaching staff, 'adjunct' staff, technical, administrative and support staff, must be sufficient and appropriate to deliver the educational programme and fulfil the VEE's mission.

A procedure must be in place to assess if the staff involved with teaching display competence and effective teaching skills in all relevant aspects of the curriculum that they teach, regardless of whether they are full or part time, residents, interns or other postgraduate students, adjuncts or off-campus contracted teachers.

9.2.1. Findings

Academic and Non-Academic Staff in the Veterinary Programme

Over 3 years, the Veterinary programme averages 21 full professors, 38 associate professors, 8 permanent assistant professors, 5 RTDB, and 6 RTDA. The gender balance is around 50%.

Key leadership roles in the VEE and associated programmes, such as Coordinators and the Erasmus Delegate, are predominantly held by women.

Non-academic staff includes a practitioner recruited for "Practice Management," an administrative coordinator, technical/administrative staff, animal groomers, and four didactic administrative staff members.

Many support staff are qualified veterinarians with PhDs. Five are titled "expert in a subject" due to their scientific output and can participate in exam commissions. The team also has an English language instructor.

VTH practitioners, selected based on their qualifications, engage in H24 service and supervise students. Six practitioners have been recruited in the last two years.

Temporary support staff includes project collaborators and PhD students allowed to engage in "teaching integrative activity." Some PhD students and grant fellows are primarily research-focused and aren't accounted as Support staff of the veterinary programme.

VEE grants annually about 8-9 awards for selected students, PhD students or other fellowship recipients for tutorial support to students who lag behind. Fifteen grants have been given in the last three years.

VEE collaborates with various health and production institutions to expand its teaching resources.

Staff numbers are anticipated to grow, despite the retirement of some professors, with the VEE strategic plan outlining various recruitments and progressions. By 2023, the institution has already recruited two RTDBs: one with an ECVN diplomate designation and another who is a resident in ECVIM-CA Oncology. In the upcoming months, six veterinary technicians are set

to commence their roles at the VTH. Out of these, two will serve in the clinics, while the remaining four will be part of the H24 service.

Staff allocation and recruitment is governed by multiple factors, including funding, performance of UniBA, student population, and retirements. RTDAs and other temporary staff are recruited on the basis of the availability of specific grants from research projects, as well as national and regional programmes.

Temporary academic staff must write an annual report on their activities to be approved by the DiMeV Council to extend the contract time terms.

The recruitment process is thorough, rigorous, and nationally regulated, sometimes taking longer than non-academic career progressions.

Academic staff can opt for full-time or part-time roles, affecting their salary and responsibilities. Current academic staff in the VEE are all full-time. External work options have specific guidelines for retributions and permissions.

Support staff, including PhD students, have set guidelines for external work and associated compensations.

Quantitative data on Academic Staff of the Veterinary Programme

Over the years 2019 to 2022: Overall, the percentage of veterinarians in the academic staff averaged 67.15% over the three years, with individual yearly percentages of 67.28%, 67.51%, and 68.51% for 2021-2022, 2020-2021, and 2019-2020 respectively.

Quantitative data on Support Staff of the Veterinary Programme

Over the years 2019 to 2022:

Permanent staff (1 FTE) had an average count of **35 members**. The specific counts for each year were 39, 33, and 33 for the years 2021-2022, 2020-2021, and 2019-2020 respectively.

Temporary staff (1 FTE) had an average count of **10.33 members**. The numbers were 19, 8, and 4 for 2021-2022, 2020-2021, and 2019-2020 respectively.

In total, the veterinary programme's support staff averaged 45.33 members across the three years.

Quantitative data on Research Staff of the VEE

From 2019 to 2022:

Permanent staff (comprising Full, Associate, and Assistant professors at 1 FTE) had an average count of 65.66 members. The specific counts for each year were 65, 67, and 65 for the years 2021-2022, 2020-2021, and 2019-2020 respectively.

Temporary staff (consisting of RTDA; RTDB at 0.50/0.25 FTE, PhD students, Post-docs, and grant fellows at 1 FTE) had an average count of 54.16 members. The numbers were 61.25, 55.50, and 45.75 for 2021-2022, 2020-2021, and 2019-2020 respectively.

Overall, the VEE's research staff averaged 123.16 members across the three years.

9.2.2. Comments

The VEE applies a thorough and systematic approach to staff assessment and management, ensuring that the staff composition aligns with the VEE's educational mission and needs. The presence of qualified veterinarians among the support staff is noteworthy, especially those with PhD qualifications.

The VEE collaborates with health, and food production institutions to expand teaching resources.

It is commendable that the VEE has taken a thorough and systematic approach to staff assessment and management, ensuring that the staff composition aligns with the VEE's educational mission and needs.

9.2.3. Suggestions for improvement

None.

9.2.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Standard 9.2.

Standard 9.3: Staff must be given opportunities to develop and extend their teaching and assessment knowledge and must be encouraged to improve their skills. Opportunities for didactic and pedagogic training and specialisation must be available. The VEE must clearly define any systems of reward for teaching excellence in operation.

Academic positions must offer the security and benefits necessary to maintain stability, continuity, and competence of the academic staff. They must have a balanced workload of teaching, research and service depending on their role. They must have reasonable opportunities and resources for participation in scholarly activities.

9.3.1. Findings

In Italy, academic personnel such as full, associate, and assistant professors have permanent employment until retirement ages of 70 and 67, respectively. This provides the essential stability and continuity in the academic domain.

Currently, the balance between tasks like teaching, research, VTH activities, TM (Third Mission - Public Engagement) and other administrative duties is not ideal. For instance, national guidelines stipulate a minimum teaching load of 350 hours for full and associate professors and 200 hours for assistant professors. For RTDB and RTDA positions the teaching activity must account for 60 h/year.

This teaching load encompasses lectures, hands-on training, exams, and more. However, the practical training sessions with smaller student groups often make the workload heavier than stipulated.

In cases where individuals have significant institutional roles, like being the Head of Department, they can request a reduced teaching load.

No formal recognition or reward system is in place for outstanding teaching, except for an acknowledgment in the DCC based on student feedback.

