



# Self-Assessment Report

by the European Association of Establishments for Veterinary  
Education (EAEVE)  
for the External Review against the Standards and Guidelines  
for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area  
(ESG)



May 2022

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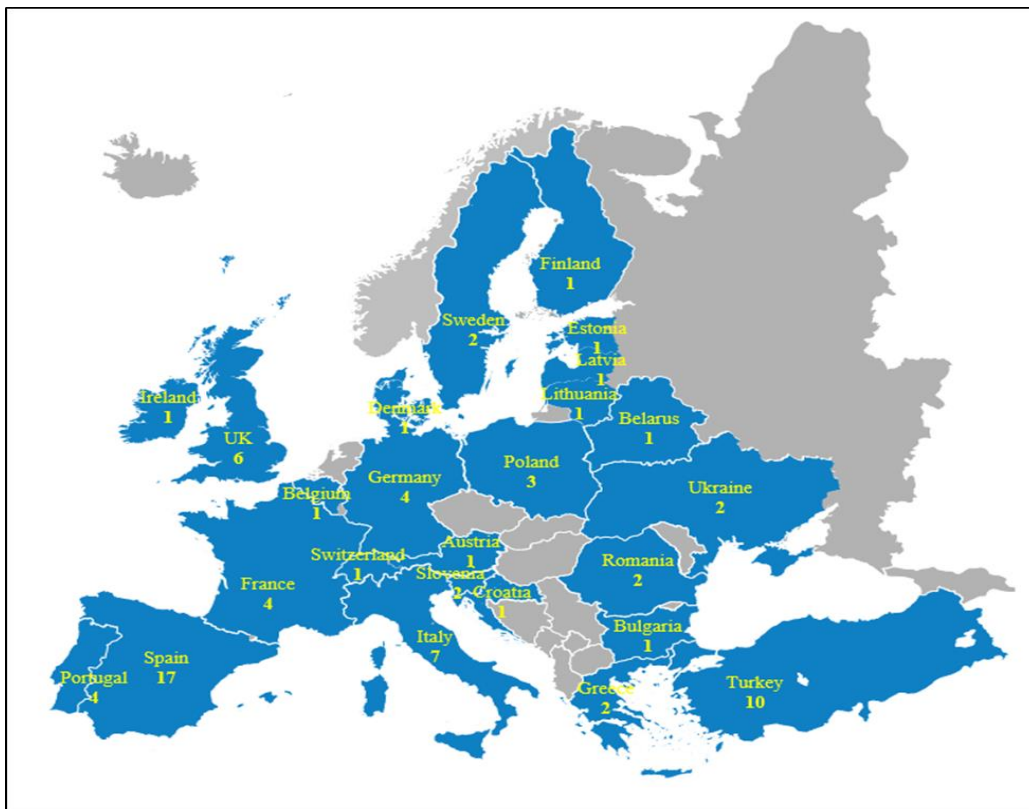
*Front page photo courtesy of the VEE of the Vetmeduni Vienna (VetSim\_Foto\_Stephanie Scholz)*

# 1. Introduction

ENQA is the primary provider of external reviews of Quality Assurance (QA) agencies in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). In addition to the major goals of continuation as a member of ENQA and registration with EQAR, the ENQA review will be utilised by EAEVE to formally demonstrate its compliance with the ESG as EAEVE continues the expansion of its work and influence outside the EHEA. This latter expansion is increasingly fuelled by the wish of national Veterinary Education Establishments (VEEs) in non-EU countries to align themselves with European practises in quality assurance, and as such, a successful ENQA review will stimulate trust in European led quality assurance in higher education at an international level.

EAEVE was founded in 1988 and initially based in Paris, France but since 2007 based in Vienna, Austria. Operating as a non-profit organisation, and also operating closely with its major stakeholder (The Federation of Veterinarians of Europe (FVE) [LINK](#)), EAEVE has evolved into the only transnational accrediting agency for tertiary veterinary education within Europe. Membership of EAEVE is voluntary and now extends to more than 100 VEEs from over 30 countries, including 80 from 24 EU member countries. As far as geographical Europe (including Turkey) is concerned the following map demonstrates the breadth and wide distribution of VEEs which have gone through an ESEVT (European System of Evaluation of Veterinary Training) accreditation visitation during the last 4 years:

**Map 1: Visitations (Full Visitations, Re-Visitations and Consultative Visitations) undertaken since 2017 in geographical Europe (including Turkey)**



In addition to its European base, and as already mentioned above, EAEVE has embarked on a significant and expanding role in the accreditation of VEEs well beyond Europe. This is covered in more detail under 4.5 International Activities. It is perhaps of relevance here to note that in a recent analysis by ENQA of 17 QA agencies from 11

countries that had undergone an ENQA review in 2020/2021, 13 of these agencies mentioned in their SAR “the aspiration and/or the need to further diversify their activities”.

A close look at articles concerning EAEVE, which are freely available and published after the ENQA review in 2017, reveals what a significant and increasing role EAEVE has been playing in the field of veterinary training both in Europe and worldwide. Evidence for this statement and brief quotes from some of the articles is given later in this SAR under 4.5 International Activities and in Annex 11.

Such varied articles are really only the ‘keyholes’ through which we get a glimpse on the impact of EAEVE; and although this analysis of the coverage of related articles and the issues in which EAEVE has been active is far from being complete, the citations still serve as a plethora of evidence reinforcing the impression that EAEVE has an increasing impact on the quality of veterinary training, and consequently on the veterinary profession itself.

The context in which EAEVE is mentioned within such articles outlines its profile and also indicates the breadth and depth of its activities, **but most importantly, emphasises the absolute need for EAEVE to be a member of ENQA and listed in EQAR.**

To deliver its accreditation process, EAEVE manages the European System of Evaluation of Veterinary Training (ESEVT), a profession-specific accreditation system which evaluates, promotes, and further develops the quality and standard of VEEs and their teaching. There are two main objectives of the ESEVT process. Firstly, to formally demonstrate the compliance of the VEE with the ESG. Secondly, to formally monitor whether the minimum standards set down in the study programme for veterinarians in the EU Directive 2013/55/EU ([LINK](#)) have been met. The regulation of these latter Directives allows for the mutual recognition of qualification of graduates in health degrees, including veterinarians, within the EU.

One of the goals at EAEVE, due to the professionalism and excellence of its activities, is to be an agile and efficient agency, indispensable to the QA led accreditation of modern VEEs. By coordinating with this QA added approach, EAEVE strives to be the essential reference for all higher level institutes that have educational responsibilities for the training of veterinarians.

EAEVE was aware that the recommendations made in 2018 by the previous ENQA review were designed to help continue the way to improvement, and the resultant internally led analysis was further stimulated by the ENQA Progress and Follow up visitations in 2020. As such, this SAR identifies actions taken since these previous ENQA reviews, including how EAEVE has addressed the recommendations as set out by ENQA. These actions are detailed later in Section 8.

With transparency, independence of judgement and commitment towards accountability, we sustain reflection, ongoing enhancement and creativity, and EAEVE looks forward to welcoming the ENQA External Review Panel in September 2022 and ultimately to receiving the Review Report.

## 2. Development of the self-assessment report (SAR)

In order for EAEVE to reapply for ENQA membership and for renewal of registration in EQAR, and after extensive involvement of relevant stakeholders, this current SAR has been produced to analyse all activities of EAEVE that fall within the ESG. The SAR sets out EAEVE's processes and procedures and provides evidence on how the organisation meets the ESG. It also summarises a long reflection process initiated in October 2021 by EAEVE appointing one of its senior Coordinators as an internal lead, to construct and "shape" the SAR, and then finally edit it after feedback from stakeholders.

It was decided early on, that this self-evaluation process should be collaborative, with contributions from members from the EAEVE Senior Management Team, particularly those whose responsibilities are linked to the ESG (i.e. the Committee on Internal Quality Assurance (CIQA) and the Executive Committee of EAEVE (ExCom)). At various stages, planned online feedback and review sessions were held to allow the team to discuss progress, especially reflecting on how the SAR met the requirements of the ESG. This submission is the output of multiple EAEVE and stakeholder contributions which was then reviewed by the internal lead.

The development of this SAR has been based on the following documentation:

- The Review Report on EAEVE issued by ENQA in 2018
- The EQAR report in June 2018 citing approval of the Application from EAEVE for inclusion on their Register
- The Follow up Report submitted by EAEVE to ENQA in April 2020
- The conclusions of the Follow up visitation panel received in October 2020
- The documentation for the Progress visit, conducted by ENQA in September 2020
- Approval of the Substantive Change Report by EQAR in March 2021 and extension of EAEVE's inclusion on their Register until April 2024
- Annual reports of EAEVE 2017–2021
- Current SWOT analysis
- Current EAEVE Strategic Plan ([LINK](#))
- EAEVE Quality Policy ([LINK](#))
- Evidence derived from the delivery of the Agency's evaluation processes 2017 to 2021 ([LINK](#))
- Fundamental documents of EAEVE: Statutes ([LINK](#)), Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) ([LINK](#)), rules of operation of committees
- Summary of EAEVE's annual activities ([LINK](#))

A truism within any external analysis of QA in higher education, is the need for accountability of these institutions towards their stakeholders. As such, and as mentioned above, EAEVE undertook an extensive distribution of the draft SAR to relevant stakeholders followed by incorporation of their feedback into the document. A table setting out the timeline for this stakeholder feedback is provided in Annex 4.

# 3. Higher education and QA of higher education in the context of the agency

For a trans-national accrediting agency such as EAEVE, it would be both difficult and time consuming to describe the complexity of the higher education systems within all the countries that the ESEVT process deals with.

However, there is common ground for the QA of the VEEs within Europe, on the one hand by the need to follow EU Directives, and, on the other hand, by the ESG itself. EAEVE has been developing an external QA system, i.e. ESEVT, the aspiration of which is to cover all the important regulations/standards of these two sources.

In the meanwhile, it is important to summarise the different approaches that countries, and VEEs within countries, utilise to deliver veterinary education.

## Regulation of Veterinary Graduates in the EU

One of the key aspects of the European Union (EU) is that individual members of certain regulated health professions in the EU can move across borders and practice their occupation or provide services abroad. These regulated professions include the Health Based Professions such as Doctors, Dentists, Pharmacists, Nurses, Midwives, and Veterinarians, and all benefit from the automatic recognition of their qualifications, on the basis of harmonised minimum training requirements. These requirements were developed over a long period and were laid down in a single legislative document, the EU Professional Qualifications Directive 2005/36/EC which was subsequently amended by Directive 2013/55/EU ([LINK](#)).

For veterinarians, the provisions within these EU Directives regulate the conditions for student admission to the VEE, the minimum duration of the training and, albeit in a relatively non-prescriptive way, elements of knowledge and skills that veterinary graduates should acquire during the course of their training.

Responsibility for compliance with both these EU Directives resides with the competent authorities of individual Member States. At the same time, national QA accrediting agencies responsible for the accreditation of VEEs, which may themselves be independent or part of a larger higher education institution, normally rely on ESG standards only. However, the automatic recognition of veterinary degrees delivered in the EU assumes that an equivalent level of training is provided throughout the EU. Crucially, ESEVT evaluations clearly show that this assumption is not congruent with reality, and that in fact, using visitations in 2020/2021 as an example, several VEEs within 24 of the 27 EU Member States have been shown to deliver substandard training programmes incompatible, in one or more crucial areas, with the EU Directives and/or ESG standards. This real-time situation emphasises the importance of EAEVE as the sole provider of accreditation for VEEs within the EU.

Details of the processes that EAEVE and its constituent committee structure utilise to deliver such accreditation decisions is discussed in much more detail later under ESG 3.1 and ESG 2, but the summary below clearly illustrates this crucial finding:

### Visitations since the last ENQA Review (September 2017 - December 2021)

Total Number of VEEs Visited: 84\*

Number of VEEs with no Major Deficiency (Major Deficiency is specified on page 25): 39

Number of VEEs with one Major Deficiency: 10

Number of VEEs with two or more Major Deficiencies: 20

Number of VEEs receiving five or more Minor Deficiencies: 2

*\*15 VEEs received a Consultative Visitation (CV) during the last four years, and now await a Full ESEVT Visitation for ECOVE to decide on their EAEVE status*

N.B. In accordance with the SOP, the ESEVT status of a VEE can be

- Accreditation (or Approval status under earlier versions of the SOP) in case of no Major Deficiencies identified by European Committee of Veterinary Education (ECOVE);
- Pending Accreditation in the case of one or several Major Deficiencies (or Conditional Accreditation status under earlier versions of the SOP, in the case of one single Major Deficiency)
- Non-Accreditation under earlier versions of the SOP in case of several Major Deficiencies.

The accreditation status is crucial for a VEE for several reasons:

1. The international labour market for fully qualified veterinarians is highly competitive, and for prospective employers the choices between fully accredited or non-accredited VEEs could be crucial.
2. Due to the current shortage of skilled veterinarians in many EU countries, there have been several VEEs within Europe establishing veterinary clinical training courses delivered in English or French. Such courses have brought in a significant funding stream to many VEEs such as Budapest, Cluj-Napoca, Zagreb, Kosice, and Brno, all of whom are currently fully accredited. Not surprisingly, these courses are competitive in attracting international applications and full accreditation is vital for such VEEs.
3. In many countries there are several VEEs, the majority of them being state funded, so a status of non-accreditation could also affect teaching and research funding derived from national sources as well as sources within their parent universities.

## Veterinary degree structures and their mutual recognition within EU Member States

European legislation for establishing an academic quality assurance and control system in higher education is usually restricted to the national level with the Bologna declaration and subsequent development of the ESG, leading to ENQA as the European membership organisation representing the wide range of QA agencies. Although the development of ENQA has created an active environment for the promotion of high-quality QA processes within higher education, these processes are **not** usually subject/profession specific.

Although, as mentioned above, mutual recognition of veterinary qualifications is automatically granted between Member States, the degree structure and variation on how graduate degrees are linked to practising veterinary science, differ substantially within European nations. It is essential that these differences are recognised, assessed and then judged by the ESEVT process for an individual VEE's compliance with a QA approach to the ESG. This ability to understand and then "judge" the different approaches to ESG compliance is vital to achieve a level of harmonisation, but also to avoid a level of uniformity amongst the 100 plus VEEs within Europe.

In general, and after successfully fulfilling at least the 5-year minimum training requirement, the graduate degree of a "veterinarian" is issued. In some Member States this basic degree is sufficient to practice. However, in an increasing number of VEEs, this five-year degree is linked with a final year thesis, which is either optional or mandatory, and which is completed before entering the practising profession. In other Member States this final year thesis requires additional studies of substantial length.

In addition to the above, there are three more important variations on how this teaching of veterinarians is delivered and which increasingly have to be taken into account by the ESEVT accreditation system:



1. A number of VEEs have introduced a system of clinical electives where individual students can “elect” to study a particular clinical field in much more depth. A number of these electives can take up several months of the curriculum, with an inbuilt danger of a critical reduction in the time available for teaching other clinical areas, leading to potential non-compliance with the EU Directives.
2. Some VEEs have an increasing reliance on non-academic staff to deliver clinical teaching outside the VEE, and the status, pedagogical training and academic supervision of such individuals can be a QA issue.
3. An increasing number of VEEs have decided not to have a Veterinary Teaching Hospital (VTH) at all, especially with newly established VEEs where the considerable cost of building and maintaining a VTH could be avoided. This system is termed a distributed model for delivery of clinical teaching and there are a variety of ways that VEEs have developed such a distributed model. Importantly, the ongoing analysis by the SOP WG of these “variety of ways” is considering QA inconsistencies.

In summary, although veterinary curricula share many similarities, there are clear differences as set out above, emphasising how a supra-national accrediting agency such as EAEVE must take account of these national variations.

In addition to this diversity of veterinary degree curricula, the competent national authorities responsible for the quality of tertiary veterinary training in their respective countries differ from state to state. Such governmental structures, of which universities are in general part of, usually oversee the delivery of the academic degrees and as such may be ministries of education, of science & research, of health, or of agriculture.

On the other hand, permission to practice the profession necessitates, in most countries, registration with and acceptance by a national professional organisation (e.g. licensing bodies, veterinary chambers). In reality, on the national level, the levels of communication, coordination and harmonisation between these two entities of competent authorities is on occasion scarce, or indeed sometimes nearly non-existent.

Traditionally, the VEEs are largely autonomous in generating and applying veterinary curricula, and although governmental authorities endorse and approve such curricula, in most member states feedback and external quality control mechanisms of such veterinary curricula (and their compatibility with both EU Directives) are infrequently applied.

***The data summarised above critically emphasise the real and increasingly important need within Europe, for EAEVE itself to be carefully and meaningfully accredited as an effective accrediting agency, and as a result, for EAEVE to be a member of ENQA and listed in EQAR.***

# 4. History, profile and activities of the agency

## 4.1. History and Profile

Veterinary Medicine was the first, and remains until today the only one of the regulated health professions within the EU where the VEEs are regularly quality assessed/evaluated for their training of veterinarians. Such a cross-national accreditation programme (ESEVT) is essential to formally monitor whether the minimum standards set down in the study programme for veterinarians in the EU Directives have been met, as the regulation of these Directives allows for the mutual recognition of qualification, and subsequent free movement of graduates in health degrees, including veterinarians, within the EU. These essential accreditation programmes are organised and delivered through EAEVE and its stakeholder partners (especially FVE representing the practising arm of the profession).

As briefly mentioned above, EAEVE was originally founded in 1988 in Paris, France, as a European Accrediting Organisation and registered under French law. Offices were first in Paris, then in Brussels and since 2007 in Vienna, Austria. The formation of this Organisation followed a 3-year cross-national peer assessment, which started in 1985 on the initiative of and financed by the EU Commission's Advisory Committee on Veterinary Training (ACVT). Consequently, ACVT installed a permanent evaluation system for European Veterinary Education Establishments recognising EAEVE as the evaluating agency. In 1993, the EU Commission withdrew its financial support and ACVT mandated EAEVE and FVE to continue managing the evaluation system independently and with its own budget.

After a lengthy discussion amongst the members of EAEVE and their constituent stakeholders, the EAEVE Member VEEs decided to maintain and develop the system by charging membership and evaluation fees. In 2000, recognising the benefits of such a Europe-wide profession-specific evaluation system, the EU-ACVT mandate formally established a Joint Education Committee (now European Committee of Veterinary Education, ECOVE) to act as an independent decision-making Evaluation/Accreditation Board within EAEVE. To deliver these accreditation decisions, ECOVE relies on a group of experts to undertake visitations in order to gather the necessary factual information. These visitations are undertaken within the framework of the ESEVT, by a team of experts who report their findings back to ECOVE for the final decision.

This EAEVE/FVE evaluation system gives assurance to

- The Public – to know they can trust the quality of graduating veterinarians and the service they deliver in relation to animal health and welfare, as well as public health
- Veterinary Students – to know their education reaches agreed and acceptable standards
- VEEs – to know that their curricula and school reach benchmarked levels.

## 4.2. Vision, Mission, Objectives

### Strategic Plan 2020-2025

Based on well-established activities since its founding, EAEVE promotes continuous development in veterinary education in Europe and elsewhere in the world. EAEVE is listed in the EQAR following the ENQA review conducted in 2017. This status also recognized EAEVE as the sole institution for the evaluation and accreditation of veterinary

training in Europe. EAEVE is a strong organisation, always striving for continuous improvement and upholding its vision and mission toward its members, the veterinary profession, veterinary students and more globally, society.

2015 was a milestone for EAEVE with the celebration of 30 years of ESEVT. A Strategic Plan (2015-2020) and SWOT analysis were developed which established a clear vision for EAEVE to become a more effective and competitive accrediting body for veterinary training. In addition, a System- Wide Analysis of the ESEVT 2011-2015 was developed in line with initial ENQA recommendations of 2013.

EAEVE understands the need to go further, to continuously seek out new challenges and to adapt to the needs of society. The current 2020-2025 Strategic Plan is based on the analysis of the achievements of the previous one and a detailed SWOT analysis of the Association in all its dimensions. It establishes the vision for the future and places a renewed focus on the clear strategic goals in relation to the mission. It was drafted by the Executive Committee (ExCom), circulated through members for review and proposals, before final submission to, and agreement from, the 2020 General Assembly of EAEVE.

## **Vision**

The EAEVE vision is that veterinary education, based on high quality standards, research and innovation, is the key component of the veterinary profession in the service of One Health and its recognition by society.

## **Mission**

The EAEVE mission is to represent and support its member establishments within Europe and globally, to drive the harmonisation of a research-based veterinary education and its constant evolution in the context of societal challenges.