To foster teaching and assessment improvements, academic staff are advised to attend online courses provided by institutions like UniBA. Over the years, workshops focusing on communication skills and relationships have been initiated. From the academic year 2021-2022, programmes under the #DiMeVAltuofianco initiatives have been introduced, targeting both students and teachers, concentrating on effective communication, team dynamics, and empathy.

Even though not compulsory, academic staff is also encouraged to allocate time for TM tasks. An increasing bureaucratic workload, however, risks overshadowing their time for teaching and research.

9.3.2. Comments

Besides the teaching tasks there is a high load of administrative tasks to support university bureaucracy.

9.3.3. Suggestions for improvement

None.

9.3.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Standard 9.3.

Standard 9.4: The VEE must provide evidence that it utilises a well-defined, comprehensive and publicised programme for the professional growth and development of academic and support staff, including formal appraisal and informal mentoring procedures.

Staff must have the opportunity to contribute to the VEE's direction and decision-making processes.

Promotion criteria for academic and support staff must be clear and explicit. Promotions for teaching staff must recognise excellence in, and (if permitted by the national or university law) place equal emphasis on all aspects of teaching (including clinical teaching), research, service and other scholarly activities.

9.4.1. Findings

The VEE, in conjunction with UniBA governance, prioritises the professional and scientific development of its academic and support staff. UniBA offers diverse online and onsite training courses tailored to different staff roles, improving their curriculum. Didactic courses are available for academic staff. They are also encouraged to work on becoming European Diplomats, and supported in participating at conferences, etc. This commitment to professional growth is evident in the strong collaboration between academic and support staff, fostering optimal operations in laboratories and the VTH, and promoting scholarly contributions.

Administrative and technical staff are grouped into Operative Units (OUs), with performance evaluations conducted annually by technician/administrative officer with the supervision of the Administrative Coordinator. These evaluations play a pivotal role in staff's financial rewards, career advancement, and salary progression. Notably, during the Department of Excellence project, Academic staff rewards were based on set objectives and scholarly contributions like publications.

The VEE actively promotes international engagement: academic staff have the opportunity to participate in the Erasmus Plus mobility programme, and professors can apply for sabbatical leave to immerse in research or educational pursuits. Support staff, too, are encouraged to enrol in advanced courses to enhance their skills, with course fees borne by the VEE. They have representation in the VEE's workers union, ensuring their voice in decision-making and appraisal processes. On every committee within the VEE, including the DiMeV Council and QA Committee, there is guaranteed representation not only of the teaching, but also of both the support staff and the students, ensuring their active involvement in decision making.

UniBA has exhibited its commitment to staff welfare, with measures like group sessions with psychologists and a focus on gender equality, evidenced by the Gender equality plan initiated in 2022. VEE members actively participate in gender-centric committees, and an anti-violence centre has been set up at VMC.

Promotion criteria for staff are defined at the national level. For more details see 9.2.

9.4.2. Comments

UniBA offers a variety of training programmes, both online and on-site, tailored to the specific needs of its staff members. Support staff is encouraged to enrol in advanced courses to enhance their skills, with the VEE covering course fees for internal courses.

Staff and students are represented in VEE committees handling the VEEs direction and decision-making processes.

Administrative and technical staff undergo annual performance evaluations with impact in career advancement, and salary progression.

Promotion criteria for staff are defined at the national level.

9.4.3. Suggestions for improvement

None.

9.4.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Standard 9.4.

Standard 9.5: A system for assessment of teaching staff must be in operation and must include student participation. Results must be available to those undertaking external reviews and commented upon in reports.

9.5.1. Findings

The VEE has implemented a dual-layered system for assessing teaching staff, which actively involves student participation:

1. The primary assessment, mandated by UniBA, requires students to complete an anonymous online questionnaire on the Esse3 platform. This questionnaire is a prerequisite for students to register for their exams.
2. At the Department level, there is a supplementary anonymous survey, devised by the TSJC in line with ANVUR guidelines. This can be filled out by students online (on the Microsoft Teams platform during the pandemic) right after their courses conclude and while requesting attendance signatures. This mechanism is highly effective in promptly gauging professors' teaching efficacy and facilitating timely corrective actions when needed.

Both survey results are made accessible on the UniBA and DiMeV websites. This transparency empowers the QA Committee, the DCVM Coordinator, and the TSJC to engage with teaching staff about potential improvements or areas of concern. Additionally, in the past year, the DCVM has introduced another anonymous post-exam survey for students to capture feedback on the examination process. Such feedback serves as a basis for introducing essential adjustments based on student evaluations.

Concerning the hiring of academic personnel, decisions are contingent upon funding from MUR to UniBA. Typically, in line with the DiMeV Strategic Plan, the VEE receives annual allocations for academic and support roles. Roles are allocated based on both research and teaching requisites, with the Head of DiMeV deliberating with departmental leaders. These proposals undergo further discussion and approval by the DiMeV Council. This council, which includes representatives from all academic and support sectors, including students and PhD candidates, ensures plain discussions and communication.

9.5.2. Comments

The VEE has implemented a comprehensive assessment system that actively involves students at multiple levels. The primary assessment, mandated by UniBA, requires students to complete an anonymous online questionnaire. Supplementary survey at the department level, in line with National guidelines, is conducted promptly after courses conclude.

Survey results are accessible on the UniBA and DiMeV websites.

9.5.3. Suggestions for improvement

None.

9.5.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Standard 9.5.

Area 10. Research programmes, continuing and postgraduate education

Standard 10.1: The VEE must demonstrate significant and broad research activities of staff that integrate with and strengthen the veterinary degree programme through research-based teaching.

10.1.1. Findings

The VEE has a strong orientation towards research in all sections. The students are included in research programmes during their thesis work. Students also participate in international research projects and they are involved from the first year in laboratory work.

PhD-students and residents participate in research and there is a well-established support from supervisors in career planning (e.g. support to write a good CV).

The publications demonstrate research in collaboration with other scientists. Per year, there is an average of 200 publications and the percentage of co-authors at the publication level is 48%.

10.1.2. Comments

The list of published articles demonstrates that broad scientific collaboration at the scientific level takes place. Academic staff and PhD students disseminate their research through teaching the students.

10.1.3. Suggestions for improvement

None.

10.1.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Standard 10.1.

Standard 10.2: All students must be trained in scientific method and research techniques relevant to evidence-based veterinary medicine and must have opportunities to participate in research programmes.

10.2.1. Findings

The VEE sensitises students very early in the curriculum on the importance of scientific research. This is performed in particular from the first year where seminars are given to students, such as, for example, the seminar called "a chat with the librarian". There is an awareness to use bibliographic research tools and knowledge of laboratory techniques.

Throughout the years of study, seminars are organised, such as the one entitled "How to write a scientific paper". The same is true for other meeting activities to promote scientific research (eg: researchers Night organised by the UniBA).

At the end of the training cycle, each student must present a graduation thesis. He or she must defend this thesis before a jury composed of at least 7 supervisors. One year before the defence, the subject must be fixed with the promoter. Through this process, the VEE raises students' awareness of the 3R concept, applicable during animal experiments.

Following the defence of the thesis graduation, the best students are selected for inclusion in international research programmes.

10.2.2. Comments

The VEE teaches evidence-based medicine. The VEE involves students in research awareness activities very early in their university training. And students are involved in research during their thesis work (final year).

10.2.3. Suggestions for improvement

None.

10.2.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Standard 10.2.

Standard 10.3: The VEE must provide advanced postgraduate degree programmes, e.g. PhD, internships, residencies and continuing education programmes that complement and strengthen the veterinary degree programme and are relevant to the needs of the profession and society.

10.3.1. Findings

For PhD students, there are three PhD courses (Animal Health and Zoonoses; Internal Medicine, Surgical and Obstetrics Clinical Sciences; Tissue and Organ Transplantation). The course “Internal Medicine, Surgical and Obstetrics Clinical Sciences” was created for this academic year (2023-2024).

Places are reserved for very qualified students who will be included in European research programmes. The number of places range from 2 to 4 per year.

The VEE is active in the field of postgraduate programmes called “postgraduate specialisation schools”. Four areas are covered by these schools: Infectious Diseases, Prophylaxis and Veterinary Policy; Inspection of food of animal origin; Pathophysiology of Domestic Animals’ Reproduction; and Technology and Pathology of Avian Species, Rabbit and Wildlife Animals. The number of years of courses is 3 totalising 180 ECTS (60 for each year) and there is a final thesis presented by the students.

The number of students registered in the schools is between 11 and 100, depending on the years. The school “infectious diseases of animals” attracts more students than the 2 other schools.

The number of PhD and Research Fellowships is summarised in SER Table 10.3.2

Continuing education within the VEE benefits from significant infrastructure for giving conferences. This training is intended for different bodies or associations: private and public associations, cultural associations, scientific societies, etc. The number of attendees to the courses organised for continuing education is between 2,100 and 3,300 each year.

The VEE also provides continuing education for veterinarians, who must acquire 150 continuing education credits over a period of 3 years.

Two spin-offs have been created inside the VEE: EcoFlyTech and Med&Food.

10.3.2. Comments

The VEE trains PhD students, interns and residents of different European colleges. PhD students are involved in the teaching of undergraduate students, with a maximum of 40 hours per year illustrating a clear connection between research and teaching.

Further to this the VEE has established 4 postgraduate specialisation schools; and a comprehensive continuing education programme attended by a high number of persons.

10.3.3. Suggestions for improvement

None.

10.3.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Standard 10.3.

Standard 10.4: The VEE must have a system of QA to evaluate how research activities provide opportunities for student training and staff promotion, and how research approaches, methods and results are integrated into the veterinary teaching programmes.

10.4.1. Finding

Research is evaluated periodically by the VEE, using the tool called VQR (Research quality evaluation). The evaluation takes place externally through ANVUR (National agency for the evaluation of Universities and Research institutes) and is intended for the MUR (Italian Ministry of Universities and Research). This evaluation is very important because it allows it to be named a department of excellence by the ministry, which provides additional resources. Within the UniBA and the VEE, 2 committees evaluate the research, which is part of a quality assurance process. Within the UniBA, a committee will mainly focus on new programmes for PhD courses, distribution of grants and reflection on the possibility of having co-funding when submitting projects.

Within the VEE, it is the REC (Research Evaluation Committee) which is in charge of the evaluation of the research and the study of the needs in terms of research for a service of the VEE. Through this committee the VEE ensures that there is no imbalance between different VEE services.

The REC committee is made up of the director of the VEE, a delegate for research, 7 professors and 2 administrative employees. The evaluation is carried out for a period of 5 years. It is used both to evaluate past research within the VEE and also to improve research and the promotion of research.

The creation of new specialisation schools must always be discussed and approved by the VEE board.

10.4.2. Comments

A solid and clearly described QA process to evaluate research is in place based primarily at VQR that evaluates the quality of research every 5 years. This tool is used by the VEE to assess both past research and plans for the next 5 years.

10.4.3. Suggestions for improvement

None.

10.4.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Standard 10.4.

11. ESEVT Indicators

	Name of the Establishment:	Department of Veterinary Medicine - University of Bari			
	Name & mail of the Head:	Prof. Nicola Decaro - nicola.decaro@uniba.it			
	Date of the form filling:	24-07-2023			
	Raw data from the last 3 full academic years	2021/22	2020/21	2019/20	Mean
1	n° of FTE academic staff involved in veterinary training	68,6	60,75	55	61,45
2	n° of undergraduate students	346	341	304	330,33
3	n° of FTE veterinarians involved in veterinary training	49	42	39	43,33
4	n° of students graduating annually	18	36	40	31,33
5	n° of FTE support staff involved in veterinary training	58	41	37	45,33
6	n° of hours of practical (non-clinical) training	809	809	809	809
7	n° of hours of clinical training	780	780	780	780
8	n° of hours of FSQ & VPH training	331	331	331	331
9	n° of hours of extra-mural practical training in FSQ & VPH	136	100	100	112
10	n° of companion animal patients seen intra-murally	1763	1359	694	1272
11	n° of ruminant and pig patients seen intra-murally	46	44	38	42,67
12	n° of equine patients seen intra-murally	70	65	45	60
13	n° of rabbit, rodent, bird and exotic patients seen intra-murally	299	344	262	301,7
14	n° of companion animal patients seen extra-murally	291	497	137	308,3
15	n° of individual ruminants and pig patients seen extra-murally	553	442	113	369,3
16	n° of equine patients seen extra-murally	48	42	19	36,3
17	n° of visits to ruminant and pig herds	50	34	33	39,0
18	n° of visits of poultry and farmed rabbit units	22	18	32	24,0
19	n° of companion animal necropsies	104	26	14	48,0
20	n° of ruminant and pig necropsies	55	15	0	23,3
21	n° of equine necropsies	9	1	0	3,3
22	n° of rabbit, rodent, bird and exotic pet necropsies	278	134	108	173,3
23	n° of FTE specialised veterinarians involved in veterinary training	5	5	5	5,0
24	n° of PhD graduating annually	6	8	4	6,0