## **Values**

- ***Quality assurance including consistency***  
We strongly believe in continuous improvement in all our activities based on standards and regular internal and external reviews.
- ***Highest ethical standards including integrity, equity and transparency***  
We make sure that any activities and decision-making processes rely on the highest ethical standards.
- ***Non-profit***  
We are a non-profit organisation, developing our mission with respect to being self-funded and independent.
- ***Professionalism***  
We carry out our actions always respecting the highest standards of professionalism within a modest organisational framework.

## **Strategic goals linked to EAEVE's mission**

*Representing and serving its members by including:*

- Contribution to advocacy towards national and international decision-making bodies, the public and all stakeholders about quality standards in veterinary education
- Demonstrating the necessity to build veterinary education on a solid research base
- Explaining the quality assessment system and the status of each member and publishing data about veterinary education
- Serving members by sharing data and promoting courses to improve the quality of veterinary education

*Driving harmonisation of veterinary education by:*

- Acting as chief accrediting body in the quality assurance of veterinary education including its links with professional knowledge, research and veterinary services
- Regular updating of the standards
- Supporting, upon request, all VEEs in developing and strengthening their educational programme
- Monitoring quality standards for members

*Stimulating constant improvement in the quality of veterinary education by:*

- Constant monitoring of new challenges
- Observation of innovative solutions developed by members
- Promoting the exchange of information between members
- Engaging in global networks and surveys relating to quality assurance

**The primary objective** of EAEVE is to monitor the harmonisation of the minimum standards set down in the study programme for veterinarians or veterinary surgeons (called veterinarians in this SAR) in the EU Directive 2005/36/EC as amended by Directive 2013/55/EU, as well as monitoring the levels of quality assurance within these standards in line with the ESG.

**Other objectives are:**

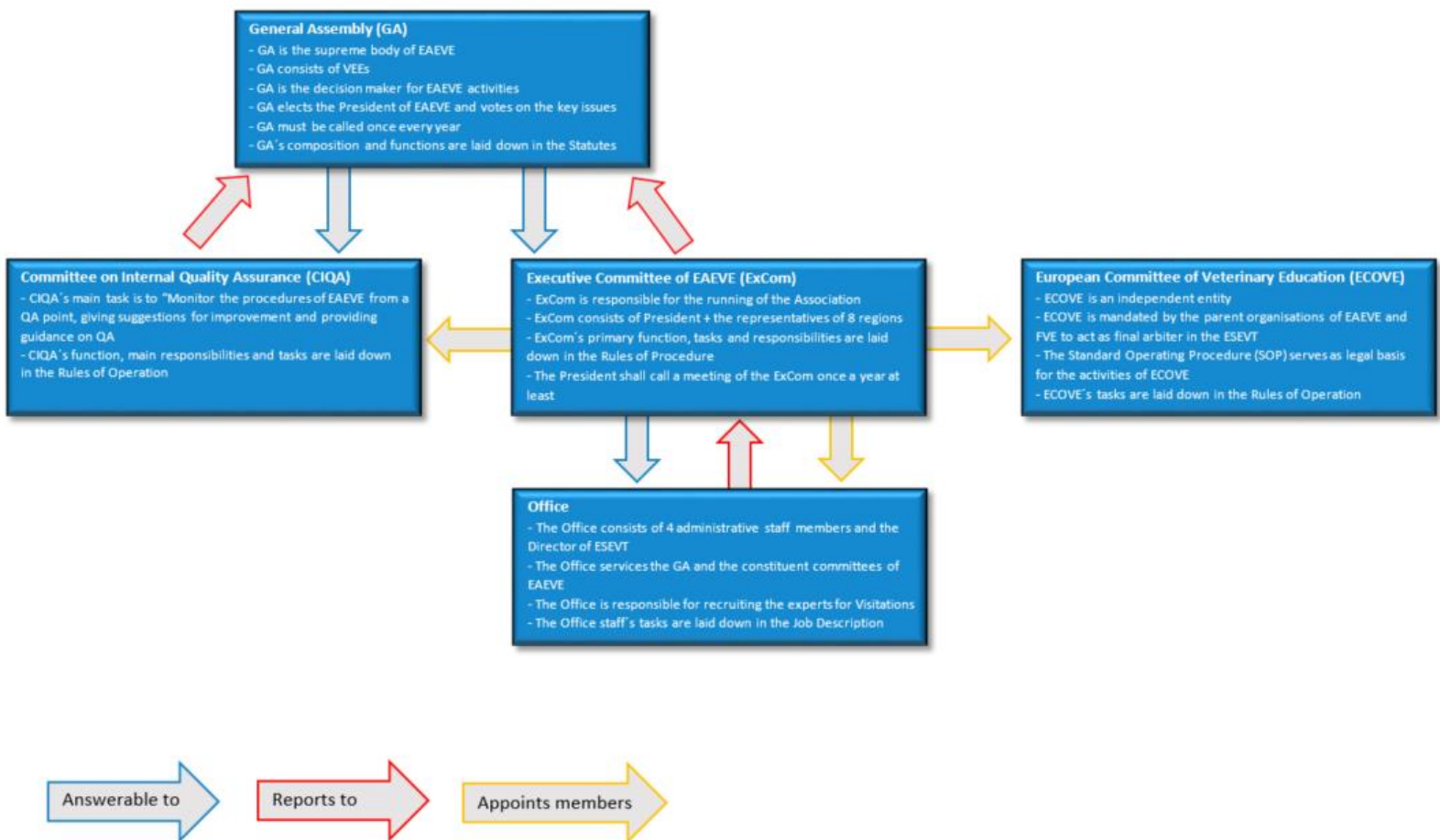
- To reinforce cooperation between member VEEs and to act as a forum for discussion in order to improve and harmonise veterinary education
- To facilitate information exchange, staff exchange, student exchange and also exchange of teaching materials between VEEs.

*To successfully deliver these objectives, EAEVE (in combination with FVE) is organised into a number of independent but interacting structures/committees. These structures/committees, charged with delivering the QA activities, are described in more detail later in ESG Standard 2.3 Implementing processes.*



*Photo courtesy of VEE of the University College Dublin*

### 4.3. Organisation and membership



#### General Assembly

The General Assembly (GA) is the overarching and ultimate decision maker for EAEVE activities consisting of a membership of over 100 stakeholders voting on the key issues.

Over the last decade the membership categories within the GA have had to change due to the increasing interest from non-EU based VEEs in the ESEVT accreditation process. More recently, and since the EQAR register of EAEVE in 2018, the categories of membership as laid out and referred to in Articles 4-8 of EAEVE's Statutes were changed and modified by the GA in 2019. The first objective of these changes was to link the member VEEs membership category to their location inside or outside of Europe; this was in consideration to the increasing number of requests to become members of EAEVE (within and outside of Europe) and thus be evaluated by ESEVT.

The second objective was to make the membership categories more consistent with the SOP 2019 and better understandable for the public. So, whereas before there were two categories of membership ("Full" and "Affiliate" members), since May 2019 there are now three categories: "Full members", "Candidate members" and "Associates". The first two categories refer to European Establishments, as defined by the Council of Europe; more specifically:

"FULL MEMBERS" are the European (European member states, as defined by the Council of Europe or Establishments enjoying full membership as of May 2018) Establishments for Higher Education in Veterinary Sciences, who "have completed a Full Visitation by the ESEVT" and have been approved/accredited or conditionally (pending) approved/accredited, non-approved/non-accredited by the EAEVE/ESEVT process.

"CANDIDATE MEMBERS" are the European (European member states, as defined by the Council of Europe or Establishments enjoying full membership as of May 2018) Establishments for Higher Education in Veterinary Sciences, who "have applied for Candidate membership through ExCom after completing an ESEVT Preliminary Visitation and have been admitted by the Executive Committee", or "have been reclassified to Candidate membership by the EAEVE General Assembly following Article 7".

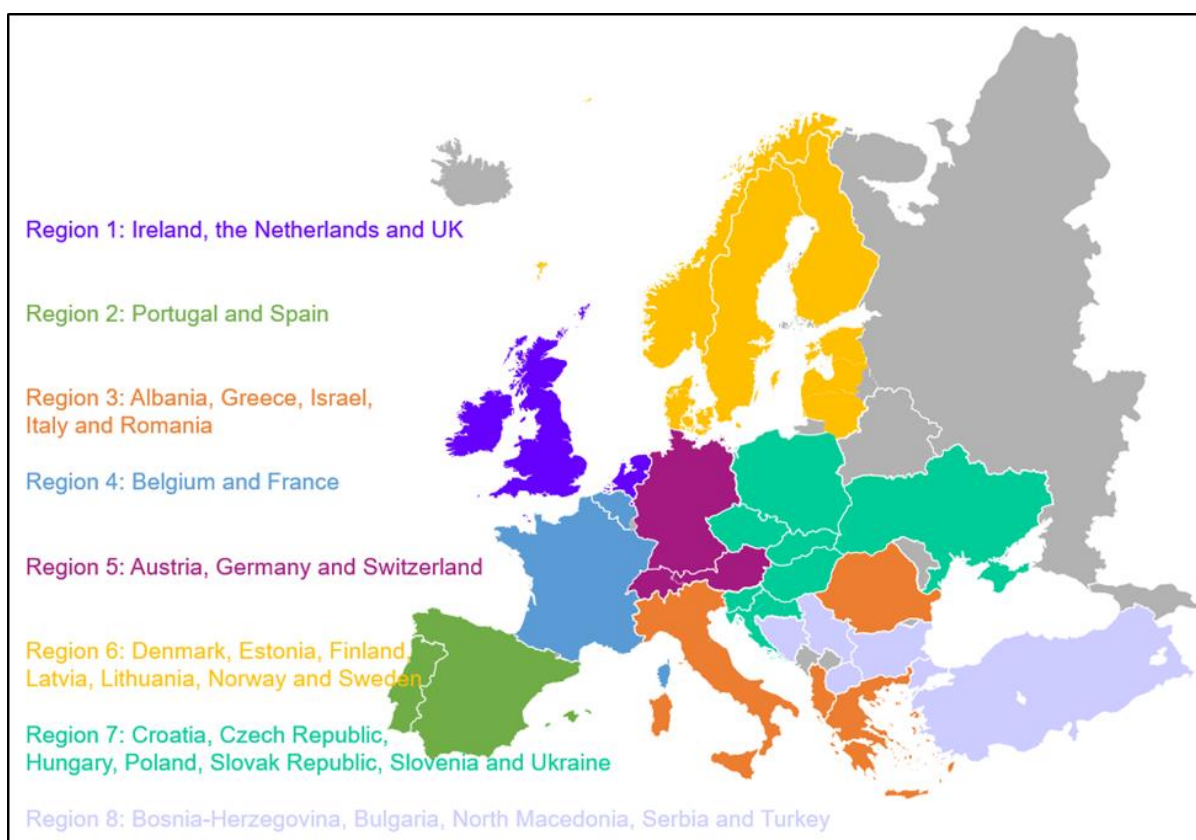
"ASSOCIATES" are non-European Establishments, as defined by the Council of Europe, for Higher Education in Veterinary Sciences who have applied for Associate membership through the Executive Committee after completing an ESEVT Preliminary Visitation and have been admitted by the ExCom.

Further information is found within articles 4 to 8 of EAEVE's Statutes 2021 ([LINK](#)).

## ExCom

The Executive Committee of EAEVE (ExCom) is responsible to the GA for the running of the Association, and is composed of a President and the representatives of 8 geographical area groups within Europe, as illustrated below.

### Map 2: Regions of the EAEVE member VEEs



The primary functions of ExCom are:

- To represent all the VEEs within the 8 areas
- To keep in contact with the VEEs and inform the EAEVE Office of any significant changes
- To inform the VEEs of matters discussed in the ExCom and to collect their opinion
- To be answerable to the GA for the running of the Association.

The particular responsibilities of ExCom are:

- To draft the Strategic Plan and, upon endorsement by the GA, implement its actions
- To monitor the Budget and propose the annual Merged Membership and Evaluation fee
- To implement the decisions of the GA
- To nominate the EAEVE members of ECOVE, CIQA and any Working Group
- To maintain and publish the evaluation status of member VEEs.

## Office

The EAEVE Office prides itself as a deliberately small but efficient office at the centre of all the activities of EAEVE. The Office consists of 4 administrative staff members (2.3 FTE, and 1 staff member currently on maternity leave), the Director of ESEVT (acting as the chief Coordinator). There are further 4 ESEVT Coordinators assisted by the Office. The Office not only services the GA and the constituent committees of EAEVE but is also responsible for recruiting the experts for visitation teams, including working with the International Veterinary Student Association (IVSA) for the appointment of student members on the visitation teams.

## ECOVE

The European Committee of Veterinary Education (ECOVE) is an independent entity which has been mandated by the parent organisations of EAEVE and FVE to act as final arbiter in the ESEVT. As laid down in the ECOVE Rules of Operation ([LINK](#)), ECOVE consists of 7 full members; all have to have been expert members of at least 2 on-site visitations of veterinary teaching establishments, by the ESEVT, within the past 5 years before taking office. 4 members will be appointed by the ExCom; 3 members will be appointed by the Board of the FVE. While serving on the Committee, members shall not act as team members in any full Visitation, Re-visitations or Consultative Visitations. EAEVE and FVE shall nominate one alternate member each, who will be called upon in case of conflict of interest of a full member. The staff of the EAEVE Office also act as Secretary of ECOVE. The principles and processes of Evaluation and Accreditation are legally delivered through the Manual of Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) ([LINK](#)) and serve as legal basis for the activities of ECOVE and the primary tasks are:

- To approve the Visitation Programmes to VEEs for Evaluation and/or for Accreditation
- To approve the selection of Expert Members and their respective roles in the Visiting Teams
- To undertake the final consideration of the Visitation Report, giving full justice to the suggestions made by the Visiting Team, and based thereupon, to decide whether “Accreditation” “Conditional Accreditation” or “Non-Accreditation” (or “Approval”, “Conditional Approval”, “Non-Approval” status during the transition period between different SOPs) should be assigned, or any other approval status, as defined in the EAEVE Statutes and the ESEVT SOP.

## CIQA

For an accreditation agency, achieving the goals of internal quality assurance is a precondition of trustworthy, reliable and transparent evaluation. As a result, a Committee on Internal Quality Assurance (CIQA) was established by EAEVE in 2009.

The main task of CIQA is to “Monitor the procedures of EAEVE from a QA point, giving suggestions for improvement and providing guidance on QA”.

To deliver this task, CIQA’s main responsibility is to direct the development, implementation, revision and improvement of quality assurance issues in ESEVT by means of:

- Looking for an equal application of the ESEVT system to all the members without any type of discrimination and to check potential conflicts of interest
- Verifying if the application of no-conflict of interest mechanism is in accordance with Annex 15 of the SOP for ESEVT Experts and with the ECOVE Rules of Operation ([LINK](#)) for ECOVE members

- Verifying if the composition of the Visitation Teams is in accordance with Chapter 2, point 1.2. of the SOP
- Reviewing effective management of and the reaction/action to the Post Visitation Questionnaires
- Performing a critical review on the development, results and persons involved in all steps of the annual evaluation processes, including the final decisions taken by ECOVE. This review includes as a minimum an evaluation of the procedures followed during the on-site Visitations, the composition and quality of the Final Visitation Reports and the QA feedback from VEEs and Team Members
- Informing the ExCom, the Director of ESEVT and the EAEVE President about the outcomes of the meetings
- Reviewing effective management of the ESEVT-related tasks carried out by the Office by checking that the procedures outlined in the ESEVT SOP are adhered to
- Presenting to the EAEVE GA an annual report on the fulfilment of the policies and objectives of internal quality assessment and management and on the proposals and measures taken for improvement.

## 4.4. Activities of EAEVE

### ESEVT

The European System of Evaluation of Veterinary Training (ESEVT) was conceived in 1985 as a peer assessment programme for Veterinary Schools (now called VEEs) and was originally started and financed by the EC on the recommendation of the ACVT. A Pilot Study was initiated using visits to 11 well established European VEEs as reference examples.

Following on from these successful pilot visitations the ACVT decided to recommend that a permanent system be set up. This was done with the development of a detailed document on SOP. However, in 1994 the EC, due to budgetary constraints, asked EAEVE to set up and run the system on a self-financing basis. Over the subsequent 26 years there have been over 300 accreditation visitations to VEEs within more than 40 countries; all these visitations utilising several iterations of the SOP which included some major changes. These necessary changes to the “working SOP” has led to the more recent development (in 2019) of the establishment of an SOP Working Group (SOP WG) under the chairmanship of the Director of ESEVT. This SOP WG has the major duty of continuously enhancing the SOP evaluation system and its implementation, by taking into consideration the suggestions for improvement made by EAEVE members.

The activities of EAEVE are focussed primarily but not solely on the accreditation process for VEEs within the membership of EAEVE. However, in addition to the accreditation process, EAEVE organises a series of Educational Days during the annual GA, regular instructive meetings with stakeholders and collaborative meetings with other veterinary related accrediting agencies.

The ESEVT evaluation process is a fully transparent international accreditation procedure. Periodic evaluation is compulsory for EAEVE members, currently every 7 years. Four types of evaluation are organised:

1. Preliminary Visitation (PV)
2. Full Visitation (FV)
3. Re-visitiation (RV)
4. Interim Report (IR)

A more detailed explanation of these four visitations is covered later in *ESG Standard 3.1 (Activities, policy and processes for quality assurance)* as well as in *ESG Standard 2.3 (Implementing processes)*. However, the Preliminary Visitation is introduced here in some detail due to the influence and advice from ENQA and EQAR.



## Preliminary Visitation

During the two online follow up visitations to EAEVE by ENQA in 2020 it became apparent that changes in regulations initiated by EQAR ([LINK](#)) would have made the Consultative Visitations (CV) as then offered and delivered by EAEVE, problematic. The major reason for this was that EAEVE had traditionally treated these consultative reports as completely confidential between the VEE and the expert visitation members and thus lacked any measure of transparency either within or outside EAEVE.

To rectify this situation, the newly established SOP Working Group developed a solution involving the establishment of a Preliminary Visitation (PV) integrated with a Full Visitation (FV), which after appraisal by ExCom and the GA was formally adopted. This solution of a PV followed by a FV has not altered the “ethos” which was always behind a CV to a VEE wishing to join EAEVE, and which was designed to introduce the concept behind the ESG-based accreditation system.

The PV is now a prerequisite for granting membership in EAEVE, as stated in the EAEVE Statutes. The PV Report is much shorter than a FV Report but is integrated with a Full Visitation which must be completed within a 3-year period after the completion of the PV for all candidate VEEs seeking membership of EAEVE.

Although a secondary objective of a PV is to contribute to improving the quality of education provided by the VEE, the primary objective of a PV is to:

- Evaluate if the VEE is fully aware of the ESG-based ESEVT SOP in general and the accreditation Standards in particular
- Check whether there is an ongoing process in place to achieve compliance with these Standards
- Ensure that the VEE is sufficiently informed, prepared and equipped for undergoing an FV within the 3-year period
- Highlight the areas of concern about the compliance of the VEE with the ESEVT Standards

To ensure a level of continuity between a PV and FV the Visitation Team is composed of one Visitor with a high expertise level and one ESEVT Coordinator, both of whom will also be part of the Visitation Team for the FV, which as mentioned above, should follow the PV within a 3-year period.

The detailed instructions and template for the writing of a Preliminary Self Evaluation Report (PSER) by the VEE is set out in the revised SOP (Annex 13 in the SOP). Likewise, the instructions for the PV visitation programme and the instructions and template for the writing of the PV Report itself, are also set out in the revised SOP.

The crucial difference between the old CV and the current PV is that after factual corrections the EAEVE Office presents the Draft Report to the next ECOVE meeting for analysis by ECOVE. Any amendment of the Draft Report as decided on by ECOVE must be explained within the amended report itself. In addition, and in exceptional cases, ECOVE may decide that an FV cannot be requested by the VEE, because the PV Report clearly demonstrates the impossibility of the VEE to be ready for an FV within the 3-year period. In this latter situation, the VEE may re-apply for a further PV three years after the first one at the earliest.

With the support of the EAEVE Office and the ESEVT Coordinator, the Final PV Report is formally issued by ECOVE. It is communicated to the VEE’s Head and to the Visitation Team prior to its mandatory publication on the websites of EAEVE, the VEE and automatically on DEQAR (Database of the European Quality Assurance Register).

## Full Visitation

A more detailed explanation of a Full Visitation (FV) is covered later in ESG Standard 3.1. However, in summary, the FV to a VEE requesting an initial and full membership of EAEVE is preceded by and integrated with a PV. If a successful full membership to EAEVE is granted, a VEE must subsequently request a subsequent FV every 7 years.

To ensure a level of continuity between a PV and FV the Full Visitation Team is composed of the original ESEVT Coordinator and the experienced expert from the PV together with six additional team members, including the student member. In subsequent FV's a completely new Visitation Team is appointed. The membership of a FV team consists of:

- An ESEVT Coordinator
- An expert in Basic Sciences
- An expert in Companion Animals (including equines)
- An expert in Food Producing Animals
- An expert in Food Safety and Public Health
- An expert in QA
- A Veterinary Practitioner
- Student (undergraduate or postgraduate)

### **Re-visitation**

A more detailed explanation of a Re-Visitation (RV) is covered later in ESG Standard 3.1. However, in summary, if a VEE has received one or more Major Deficiencies as a result of a FV it has up to one year to rectify any deficiency. If a VEE considers that it has rectified such deficiencies within the 12-month period, it can apply through the EAEVE Office to ECOVE for a RV. If ECOVE grants permission for the RV, it is then organised through the EAEVE Office.

### **Interim Report**

A more detailed explanation of the Interim Report is covered later in ESG Standard 3.1. However, three and a half years after a successful FV, all VEEs that are members of EAEVE must send a concise Interim Report to the EAEVE Office. This report must be completed in agreement with the templates and guidelines provided in the current SOP.

After being reviewed by an ESEVT Coordinator designated by ECOVE, the Interim Report is sent by the EAEVE Office to ECOVE for consideration during their next meeting.

The Interim Report must be published on the website of the VEE.

### **Joint Visitations**

Over the last decade EAEVE has undertaken several joint visitations with other accrediting agencies, primarily with the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA). Currently, together with other veterinary accreditation bodies of the IAWG, EAEVE is working on the Joint Visitations' procedure, but there are no Joint Visitations planned by any of our member VEEs in the near future (as ENQA recently enquired).

## **4.5. International Activities**

Although from its inception EAEVE was firmly based on the VEEs within the EU, it was agreed at an early stage by ExCom and the GA to welcome members from Turkish VEEs and to initiate a series of accreditation visitations within Turkey. Such visitations are extensive and ongoing, and indeed, representatives from Turkey now play an important and active role within EAEVE.

In addition, following the collapse of the Soviet Union, EAEVE swiftly moved to encourage both membership **from** and ESEVT visitations **to** potential new EU members such as Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania, Slovenia, Croatia and Bulgaria.

2018 was a year of international expansion for EAEVE with the completion of seven Consultative Visitations to several Establishments in Russia, Tunisia and Ukraine, thereby enabling the admission of six new Candidate and one Affiliate member into the Association. This was in addition to two successful FVs to Japanese VEEs.

Much of this expansion has occurred following a number of senior members from EAEVE delivering seminars, either privately to individual VEEs from nations well outside Europe, or to groups of VEEs from within such nations. These seminars, setting out the ESEVT accreditation process based on the European based ESG, have elicited an increasing level of interest internationally which has resulted in an exponential growth in visitations, both at the consultancy level as well as full accreditation visits. These visitations have been to VEEs within Africa, South America, the Far East and Asia.

Table 2 in Annex 5 summarises the current situation with accreditation visitations to countries outside the EU.

A useful example to demonstrate this international activity of EAEVE can be found within Japan, details of visitations to these VEEs are given below.

## Japan

The VEEs within Asian countries are increasingly organising transnational regional groupings involving veterinary education; for example, the Asian Association of Veterinary Schools (AAVS) in which Japan plays a leading role.

Japan’s 16 veterinary schools graduate over 930 new veterinarians each year, with 11 public schools and five private schools.

An external evaluation system of veterinary education at the **national** level has been implemented by the Japan University Accreditation Association (JUAA) with the first ESEVT evaluation conducted in 2017 followed by another 4 veterinary schools evaluated in 2018. This national accreditation scheme has now been linked with international accreditation through ESEVT.



As already mentioned in the Introduction, this international expansion has greatly and publicly “exposed” EAEVE, resulting in an increase of publications where EAEVE and its activities are discussed. It is therefore of relevance to examine a few brief quotes from such articles. The coverage of related articles and the issues in which EAEVE has been active is far from being complete, but still the citations serve as evidence reinforcing the impression that EAEVE has a great impact on the quality of veterinary training and the veterinary profession, and the context in which EAEVE

is mentioned outlines its profile and also indicates the breadth and depth of its activities. The ‘mentions’ may be roughly grouped as follows:

1. EAEVE as the **accrediting body**
2. ESEVT **standards triggering change**
3. EAEVE **initiatives, projects, surveys**
4. EAEVE **workshops and educational days**
4. EAEVE’s role in **ethical issues**
5. EAEVE as **coordinator of projects or collaborator**
6. EAEVE as subject to **criticism**

All these areas and links with the publications are included in Annex 11.



*Photo courtesy of the VEE of the University of Veterinary Medicine and Pharmacy in Košice*

# 5. Profile, functioning and (EQA) activities of the agency (compliance with Part 3 of the ESG)

## 5.1 ESG Standard 3.1 Activities, policy and processes for quality assurance

### **Standard**

*Agencies should undertake external quality assurance activities as defined in Part 2 of the ESG on a regular basis. They should have clear and explicit goals and objectives that are part of their publicly available mission statement. These should translate into the daily work of the agency. Agencies should ensure the involvement of stakeholders in their governance and work.*

*As endorsed within the Strategic Plan 2020-2025, “The EAEVE mission is to represent and support its member establishments within Europe and globally, to drive the harmonization of a research-based veterinary education and its constant evolution in the context of societal challenges”.*

This mission is designed to promote and develop a culture of quality within the VEEs in Europe; and these latter academic institutions depend on the ESEVT evaluation process to ensure that they possess, both nationally and internationally, quality criteria firmly based on ESG and the Bologna Process.

Strategically, this mission is delivered within EAEVE by an integrated committee structure linked to a visitation programme. Three key documents explain the QA framework and principles adopted by EAEVE to deliver the accreditation programme:

- EAEVE Statutes
- The current Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)
- The Strategic Plan 2020 to 2025

The above documents are published on the Agency’s website ([www.eaeve.org](http://www.eaeve.org)) which ensures transparency and universal access.

### **Current SOP**

Basically, this current document sets out the SOP of the ESEVT, which is managed by EAEVE in association with the FVE. The current SOP was approved by the EAEVE General Assembly in May 2019 and by the FVE Board in April 2019. The link to the ESEVT SOP is provided in Annex 1.

Since this joint agreement, there have been relatively minor changes in December 2020 and September 2021. These transitional changes are described in Annex 17 of the SOP and were due to VEEs having utilised previous SOPs for their reviews.

As mentioned earlier, the further development of the SOP is now the responsibility of the SOP WG which has student representation as well as FVE and EAEVE members.

The ESEVT evaluation process is a fully transparent accreditation procedure for all EAEVE members as defined by the EAEVE Statutes. As stated in the EAEVE Statutes, full membership of EAEVE is based on a compulsory system of Visitations (currently every 7 years) together with periodic Interim Reports provided by the VEE.

To be accredited by the ESEVT process, a VEE, and each study programme it provides which lead to the degree of veterinarian, must be compliant with the EU Directives on the recognition of professional qualifications as well as the ESG. Therefore, to achieve this dual recognition, they must meet all the Standards set out in Chapter 3 of the SOP. If a VEE offers more than one study programme to become a veterinarian, e.g. in different languages or in collaboration with other VEEs, all study programmes must be evaluated.

If a VEE delegates a significant part of the curriculum (except External Practical Training) to a different legal entity, e.g. another higher education institution or a corporate, it must provide, as an annex of their Self Evaluation Report (SER), a written contract describing how the VEE can exercise a real control over the quality of the training delivered. These additional entities must be visited and evaluated.

As briefly introduced in Chapter 4.4, to deliver this accreditation process, four types of evaluation are organised through ESEVT:

1. Preliminary Visitation
2. Full Visitation
3. Re-visitation
4. Interim Report

### **Preliminary Visitation**

The necessary replacement of the previous “Consultative Visitation” to the current Preliminary Visitation was previously and extensively explained in Chapter 4.4

### **Full Visitation**

A full Visitation may not be completed before the graduation of the first cohort of veterinary students from the VEE and the visitation must be carried out during a period of full academic activity, i.e. when most staff and students are present on site, and should be completed not later than 2 months before the ECOVE meeting preceding the end of granted status of the VEE.

As previously mentioned in Chapter 4.4 the Visitation Team is composed of 8 Experts:

- An expert in Basic Sciences
- An expert in Clinical Sciences in companion animals (including equine and exotic pets)
- An expert in Clinical Sciences in food-producing animals (including Animal Production and Herd Health Management)
- A practitioner (proposed by FVE)
- An expert in Food Safety and Quality (including Veterinary Public Health)
- An expert in Quality Assurance
- A student/recent graduate (a minimum of 2 years before graduation as veterinarian or a maximum of 1 year after graduation at the time of the Visitation) proposed by an association of veterinary students and being from a VEE which is a full member of EAEVE with the Accreditation status
- An ESEVT Coordinator.

If a VEE offers more than one study programme to become a veterinarian, or delegates a significant part of the curriculum (except External Practical Training) to a different legal entity, one additional Visitor may be appointed by ECOVE. One of the Experts is designated by ECOVE as Chairperson on the basis of his/her experience as an ESEVT

Visitor and proven leadership qualities. All academic Experts must be associated with a VEE with ESEVT Accreditation or Pending Accreditation status.

In addition, all Experts (regardless of the type of Visitation) must:

- Have successfully completed the E-learning course for ESEVT Experts
- Be fluent in English, both speaking and writing
- Have been granted their university degree and work in a country other than the visited one
- Sign a declaration confirming that they have no conflict of interest with the visited VEE and a commitment to strictly follow the ESEVT SOP and the EAEVE Code of Conduct.

If the visited VEE considers that there is a conflict of interest with any of the selected Experts, it may inform ECOVE through the EAEVE Office 2 weeks after receiving the Visitation team list at the latest. If the conflict of interest is justified by the VEE, ECOVE decides to replace this Visitor.

Upon an official request from the visited VEE, ECOVE may accept an observer from another official body, in addition to the ESEVT Experts. The visited VEE is strongly encouraged to consider inviting to the Visitation an observer from the relevant national accrediting agency. Examples of national accrediting agencies joining Visitations are shown on page 38.

In addition, ECOVE may accept to share Visitors with other veterinary accreditation bodies in case of joint Visitations within the International Accreditors Working Group (IAWG).

However, the Visitation programme must be fully compliant with the ESEVT SOP, e.g. specific ESEVT Visitation team, Self Evaluation Report (SER), Visitation Report, Exit Presentation.

As set out above, the main duty of the Visitation team is to establish if the veterinary degree granted by the visited VEE is compliant with the ESEVT Standards. More specifically, the duties of **each** Visitor are:

- Before the Visitation, to read the SER, to write the draft report for their respective chapters and to send it together with a list of questions and issues to be clarified to the ESEVT Coordinator before the Visitation
- During the Visitation, to check the accuracy of the information provided in the SER, to visit the facilities, to consult the databases, to meet students, staff, representatives of the national veterinary associations and other stakeholders, to request any missing information and to finalise the writing of the draft Visitation Report for their respective chapters in collaboration with the other members of the team
- Immediately after the Visitation, to send their comments on the final draft of the Visitation Report to the ESEVT Coordinator and the post-Visitation questionnaire/feedback to the EAEVE Office.

The main duties of the ESEVT Chairperson are to:

- Chair all the meetings during the Visitation
- Make decisions (after consulting the Visitation Team) when an unexpected problem occurs during the Visitation
- To be subsequently available to ECOVE to discuss the Visitation Report and answer any questions that may arise.

The main duties of the ESEVT Coordinator are to:

- Coordinate the preparation, completion and outcome of the Visitation process in close contact with the EAEVE Office, the Chairperson and the visited VEE
- Train and supervise the new Experts (i.e. Experts who have successfully completed the ESEVT E-learning but who have not yet participated in an ESEVT Visitation)

- Supervise the writing of the Visitation Report and to edit it in order to help the experts in their duties
- Facilitate contacts with the VEE
- Ensure a strict implementation of the SOP, and to guarantee an equal level of all reports.

The visited VEE appoints a Liaison Officer to work with the EAEVE Office, as well as with the Chair and ESEVT Coordinator of the visitation team. The main duties of the Liaison Officer are to:

- Be aware of both the ESEVT SOP and the structure and functioning of the VEE
- Be fluent in English
- To be easily accessible by e-mail and by phone and readily available at all times, particularly during the Visitation
- To facilitate the whole Visitation process in agreement with the ESEVT SOP and to be in close contact with the EAEVE Office, the ESEVT Coordinator and the VEEs Head before, during and after the Visitation
- To provide the Experts with the information and documents requested before and during the Visitation
- To address any technical problems and to organise the relevant meetings in the most efficient way.

All transportation of the Experts, accommodation and catering must be organised and funded by the visited VEE.

The construction and writing of the **Self Evaluation Report** follow a template as set out in the SOP. Similarly, the **Programme for the Visitation** is laid out in the SOP as is the template for the writing of the actual **Visitation Report** itself.

As described later in this SAR, both the SER from the VEE and the Visitation Report itself are based on ten Areas and 55 Standards. The following sections within each of the 55 Standards in the Visitation Report, are especially important from a QA perspective, in an attempt to strive for harmonisation amongst the many reports from different VEEs and different countries:

1. Findings
2. Comments
3. Suggestions for improvement
4. Decision

To summarise each section:

**The Findings** are a short summary of the most relevant points garnered from the SER and must be written before the visitation; such findings can then be altered/added to during the visitation. The Findings section is also from where each expert can ask questions to the VEE before the visit to clarify any points.

**The Comments** are written during the visitation and have 3 roles. Firstly, a list of any commendations to the VEEs for things which are worthy of praise (if any). Secondly, a brief summary in general terms of what is compliant with the relevant Standard. Thirdly, a list of what is partially or not compliant with the relevant Standard, with a clear explanation of the reason of the deficiency (if any).

**The Suggestions for improvement** are also written during the visitation. They must be brief and only focused on ways for improving the partial/non-compliance with the Standards; they should not be too concrete but formulated in a broader sense, since it is the responsibility of the VEE to find the most appropriate way to correct the deficiency(ies).

**The Decision of the Visitation Team** must be coordinated and recorded by the ESEVT Coordinator and especially, from a QA perspective, be consistent with the Findings, Comments and Suggestions within the relevant Standard. In other words, a decision must be backed up by a “flow” of evidence within these three sections.



Each of the 55 Standards (called Substandards in earlier SOPs) are discussed by the team and an agreed decision is made. To harmonise the different reports to VEEs the following standardised terminology is used for the decision:

- The VEE is compliant with Standard X
- The VEE is partially compliant with Standard X because of (relevant text – e.g. suboptimal clinical training in the equine species)
- The VEE is not compliant with Standard X because of (relevant text – e.g. insufficient clinical training in the equine species).

This independent assessment by the Visitation Team and an unambiguous statement on the adequacy of the VEE against each ESEVT Standard, leads to a list of Minor Deficiencies (i.e. partly compliant) that do not significantly affect the quality of education and the VEEs compliance with the ESEVT Standards, and then a list of Major Deficiencies (i.e. non-compliant) that the team believes can affect the quality of education and the VEEs compliance with the ESEVT Standards.

After corrections of factual errors by the VEE, the EAEVE Office presents the Report to the next ECOVE meeting where it is analysed and discussed to confirm or amend the recommendations of the Visitation Team. The Chairperson and the ESEVT Coordinator must be available to ECOVE for discussing the Visitation Report and for answering any questions that may arise. The Major Deficiencies must be clearly listed in agreement with a standardised terminology and the VEEs status clearly identified by ECOVE, i.e.:

1. Accreditation in case of no Major Deficiencies, or
2. Pending Accreditation in the case of one or several Major Deficiencies (or Conditional Accreditation status under earlier versions of the SOP, in the case of one single Major Deficiency)
3. Non-Accreditation under earlier versions of the SOP in case of several Major Deficiencies.

With decisions 2 and 3, if the Major Deficiency/ies is/are corrected within 2 years after the Visitation, which is to be confirmed through a Re-visitiation that must be requested within 1 year after the Visitation, the VEE will be granted with the status of Accreditation.

There are clear guidelines within the ESEVT SOP that allow for a decision by ECOVE to be challenged by a VEE as well as a mechanism for complaints about the result.

### **Appeal and Complaints Processes**

As clearly described within the current ESEVT SOP there is an appeal process for VEEs to complain about a decision on their accreditation status issued by ECOVE. This appeal process is set out in detail later under **ESG Standard 2.7 Complaints and appeals**. Due to the shortage of qualified veterinarians within Europe and because several VEEs are competing to attract overseas students, there is a definite need for a VEE to be accredited.

### **Re-visitiation**

If a VEE has received one or more Major Deficiencies as a result of a Full Visitation, it has up to one year to rectify any deficiency. If a VEE considers that it has rectified such deficiencies within the 12-month period, it can apply through the EAEVE Office to ECOVE for a RV. If ECOVE grants permission for the RV, it is then organised through the EAEVE Office. Three months before the RV at the latest, ECOVE through the EAEVE Office appoints a minimum of two Experts, one being a member of the previous Full Visitation Team (most often the Chairperson, who will chair the Re-visitiation Team) and an ESEVT Coordinator (who should be different from the Coordinator of the previous Full Visitation to the same VEE).

After an agreement for a RV is awarded, it must be performed, at the latest, 2 years after the previous Visitation and can only be performed once. If this interval is exceeded, only another FV can be initiated. The RV must be carried

out during a period of full academic activity, i.e. when most staff and students are present on site. Importantly, the RV should be completed not later than 2 months before the ECOVE meeting preceding the end of granted status of the VEE.

As with a FV, the VEE commits to strictly respect the ESEVT SOP with regard to the preparation and completion of the RV and the publication of the Re-visitation SER (RSER) and the Re-visitation Report on its own website as well as the websites of EAEVE and DEQAR (Database of the European Quality Assurance Register). Before the RV, the VEE prepares the RSER to be studied by the Re-visitation team.

Before the RV, the VEE will prepare a RSER to be studied by the Re-visitation team.

After factual correction by the VEE, the Re-Visitation Report is delivered to ECOVE via the EAEVE Office for the formal decision on whether the Major Deficiencies have now been rectified. If all Major Deficiencies have been rectified the VEE assumes accreditation status.

### Interim Report

Three and a half years after a successful FV, all VEEs that are members of EAEVE must send a concise Interim Report to the EAEVE Office. This report must be completed in agreement with the templates and guidelines provided in the current SOP and must include:

- The name and details of the current VEE’s Head
- Any major changes in each ESEVT Area since the previous SER
- Progress in the correction of Major Deficiencies (if any) and of Minor Deficiencies
- The expected date of the next evaluation
- An updated list of Indicators (these are the Excel based files which are calculated from data within the last three complete academic years (in order to smooth the annual variations and to avoid temporary improvements restricted to the period of the Visitation))

After being reviewed by an ESEVT Coordinator designated by ECOVE, the Interim Report is sent by the EAEVE Office to ECOVE for consideration during their next meeting. In the case of a lack of an Interim Report or evidence in the Interim Report of the occurrence of potential major issues, ECOVE may ask for further information from the VEE. In addition, if the VEE does not reply or does not provide a convincing plan for correcting any major issues, ECOVE may decide to send an ESEVT Coordinator on site with the possibility that the VEE’s Accreditation status may be changed.

The Interim Report must be published on the website of the VEE.

After the previous visitation by ENQA in 2017, the following Table sets out the visitations subsequently completed:

**Table 3: Types of ESEVT evaluation completed between 2017 - 2021**

Visitations	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
<b>Number of VEEs visited</b>	18	18	20	9	26
<b>Number of Consultative/Preliminary Visitations</b>	2	7	3	0	4
<b>Number of Full Visitations</b>	8	6	12	6	14
<b>Number of Re-Visitations</b>	7	4	5	3	8
<b>Number of Joint Visitations</b>	1	1	0	0	0
<b>Number of Interim Reports submitted</b>	0	18	8	7	14

### Critical Reflection

- The various iterations of the SOP linked to the inevitable postponement of Visitations to VEEs has resulted in Visitations being conducted on similar dates but utilising a SOP from 2016, 2019 or 2021
- This distortion has caused confusion both for VEEs as well as Visitation teams. The establishment of the permanent SOP WG should prevent such problems in the future
- The growing number of VEEs establishing courses in a language other than their national language will lead to an increasing need for Visitation teams to equally assess both language courses.