Name of the Establishment:		Department of Veterinary Medicine, University of Bari, Italy			
Date of the form filling:		July 2023			
Calculated Indicators from raw data		Establishment values	Median values¹	Minimal values²	Balance³
I1	n° of FTE academic staff involved in veterinary training / n° of undergraduate students	0,186	0,15	0,13	0,060
I2	n° of FTE veterinarians involved in veterinary training / n° of students graduating annually	1,383	0,84	0,63	0,753
I3	n° of FTE support staff involved in veterinary training / n° of students graduating annually	1,447	0,88	0,54	0,907
I4	n° of hours of practical (non-clinical) training	809,000	953,500	700,590	108,410
I5	n° of hours of clinical training	780,000	941,580	704,800	75,200
I6	n° of hours of FSQ & VPH training	331,000	293,500	191,800	139,200
I7	n° of hours of extra-mural practical training in FSQ & VPH	112,000	75,00	31,80	80,200
I8	n° of companion animal patients seen intra-murally / n° of students graduating annually	40,596	62,31	43,58	-2,984
I9	n° of ruminant and pig patients seen intra-murally / n° of students graduating annually	1,362	2,49	0,89	0,472
I10	n° of equine patients seen intra-murally / n° of students graduating annually	1,915	4,16	1,53	0,385
I11	n° of rabbit, rodent, bird and exotic seen intra-murally / n° of students graduating annually	9,628	3,11	1,16	8,468
I12	n° of companion animal patients seen extra-murally / n° of students graduating annually	9,840	5,06	0,43	9,410
I13	n° of individual ruminants and pig patients seen extra-murally / n° of students graduating annually	11,787	16,26	8,85	2,937
I14	n° of equine patients seen extra-murally / n° of students graduating annually	1,160	1,80	0,62	0,540
I15	n° of visits to ruminant and pig herds / n° of students graduating annually	1,245	1,29	0,54	0,705
I16	n° of visits of poultry and farmed rabbit units / n° of students graduating annually	0,766	0,11	0,04	0,721
I17	n° of companion animal necropsies / n° of students graduating annually	1,532	2,11	1,40	0,132
I18	n° of ruminant and pig necropsies / n° of students graduating annually	0,745	1,36	0,90	-0,155
I19	n° of equine necropsies / n° of students graduating annually	0,106	0,18	0,10	0,006
I20	n° of rabbit, rodent, bird and exotic pet necropsies / n° of students graduating annually	5,532	2,65	0,88	4,652
I21*	n° of FTE specialised veterinarians involved in veterinary training / n° of students graduating annually	0,160	0,27	0,06	0,100
I22*	n° of PhD graduating annually / n° of students graduating annually	0,191	0,15	0,07	0,121

12. ESEVT Rubrics (summary of the decision on the compliance of the VEE for each ESEVT Standard, i.e. (total or substantial) compliance (C), partial compliance (PC) (Minor Deficiency) or non-compliance (NC) (Major Deficiency))

Area 1. Objectives, Organisation and QA Policy	C	PC	NC
Standard 1.1: The VEE must have as its main objective the provision, in agreement with the EU Directives and ESG recommendations, of adequate, ethical, research-based, evidence-based veterinary training that enables the new graduate to perform as a veterinarian capable of entering all commonly recognised branches of the veterinary profession and to be aware of the importance of lifelong learning. The VEE must develop and follow its mission statement which must embrace all the ESEVT Standards.	x		
Standard 1.2: The VEE must be part of a university or a higher education institution providing training recognised as being of an equivalent level and formally recognised as such in the respective country. The person responsible for the veterinary curriculum and the person(s) responsible for the professional, ethical, and academic affairs of the Veterinary Teaching Hospital (VTH) must hold a veterinary degree. The decision-making process, organisation and management of the VEE must allow implementation of its strategic plan and of a cohesive study programme, in compliance with the ESEVT Standards.	x		
Standard 1.3: The VEE must have a strategic plan, which includes a SWOT analysis of its current activities, a list of objectives, and an operating plan with a timeframe and indicators for its implementation.	x		
Standard 1.4: The VEE must have a policy and associated written procedures for the assurance of the quality and Standards of its programmes and awards. It must also commit itself explicitly to the development of a culture which recognises the importance of quality, and quality assurance, within their VEE. To achieve this, the VEE must develop and implement a strategy for the continuous enhancement of quality. The development and implementation of the VEE's strategy must include a role for students and other stakeholders, both internal and external, and the strategy must have a formal status and be publicly available.	x		
Standard 1.5: The VEE must provide evidence that it interacts with its stakeholders and the wider society. Such public information must be clear, objective and readily accessible; the information must include up-to-date information about the study programme, views and employment destinations of past students as well as the profile of the current student population. The VEE's website must mention the ESEVT VEE's status and its last Self Evaluation Report and Visitation Report must be easily available for the public.	x		
Standard 1.6: The VEE must monitor and periodically review its activities, both quantitative and qualitative, to ensure that they achieve the objectives set for them and respond to the needs of students and society. The VEE must make public how this analysis of information has been utilised in the further development of its activities and provide evidence as to the involvement of both students and staff in the provision, analysis and implementation of such data. Any action planned or taken as a result of this data analysis must be communicated to all those concerned.	x		
Standard 1.7: The VEE must undergo external review through the ESEVT on a cyclical basis. Evidence must be provided of such external evaluation with the assurance that the progress made since the last ESEVT evaluation was linked to a continuous quality assurance process.	x		
Area 2. Finances	C	PC	NC
Standard 2.1: Finances must be demonstrably adequate to sustain the requirements for the VEE to meet its mission and to achieve its objectives for education, research and services. The description must include both expenditures (separated into personnel costs, operating costs, maintenance costs and equipment) and revenues (separated into public funding, tuition fees, services, research grants and other sources).	x		
Standard 2.2: Clinical and field services must function as instructional resources. Instructional integrity of these resources must take priority over financial self-sufficiency of clinical services operations. The VEE must have sufficient autonomy in order to use the resources to implement its strategic plan and to meet the ESEVT Standards.	x		
Standard 2.3: Resources allocation must be regularly reviewed to ensure that available resources meet the requirements.	x		
Area 3. Curriculum	C	PC	NC
Standard 3.1: The curriculum must be designed, resourced and managed to ensure all graduates have achieved the graduate attributes expected to be fully compliant with the EU Directive 2005/36/EC (as amended by directive 2013/55/EU) and its Annex V.4.1. The curriculum must include the subjects (input) and must allow the acquisition of the Day One Competences (output) listed in Annex 2. This concerns Basic Sciences, Clinical Sciences in companion animals (including equine and exotic pets), Clinical Sciences in food-producing animals (including Animal Production and Herd Health Management), Food Safety and Quality, and Professional Knowledge.	x		
3.1.1. General findings			
3.1.2. Basic sciences	x		
3.1.3. Clinical Sciences in companion animals (including equine and exotic pets)	x		

FINAL REPORT AS ISSUED BY ECOVE ON 11 DECEMBER 2023

3.1.4. Clinical Sciences in food-producing animals (including Animal Production and Herd Health Management)	X		
3.1.5. Food Safety and Quality	X		
3.1.6. Professional Knowledge	X		
<p>Standard 3.2: Each study programme provided by the VEE must be competency-based and designed so that it meets the objectives set for it, including the intended learning outcomes. The qualification resulting from a programme must be clearly specified and communicated and must refer to the correct level of the national qualifications framework for higher education and, consequently, to the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area.</p> <p>The VEE must provide proof of a QA system that promotes and monitors the presence of an academic environment highly conducive to learning including self-learning. Details of the type, provision and updating of appropriate learning opportunities for the students must be clearly described, as well as the involvement of students.</p> <p>The VEE must also describe how it encourages and prepares students for self-learning and lifelong learning.</p>	X		
<p>Standard 3.3: Programme learning outcomes must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensure the effective alignment of all content, teaching, learning and assessment activities of the degree programme to form a cohesive framework • include a description of Day One Competences • form the basis for explicit statements of the objectives and learning outcomes of individual units of study • be communicated to staff and students • be regularly reviewed, managed and updated to ensure they remain relevant, adequate and are effectively achieved. 	X		
<p>Standard 3.4: The VEE must have a formally constituted committee structure (which includes effective student representation), with clear and empowered reporting lines, to oversee and manage the curriculum and its delivery. The committee(s) must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • determine the pedagogical basis, design, delivery methods and assessment methods of the curriculum • oversee QA of the curriculum, particularly gathering, evaluating, making change and responding to feedback from stakeholders, peer reviewers and external assessors, and data from examination/assessment outcomes • perform ongoing and periodic review of the curriculum at least every seven years by involving staff, students and stakeholders; these reviews must lead to continuous improvement. Any action taken or planned as a result of such a review must be communicated to all those concerned • identify and meet training needs for all types of staff, maintaining and enhancing their competence for the ongoing curriculum development. 	X		
<p>Standard 3.5: External Practical Training (EPT) is compulsory training activities organised outside the VEE, the student being under the direct supervision of a non-academic person (e.g. a practitioner). EPT cannot replace the core intramural training nor the extramural training under the close supervision of academic staff (e.g. ambulatory clinics, herd health management, practical training in FSQ and VPH). Since the veterinary degree is a professional qualification with Day One Competences, EPT must complement and strengthen the academic education inter alia by enhancing student's professional knowledge.</p>	X		
<p>Standard 3.6: The EPT providers must have an agreement with the VEE and the student (in order to state their respective rights and duties, including insurance matters), provide a standardised evaluation of the performance of the student during their EPT and be allowed to provide feedback to the VEE on the EPT programme.</p> <p>There must be a member of the academic staff responsible for the overall supervision of the EPT, including liaison with EPT providers.</p>	X		
<p>Standard 3.7: Students must take responsibility for their own learning during EPT. This includes preparing properly before each placement, keeping a proper record of their experience during EPT by using a logbook provided by the VEE and evaluating the EPT. Students must be allowed to complain officially and/or anonymously about issues occurring during EPT. The VEE must have a system of QA to monitor the implementation, progress and then feedback within the EPT activities.</p>	X		
Area 4. Facilities and equipment	C	PC	NC
<p>Standard 4.1: All aspects of the physical facilities must provide an environment conducive to learning, including internet access. The veterinary VEE must have a clear strategy and programme for maintaining and upgrading its buildings and equipment. Facilities must comply with all relevant legislation including health, safety, biosecurity, accessibility to people with reduced mobility, and EU animal welfare and care standards.</p>	X		
<p>Standard 4.2: Lecture theatres, teaching laboratories, tutorial rooms, clinical facilities and other teaching spaces must be adequate in number, size and equipped for the instructional purposes and must be well maintained. The facilities must be adapted for the number of students enrolled. Students must have ready access to adequate and sufficient study, self-learning, recreation, locker, sanitary and food service facilities. Offices, teaching preparation and research laboratories must be sufficient for the needs of the academic and support staff.</p>	X		
<p>Standard 4.3: The livestock facilities, animal housing, core clinical teaching facilities and equipment used by the VEE for teaching purposes must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be sufficient in capacity and adapted for the number of students enrolled in order to allow safe hands-on training for all students • be of a high standard, well maintained and fit for the purpose 	X		