## 5.2 ESG Standard 3.2 Official status

### Standard

*Agencies should have an established legal basis and should be formally recognised as quality assurance agencies by competent public authorities*

As discussed earlier, EAEVE was founded in 1988 and initially based in Paris, France, then in Brussels, but since 2007 based in Vienna, Austria where it operates under Austrian Law. EAEVE was founded by the European Accrediting Organisation and subsequently recognised and financed by the ACVT as a permanent evaluation system for European VEEs within Europe. In 1993 the EU Commission withdrew its financial support and ACVT mandated EAEVE and the FVE to continue managing the evaluation system independently utilising its own budget. When ACVT was finally dissolved in 2000, EAEVE was assigned the sole responsibility for evaluation of Veterinary Education Establishments within the EU, and the member Establishments within EAEVE decided to maintain this system on a voluntary, self-financing basis.

As well as this trans-national status, EAEVE is increasingly recognised within individual nations as the sole accreditation body for their VEEs. Such national authorities in Europe recognise EAEVE decisions and act accordingly, for example in Austria where EAEVE is recognised as the legitimate accrediting agency for veterinary science. Another example is in Italy, where the Educational Ministerial Decree welcomes and encourages the periodic evaluation of Italian VEEs by the EAEVE/ESEVT accreditation process. EAEVE has stated its purpose of further developing such cooperation with national authorities in the future.

Although its actions and proceedings are subject to public law, EAEVE has its own assets, and full capacity to act in pursuit of its objectives.

As such EAEVE can enter into legally binding agreements with governments, institutions, agencies or other entities. In addition, EAEVE complies with its statutes and legal obligations, preparing documents for the annual GA e.g. a preliminary draft budget, an activity report as well as the preparation, every 5 years, of a Strategic Plan (Annex 3). EAEVE is externally audited on an annual basis by the Financial Auditors who report their findings at the annual GA.

It is true that after an evaluation visitation to a VEE, the resultant recommendations decided on by ECOVE and communicated back to the VEE, are often not ‘legally binding’, and it is up to the individual Higher Educational Establishments to react (or not to react) to these results. This of course is dependent on national policies, especially in terms of recognition and licensing of veterinarians, over which EAEVE itself does not have any direct power. Nevertheless, the decisions on accreditation status by ECOVE have an increasing level of influence through the widespread publicity of such decisions. The public availability of such findings associated with a VEE, has an increasing effect and far-reaching consequences on the ability of graduates from such VEEs to find a suitable career; this is especially of importance for those VEEs in the EU who are actively establishing courses (usually in the English language) with the prime designation to attract and then to train overseas applicants in veterinary science. Such VEEs

are well aware of the risks involved in being a “non-approved” school and are therefore incentivised to move as quickly as possible towards remedying both the major and minor deficiencies.

### Critical Reflection

- EAEVE remains determined to expand its links with national accreditation agencies
- These links are initially by encouraging VEEs to request a member of the national accrediting agency to join the relevant Visitation Team
- These links could be further developed by running “Joint Visitations”, and then exploring how routine EAEVE accreditation could reduce the necessity for national accreditation.

## 5.3 ESG Standard 3.3 Independence

### Standard

*Agencies should be independent and act autonomously. They should have full responsibility for their operations and the outcomes of those operations without third party influence*

In the spirit of academic tradition, true independence is one of EAEVE’s core values. The organisational independence of EAEVE is guaranteed by the statutes and EAEVE has developed and implemented rules and regulations that determine the competences and responsibilities of all its constituent bodies.

As discussed above, EAEVE has full organisational and operational autonomy in implementing accreditation procedures. This especially applies to ECOVE, the independent body overseeing and deciding on the outcomes of assessment procedures after receiving ESEVT reports from and about visited VEEs. Although EAEVE is a membership organisation (consisting of VEEs), members have the right to vote about issues and rules related to the operation and organisation of EAEVE, and the procedures at the GA, but cannot influence the work of ECOVE.

Members of ECOVE cannot take part in the handling of or decision making on evaluations of VEEs in which they are currently employed or have/had substantial links with. ECOVE has the power to fully accept the recommendations as set out in an ESEVT report or often to substantially add/delete these recommendations.

As far as ESEVT is concerned, all experts engaged in assessment visitations must sign a declaration of confidentiality and independence before the start of the procedure. This practice is mentioned explicitly in the guidelines for the composition of expert teams and team members should not have had any relevant links with the VEE being visited. This check for conflict of interest is a standard procedure in the assessment and approval of all ESEVT Visitation teams. A separate Code of Conduct (as set out in the current SOP) for team members also outlines the requirements for independence.

As a legally and organisationally independent agency, EAEVE has no formal link to any government ministries within the countries it operates in. As a result, the agency is free from any influence from third parties and is accountable solely to its members, who are informed during the yearly general assembly about the activities of the last year, planned activities, the yearly economic results etc. EAEVE is financially independent and generates its own income through its membership charges and quality assurance activities.

### Critical Reflection

- Due to its stated aim to keep membership fees to a minimum, EAEVE will increasingly rely on “virtual” meetings for both routine meetings as well as virtual conference platforms for assemblies related to educational matters
- The ongoing expansion beyond geographical Europe will change the original “European based” membership of EAEVE

## 5.4 ESG Standard 3.4 Thematic analysis

### **Standard**

*Agencies should regularly publish reports that describe and analyse the general findings of their external quality assurance activities*

Based on the available data on the activities of EAEVE, a structured, periodic analysis is prepared every five years to study the various factors of the higher education system in VEEs. The objective of the system-wide analysis of ESEVT is to propose recommendations for improvement of ESEVT in general and of veterinary education in Europe in particular, and to identify the main challenges for the future. The recent analysis covers the period 2016-2019 and the next system-wide analysis for the period 2020-2024 is due in 2025.

The Educational Day of the General Assembly is an indispensable forum for the profession to review these future challenges from the academicians', practitioners' and students' point of view, to present best practices and to exchange ideas on the most vital subjects on veterinary education. The Educational Day topics are suggested by the member VEEs, and details are provided later in this SAR (Section 8). These conferences provide a great opportunity not only to reflect on the future challenges and on the improvement of the ESEVT procedures, but also allow every EAEVE member and stakeholder to participate in the official life of EAEVE and to meet friends and network with colleagues who share a common interest in improving the quality of veterinary education in Europe and beyond.

### **Critical Reflection**

- Although quite general in its concept, the system-wide analysis is vital for EAEVE and its membership to reflect on the external quality activities delivered by EAEVE
- It is important that there is a widespread involvement of both members and other stakeholders in developing this five year analysis

## 5.5 ESG Standard 3.5 Resources

### **Standard**

*Agencies should have adequate and appropriate resources, both human and financial, to carry out their work. Reflect separately on human and financial resources.*

### **Human Resources**

Although in comparison with other accreditation agencies, the actual number of staff at EAEVE is relatively small, the Agency believes that at this current time it has adequate and appropriate resources (human, material, technical, informational and financial) to carry out in full all types of work in each of the areas it is responsible for.

Since 2007 the office of EAEVE has been situated in Vienna, Austria, where EAEVE is duly registered, employing local staff. EAEVE has a Director of the ESEVT who handles the planning of the Visitations, the timetables, the selecting and proposing of visiting teams, and who accompanies many of the visiting teams as one of the Coordinators.

In addition, there are four part-time ESEVT Coordinators who also accompany on-site Visitations.

With respect to the administrative tasks, the Director works hand in hand with the Office staff: an Office Manager, the Visitations Officer, the Project & Finance Officer (currently on maternity leave) and the EAEVE Secretary; two of these staff members have an academic background in Business Administration. Two of them are employed part time.

The Office is supervised by the President of EAEVE through monthly reports of activities and the Office itself is evaluated on a yearly basis within an ExCom meeting. The major reason that EAEVE is able to run so efficiently with only a small number of paid employees is that historically EAEVE has relied on a large number of “volunteers” both for acting pro bono as committee members and as experts on the visitation panels. Interestingly, this is in marked contrast to other large accrediting agencies such as the AVMA that employs large numbers of personnel in their headquarters in Illinois, USA. This situation, allowing EAEVE to keep membership and visitation costs down, is a direct reflection on the interest, pride and determination of academic staff in European based VEEs, who by volunteering for involvement within EAEVE, actively contribute in helping fellow VEEs improve both their theoretical and practical teaching. Expert visitors also benefit from the excellent opportunities to strengthen the professional network of veterinary educators and enhance the sharing of experiences.

During the current COVID-19 pandemic all staff at EAEVE, from the office staff to the experts on visitation teams, have had to be imaginative in developing techniques to deliver all the necessary work schedules. This has necessitated a “virtual” office being established involving emails, telephones and “Microsoft Teams” as the preferred communication platform. This approach has also been utilised for a series of online virtual meetings such as outlined in Table 4 in Annex 6.

During the COVID-19 pandemic such an approach has also been utilised for a number of ESEVT visitations to VEEs. The SOP WG was quick to work on an Emergency Procedure which would enable ESEVT to adapt to the COVID-19 pandemic. A decision was made early on **not** to carry out **fully virtual** ESEVT Visitations, but to allow for a mixed approach with some experts on site at the VEE and others working remotely. This decision was primarily based on the difficulties of evaluating clinical and laboratory facilities on a virtual basis. As 23 Visitations had been planned for 2020, advising these VEEs on how to proceed with their planned Visitations or dealing with unavoidable postponements, was crucial. To deal with the major problems caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, an addendum to the SOP entitled “Exceptional Transitory Amendment of the SOP (due to COVID-19)” was approved by ExCom and endorsed by the GA in 2020 (Annex 2). According to the official guidelines for the postponement of a Visitation laid out in this document, 9 of the 23 Visitations which were planned were completed, with some of them being carried out with a mix of on-site and remote Experts.

This approach has helped deliver successful visitations and avoided having to postpone what would have been a large number of visitations. Details of these “Hybrid” visitations are provided in Table 5 in Annex 7.

## Financial Resources

EAEVE is an independent organisation and thus does not receive any funding or donations from any government, ministries or third parties. As regards financial resources, EAEVE has a regular and sustainable income together with sufficient bank deposits. These generated funds are used only for the purposes of the association and the proper use of funds is reported on annually by the auditors.

In 2021, the total revenue of EAEVE was € 389.817. This income was from the membership fees (€ 279.902) and from the evaluation fees including deposits and residual fees (€ 87.072) and from other items such as remuneration for activities and outputs of Erasmus+ projects.

The total expenditure in 2021 was € **308.216**.

On 30<sup>th</sup> September 2021, the EAEVE General Assembly decided to introduce a Merged Membership & Evaluation Fee (MEF), amounting to € 4.200 per annum for full members, and € 2.700 for Associates and Candidate members, including a transitory period until 2028. The MEF is composed of the former Membership Fee and of an Evaluation Fee part, increased by 10% in order to cover the real cost of ESEVT. The MEF is paid annually in order to guarantee the transparent and predictable financial management of the Association, as well as to ease the burden of large payments before or in the year of the ESEVT Visitation.

Until December 2021, EAEVE had a separate Savings account at the Austrian ERSTE Bank. In accordance with the Treasurer’s and the Auditors’ recommendation, the Savings balance covered one year’s activity. On 1<sup>st</sup> December 2021, ERSTE Bank withdrew the Savings product from its portfolio due to the market situation and hence they closed EAEVE’s Savings account and transferred the reserve to the running Giro account. At the time of the writing of the SAR, the ExCom is looking for alternatives to deposit EAEVE’s money with a reasonable interest rate.

In accordance with the Procedure for operating finances of EAEVE, as approved by ExCom on 22 November 2018, the EAEVE Office executes the handling of payments/funds and the daily account keeping, which is sent to the Treasurer and President on a monthly basis, together with a list of executed bank transactions and bank account statement of the respective month. In addition, quarterly reports are prepared by the Office and are submitted to the Treasurer and President for revision and for final endorsement by ExCom. The EAEVE Office is also responsible for the preparations for auditing, writing the Treasurer’s GA report on behalf of and under supervision of the Treasurer.

### **Critical Reflection**

- The postponement of a large number of Visitations to VEEs due to Covid-19, necessitated the development of a “Split Team” approach to Visitations. Although this approach proved successful, problems were encountered when one or more of the off-site Experts were responsible for assessing clinical teaching as well as clinical facilities.

## **5.6 ESG Standard 3.6 Internal quality assurance and professional conduct**

### **Standard**

*Agencies should have in place processes for internal quality assurance related to defining, assuring and enhancing the quality and integrity of their activities*

The objective of EAEVE’s internal quality management system is to continuously review its work, especially regarding ESEVT visitations, and to ensure compliance with national and international standards (e.g. ESG) together with safeguarding and improving the quality of its own work and processes. In more detail, the establishment of CIQA and its role in delivering internal quality assurance mechanisms is described in the CIQA Rules of Operation ([LINK](#)). This current section provides an overview of CIQA’s activities with an emphasis on the role of CIQA in defining, assuring and enhancing quality of the Agency’s activities.

In summary, the work of CIQA involves two separate but complementary areas: firstly, operational guidelines and policies and secondly, monitoring and reporting.

### **Operational guidelines and policies**

This area involves helping develop and then monitoring documented work processes and outcomes; these would include documentation management, internal communications, staff responsibilities, work of constituent committees, so ensuring that these processes help guarantee the correct application of policies.

### **Monitoring and Reporting**

This area involves the acquisition and subsequent analysis of qualitative and quantitative data. Such data would be from ESEVT visitations, feedback from internal and external stakeholders, including the confidential assessments from all ESEVT experts as well as from the visited VEE itself.

### **Critical Reflection**

- CIQA continues to have an expanding and crucial role in its “policing” of the QA activities of EAEVE.

## 5.7 ESG Standard 3.7 Cyclical external review of agencies

### **Standard**

*Agencies should undergo an external review at least once every five years in order to demonstrate their compliance with the ESG*

EAEVE was last reviewed by ENQA in 2017 which led to membership in ENQA in 2018 followed by successful registration in EQAR later that year. As laid out within the membership in ENQA's Statutes, all member agencies are required to undergo an external review against the ESG at least once every five years.

ENQA reviews are based on published principles, shown on ENQA's website and as they were integral to the development of this SAR, as shown in Annex 8.

EAEVE is determined to be the essential reference for all higher-level institutes that have educational responsibilities for the training of veterinarians, and as such an external review against the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the ESG is without doubt a prerequisite for the application by EAEVE to continue its membership of ENQA and the associated requirement for application to EQAR.

EAEVE is aware that the recommendations made in 2018 by the previous ENQA Review were designed to help continue the way to improvement, and the resultant internally led analysis was further stimulated by the ENQA Progress and Follow up visitation in 2020. This SAR identifies actions taken since the previous ENQA reviews, including how EAEVE has addressed the recommendations and suggestions as set out by ENQA, and this is discussed later in Chapter 8. The SAR analyses all activities of EAEVE that fall within the ESG and sets out EAEVE's processes and procedures to provide evidence on how the organisation meets the ESG.

With transparency, independence of judgement and commitment towards accountability, EAEVE looks forward to welcoming the ENQA External Review Panel in September 2022 and ultimately to receiving the Review Report.

### **Critical Reflection**

- There is no question that the four ENQA reviews set in motion a series of changes in how EAEVE delivers its EQA activities
- These changes are described in detail within Chapter 8.



# 6. Design and implementation of the agency's EQA activities (compliance with Part 2 of the ESG)

## 6.1 ESG Standard 2.1 Consideration of internal quality assurance

### *Standard:*

*External quality assurance should address the effectiveness of the internal quality assurance processes described in Part 1 of the ESG.*

### **The Development of the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) as the means by which an ESEVT team assesses the compliance of a VEE with the ESG**

The standards and guidelines of Part 1 of ESG 2015 have been addressed within the ESEVT SOP, where the 10 Areas assessed during ESEVT accreditation visitations link with the ESG framework. The VEEs are made aware of their responsibility for implementing the elements of Part 1 in their vision and policies on education and quality management.

QA training courses were held in 2017 for each of the EAEVE regions, where the constituent VEEs within each region sent not only senior management, but also staff responsible for developing QA in the particular VEE. These courses covered the importance of a QA approach as a philosophy running through all aspects of the teaching programme and then crucially how to implement it. In addition, discussions took place on how QA is assessed during an ESEVT visitation. These meetings also allowed the different VEEs in a particular region to both compare and help each other in the implantation of a QA culture.

The practical part of veterinary training is very important from the point of view of achieving learning outcomes at the programme level and forms a substantial part of the training. Aspects of the clinically based ESEVT visitation to a VEE will necessarily be assessing areas such as physical facilities and clinical training (and the QA of these fields such as good biosecurity and biocontainment, good laboratory, pharmaceutical and clinical practice, etc.). Although such assessments are not prescriptively part of the ESG, all of the 10 Areas have relevant Standards with QA processes woven into their policies and deliverables.

In more detail, the SOP publishes the following criteria which allows the ESEVT team to evaluate the VEE by ensuring that the VEE

- is well managed
- operates permanent QA and quality enhancement mechanisms
- has adequate financing to sustain its educational, research and social commitments
- has appropriate resources of staff, facilities and animals
- provides an up-to-date professional curriculum
- provides an appropriate learning environment
- operates a fair and reliable assessment system

- demonstrates compliance with all the **ESEVT Standards** which, when taken together, provide an assurance that the veterinary degree meets the requirements of the EU Directives and the ESG, as well as ensuring that its graduates will have acquired the relevant knowledge, skills and attitudes required for the entry-level of a veterinarian (Day One Competences).

The **ESEVT Standards** are organised into 10 Areas:

- Area 1. Objectives, Organisation and Quality Assurance Policy
- Area 2. Finances
- Area 3. Curriculum
- Area 4. Facilities and equipment
- Area 5. Animal resources and teaching material of animal origin
- Area 6. Learning resources
- Area 7. Student admission, progression and welfare
- Area 8. Student assessment
- Area 9. Academic and support staff
- Area 10. Research programmes, continuing and postgraduate education

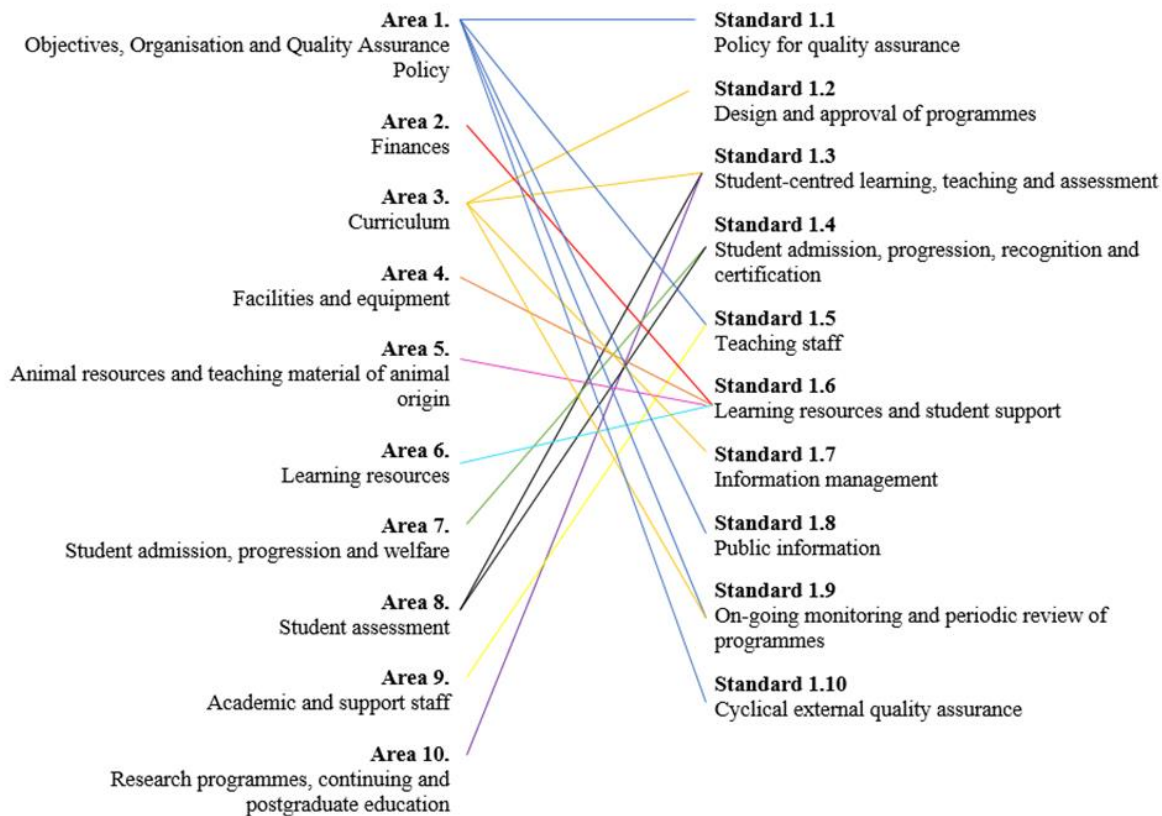
The 10 Areas are further divided into a total of 55 standards, which, as the ESEVT “Rubrics”, are set out in Annex 8 of the SOP.

Each of the Areas is the responsibility of an individual Visitation team member to establish if the degree granted by the visited VEE is compliant with the relevant standards within that Area. This is achieved, prior to the visitation, by a thorough examination of the VEE’s SER, a request for further information, again prior to the visitation; and then during the visitation itself, to check the accuracy of the information provided in the SER by visiting the facilities, checking documents, consulting the databases, meeting students, meeting staff, and meeting representatives of the national veterinary associations and other stakeholders. In addition, the team members can request any missing information and finally complete the writing of their section(s) of the draft Visitation Report in collaboration with the other members of the team.

The Visitation Team, as a whole, is responsible for making a unanimous and unambiguous statement on the adequacy of the VEE against each of the 55 ESEVT Standards i.e. compliant, partly compliant (one or more Minor Deficiencies that does/do not significantly affect the quality of education and the VEEs compliance with the ESEVT Standards) or not compliant (one or more Major Deficiencies that affect the quality of education and the VEEs compliance with the ESEVT Standards).

The grid below sets out how these 10 ESEVT Areas are aligned with the 10 ESG Standards as set out in ESG Part 1 Standards and Guidelines for Internal QA, although it must be borne in mind that the 10 ESEVT Areas and their 55 constituent standards are also designed to assess the teaching and facilities related to a clinically related professional course such as veterinary medicine.

### Map 3: Breakdown of how the ESEVT SOP Areas link with ESG Part 1 Standards



- The organisation of a QA approach within the VEE, including links with the central QA organisation within the host university (according to ESEVT Area 1 and ESG 1.1)
- The design, approval and subsequent review of study programmes that are delivered by the VEE (*according to ESEVT Area 3 and ESG 1.2*)
- The involvement of students in relation to the processes of learning, teaching and assessment (*according to ESEVT Areas 3, 8, 10 and ESG 1.3*)
- The consistent application of pre-defined and published regulations which cover all phases of the student “life cycle”, e.g. student admission, progression and the recognition and certification of such phases: admission, progression, recognition and certification (*according to ESEVT Areas 7, 8 and ESG 1.4*)
- The regulations covering the recruitment, professional development (including initial and further pedagogical training) and regular reappraisal of teaching staff (*according to ESEVT Areas 1, 9 and ESG 1.5*)
- The VEE should have appropriate funding for its learning and teaching activities. The VEE must ensure that adequate and readily accessible learning resources and student support are provided (*according to ESEVT Areas 2, 4, 5, 6 and ESG 1.6*)
- The VEE should ensure that they have mechanisms in place to collect, analyse and finally to use relevant information for the effective management of their programmes and other activities (*according to ESEVT Area 3 and ESG 1.7*)
- The VEE should ensure that information about the programmes and other activities of the VEE are published, and that they are clear, accurate, objective, up-to date and readily accessible (*according to ESEVT Area 1 and ESG 1.8*)

- The VEE should monitor and periodically review their programmes to firstly ensure that they achieve the objectives set for them and secondly to respond to changing needs of students and external stakeholders. Any action planned or taken as a result of these reviews should be communicated to all those concerned, especially the internal and external stakeholders (*according to ESEVT Areas 1.3 and ESG 1.9*)
- The level and regularity of cyclical external QA reviews, including both National as well as international (e.g. ESEVT) (*according to ESEVT Area 1 and ESG 1.10*)

**In some more detail, several individual QA training courses were run in 2017 for VEEs in all of the 8 EAEVE Regions. During these extensive training courses, there was a reflection on the importance of QA within the Standards in each of the 10 Areas due to be assessed by the ESEVT team during a visitation. These reflections, although very relevant, are extensive and therefore set out in Annex 9.**

*There is another important role for the 10 ESEVT Areas and their 55 constituent Standards which involves national QA Agencies. During all ESEVT visitations, EAEVE considers the importance of informing team members, and also convincing VEEs, that these ESEVT accreditations are not designed to request a QA level higher than what is requested by the ESG 2015 (no less, no more). This role is directly linked to EAEVE’s policy of working with national QA accreditation bodies in demonstrating that the ESEVT evaluations use the same “Standards” as they do. As such, an ESEVT evaluation could replace their own relatively non-clinical evaluation of VEEs. In order to progress such a decision and save time and money for the visited VEE, the national QA body is now encouraged to send an observer during an ESEVT Visitation.*

## **ECOVE and CIQA**

Both ECOVE and CIQA have critical roles to play in the accreditation process that EAEVE delivers to national VEEs through the ESEVT visitation system described above. As an independent body ECOVE will carefully analyse the ESEVT report on a VEE and reach its own conclusion as to whether the VEE is following the standards as laid down in the ESEVT SOP.

CIQA in turn monitors all the feedback both by the VEE and the visiting team on the visitation to filter out any issues that might hinder the fair and transparent assessment of the VEEs.

### **Critical Reflection**

- The strength of the EAEVE accreditation process, as delivered to VEEs both within the EU and further afield, is the “check and balance” approach offered by the combination of ESEVT/ECOVE/CIQA. This approach allows for a culture of harmonisation rather than uniformity
- Another strength is the focus on employability and international outlook that EAEVE accreditation brings to a VEE and its veterinary graduates
- There is a continuing need for the ESEVT teams to include individuals with a “mainstream” QA experience, even though one member of the current teams must have proven QA experience and the other team members are now receiving a level of QA experience during their training
- The complexity and rigour of the ESEVT standards could make it difficult for the VEEs to comply. However, the efforts made by the VEEs to meet the standards are tangible for the visiting teams and definitely contribute to the improvement of the quality of veterinary training.

## 6.2 ESG Standard 2.2 Designing methodologies fit for purpose

### Standard

*External quality assurance should be defined and designed specifically to ensure its fitness to achieve the aims and objectives set for it, while taking into account relevant regulations. Stakeholders should be involved in its design and continuous improvement.*

In this standard we need to demonstrate:

- That the aims of the EAEVE accreditation process are clear and agreed on by stakeholders
- The aims, objectives and implementation of the processes have borne in mind the level of workload and cost that they will place on the VEEs
- When accrediting VEEs, to take into account the need to support such institutions to improve quality and to allow them to demonstrate this improvement
- The accreditation process takes into account local characteristics, and accepts them without making compromises as for the compliance with standards
- The result of accreditation must deliver clear information on the outcomes and any follow-up
- The system for external quality assurance might operate in a flexible way if VEEs are to demonstrate the effectiveness of their own internal quality assurance as well as the effectiveness at a national and international level.

Since 1987, EAEVE has worked together with stakeholders from within universities as well as from the wider area of employed veterinarians (employers and employees) to accommodate their demands and make these accreditation frameworks fit for purpose. The fundamental guide for the accreditation framework is the SOP which has and continues to be developed through an ongoing set of iterations. The original SOP document evolved from the first working paper of EAEVE governed by the EU Commission Document III/D/5056/5/89. This initial document was amended and published as an SOP in EU Doc XV/E/8488/2/98.

Initially EAEVE operated through ACVT, but following the dissolution of ACVT in 2000 the decision by EAEVE was to formally accept “ownership” of the accreditation visitation system to VEEs. This decision led to the development of a revised SOP, and at every step in this revision, VEEs, students, members of EAEVE and FVE were consulted and given the opportunity to comment on proposals.

The revised SOP was applied exclusively as of 2002. Since then, the SOP has been thoroughly revised and progressively updated under approval of the respective annual GAs as well as VEEs, students and other stakeholders who are consulted on line and given the opportunity to comment on proposals.

After an update to the SOP in 2008 in Copenhagen, there was a major shift in 2009 at Hannover where the concept of a Stage 1 and Stage 2 evaluation system was adopted, with Stage 2 designed to judge the QA within a VEE. Following further updates to the SOP in 2011 at Lyon and 2012 in Budapest the Stage 1 and Stage 2 system was fully implemented. However, soon after this implementation, doubts were raised in both the Coordinators group and ECOVE as to whether this separation was the correct approach. This concern was then both justified and supported by the first ENQA report on EAEVE after their visitation in 2013.

As a result of this justifiable criticism, EAEVE undertook a complete overhaul of the SOP which involved a series of iterations (seven in total) with detailed input from stakeholders such as EAEVE members, EAEVE committee members, FVE (UEVP, EVERI, UEVH, EASVO), EBVS, IVSA. The draft versions of the SOP were also based on the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (the ESG 2015 document).

The 7<sup>th</sup> version of the SOP was formally adopted by the GA in Uppsala in May 2016 and was routinely used on visitations to VEEs. This 2016 SOP also incorporated the actions taken by EAEVE to overcome the shortcomings/non-compliances with ESG standards as outlined in the 2013 ENQA report.

The central thrust of the evaluation of the 2016 SOP was the introduction of an additional Standard in the SOP (Standard 11) to replace the discredited Stage 2 approach with a single QA focused standard.

The second ENQA visitation to EAEVE occurred in late 2017 resulting in a report in 2018. This latter report clearly and unambiguously recommended that the Standard 11 be dropped from the SOP and replaced by the incorporation of QA principles into the remaining 10 Standards. This finding was accepted by EAEVE and resulted, after once again a series of iterations and stakeholder involvement, by the GA accepting a new SOP in 2019. This latter SOP, with some minor alterations agreed in the 2020 and 2021 GAs, is now the current SOP.

Finally, the newly established SOP Working Group, set up in May 2019 (with both student and practising veterinarian membership) is currently and actively revising a new version of the SOP for implementation in 2023.

EAEVE is increasingly aware of the financial and “manpower” responsibilities that visited VEEs have to undertake as part of the requirements behind a visitation. Although visited VEEs are an integral part of the GA, where the visitation fees are decided on, EAEVE does recognise the variation in the financial background of different VEEs and a similar variation in the financial background of different countries. It is intended for the workload to be simplified in the new SOP with a better definition of standards, and a reviewed evaluation programme to limit the number of meetings, dinners, etc. to a minimum, making the process as efficient as possible.

### Critical Reflection

- The recent establishment of the permanent SOP WG, should emphasise EAEVE’s commitment to a smoother transition in upgrading SOPs in response to educational developments at the tertiary level
- Although there is an advantage with a relatively small and agile group, it might be considered useful to also appoint a QA expert from a non-veterinary background and also a postgraduate from either a clinical or research position
- Within the SOP, EAEVE should consider further emphasising and encouraging the VEEs to approach their national QA agency to appoint an observer to the visitation team

## 6.3 ESG Standard 2.3 Implementing processes

### Standard

*External quality assurance processes should be reliable, useful, pre-defined, implemented consistently and published. They include*

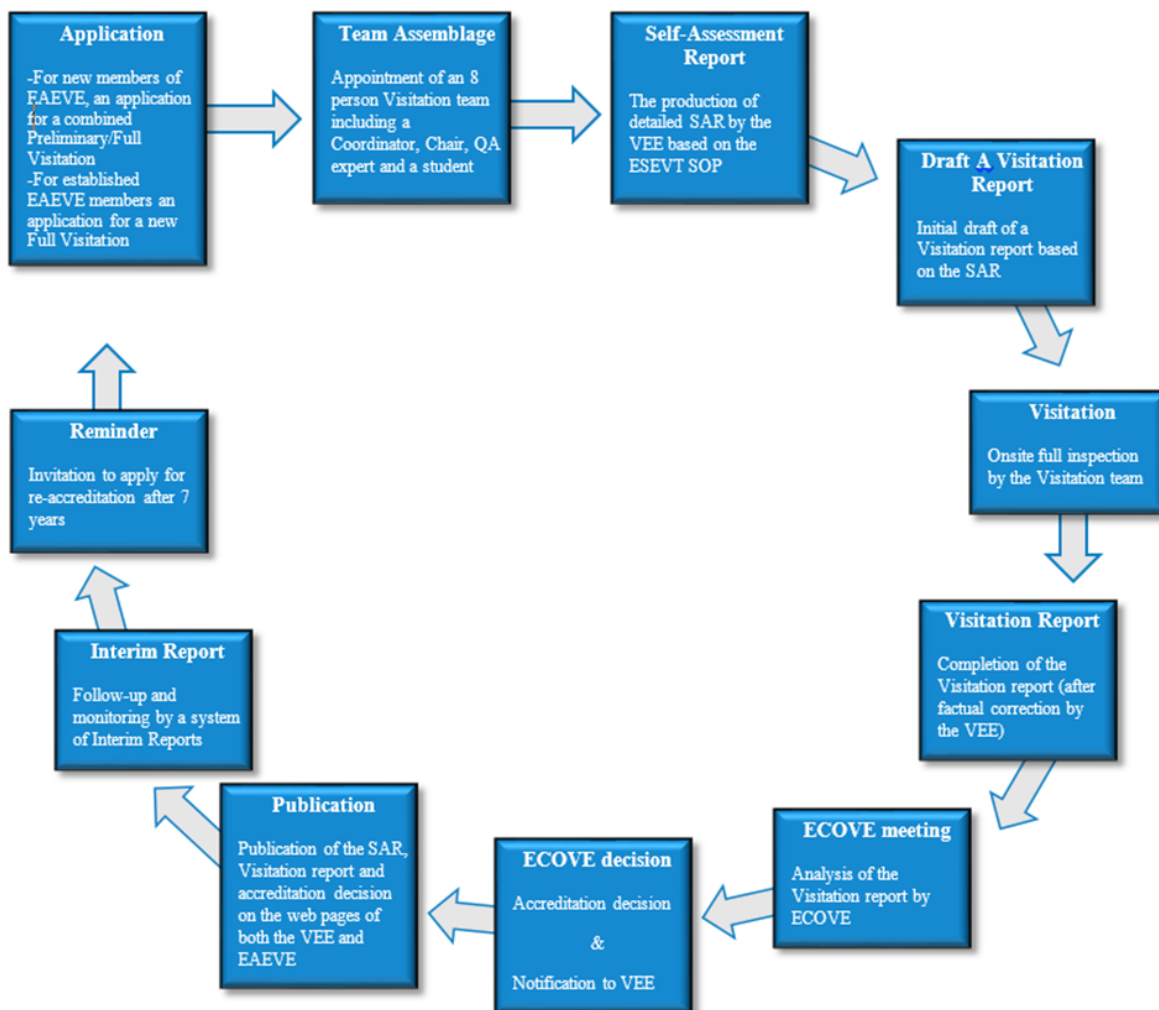
- a self-assessment or equivalent;
- an external assessment normally including a site visit;
- a report resulting from the external assessment;
- a consistent follow-up.

As previously explained in this SAR, the main objective of the ESEVT process is to evaluate firstly, if the professional qualifications provided by a national based VEE are compliant with the relevant EU Directives, and secondly, if the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the ESG are achieved. To deliver this objective EAEVE has developed an accreditation system based on a detailed SAR (SER) from a VEE, a fact finding ESEVT visitation and finally an accreditation decision process through ECOVE designed to create a level of harmonisation but not uniformity amongst the different member nations.

This accreditation process for an individual VEE can be summarised as follows:

- Initial Enquiry
- For new members of EAEVE, an application for a combined Preliminary/Full Visitation

- For established EAEVE members an application for a new Full Visitation
- Appointment of an 8-person Visitation team including a Coordinator, Chair, QA expert and a student
- The production of detailed SER by the VEE based on the ESEVT SOP
- Initial draft of a Visitation report based on the SER
- Onsite full inspection by the Visitation team
- Completion of the Visitation report (after factual correction by the VEE)
- Analysis of the Visitation report by ECOVE
- Accreditation decision
- Notification to VEE
- Publication of the SER, Visitation report and accreditation decision on the web pages of both the VEE and EAEVE
- Follow-up and monitoring by a system of Interim Reports
- Invitation to apply for re-accreditation, 7 years after a FV.



## Self-Assessment Report

All VEEs must complete and submit a Self-Assessment Report (SAR, also referred to as a Self-Evaluation Report (SER) in many EAEVE documents) before any full or Preliminary accreditation Visitation. The purpose of the SAR is for the VEE to identify their strengths and weaknesses based firmly on a template provided by the SOP, covering the ten areas and 55 Standards, and quoting evidence in support. The SOP provides guidance notes for the production

of the SAR and for the visitation programme itself. The SAR is provided to the Visitation team 2 months before the actual visitation in both electronic and hard copy forms.

## On Site Visitation

All VEEs have a full, onsite inspection at the beginning of their accreditation cycle. The visitation programme follows a pattern described within the SOP and takes five full days of inspection by the 8 team members. If a VEE has multiple campuses: for example, one VEE could provide a Masters level programme with one or more other “feeder” teaching establishment providing a Bachelor level programme. In this latter case an additional team member may be necessary. The inspection consists of viewing physical resources, meetings with staff and students, documentation review, and direct observations of teaching and facilities.

As well as the 8 ESEVT members, the VEE is increasingly encouraged to arrange for a member of the appropriate national QA agency to join the visitation team, with the long-term aim of both sides (the generic national QA agency and the subject specific EAEVE agency), working towards the constant analysis and improvement of a VEE’s teaching.

This latter area is one that ESEVT is actively seeking to promote: the involvement with the national accrediting agencies during ESEVT Visitations. As such there are increasing examples of individuals from both National and International Accrediting Agencies being accepted and welcomed as Observers on ESEVT Visitations. These National Accrediting Agencies are cross disciplinary and as such are experienced in QA and ESG Standards rather than specific veterinary related Standards. Examples of these ESEVT (full) Visitations (FV) with full observer status from national and international accrediting agencies would include:

- Hannover 2018 with the Australasian Veterinary Boards Council Inc. (AVBC)
- Liège 2019 with the Agence pour l’Evaluation de la Qualité de l’Enseignement Supérieur (AEQES, Belgium)
- Helsinki 2019 with the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS)
- Burdur 2019 with the Association for Evaluation and Accreditation of Educational Institutions and Programs of Veterinary Medicine in Turkey (VEDEK)
- Bursa 2020 with VEDEK
- Dublin 2020 with the Veterinary Council of Ireland (VCI)

A further achievement was the decision by the French agency for quality assurance (HCERES) to rely on ESEVT for the evaluation of French Veterinary Education VEEs.

## Visitation Report

The Visitation report is produced utilising a template provided within the SOP and after a general introduction sets out the visitation teams findings on the 55 Standards. Each review of a Standard consists of four sections:

- Findings
- Comments
- Suggestions for improvement
- Decision of the Visitation Team, *i.e. whether the VEE is compliant with the Standard or partially compliant with the Standard or not compliant with the Standard.*

To help the Visitation team reach their decisions, two other areas are initially included but are then excluded from the final draft report; these are:

- Questions to be asked to the VEE prior to the visitation
- Issues to be clarified on-site

### Findings



Findings are written after the relevant expert has read the SAR, and summarises their understanding of how the VEE, through its SAR, has presented the necessary information concerning a particular Standard. Any concern about compliance with the Standard is mentioned here.

### *Comments*

This section should include:

- Any commendations to the VEE for findings that the team believes are worthy of praise
- A brief summary in general terms of what is compliant with the relevant Standard
- A list of what is partially or not compliant with the relevant Standard, with a clear explanation of the reason for the deficiency.

### *Suggestions for improvement*

- Suggestions for improvement are brief and focused on ways for improving the partial or non-compliance with the Standard
- They should not be too “concrete” but formulated in a broader sense, since it is the responsibility of the VEE to find the most appropriate way to correct any deficiency
- Suggestion of areas which could further improve a Standard beyond what was already fully compliant.

### *Decision of the Visitation Team*

- It is essential that any decision is consistent with the ‘Findings’, ‘Comments’ and ‘Suggestions’ for the relevant Standard to form a consistent pattern of evidence for the decision on compliance
- The following standardised terminology is used throughout the report:
  - The VEE is compliant with Standard X.Y
  - The VEE is partially compliant with Standard X.Y because of (relevant text)
  - The VEE is not compliant with Standard X.Y because of (relevant text)

There are two additional areas for the Visitation team to assess which are particular for a clinically orientated professional course such as that designed to qualify a veterinarian:

1. **Day One Competencies (DIC).** This is a comprehensive list of skills, clinical and non-clinical, that a graduate from the VEE is expected to have obtained before they enter the workplace. Competencies cover all possible branches of the profession.
2. **Indicators.** Indicators are used in a non-prescriptive way in the evaluation of a VEE. They are calculated from data which are the means of the last three complete academic years (in order to smooth the annual variations and to avoid temporary improvements restricted to the period of the Visitation). They reflect a given situation at the time of a Visitation, allowing EAEVE to compare between VEEs and to recognise trends within the education of veterinarians.