FINAL REPORT AS ISSUED BY ECOVE ON 11 DECEMBER 2023

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • promote best husbandry, welfare and management practices • ensure relevant biosecurity and bio-containment • be designed to enhance learning. 			
<p>Standard 4.4: Core clinical teaching facilities must be provided in a veterinary teaching hospital (VTH) with 24/7 emergency services at least for companion animals and equines. Within the VTH, the VEE must unequivocally demonstrate that standard of education and clinical research are compliant with all ESEVT Standards, e.g. research-based and evidence-based clinical training supervised by academic staff trained to teach and to assess, availability for staff and students of facilities and patients for performing clinical research and relevant QA procedures.</p> <p>For ruminants, on-call service must be available if emergency services do not exist for those species in a VTH.</p> <p>The VEE must ensure state-of-the-art standards of teaching clinics which remain comparable with or exceeding the best available in the private sector.</p> <p>The VTH and any hospitals, practices and facilities (including EPT) which are involved with the curriculum must meet the relevant national Practice Standards.</p>	X		
<p>Standard 4.5: The VEE must ensure that students have access to a broad range of diagnostic and therapeutic facilities, including but not limited to: diagnostic imaging, anaesthesia, clinical pathology, intensive/critical care, surgeries and treatment facilities, ambulatory services, pharmacy and necropsy facilities.</p>	X		
<p>Standard 4.6: Appropriate isolation facilities must be provided to meet the need for the isolation and containment of animals with communicable diseases. Such isolation facilities must be properly constructed, ventilated, maintained and operated to provide for animal care and for prevention of spread of infectious agents. They must be adapted to all animal species commonly handled in the VTH.</p>	X		
<p>Standard 4.7: The VEE must have an ambulatory clinic for production animals or equivalent facilities so that students can practise field veterinary medicine and Herd Health Management under academic supervision.</p>	X		
<p>Standard 4.8: The transport of students, live animals, cadavers, materials from animal origin and other teaching materials must be done in agreement with national and EU standards, to ensure the safety of students and staff and to prevent the spread of infectious agents.</p>	X		
<p>Standard 4.9: Operational policies and procedures (including e.g. biosecurity, good laboratory practice and good clinical practice) must be taught and posted for students, staff and visitors and a Biosafety manual must be available. The VEE must demonstrate a clear commitment for the delivery of biosafety and biosecurity, e.g. by a specific committee structure. The VEE must have a system of QA to monitor and assure clinical, laboratory and farm services, including a regular monitoring of the feedback from students, staff and clients.</p>	X		
<p>Area 5. Animal resources and teaching material of animal origin</p>	C	PC	NC
<p>Standard 5.1: The number and variety of healthy and diseased animals, cadavers, and material of animal origin must be adequate for providing the practical and safe hands-on training (in the areas of Basic Sciences, Clinical Sciences, Pathology, Animal Production, Food Safety and Quality) and adapted to the number of students enrolled.</p> <p>Evidence must be provided that these data are regularly recorded and that procedures are in place for correcting any deficiencies.</p>		X	
<p>Standard 5.2: In addition to the training provided in the VEE, experience can include practical training at external sites, provided this training is organised under direct academic supervision and following the same standards as those applied in the VEE.</p>	X		
<p>Standard 5.3: The VTH must provide nursing care skills and instruction in nursing procedures. Under all situations students must be active participants in the clinical workup of patients, including problem-oriented diagnostic approach together with diagnostic decision-making.</p>	X		
<p>Standard 5.4: Medical records must be comprehensive and maintained in an effective retrieval system (preferably an electronic patient record system) to efficiently support the teaching, research, and service programmes of the VEE.</p>	X		
<p>Area 6. Learning resources</p>	C	PC	NC
<p>Standard 6.1: State-of-the-art learning resources must be adequate and available to support veterinary education, research, services and continuing education. When the study programme is provided in several tracks/languages, the learning resources must be available in all used languages. Timely access to learning resources, whether through print, electronic media or other means, must be available to students and staff and, when appropriate, to stakeholders. State-of-the-art procedures for bibliographical search and for access to databases and learning resources must be taught to undergraduate students.</p>	X		
<p>Standard 6.2: Staff and students must have full access on site to an academic library administered by a qualified librarian, an Information Technology (IT) unit managed by an IT expert, an e-learning platform, and all the relevant human and physical resources necessary for the development of instructional materials by the staff and their use by the students.</p> <p>The relevant electronic information, database and other intranet resources must be easily available for students and staff both in the VEE's core facilities via wireless connection (Wi-Fi) and from outside the VEE through a hosted secured connection, e.g. Virtual Private Network (VPN).</p>	X		
<p>Standard 6.3: The VEE must provide students with unimpeded access to learning resources, internet and internal study resources, and equipment for the development of procedural skills (e.g. models). The use of these resources must be aligned with the pedagogical environment and learning outcomes within the programme and have mechanisms in place to evaluate the teaching value of changes in learning resources.</p>	X		
<p>Area 7. Student admission, progression and welfare</p>	C	PC	NC
<p>Standard 7.1: The VEE must consistently apply pre-defined and published regulations covering all phases of the student "life cycle", e.g. student admission, progression and certification.</p>	X		