### **Final ESEVT Report**

After the final report is checked for factual corrections, it is sent on to the EAEVE Office for onward transmission to ECOVE for an independent assessment of the ESEVT report, before then reaching a decision on the accreditation status of the VEE.

## Re-Visitation Report

As previously described under section ESG 3.8 (5.1) there is the possibility for a VEE to correct any major deficiencies identified by ECOVE by applying for a Re-Visitation (RV). The VEE has up to one year after the ECOVE decision to rectify any deficiency. If a VEE considers that it has rectified such deficiencies within the 12-month period it applies to ECOVE through the EAEVE Office. If ECOVE grants permission for the RV, it is then organised through the EAEVE Office.

After an agreement for a RV is awarded, it must be performed, at the latest, 2 years after the previous Visitation and can only be performed once. If this interval is exceeded, only another FV can be initiated. The RV must be carried out over 1-2 days during a period of full academic activity, i. e. when most staff and students are present on site. Importantly, the RV should be completed not later than 2 months before the ECOVE meeting preceding the end of granted status of the VEE.

As with a FV, the VEE commits to strictly respect the ESEVT SOP with regard to the preparation and completion of the RV and the publication of the RSER and the Re-visitation Report on its own website as well as the websites of EAEVE and DEQAR.

Before the RV, the VEE will prepare a RSER to be studied by the Re-visitation team.

After factual correction by the VEE, the Re-visitation Report is delivered to ECOVE via the EAEVE Office for the formal decision on whether the Major Deficiencies have now been rectified. If fully rectified, the VEEs status is Accredited.

## Interim Reports

As already described in ESG 3.1, the Interim Reports are designed to give the VEE an opportunity to describe the changes that have been implemented to correct any deficiencies that were identified by ECOVE, either major or minor. Three and a half years after a successful Full Visitation, all VEEs that are members of EAEVE must send a concise Interim Report to the EAEVE Office. This report must be completed in agreement with the templates and guidelines provided in the current SOP and must include:

- The name and details of the current VEE's Head
- Any major changes in each ESEVT Area since the previous SER
- Progress in the correction of Major Deficiencies (if any) and of Minor Deficiencies
- The expected date of the next evaluation
- An updated list of Indicators.

After being reviewed by an ESEVT Coordinator designated by ECOVE, the Interim Report is sent by the EAEVE Office to ECOVE for consideration during their next meeting.

In case of the lack of an Interim Report or evidence in the Interim Report of the occurrence of potential major issues, ECOVE may ask for further information from the VEE. In addition, if the VEE does not reply or does not provide a convincing plan for correcting any major issues, ECOVE may decide to send an ESEVT Coordinator on site to report back to ECOVE leading to with the possibility that the VEE's Accreditation status may be changed by ECOVE.

The Interim Report must be published on the website of the VEE.

### Critical Reflection

- The ESEVT accreditation process is now expanding to VEEs from countries both geographically and administratively, far removed from the original "home territory" of EAEVE within the umbrella of the EU

- As this international expansion utilises the accreditation process as detailed above, there is an increasing need to fully explain the ESG driven approach to candidate VEEs who are often not fully cognizant of such a QA approach. This would be especially relevant within countries that show national variations in veterinary related teaching programmes
- As mentioned above, EAEVE is determined to work more closely with national QA agencies within Europe, and EAEVE believes that this approach is even more important when visiting VEEs well beyond Europe.

## 6.4 ESG Standard 2.4 Peer-review experts

### *Standard*

*External quality assurance should be carried out by groups of external experts that include (a) student member(s).*

The quality of any assessment and/or accreditation procedure is crucially dependent on the quality and experience of the appointed experts within a Visitation team. In order to ensure a level of comparative quality and experience, the task for selection and appointment of teams lies with the EAEVE Office and the ESEVT Director along the lines of predefined principles.

EAEVE ensures the impartiality of the experts to avoid conflicts of interests by clear rules and processes. Besides the usual impartiality criteria such as no personal relationship with the VEE and no recent and close scientific cooperation projects, EAEVE also avoids any national bias by not appointing any team members from the country of the VEE. As well as the mandatory conflict of interest statements, the VEEs are also given the opportunity to comment on the membership of the Visitation Team.

According to the Standard 2.4 of the ESG: “*External quality assurance should be carried out by groups of external Visitors that include (a) student member(s)*” The corresponding guideline then states: “*In order to ensure the value and consistency of the work of the Visitors, they:*

- *Are carefully selected*
- *Have appropriate skills and are competent to perform their task*
- *Are supported by appropriate training and/or briefing”*

As mentioned above, the training and selection of Experts to become members of a QA Accreditation Team is an essential prerequisite for any organisation that purports to be recognised as a fully functioning and effective accrediting agency. This is especially true for EAEVE and its ESEVT visitation teams appointed to assess and accredit Veterinary Education Establishments (VEEs). This is due to the complex nature of such an assessment with the need for the team to inspect both physical and animal-based facilities, as well as inspecting all the QA aspects involved in delivering such an intensive basic science/clinical science course within a University. As previously described, to achieve this, EAEVE appoints a team of eight individuals/experts with different backgrounds and skills.

EAEVE is determined that with such a disparate group, it is vital to have a structured selection and training programme that will involve all the experts, notwithstanding the variety of their individual expert knowledge and experience.

Although at the beginning of the historical ESEVT process individual experts were “put forward” by VEE Deans, the situation is now more inclusive in that any candidate can put themselves forward for selection as an ESEVT Expert. The timeframe for selection for all team members, except students, is as follows:

1. A candidate willing to apply as ESEVT Expert must submit to the EAEVE Office:

- A fully completed Application Form (see [LINK](#))
- A letter of motivation

- A letter of recommendation from the VEE's Head (or, for practitioners, from the FVE Board)
2. The EAEVE Office then requests advisory opinions from the ESEVT Coordinators' Group
  3. A final decision of acceptance is made by the President of EAEVE and the Director of ESEVT
  4. If positive, an invitation is sent to the candidate to follow the E-learning course for ESEVT Experts, which will involve a knowledge of the EAEVE Code of Conduct, the ESEVT Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) and the inbuilt QA and ESG principles embedded within the SOP.

The timeframe for selection for students is as follows:

1. Four times a year the International Veterinary Students Association launches a call for applications for student members.
2. The students who wish to be considered to join a Visitation team must submit to the EAEVE Office:
  - A fully completed Application Form (see [LINK](#))
  - A letter of motivation
3. The EAEVE Office then requests advisory opinions from the ESEVT Coordinators' Group
4. A final decision of acceptance is made by the President of EAEVE and the Director of ESEVT
5. If positive, an invitation is sent to the candidate to follow the E-learning course for ESEVT Experts, which will involve a knowledge of the EAEVE Code of Conduct, the ESEVT Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) and the inbuilt QA and ESG principles embedded within the SOP.

Further details on the application of students can be accessed on the IVSA website ([LINK](#)) and in the promotional video ([LINK](#)).

In addition to this process, and following the ENQA review in 2017, EAEVE decided to introduce a Competency Framework for ESEVT Experts. The framework was inspired by the work of the Institute of Internal Auditors (IIA, USA, *na.theiia.org*), an international association promoting worldwide standards and frameworks for auditors, together with ENQA's QA professional competencies framework ([LINK](#)). Eight competences have been retained in EAEVE's framework, in order to adapt the framework to the individual circumstances and voluntary activities of ESEVT Experts, including Quality Assurance. These eight competences are:

- Demonstrating professional ethics
- Managing teams
- Mastering Standard Operating Procedure implementation
- Mastering Quality assurance and European Standards and Guidelines
- Communicating effectively
- Persuading and collaborating
- Critical thinking
- Mastering audit delivery

As promoted by IIA, each competence was then developed into a panel of sub-competences, each one of them being required (or not) for an Expert, a Chairperson and/or an ESEVT Coordinator, and correlated to the conditions leading to their development and assessment.

Full details of the Competency Framework including the over 90 sub-competences are shown in Annex 10. Most sub-competences are assumed to be already acquired by most Expert Visitors, as they are part of the required skills of a teacher or researcher. It was however necessary to formalise them so that each of them could proceed to a reflexive analysis of their knowledge and behaviour. The competency framework is linked to the E-learning training course

described above, utilising the sub-competences to produce an improved online course, with interactive and concrete examples, but without increasing the volume of time that the Experts must devote to it.

The acquisition of this E-learning course is assessed by a Multiple Choice Questionnaire.

Upon completing this E-learning course, the candidate is invited to participate as a new Expert within an ESEVT Visitation under the guidance and supervision of the ESEVT Coordinator during all steps of the 5-day onsite visit and writing of the Visitation Report. As part of this guidance and of the continuing education process, an extensive PowerPoint presentation is given to all the team at the beginning of the Visitation which fully explains the links between the ESEVT Standards and the ESG Standards, any recent amendments to the ESEVT SOP and all additional information which may be relevant for an ESEVT expert.

Finally, after the Visitation is concluded, there is the confidential Post-Visitation Questionnaire (PVQ) completed by all participants in which the Coordinator and others can record their opinion on the suitability of an individual Expert. For a new expert this PVQ is analysed by CIQA and upon receiving a positive appraisal from the PVQ, the candidate is formally included in the list of ESEVT Experts.

In order to keep themselves informed of changes within the ESEVT SOP and to enhance continuing education, the ESEVT Experts receive information by mail and are invited to participate to update webinars and to complete any upgraded E-learning exercise.

### **The Current Pool of individual experts available to EAEVE for accreditation teams**

The current pool of experts for inclusion on ESEVT teams comprise:

- ESEVT Director + 4 ESEVT Coordinators
- Total of 180 Experts (124 male / 56 female)
  - 41 Experts in Basic Sciences
  - 38 Experts in Clinical Sciences in companion animals
  - 26 Experts in Clinical Sciences in food-producing animals
  - 31 Experts in Food Safety and Quality
  - 22 Experts in Quality Assurance
  - 22 Expert Practitioners
  - Eligible Students (11 in 2021, 6 in 2020, 12 in 2019)

The Team members are chosen from this pool of experts, all of whom have undergone the rigorous recruitment, and training process with a proven knowledge of the current SOP (E-learning). This ensures that they understand the background to the ESEVT accreditation process as well as the potential benefits it could bring to the accredited VEE.

The student members of a Visitation team are deployed on all new and re-accreditation visitations under the ESEVT scheme, both within the EU and further afield. Their specific duties on the visitation are allocated to them by the ESEVT Coordinator and Chairperson. Typical areas, in which the student would be involved from the outset, relate to student recruitment, support, guidance and progression, where their current experience as a student brings valuable insights.

The selection of students is discovered within the links described above. As the student team members are chosen from their final or penultimate year (also from their first year after graduation), they bring a unique perspective as they are actively studying, and as such are able to relate to students from the VEE with whom they meet on the visitation. The mandatory feedback received from the other team members emphasises the importance of a student team member in facilitating the gathering of evidence relating to the student experience at the VEE.

The student member is regarded as an equal partner with the other members of the accreditation team and plays a full role in decision making as to whether the VEE meets compliance for the 55 Standards.

### **Training for Experts**

The E-learning course was initiated in 2015 and has been continuously improved and adapted to the SOP 2016 and SOP 2019. In 2018, a Competency Framework based on 8 core competencies for the ESEVT Experts was developed and presented to the 31<sup>st</sup> GA in Hannover.

A major upgrade of the E-learning course was planned in the beginning of 2021. The upgrade was envisaged to include the following: Incorporation of the ESEVT Competency Framework (i.e. the specific competencies, tasks and responsibilities of the ESEVT Experts during Visitations); Introduction of specific case studies in the form of situational judgement tests; Transfer of the course from the Moodle platform to Blackboard. Due to unforeseen time constraints, the upgrade could not be finalised. The phase 1 upgrade was completed in April 2021, in accordance with the SOP 2019 as amended in December 2020. The upgrade includes a chapter with Multiple Choice Questions (MCQs) on the Competency Framework in the form of situational judgement tests. CIQA had an opportunity to evaluate and comment on the proposed changes.

Following on from the successful use of webinars during visitations, a new series of webinars for **all** ESEVT Experts has been initiated, the first one on 24<sup>th</sup> May covered: amendments of the SOP (2021 and 2023); improvement of the quality and consistency of the Visitation reports; (Q&A). It is planned to hold such online meetings on a yearly basis in order to keep the experts informed and enhance continuing education.

### **Recruitment and selection of Expert Team Members**

Once a visitation to a VEE has been formally agreed and a mutually suitable date chosen, it is the responsibility of the EAEVE Office to recruit a suitable team. Initially, the Office, working with the five ESEVT Coordinators, one of whom is the ESEVT Director, distributes the yearly visitations amongst the Coordinators' group. As described above, the ESEVT Director with the help of the Office then selects the team from the pool of experts, bearing in mind the need for the omission of any experts from the VEEs country, an experienced expert to act as the Chair, an expert with proven QA expertise, gender balance and student eligibility.

### **Identification of the Re-visitation Team**

3 months before the Re-visitation at the latest, ECOVE through the EAEVE Office appoints a minimum of two Experts, one being a member of the previous Full Visitation Team (most often the Chairperson, who will chair the Re-visitation Team) and an ESEVT Coordinator (who should be different from the Coordinator of the previous Full Visitation to the same VEE). The number and specific expertise of Experts are decided by ECOVE on the basis of the number, type and complexity of the Major Deficiencies identified during the Full Visitation. All Visitors must be experienced ESEVT Experts.

### **Ongoing monitoring of Expert Team Members**

Unbiased work of the experts is ensured on the one hand by their selection and the “no-conflict of interest” statement. On the other hand, there is a post-visitation feedback, in questionnaire format, both from the VEEs and from the members of the visiting team, all of which include an evaluation of the performance of experts. These feedbacks are regularly evaluated by CIQA.

## Critical Reflection

- EAEVE is fully aware of the potential problems in running such a large amount of accreditation visitations to such an increasing number of independent nation states; for example, such nation states exhibit a wide variety in their tertiary education of new veterinarians as well as the recruitment and acceptability of veterinarians within their society
- The last two years of the pandemic have clearly indicated the success of a webinar-approach to quite large groups. EAEVE believes that such a webinar-approach would be very conducive for running a series of training courses for ESEVT Experts to both train new experts as well as informing established experts of changes within the SOP
- From a QA point of view, there is therefore a need to avoid any bias, deliberate or not, that could influence the outcome of an individual expert's opinion on an individual ESEVT Standard
- The rapid expansion of ESEVT accreditation visitations to VEEs geographically separated from Europe, has further emphasised the need for teams to be fully aware of potential differences. Such differences could be educational, social or religious
- Would the performance of an expert be substandard if an ethical issue would be raised? CIQA has forwarded this problem to the Director of ESEVT
- Coordinators of teams are responsible for safeguarding the Code of Conduct to be followed during visitations

## 6.5 ESG Standard 2.5 Criteria for outcomes

### Standard

*Any outcomes or judgements made as the result of external quality assurance should be based on explicit and published criteria that are applied consistently, irrespective of whether the process leads to a formal decision.*

As mentioned earlier in this SAR, any outcomes or judgements made as the result of external quality assurance by EAEVE are firmly based on explicit and published criteria found within the ESEVT SOP and also within the EAEVE website. There are two main areas where outcomes and judgements arise following the quality assurance visitations by ESEVT to national VEEs. Firstly, the judgements reached by the ESEVT team which are articulated into their Visitation Report; secondly, the judgements reached by ECOVE utilising the ESEVT Visitation Report.

### Judgements reached by the ESEVT team

As described within this SAR, the team of 8 experts, including a student and a QA expert, must reach a decision on accreditation by the final day of their visit on all of the 55 ESEVT Standards.

The path to this decision process is firmly rooted within the SOP. The SOP, which will be found in Annex 1 has explicit instructions/regulations to aid the team to reach these decisions. These instructions start with reading the SER from the VEE which sets out how the VEE believes it is compliant with a particular Standard; then requesting further information both before and during the visitation; then meetings with relevant staff and students; then finally discussing the Standard with fellow team members before a unanimous decision is reached for each Standard:

- The VEE is compliant with Standard X
- The VEE is partially compliant with Standard X because of.....
- The VEE is not compliant with Standard X because of.....

For an individual expert visitor, such judgments can really only be made by a gained understanding of the SOP and the underlying links between the ESEVT and ESG Standards. This knowledge is then reinforced by the detailed Power Point presentation by the ESEVT Coordinator at the start of the visitation. It is the task of the four ESEVT Coordinators to achieve a level of consistency in these judgements, a task which can only be achieved by their regular and comparative meetings.

## Judgements reached by ECOVE

As described above, the report following an accreditation Visitation to a VEE is initially collated by the Chairperson and the ESEVT Coordinator after collective input from all the experts. A resume of the report's main findings including commendations, and a clear formulation and explanation of potential minor and major deficiencies are disclosed to the VEE at the final exit meeting of the visitation and then the report is returned to the VEE for any factual corrections. The report is then sent to ECOVE for a decision.

As previously mentioned, EAEVE developed a QA approach to accreditation decisions based on establishing ECOVE as an independent body to use ESEVT as the source of factual data and team opinions, but retaining full decision control for accreditation. The VEE is made fully aware of the process and timing of the decision making during the exit presentation by the ESEVT Coordinator.

For each visited VEE, ECOVE analyses and discusses in detail the Visitation Report and decides to confirm or amend the recommendations of the Visitation Team. The Chairperson and/or the ESEVT Coordinator must be available in person (or via a video link) to ECOVE for discussing the Visitation Report and for answering any questions that may arise. In the decision from ECOVE the Major Deficiencies must be clearly listed in agreement with a standardised terminology and the VEE's status clearly identified, i.e.:

- Accreditation in case of no Major Deficiencies
- Pending Accreditation in case of 1 or several Major Deficiencies.

ECOVE has the right to change any aspects of the ESEVT Visitation Report. Details of such changes since the last ENQA Review in September 2017 to March 2022 are laid down in Annex 12. However, in summary:

- During this time ECOVE examined 85 ESEVT Visitation Reports
- Accepted 44 Visitation Reports as they stood
- In 26 cases changed the outcome of the ESEVT Report
- 12 Visitation Reports are to be examined by ECOVE on 8<sup>th</sup> June 2022
- 15 Consultative Visitation Reports were presented to ECOVE as information

In the case of Pending Accreditation, the VEE is given the opportunity to correct the Major Deficiency/ies. If such Deficiencies are corrected within 2 years after the Visitation, they can then be assessed/confirmed through a Re-visitation which itself must be requested within 1 year after the Visitation. In the interim the VEE will continue to be granted the status of Pending Accreditation.

In case the VEE does not meet the deadlines for requesting and/or undergoing the Re-visitation or if the Re-visitation confirms that the Major Deficiency/ies has/have not been corrected, the status of Pending Accreditation will automatically revert to Non-Accreditation, with a validity period starting from the date of the Visitation.

When a VEE offers more than one study programme to become a veterinarian, e.g. in different languages or in collaboration with other VEEs, ECOVE may take a different decision for the different study programmes, e.g. Accreditation for one programme and Pending Accreditation for another one. This approach is separate from a situation (described previously) where one VEE offers a Masters programme and then relies on separate teaching establishments to offer a matching Bachelor programme.

While the above timeline that follows a visitation explains the actual process, it is important to consider how the consistency and interpretation of the application of the criteria covering the standards, is applied by each visiting team.

The *a priori* situation with the standards that form the basis of the ESEVT process is that they must be fully understood by stakeholders, especially including the visited VEEs, and the processes involved in their assessment are also fully understood by both the VEEs and the expert assessors. It is a given that not only are these standards clear and logical



but their subsequent assessment by the experts is also clear, logical and evidence based. In addition, the assessments must be seen to be both equitable and especially repeatable for each visitation. It is obviously vital that decisions made following such assessments must be reliable and similarly applied on all visitations.

The success of such an approach should convince the body of stakeholders, involved in both the delivery and then dependence on veterinary higher education, that the evaluation of the standards is both fair and “standardised” across the sector. With respect to the consistency of the application of the standards by the team of Experts, the whole team (8 members) must reach a unanimous decision on the grade of compliance of the Establishment with the 55 standards (from the 10 Areas) compiled in the rubrics (pages 106-110 of the SOP). To deliver on such an analysis of the evidence-based criteria for the evaluation of the standards, EAEVE has developed an integrated system of checks and balances (i.e. ESEVT, ECOVE, CIQA) which are already discussed within this SAR.

### Critical Reflection

- The increase in Visitations, and especially the COVID-19 pandemic, has led to a plethora of cancellations and postponements for ESEVT visitations, as well as an increasing number of Re-visitations. One problem resulting from such delays is that the VEEs are often using different versions of the SOP which can affect both the writing/construction of the Visitation Report as well as difficulties for ECOVE to reach a decision as it must base such a decision on the SOP which was valid at the time of the agreement between the VEE and EAEVE

## 6.6 ESG Standard 2.6 Reporting

### Standard

*Full reports by the experts should be published, clear and accessible to the academic community, external partners and other interested individuals. If the agency takes any formal decision based on the reports, the decision should be published together with the report.*

On the EAEVE website (<https://www.eaeve.org/esevt/ser-and-visitation-report-of-visited-establishments>) there are over 280 reports on individual VEEs receiving ESEVT accreditation visitations. In addition, it is mandatory for the VEEs to publish such reports on their own webpages. The following reports are illustrative of these requirements:

- VEE of Budapest [1] (accredited):  
<https://univet.hu/hu/egyetem/eaeve-akkreditacio/>
- VEE of Camerino (conditionally accredited):  
<https://veterinaria.unicam.it/en/eaeve-conditional-accreditation>
- VEE of Aydin (non accredited):  
<https://akademik.adu.edu.tr/fakulte/veteriner/default.asp?idX=343434>

In addition, all Reports are shared on the Database of External Quality Assurance Results (DEQAR):  
<https://www.eqar.eu/qa-results/search/by-institution/>

*The standard asks for any formal decision to be published along with the report*

As explained elsewhere in this SAR, the formal decision on accreditation for a VEE is taken by ECOVE and the decisions as well as an explanation for the decision are always published at the end of each report on the VEE. To illustrate this point three samples are given below with the actual name of the VEE redacted:

### Sample 1

**Decision of ECOVE.** : The Committee concluded that no Major Deficiencies had been found.

The ‘University of [REDACTED]’ is therefore classified as holding the status of: **ACCREDITATION**

### Sample 2

**Decision of ECOVE:** The Committee concluded that the following Major Deficiencies were identified:

- Non-compliance with substandard 3.5 because of no compulsory training in 24/7 emergency services for all students resulting in insufficient acquisition of some of Day One Competences in clinical sciences;
- Non-compliance with substandard 4.13 because of no presence of relevant isolation facilities and biosecurity procedures in all clinical facilities.

The School of Veterinary Medicine and Science, University of [REDACTED] is therefore classified as holding the status of: **NON-ACCREDITATION**

### Sample 3

**Decision of ECOVE:** The Committee concluded that the following Major Deficiency had been identified:

- Non-compliance with Standard 3.5 because of insufficient number of hours of hands-on clinical training with real patients under the supervision of academic staff in both companion and food producing animals in order to achieve Day One Competences for each individual student.

The ‘Faculty of Veterinary Medicine of the [REDACTED]’ is therefore classified as holding the status of: **CONDITIONAL ACCREDITATION**

### Critical Reflection

- The changes in the ESEVT SOPs (e.g. SOP 2012, SOP 2016 and SOP 2019) have also resulted in changes in the nomenclature concerning accreditation status, a situation which has sometimes led to a level of confusion
- In the past decade EAEVE has undertaken visitations to VEEs interested in applying for accreditation; these visitations were called “Consultative Visitations” and the report was not published and remained confidential between the VEE and EAEVE
- Following advice from ENQA and EQAR, the consultative visitations have been replaced by an integrated but two-part approach of a preliminary visit followed by a full visit which are published on both the EAEVE and VEE websites
- EAEVE believes there will still be occasions where new VEEs from countries geographically beyond Europe will need a visit by a senior EAEVE individual to explain the concept of the ESEVT/ESG Standard led approach, but in a non-prescriptive and non-judgemental way.

## 6.7 ESG Standard 2.7 Complaints and appeals

### Standard

*Complaints and appeals processes should be clearly defined as part of the design of external quality assurance processes and communicated to the institutions.*

### Appeal procedure

EAEVE has a well-established mechanism for appeals to be made against accreditation decisions. If a VEE does not consent to or is not agreeing with any ECOVE decision, the right to appeal can be used. Details of the appeal procedure can be found under Chapter 1 1.8 in the current ESEVT SOP.

This current appeal procedure was developed as a consequence of a justifiable recommendation by ENQA following their 2017 visitation as described later in Section 8.

When a VEE believes that the decision by ECOVE is not justified by the findings in the visitation report, it must inform the ECOVE Chairperson through the EAEVE Office of its intention to appeal the ECOVE decision within 2 weeks. A detailed basis for the appeal must be made by the VEE 2 months after receipt of the ECOVE decision and the final Visitation Report. The first stage of the appeal process involves reconsideration by ECOVE with the option of the Chairperson and the ESEVT Coordinator of the relevant Visitation Team participating. The appeal may be accepted or dismissed.

If the ECOVE dismisses the appeal and if the VEE intends to continue the appeal process, it is then considered formally by an appeal panel. The panel comprises three members, all of whom should preferably have chaired a Visitation Team. The appointment of the panel is coordinated by the President of EAEVE with one member each appointed by EAEVE, one by FVE, with the appealing VEE having the right to nominate a third member. At least one member must have expertise relating to the subject area(s) under dispute. The panel selects its own Chair. All three members must sign a declaration confirming that they have no conflict of interest with the visited VEE and a commitment to strictly follow the ESEVT SOP and the Code of Conduct for Experts (Annex 15 of the SOP). The appeal and relevant discussion are initially carried out by correspondence. If a decision cannot be reached by this means, the Chair of the Appeal Panel may consider that a meeting is necessary, at the Establishment or elsewhere, between the members of the panel. Currently, if this is the case, all expenses must be paid by the VEE. However, a suggestion by the 2018 ENQA report did bring this situation to the attention of EAEVE and this is discussed later in chapter 8.

Once the Appeal Panel has reached a decision, by majority if necessary, its Chair will inform ECOVE by submitting an adjudicating statement which may or may not lead to a change of ECOVE's original decision. The EAEVE Office is responsible for informing the VEE of the Appeal Panel's decision in writing. The decision of the Panel is final. Until the end of the appeal process, the Visitation Report is not published, and the appealing VEE holds its current status. The report of the Appeal Panel is confidential and is not publicly available; nevertheless, all correspondence, documents and statements are collected and filed in the EAEVE Office.

Between 2010 to the ENQA review in 2017 there were 7 separate appeals. From 2017 to 2021 there have been 2 separate appeals.

An analysis of all these appeals demonstrates;

- 5/7 appeals were rejected by ECOVE and the decisions then accepted by the Establishment
- 2/7 appeals went further and were further investigated by the independent panel of three individuals with the following outcome:
  - 1/7 appeal was fully justified
  - 1/7 appeal was justified for one “major deficiency” but rejected for other “major deficiencies”

It is of note that the appeal which was fully justified, rested on an incorrect procedural decision acknowledged both by the Appeal Panel and by ECOVE.

Reasons for appeal by the Establishments included:

- Experts not taking sufficient account of data in the SER and annexes
- Decisions not taking full account of the “real situation within the university”

- Arguments against a perceived “lack of a strategic plan”
- Faulty interpretation on the number of clinically qualified teaching staff

### Complaint procedure

If the VEE believes that procedural faults have been made during the ESEVT evaluation process, it must send by e-mail to the EAEVE Office the official complaint and its argued basis not later than two months after the last day of the Visitation. The complaint is sent by the EAEVE Office to CIQA, which analyses the documents and evidence, including seeking further information from all relevant parties. CIQA informs the ExCom about its conclusions as soon as possible and no later than two months after receiving the relevant information. The ExCom decides to dismiss or to accept (totally or partially) the complaint and informs all concerned parties about its decision and subsequent actions.

### Critical Reflection

- Although the process for an appeal against an accreditation decision is fully explained within the SOP, EAEVE is well aware of the need to keep this process under review
- One of the main reasons for this latter situation is the increasing expansion of ESEVT accreditation into VEEs well outside Europe. Such VEEs are often not fully cognizant of this accreditation process that was originally developed for EU based VEEs and is firmly based on an ESG approach
- The current accreditation decision made by EAEVE on a VEE, has to take note of both the EU Directives as well as the ESG. Is such an approach suitable for VEEs in Asia, Africa and America?
- There is no cost to the VEE during the initial appeal process and also no charge to the VEE if any Appeal Panel is conducted virtually. There has not, to date, been any cost resulting from the Appeal Panel having to travel



*Photo courtesy of the VEE of the University of Veterinary Medicine and Pharmacy in Košice*

## 7. Opinions of stakeholders

The underlying concepts of quality and quality assurance system, as embedded in the higher education system, are shared within EAEVE by involving relevant stakeholders. Relevant stakeholder categories are all those that reflect the opinions present both in the educational process leading to the graduation of new veterinarians as well as in the wider society linked to the recruitment and workplace involvement of veterinarians. EAEVE's close working relation with FVE in maintaining ESEVT, ensures the active and inherent participation of one of the most important stakeholders of veterinary education: the qualified veterinarians.

The Post Visitation Questionnaire/Feedback forms collated and analysed internally by CIQA, are also important to address the criterion of ENQA to provide an analysis and critical reflection on stakeholders' opinions of an agency's key QA activities.

A summary of the relevant stakeholders, as far as the ESEVT accreditation processes are concerned, are:

- Veterinary Students including those seeking advice on admission to VEEs
- Academic staff within VEEs
- Non-academic staff involved in the extramural education of veterinary students
- University personnel involved in the administration of VEEs especially from a QA perspective
- Employers of veterinarians including national agencies
- The Public who are dependent on the skills of veterinarians in the context of animal health and welfare, as well as public health
- The qualified veterinarians themselves.

EAEVE attempts to systematically involve all such stakeholders. As they are obviously not a single, homogenous group, a diversified approach is required to recruit interested stakeholders and recruitment methods do vary among the stakeholder groups, for example from the International Veterinary Student Association (who provide student members of Visitation Teams) and the FVE who represent working veterinarians.

A summary of the main stakeholders for EAEVE who can be circulated with key documentation for their opinions and feedback would include:

- VEEs throughout the EC, also within wider geographical Europe and increasingly more internationally
- ECOVE and CIQA whose members are elected by EAEVE
- FVE which is an umbrella organisation of veterinary organisations within 38 European countries, including the Union of European Veterinary Practitioners (UEVP) and other associations of veterinarians.
- European Board of Veterinary Specialisation (EBVS). EBVS is the umbrella organisation for veterinary clinical specialties within Europe. EBVS includes 26 veterinary specialist Colleges, comprising more than 35 distinct specialties with more than 3300 veterinarians active as a European Veterinary Specialist. European veterinary specialists are ready to serve the public, its animals, and the veterinary profession by providing high quality service in disciplines as varied as anaesthesia and analgesia, clinical pathology, companion animal or equine internal medicine, surgery, ophthalmology, pathology, pharmacology and toxicology, public health, and zoological medicine
- International Veterinary Students' Association (IVSA). The International Veterinary Students' Association (IVSA) was founded in 1951 with a mission to benefit the animals and people of the world by "harnessing the potential and dedication of veterinary students to promote the international application of veterinary

skills, education and knowledge." The way it is achieved is by arranging biannual international meetings (congresses and symposia), running permanent projects focused on veterinary education, mental health, soft skills and career attributes, one health, and animal welfare, facilitating exchanges, maintaining close contact with newly qualified graduates and publishing regular newsletters. IVSA represents over 38 000 veterinary students from 73 countries and 194 veterinary establishments worldwide.

In conclusion, and as far as EAEVE is concerned, groups and individuals who have an interest in the education of veterinarians constitute the EAEVE stakeholders. The major groups can be divided into three. Firstly, the VEEs which provide the education. Secondly, groups representing veterinarians (and their employers) in the workplace. Thirdly, the students themselves involving themselves in their education and planning for their future careers.

EAEVE gathers stakeholder feedback in a variety of ways from virtual or face to face meetings to the use of emails. A useful example of this stakeholder feedback, is the SAR developed for the ENQA review of EAEVE in September 2022, as the SAR summarises the principles and processes behind EAEVE. The draft SAR was circulated to stakeholders on 27/4/2022 with feedback requested by 8/5/2022. As described above, the first group were the VEEs numbering nearly 100. The second group consisted of FVE and its umbrella organisation of veterinary organisations within 38 European countries. Thirdly was the International Veterinary Students' Association (IVSA) acting on behalf of IVSA groups within the VEEs.

Feedback was obtained from all three groups, with over 150 comments. Every suggestion and comment was analysed and considered, but not all of the feedback was then incorporated into a final draft of the SAR.

A further example for knowledge transfer concerning the educational processes in VEEs and associated quality assurance is organised within EAEVE's General Assembly Educational Days, which are discussed elsewhere in this SAR (Section 8) and are designed to raise the commitment of all stakeholders in the governance and work of EAEVE and its accreditation processes.

### **Critical Reflection**

- As EAEVE expands its accreditation programme beyond the "confines" of mainland Europe, it will be necessary to find additional methods for stakeholder involvement within such non-European countries
- These methods could include webinars aimed at national groups such as practicing veterinarians, employers of veterinarians, student groups and representatives from the national QA agencies involved in higher education
- These webinars would explain the EAEVE/ESG "Standards" approach and seek feedback from these national based stakeholder groups as EAEVE embarks on developing the accreditation process within their countries.

## 8. Recommendations and main findings from previous review(s) and agency's resulting follow-up (for second and subsequent reviews only)

There have been a number of recommendations emanating from ENQA over the past 4 years:

1. Recommendations after the 2017 ENQA review
2. Recommendations associated with the follow-up report by ENQA in 2020
3. Recommendations associated with the progress report submitted to ENQA in 2020

### Recommendations after the 2017 ENQA review

There were five recommendations following this visitation:

- ESG 3.4 Thematic analysis
- ESG 2.1 Consideration of internal quality assurance
- ESG 2.5 Criteria for outcomes
- ESG 2.6 Reporting
- ESG 2.7 Complaints and appeals

#### 1. ESG 3.4 Thematic analysis

*The ENQA Board recommended that EAEVE should strengthen its thematic analysis by selecting specific themes, eventually proposed by its members and stakeholders, such as for example: 'student centred learning', 'development of academic staff', 'recognition' or other relevant themes. A thorough and careful analysis of the information can show more developments, trends and areas of good practice or persistent difficulty. EAEVE has to define a cyclic period for its thematic analysis.*

**In response to this recommendation, EAEVE** has agreed that developing such a system-wide analysis on different themes was an excellent idea, especially combining them with the annual GA meetings. The feedback collected from the attendants in the EAEVE GAs were carefully analysed to create a programme for the second day of subsequent GAs.

#### Brief description of the 2018 Educational Programme

- The use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in Modern Veterinary Education
- Experiences and Trends in ICT based Veterinary Education
- Challenges of ICT in modern Veterinary Education
- Integration of the new French veterinary competency framework in Moodle in the French vet schools
- Introducing the database DISCONTTOOLS to Veterinary Education
- Integration of Virtual Patients in Modern Veterinary Education and creation of VeFaNet (Veterinary Faculty Network)
- Internal Quality Management: Evaluating and Improving Competency Based Higher Education

This formulation proved to be a success following the EAEVE stakeholder feedback, so was continued for the 2019 GA held in Zagreb:

### **Brief description of the 2019 Educational Programme**

- New Challenges in Veterinary Education
- Major Deficiencies under the SOP 2016: Statistics and Trends
- Defining the Minimum Use of Live Animals to respect the 3Rs Principle
- Student Admission Practises in Europe
- Launching a Clinical Skills Lab: Why and how?
- Importance of Soft Skills for Veterinarians
- Assessment Methods in Veterinary Education: Where are we now?
- Implementation of One Health in veterinary undergraduate education

The 2020 GA was like many other international meetings, a virtual one without an Educational Programme due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The 2021 GA was held in Turin with the following Educational Programme:

### **Brief description of the 2021 Educational Programme**

- Measures taken to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic. Measures and actions taken by different Establishments (experiences, best practices, online education methods, e-assessment methods)
- Students' experiences during the pandemic and how they coped with the related challenges and changes
- Amendments to COVID situation: follow up the acquisition of Day One Competences
- Digital Technologies and Artificial Intelligence in veterinary education
- ECCVT Expert Working Group on the impact of DT & AI in veterinary education
- The practice of Day One Competences in DT & AI from the practitioner's point of view
- Integration of DT & AI in the veterinary study programme
- Poster Lunch on "Climate Change and Veterinary Medicine" and "One Health approach in Veterinary Education"

## **2. ESG 2.1 Consideration of internal quality assurance**

*The ENQA Board recommended that the technique suggested and provided by the ESEVT SOP for assessing the ESG 2015 Part 1 is reviewed to make it more fit for purpose and in order to avoid misconceptions and either overlaps or omissions. Instead of seeing the ESG 2015 Part 1 as an add-on feature of quality assurance, it is recommended to integrate the ESG 2015 Part 1 standards and guidelines holistically and directly into the other standards provided in the ESEVT SOP concepts and hands-on templates for writing SERs and evaluation reports. This may render better services to developing and assessing quality and quality assurance policies and practices of higher education institutions.*

***It should be noted here that in reaching this judgement, the ENQA review team stated that its judgements concerning ESG 2.1 and ESG 2.5 are essentially based on only one real deficiency***

**In response to this recommendation, EAEVE** agreed that this major suggestion from ENQA was that instead of Standard 11 in the 2016 ESEVT SOP being seen as an add-on feature of quality assurance, this Standard should be holistically and directly integrated into the other 10 Standards provided for within the ESEVT SOP.

Therefore in 2018, EAEVE established a small working group comprising QA experts to implement this recommendation. Their job was to renew the SOP specifically by removing Standard 11 and integrating its QA principles into the remaining 10 Standards. In addition, the group reduced the number of the Substandards (present in



what is currently termed the “Rubrics”) by selective merging of these Substandards and aligning them to their respective standard chapters.

There were over 6 drafts/iterations disseminated and revised by all EAEVE members, EAEVE committees and stakeholders such as FVE, UEVP, UEVH, EVERI, EASVO, EBVS and IVSA.

The final Draft was successfully presented to the 2019 General Assembly in Zagreb for agreement as the new ESEVT SOP. A major factor resulting from this change to the new SOP, was the recognition of the importance for the experts covering the ten Standards to have some knowledge of the importance of QA within the visitation process, especially within the individual Standards they have a primary responsibility for. However, a decision was made and then implemented that there would always be a QA expert(s) on the Visitation Team who would work closely with their colleagues and as such, be necessarily involved in many of the Standards.

In addition, a measure of QA was implemented into the mandatory E-learning course undertaken by all experts.

### 3. ESG 2.5 Criteria for outcomes

*The ENQA Board strongly recommended that EAEVE should review its template for experts’ reporting, in addition to reviewing its template for drafting the SERs, in order to align the template content to the quality criteria (rubrics) laid out in the SOP chapters, and to do so by integrating the ESG 2015 Part 1 (standard 11 of the SOP 2016) holistically into the quality assessment criteria presented in standards 1 – 10 of the SOP 2016 in order to both avoid undue overlap and promulgate better understanding of the quality concepts fostered by ESG 2015 Part 1. It is also recommended to check more intensely that all reports explicitly cover all the quality parameters in a more holistic and systematic way.*

***It should be noted here that in reaching this judgement, the ENQA review team stated that its judgements concerning ESG 2.1 and ESG 2.5 are essentially based on only one real deficiency***

**In response to this recommendation, EAEVE has set out its response which is jointly outlined above for ESG 2.1.**

### 4. ESG 2.6 Reporting

*Although the panel can understand the reasons behind the EAEVE’s choice not to publish the consultative visitation reports that detect if the establishment reaches the threshold level for membership, the ESG 2.6 states clearly that full reports by the experts should be published. The panel acknowledges that consultative visitations are not a separate quality assurance activity of EAEVE but a part of the same ESEVT procedure (applied in some predefined cases), but for full transparency, the panel recommends publishing also the reports resulting from this part.*

**See later under “Recommendations associated with the progress report submitted to ENQA in 2020.**

### 5. ESG 2.7 Complaints and appeals

*The ENQA Board recommended that EAEVE make the complaints procedure (concerning procedural faults, as contrasted by appeals concerning flaws of judgement) explicit by explaining its existence and its procedures, e.g. in the SOP. Whether or not the complaints procedure can be integrated into the same framework as the appeals procedures, thus creating only one type of process, is a matter of judgement open to EAEVE policy. Since the appeal procedures can take a lot of time due to the fact that ECOVE meets only twice a year, abbreviations in process should be considered, e.g. by using telephone conferences or Skype meetings.*

**In response to this recommendation, the newly established SOP working group within EAEVE established a more formal complaint procedure within the Draft SOP which was then accepted by the EAEVE GA in Zagreb in 2019. This current procedure is described earlier in more detail under ESG 2.7 Complaints and appeals.**

In addition, a VEE is entitled to appeal against the formal accreditation decision taken by ECOVE. This appeal process is also described above under **ESG 2.7**.