FINAL REPORT AS ISSUED BY ECOVE ON 11 DECEMBER 2023

In relation to enrolment, the VEE must provide accurate and complete information regarding all aspects of the educational programme in all advertisements for prospective national and international students. Formal cooperations with other VEEs must also be clearly advertised.			
Standard 7.2: The number of students admitted must be consistent with the resources available at the VEE for staff, buildings, equipment, healthy and diseased animals, and materials of animal origin.	X		
Standard 7.3: The selection and progression criteria must be clearly defined, consistent, and defensible, be free of discrimination or bias, and take into account the fact that students are admitted with a view to their entry to the veterinary profession in due course. The VEE must regularly review and reflect on the selection processes to ensure they are appropriate for students to complete the programme successfully. If the selection processes are decided by another authority, the latter must regularly receive feedback from the VEE. Adequate training (including periodic refresher training) must be provided for those involved in the selection process to ensure applicants are evaluated fairly and consistently.	X		
Standard 7.4: There must be clear policies and procedures on how applicants with disabilities or illnesses are considered and, if appropriate, accommodated in the programme, taking into account the requirement that all students must be capable of meeting the ESEVT Day One Competences by the time they graduate.	X		
Standard 7.5: The basis for decisions on progression (including academic progression and professional fitness to practise) must be explicit and readily available to the students. The VEE must provide evidence that it has mechanisms in place to identify and provide remediation and appropriate support (including termination) for students who are not performing adequately. The VEE must have mechanisms in place to monitor attrition and progression and be able to respond and amend admission selection criteria (if permitted by national or university law) and student support if required.	X		
Standard 7.6: Mechanisms for the exclusion of students from the programme for any reason must be explicit. The VEE's policies for managing appeals against decisions, including admissions, academic and progression decisions and exclusion, must be transparent and publicly available.	X		
Standard 7.7: Provisions must be made by the VEE to support the physical, emotional and welfare needs of students. This includes, but is not limited to, learning support and counselling services, career advice, and fair and transparent mechanisms for dealing with student illness, impairment and disability during the programme. This shall include provision of reasonable adjustments for disabled students, consistent with all relevant equality and/or human rights legislation. There must be effective mechanisms for resolution of student grievances (e.g. interpersonal conflict or harassment).	X		
Standard 7.8: Mechanisms must be in place by which students can convey their needs and wants to the VEE. The VEE must provide students with a mechanism, anonymously if they wish, to offer suggestions, comments and complaints regarding compliance of the VEE with national and international legislation and the ESEVT Standards.	X		
Area 8. Student assessment	C	PC	NC
Standard 8.1: The VEE must ensure that there is a clearly identified structure within the VEE showing lines of responsibility for the assessment strategy to ensure coherence of the overall assessment regime and to allow the demonstration of progressive development across the programme towards entry-level competence.	X		
Standard 8.2: The assessment tasks and grading criteria for each unit of study in the programme must be published, applied consistently, clearly identified and available to students in a timely manner well in advance of the assessment. Requirements to pass must be explicit. The VEE must properly document the results of assessment and provide the students with timely feedback on their assessments. Mechanisms for students to appeal against assessment outcomes must be explicit.	X		
Standard 8.3: The VEE must have a process in place to review assessment outcomes, to change assessment strategies and to ensure the accuracy of the procedures when required. Programme learning outcomes covering the full range of professional knowledge, skills, competences and attributes must form the basis for assessment design and underpin decisions on progression.	X		
Standard 8.4: Assessment strategies must allow the VEE to certify student achievement of learning objectives at the level of the programme and individual units of study. The VEE must ensure that the programmes are delivered in a way that encourages students to take an active role in creating the learning process, and that the assessment of students reflects this approach.	X		
Standard 8.5: Methods of formative and summative assessment must be valid and reliable and comprise a variety of approaches. Direct assessment of clinical skills and Day One Competences (some of which may be on simulated patients), must form a significant component of the overall process of assessment. It must also include the quality control of the student logbooks in order to ensure that all clinical procedures, practical and hands-on training planned in the study programme have been fully completed by each individual student.	X		
Area 9. Academic and support staff	C	PC	NC
Standard 9.1: The VEE must ensure that all staff are appropriately qualified and prepared for their roles, in agreement with national and EU regulations and must apply fair and transparent processes for the recruitment and development of staff. A formal training (including good teaching and evaluation practices, learning and e-learning resources, biosecurity and QA procedures) must be in place for all staff involved with teaching. Most academic staff (calculated as FTE) involved in veterinary training must be veterinarians. It is expected that more than 2/3 of the instruction that the students receive, as determined by student teaching hours, is delivered by qualified veterinarians.	X		

FINAL REPORT AS ISSUED BY ECOVE ON 11 DECEMBER 2023

<p>Standard 9.2: The total number, qualifications and skills of all staff involved with the programme, including teaching staff, 'adjunct' staff, technical, administrative and support staff, must be sufficient and appropriate to deliver the educational programme and fulfil the VEE's mission. A procedure must be in place to assess if they display competence and effective teaching skills in all relevant aspects of the curriculum that they teach, regardless of whether they are full or part time, residents, interns or other postgraduate students, adjuncts or off-campus contracted teachers.</p>	x		
<p>Standard 9.3: Staff must be given opportunities to develop and extend their teaching and assessment knowledge and must be encouraged to improve their skills. Opportunities for didactic and pedagogic training and specialisation must be available. The VEE must clearly define systems of reward for teaching excellence in operation. Academic positions must offer the security and benefits necessary to maintain stability, continuity, and competence of the academic staff. Academic staff must have a balanced workload of teaching, research and service depending on their role. They must have reasonable opportunities and resources for participation in scholarly activities.</p>	x		
<p>Standard 9.4: The VEE must provide evidence that it utilises a well-defined, comprehensive and publicised programme for the professional growth and development of academic and support staff, including formal appraisal and informal mentoring procedures. Staff must have the opportunity to contribute to the VEE's direction and decision-making processes. Promotion criteria for academic and support staff must be clear and explicit. Promotions for teaching staff must recognise excellence in, and (if permitted by the national or university law) place equal emphasis on all aspects of teaching (including clinical teaching), research, service and other scholarly activities.</p>	x		
<p>Standard 9.5: A system for assessment of teaching staff must be in operation and must include student participation. Results must be available to those undertaking external reviews and commented upon in reports.</p>	x		
<p>Area 10. Research programmes, continuing and postgraduate education</p>	C	PC	NC
<p>Standard 10.1: The VEE must demonstrate significant and broad research activities of staff that integrate with and strengthen the veterinary degree programme through research-based teaching.</p>	x		
<p>Standard 10.2: All students must be trained in scientific method and research techniques relevant to evidence-based veterinary medicine and must have opportunities to participate in research programmes.</p>	x		
<p>Standard 10.3: The VEE must provide advanced postgraduate degree programmes, e.g. PhD, internships, residencies and continuing education programmes that complement and strengthen the veterinary degree programme and are relevant to the needs of the profession and society.</p>	x		
<p>Standard 10.4: The VEE must have a system of QA to evaluate how research activities provide opportunities for student training and staff promotion, and how research approaches, methods and results are integrated into the veterinary teaching programmes.</p>	x		
<p>C: (total or substantial) compliance; PC: partial compliance (Minor Deficiency); NC: non-compliance (Major Deficiency)</p>			

Executive Summary

The first two-year course in veterinary medicine was established in Bari in 1943. The teaching was suspended for several years but the Degree Course in Veterinary Medicine (DCVM) at the University of Bari, Aldo Moro (UniBA) was established by ministerial decree in the Academic Year (AY) 1971-72.

The DiMeV (Dipartimento di Medicina Veterinaria = VEE) is located in a 12-ha area in the municipality of Valenzano, about 12 km from Bari city centre and consists of 6 educational and research buildings, plus the Veterinary Teaching Hospital (VTH).

The VEE is one of 19 departments that constitute the University of Bari, 3 of them located in the Valenzano campus.

The VEE autonomously organises and oversees educational activities.

The VEE serves as the basic unit of the UniBA, fostering and coordinating research activities, while each individual staff member has the right to pursue funding for research directly, at local, national and international levels.

In 2004, the VEE was awarded Full Approval by EAEVE. The VEE was periodically evaluated by EAEVE in January 2014 with Conditional Approval due to one major deficiency (Lack of strategic objectives). The major deficiency was fully corrected by the VEE and therefore ECOVE issued Full Approval in 2016. The current strategic plan is in full accordance with the UniBA strategic plan.

In 2018, the VEE had a compulsory visitation from the Italian agency ANVUR (National Agency for the Evaluation of the University and Research system) leading to a positive outcome. ANVUR is formally accredited as an ENQA member and its accreditation process follows the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG 2015).

In 2022 the VEE received the recognition of Department of Excellence, making it the only department at the UniBA and one of the five Italian VEEs in the 2018-22 selection promoted by the Italian Ministry of Universities (MUR). This recognition was followed by further financial resources from MUR.

The SER was provided on time and written in agreement with the SOP 2019 as amended in September 2021. Replies to the pre-Visitation questions from the experts were provided before the start of the Visitation. Ambiguities, contradictions and errors in the SER identified by the experts were communicated to the VEE which circulated updated elements of the SER to the team before the end of the visit.

The Visitation was well organised and the Liaison Officer and her team did a great job to adapt the schedule of the Visitation, to search for the requested information, to organise the relevant meetings, and to ensure the wellbeing, health and safety of the Visitors.

Areas worthy of praise (i.e. Commendations):

Standard 1.5.

- It is commendable that the VEE is involved deeply and in many ways in the scientific, cultural, economic and social life of the local and regional community.

Standard 1.6.

- It is commendable that the results of student satisfaction surveys carried out by the UniBA regarding the veterinary study course are above 90%.

Standard 2.1.

- The VEE is commended for the financial balance and the management of financial resources.
- The significant increase in the research grants and the reward as Department of

EAEexcellence received from the MUR is commendable.

Standard 3.1.1.

- It is commendable that the ESEVT day-one competences are listed in each programme of the teaching unit.

Standard 3.1.3.

- It is commendable that, during the COVID-19 period, the VEE arranged students' rotations in emergency services in private clinics.

Standard 3.1.4.

- It is commendable that there is a summary of the knowledge and skills (Day One Competences) described in the Study Plan for each discipline.
- It is commendable that following wishes expressed by students the revised curriculum includes an increased clinical teaching component, aimed at enhancing students' clinical and procedural skills.

Standard 4.4.

- It is commendable that specialised academic staff can also be consulted during night-time and on weekends.

Standard 5.1.

- It is commendable that the students, during the visits to the farms, come into contact with a large number of clinical activities and livestock management and are motivated to engage in these activities.

Standard 7.4.

- It is commendable that the UniBA provides support to any special-needs students to be able to follow their studies until the acquisition of the degree.

Standard 7.7.

- The VEEs focus on all aspects of student support is commendable.

Standard 9.2.

- It is commendable that the VEE has taken a thorough and systematic approach to staff assessment and management, ensuring that the staff composition aligns with the institution's educational mission and needs.

Areas of concern (i.e. Minor Deficiencies):

- Partial compliance with Standard 5.1 because the number of companion animal patients seen intramurally (#8) is suboptimal in relation to the number of students enrolled.
- Partial compliance with Standard 5.1 because the number of ruminant and pig necropsies (#18) is suboptimal in relation to the number of students enrolled.

Items of non-compliance with the ESEVT Standards:

None.

Glossary

ANVUR – Agenzia Nazionale di Valutazione del sistema Universitario e della Ricerca
AY - Academic Year
CESA - Animal Ethics Committee
CISIA - Inter University Consortium for Integrated Access Systems
CRR - Cyclic Review Report
CT – Computer Tomography
CUN - National University Council
DCC – Degree Course Council
DCVM - Degree Course in Veterinary Medicine
DiMeV - Dipartimento di Medicina Veterinaria (=VEE)
EPT – Extramural Practical Training
Esse3 - online exam registration system
FNOVI - National Federation of Veterinary Professional Associations
GIUNTA - DiMeV Administrative Board
ICU – Intensive Care Unit
IPT – Intramural Practical Training
MC – Mobile Clinic
MUR - Ministry of Universities and Research
NSQ - National Scientific Qualification
OU - Operative Units
PACS - Picture Archiving and Communication System
PDCA – Plan-Do-Check-Act
PDP - Professionalizing Didactic Paths
PLF - Precision Livestock Farming
PPT - Professional Practical Training
PRODID - PROfessionalità Docente e Innovazione Didattica
QA – Quality Assurance
REC - Research Evaluation Committee
RG – Review Group
RTDBA - Fixed-term (temporary) Researcher Type A
RTDBB - Fixed-term (temporary) Researcher Type B
SiBA - Sistema Bibliotecario di Ateneo
SMA - Annual Monitoring Report
SMARTVET - A cloud-based software
SSD - Scientific Disciplinary Sectors
SUA - CdS - Teaching Course Unique Annual Report
TB - Teaching Bylaws (Regolamento didattico)
TM - Third Mission (Public Engagement)
TOLC VET – admission tests
TSJC - Teacher Student Joint Commission
UCOT - University Committee for Orientation and Tutoring
UniBA - University of Bari Aldo Moro
VLC - Veterinary Library Committee
VML - Veterinary Medicine Library
VTH - Veterinary Teaching Hospital
VQR - Research Quality Evaluation

Decision of ECOVE

The Committee concluded that no Major Deficiencies had been identified.

The Veterinary Education Establishment (VEE) of the University of Bari Aldo Moro is therefore classified as holding the status of: **ACCREDITATION**.