## Suggestions for Further Development

Finally, there were a number of “Suggestions for Further Development” within the 2018 ENQA review Report that have been followed up by EAEVE. Although these were more fully discussed in the 2020 “Follow up Report to ENQA” they are summarised below:

***ESG 3.1: Although students are not requesting membership of ECOVE and the appeal panel, EAEVE can consider taking the students on board.***

In response, this issue has been discussed by ExCom and also by a discussion initiated between President Stéphane Martinot (EAEVE) and President Magda Jannasch (International Veterinary Student Association (IVSA)), resulting in a joint agreement that having a student on ECOVE and the appeal panel is not feasible, with both organisations not in favour of it.

***ESG 3.5: While the director and the 3 deputy coordinators are essentially sufficient to meet operational needs, EAEVE may consider the added value gained by having a member of staff who is professionally experienced in the current quality assurance policies and practices in the European Higher Education Area and could be a useful resource person for developing EAEVE activities further. A financial compensation of team members would strengthen the possibility to attract QA experts outside Veterinary establishments.***

After due consideration, EAEVE believes this is not currently necessary since one of the current ESEVT Coordinators has a specific QA experience. However, when the Visitation schedule picks up with the new 7-year cycle, it may be necessary to appoint another Coordinator with additional QA experience. In 2019 ExCom prepared and approved a document on the tasks and responsibilities of Coordinators in case there was an urgent need for an additional ESEVT Coordinator.

In the meantime, EAEVE Office staff are encouraged and financed to follow QA training courses. While EAEVE is firmly committed to recruiting more QA experts, both from a veterinary background as well as from a non-clinical background, financial compensation for the expert team will cause undue financial pressure on a number of VEEs, especially those within new EU member nations, who can often find it difficult to raise sufficient funds to cover the cost of a FV.

***ESG 2.4: In the few cases when there is no student from the student organisation, an ESEVT expert can recommend a student panel member. The formulation in the ESEVT SOP 2016 suggests that all student members need a recommendation by an ESEVT expert, which is not the case. The panel suggested clarifying this in the current SOP.***

If a student member is proposed by the Chairperson / ESEVT Coordinator of a Visitation, they still need to send a recommendation letter from their local IVSA representatives. This recommendation is not from the expert who selected them.

***ESG 2.4: The panel learned that students are now vital in the current ESEVT SOP. Nevertheless, students do not participate in the consultative visitations. The panel encourages EAEVE to involve students in the consultative visitations.***

In response, EAEVE does understand that this could be useful, especially with an experienced student, although it would involve additional costs for the VEEs and involve some difficulty in finding appropriate students.

However, as discussed below, recent evidence from ENQA and especially EQAR has convinced EAEVE to replace Consultative Visitations with an integrated Preliminary/Full Visitation in which a student would play a full role.

**ESG 2.4: A daylong training session for panel members in a single location would be beneficial. With experts drawn from throughout Europe and at times beyond, the expense would presently be prohibitive. Other than the current online training, a more electronically visual and real time training programme might nonetheless be beneficial. EAEVE may consider linking face-to-face-training at the annual GA for all attendees.**

In response, EAEVE currently believes that this would be prohibitively expensive (which the ENQA visitors actually agreed with). Nevertheless, EAEVE is developing an amended electronic training scheme for all experts and, in addition, more formal onsite training for New Experts by the ESEVT Coordinator. EAEVE has introduced regular ESEVT sessions (including a question and answer session) at the annual GA for all those attending. A more formal and extensive two-hour training course was developed and supported by a PPT presentation, which is now delivered by the ESEVT Coordinator to all Experts, but especially New Experts and the student member, on the first day of the Visitation, immediately before the first Team meeting on the Monday of each Visitation. In addition, programmed virtual online meetings are now being held for the visitation team during the two weeks prior to the visit.

***ESG 2.7: EAEVE should consider to bear the cost, at least its own, in cases of successful appeals and complaints if these have led to a change in judgement in the given case.***

This issue was taken into consideration by CIQA and it was proposed that if the appeal of the VEE is accepted by the appeal panel, the costs of the appeal procedure should be reimbursed by EAEVE. The proposal was presented to and taken into consideration by the ExCom in November 2018, and it was not accepted. Although it should be mentioned here that there is currently no fee for an appeal procedure.

## Recommendations associated with the follow-up report by ENQA in 2020

1. The ENQA Board recommended that EAEVE should further elaborate how the recommendation under ESG 2.5 was addressed i.e. whether the reporting template was updated to reflect the changes as presented under ESG 2.1

**In response to this recommendation, EAEVE has stated that** the reporting template is specifically set out within the new ESEVT SOP which, after extensive input from stakeholders, was finally and successfully presented to the 2019 General Assembly in Zagreb in May 2019 for agreement. Within this 2019 SOP, the reporting template consists of 37 pages which were extensively updated to reflect the major suggestion from ENQA that instead of Standard 11 in the old 2016 ESEVT SOP being seen as an add-on feature of quality assurance, this Standard should be holistically and directly integrated into the other 10 Standards provided for within the ESEVT SOP. This altered template within the 2019 SOP has now been successfully applied to several accreditation visitations.

2. The ENQA Board emphasised the need to pay further attention to the standard 3.4. and asks whether the cyclical period of thematic analysis has been defined.

**In response to this recommendation, EAEVE has now agreed** that the cyclical period of an overall thematic analysis should be on a four-year cycle and, after stakeholder involvement, be available for further discussion and agreement at the relevant annual EAEVE General Assembly. As far as the thematic/educational day is concerned this is an annual event at the EAEVE General Assembly where the selection of specific themes is decided on and, together with a selection of relevant speakers, is integrated into the General Assembly.

## Recommendations associated with the progress report submitted to ENQA in 2020

There was one major recommendation that resulted from this virtual meeting on 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2020 to discuss the Progress Report submitted by EAEVE. This recommendation concerned the Consultative Visitations that at that time were offered to VEEs wishing to join EAEVE.

The ENQA representatives at the Progress Report meeting, articulated their concern with the Consultative Visitations:

*“If you, as an agency, undertake an activity such as a visitation, it must always meet the requirement to have a student on the panel and to have a published report. If not, a visitation that is not related to another visitation will not survive the next peer review. Consequently, a consultative visitation that does not meet the above conditions will never be able to lead to a positive opinion from an ENQA panel.*

*In addition, the Progress Report ENQA Panel felt it problematic that this visitation is called a 'consultative visitation' and strongly advised EAEVE to replace this name, as for EAEVE to conduct a real consultancy activity at an institution that they would subsequently evaluate is completely against the rules as there must be at least 6 years between the two types of activity. This is clearly articulated by EQAR (as shown within EQAR: Use and interpretation ESG version September 2020 p. 20) in that Agencies should ensure that they do not carry out any external quality assurance (within the scope of the ESG) of the same unit (e.g. institution, faculty, department or study programme) to which they have provided consultancy during the past six years.*

This level of confusion was picked out by the ENQA review Report in 2018, namely:

*ENQA 2018 Report p. 32*

*While the ESEVT SOP 2016 was clear to the panel (within the limits described under ESG 2.1. above), the term 'consultative visitation' turned out to be confusing. It can be understood as a consultancy activity. In fact, it is a first visitation to check if an establishment meets the threshold level to become an EAEVE member.*

*ENQA 2018 REPORT p.15.*

*The purpose of a consultative visitation is an appraisal of the overall compliance of an establishment with ESEVT Standards. The visitation is advisory in nature and the result is not listed nor made public. A consultative visitation is a prerequisite for granting membership in EAEVE, as stated in the EAEVE statutes. Consultative visitations are an additional step in the procedure for full visitations, applied only for membership candidates from outside the EU to avoid non-deliberate applications. **In this way it is an additional but not a separate quality assurance procedure apart from full visitations.***

*ENQA 2018 Report p. 47*

*The panel acknowledges that consultative visitations are not a separate quality assurance activity of EAEVE but a part of the same ESEVT procedure (applied in some predefined cases), but for full transparency, the panel recommends publishing also the reports resulting from this part.*

### **Response by EAEVE**

After this rather detailed discussion on replacing Consultative Visitations, EAEVE undertook an extensive evaluation of the situation, resulting in the fully transparent approach of a combined Preliminary and Full Visitation. Details of this revision of the current 2019 SOP can be found in Annex 1 and have already been fully discussed in Sections 4.4 and ESG 3.1.

**In summary, after EAEVE's successful application for full membership of ENQA in 2018, EAEVE has carefully reviewed the recommendations and feedback within the 2017 ENQA review in order to further develop and enhance its quality assurance processes and services. In addition, during 2020, EAEVE submitted a follow-up report to ENQA followed by a voluntary, but very useful, progress visit in 2020, both of which produced more useful feedback for EAEVE to consider.**

# 9. SWOT analysis

## SWOT ANALYSIS for Strategic Plan 2020 - 2025

After due consideration by stakeholders and relevant committees, EAEVE has produced a SWOT Analysis which is set out below. Many of the findings within this document have already been both factually mentioned and factually discussed within this SAR.

The SWOT Analysis is based on the Strategic Plan 2020 -2025 including additions by stakeholders.

### MEMBERSHIP

ITEM	STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<b>Membership</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Well-defined membership</li> <li>-Extensive membership throughout European Establishments (almost 100% of the European Establishments are members)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Full member reclassified as Candidate member</li> <li>-Heterogeneity of Establishments' background and conditions</li> <li>-No procedure in place to help members after receiving Non-accreditation status</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Membership requests by an increasing number of non-European Establishments who want to use the ESEVT system</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Shortage of funding of veterinary education in Europe</li> <li>-No systematic contact with national accreditation bodies</li> </ul>

### GOVERNANCE

ITEM	STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<b>President</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Good support from the membership</li> <li>-Expertise in management and strategic governance required</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-No full dedication to EAEVE</li> <li>-No experience in EAEVE's decision bodies nor in ESEVT required</li> <li>-Very little contact with members except during GA or through ExCom members</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Recognition by stakeholders (FVE, EBVS)</li> </ul>	

<b>ExCom</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Real representation of each region through direct election</li> <li>-Good experience in management and strategy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Transmission and collection of information and interaction with members of the regions is highly dependent on the activities of the individual representatives</li> <li>-No experience in ESEVT and knowledge of the Statutes and SOP required</li> <li>-Members must rely on institutional memory of the President and office staff</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Consideration of geographic particularities by regional representation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Increasing number of membership requests from additional European countries will raise questions about regional representation</li> </ul>
<b>General Assembly</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Member attendance</li> <li>-Strong support on key decisions (2/3 majority for the Statutes)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Different level of English among members</li> <li>-Diversity of interest and perception of quality</li> <li>-Different level of knowledge of the rules of the association between members</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Sharing experience, discussion and cooperation between members</li> <li>-Increasing the quality in veterinary education</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Only one decision-making body each year</li> <li>-Over-consideration of external parameters (finances) could have impact on quality principles</li> </ul>
<b>CIQA</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Well experienced QA experts from different regions</li> <li>-Independence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-difficulty to position level of feedback and proposals from CIQA to ExCom</li> </ul>		

## MANAGEMENT

ITEM	STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<b>Director of ESEVT</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Experience in academic, management and ESEVT required in the application process</li> <li>-Long-time experience for the job and well-recognized by ExCom and members</li> <li>-Perfect knowledge of membership</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-No process in place to organise the transfer of knowledge to someone else if change is needed for any reason</li> <li>-Adaptation to new governance (President, ExCom) could be challenging</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Contact with other QA evaluation systems</li> <li>-Contribution to the credibility of the ESEVT on members and stakeholders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Discordance between the political decisions (President, ExCom, GA) and leadership of the Director</li> </ul>

<b>Office</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Well-established job descriptions, well-defined duties through task follow-up</li> <li>-Experienced staff being able to maintain high level of quality and knowledge of the process</li> <li>-Sufficient experience for some of the office employees to allow transmission of knowledge</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Diversity of tasks in limited period of time and high workload all over the year</li> <li>-Small team subject to potential overload if any problem arises with one or more member of the staff</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Highly attractive job</li> <li>-Enhance contact with stakeholders' institutions and other QA agency staff</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Increasing number of new solicitations</li> </ul>
<b>Finances</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Independence of funding</li> <li>-Efficient cost/benefit operation</li> <li>-Strict rules and strong follow-up of the financial trends and respect of budgeted figures</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Funding highly dependent on number of Visitations (excess of the ratio between Visitation fee and Membership fee)</li> <li>-Improvement of funding limited by members' capacity to accept increase of membership fee</li> <li>-No national government financial support</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Increasing the number of members and Visitations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Unsustainable funding</li> </ul>

### ESEVT

ITEM	STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<b>Evaluation System</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Quality recognized by ENQA accreditation of EAEVE</li> <li>-Well-established and experienced system run and developed in collaboration with the veterinary profession</li> <li>-Continuous improvements based on system analysis</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Lack of legal basis or official mandates for evaluation system and the consequences of outcomes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-The only regulated profession-specific accrediting peer-review system in Europe</li> <li>-Evaluation system used by non-European countries to build their own system</li> <li>-Following ENQA accreditation to be legally recognized by national authorities as accreditation agency for VEEs in European countries</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-New challenge of the profession and new organisation of veterinary teaching could be difficult to take into consideration to maintain high quality standards</li> <li>-Poor recognition of outcomes of evaluations by few national governments</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Transparent results open to the public</li> <li>-Harmonisation of veterinary training without homogenization</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Be an active and strong player to support development of quality teaching in Europe and all over the world</li> </ul>	
<b>Coordinators</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Highly engaged in the process and very professional</li> <li>-Allow permanent respect of the procedure and harmonisation of the Visitation process and report drafting</li> <li>-Contribution to the training of new experts</li> <li>-Good support by the Director and working well together as a group</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Only part time-dedication, which can induce overload of work and delays</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Monitor and develop the quality and repeatability of the evaluation process</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Discordance with team members or ECOVE on decision-making</li> </ul>
<b>Experts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Independent (non-paid), highly motivated and qualified</li> <li>-Mixing practitioners and academic experts in the same team and systematic involvement of students</li> <li>-E-learning system</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Insufficient number in some disciplines, renewal is not always efficient</li> <li>-Difficulty to engage and teach student experts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Develop international peer-review, to exchange expertise</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Decrease of mobilisation of experts and competition with national accreditation agencies</li> </ul>
<b>ECOVE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Independent (non-paid)</li> <li>-Mixing practitioners and academic experts in the same team</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Perfect knowledge of ESEVT not required for ECOVE members and ECOVE members are not allowed to be experts</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-No competency assessment and appropriate training</li> </ul>



# 10. Key challenges and areas for future development

EAEVE is facing a number of challenges that should be considered during the ENQA visitation in 2022.

The first challenge is the development of new teaching strategies by VEEs following important educational developments (e.g. Artificial Intelligence & Digital Technologies, soft skills, distance learning). Such new teaching strategies should be carefully monitored to ensure that the additional/altered education provided offers all the necessary elements in meeting the ESEVT and ESG standards, as well as providing enough experience for the acquisition of Day One Competencies by each student. Two examples of these new strategies would firstly be online teaching and assessment, and then secondly, the distributed model with the clinical aspects of the veterinary course occurring well outside the Faculty/School in the absence of a Veterinary Teaching Hospital in the Faculty/School.

The second challenge is the increasing interest in the ESEVT system from VEEs within not only non-EC European countries, but also from non-European countries. This challenge is on one side very positive as it helps to spread the concept of the ESEVT/ESG Standard approach, and so improving the quality of veterinary education. On the other hand, this raises issues for EAEVE to cope with, such as the increase in membership, with different cultures, habits and education levels.

A third challenge is the development of e-medicine within the veterinary profession and moreover the spread of artificial intelligence (AI and the use of big data). This challenge increasingly involves leading EAEVE, its members and stakeholders toward an in-depth review of future competencies that should be included in the curriculum of undergraduate veterinarians. The challenge is even more difficult considering that the Day 1 Competencies framework is already quite complex, resulting in some strategic choices appearing and evolving with the existing standards.

Taking these challenges into account, EAEVE is determined to further develop its activities especially in regard to its evaluation system and to continue in supporting its annual “Educational Day”, allowing members the opportunity for mutual discussion and sharing of ideas. The upgrade of the ESEVT is conducted on a permanent QA loop system with the newly established SOP working group set to analyse feedback from VEEs, experts and stakeholders (including the wider veterinary profession and students) but also including external reviews as the one conducted by ENQA.

Further actions will be engaged to put more emphasis within the standards on soft skills acquisition, welfare of students and staff and sustainable development goals. In addition, EAEVE is considering a more regular and continuous process for the follow-up of accredited VEEs; increasing the regularity of interim reports will be one option to be considered.

The support to members and the implementation of prospective reflection on key components of the future will continue to be conducted through regular meetings with members (regional meetings and General Assembly). Topics like: “*how to use experience from the Covid period to enhance teaching efficiency*”, “*AI and new technologies for veterinary use*” or “*One health education*” are some examples of what is covered and regularly discussed.

# Glossary of Terms

**ACVT:** EU Commission's Advisory Committee on Veterinary Training  
**AEQES:** Agence pour l'Evaluation de la Qualité de l'Enseignement Supérieur  
**AVBC:** Australasian Veterinary Boards Council Inc.  
**AVMA:** American Veterinary Medical Association  
**EAEVE:** European Association of Establishments for Veterinary Education  
**CIQA:** Committee on Internal Quality Assurance  
**CV:** Consultative Visitation  
**DEQAR:** Database of the European Quality Assurance Register  
**DIC:** Day One Competencies  
**EASVO:** European Association of State Veterinary Officers  
**EBVS:** European Board of Veterinary Specialisation  
**ECOVE:** European Committee of Veterinary Education  
**EHEA:** European Higher Education Area  
**ENQA:** European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education  
**ESEVT:** European System of Evaluation of Veterinary Training  
**ESG:** European Higher Education Area  
**EQAR:** European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education  
**EU:** European Union  
**EVERI:** European Veterinarians in Education, Research and Industry  
**ExCom:** Executive Committee of EAEVE  
**FV:** Full Visitation  
**FVE:** The Federation of Veterinarians of Europe  
**GA:** General Assembly  
**IAWG:** International Accreditors Working Group  
**ICT:** Information and Communication Technology  
**ICU:** Intensive Care Unit  
**IR:** Interim Report  
**IVSA:** International Veterinary Student Association  
**JUAA:** Japan University Accreditation Association  
**MCQs:** Multiple Choice Questions  
**MEF:** Merged Membership & Evaluation Fee  
**PSER:** Preliminary Self Evaluation Report  
**PV:** Preliminary Visitation  
**PVQ:** Post-Visitation Questionnaire  
**QA:** Quality Assurance  
**RCVS:** Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons  
**RSER:** Re-visitation SER  
**RV:** Re-visitation  
**SAR:** Self-Assessment Report  
**SER:** Self Evaluation Report  
**SOP:** Standard Operating Procedure  
**UEVH:** Union of European Veterinary Hygienists  
**UEVP:** Union of European Veterinary Practitioners  
**VCI:** Veterinary Council of Ireland  
**VEDEK:** Veterinary Medicine in Turkey



*Photo courtesy of Camilla Wiik Gjerdrum, VEE of the Norwegian University of Life Sciences*

# Annexes

## ANNEX 1

Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) 2019 as amended in September 2021

[LINK](#)

## ANNEX 2

Exceptional Transitory Amendment of the SOP (due to COVID-19)

[LINK](#)

## ANNEX 3

Strategic Plan 2020-2025

[LINK](#)

## ANNEX 4

Table 1: Distribution of the draft ENQA SAR to relevant stakeholders for revision

Stakeholder	ENQA SAR sent for revision	Feedback submitted
<b>Internal</b>		
CIQA	22.01.2022	13.02.2022
ECOVE	13.03.2022	17.03.2022
ExCom	31.03.2022	11.04.2022
EAEVE member VEEs	27.04.2022	08.05.2022
ESEVT Coordinators and Experts	27.04.2022	08.05.2022
<b>External</b>		
FVE	27.04.2022	08.05.2022
IVSA	27.04.2022	08.05.2022
EBVS	27.04.2022	08.05.2022

## ANNEX 5

Table 2: Visitations completed outside the EU until 2021

Country	VEE	EAEVE status	Type of Visitation	Date of Visitation	ESEVT status
Albania	Tirana	Candidate member	Consultative Visitation	22-23.04.2015	<b>NOT VISITED</b>

<b>Bosnia/H.</b>	Sarajevo	Candidate member	Consultative Visitation	13-16.10.2014	<b>NOT VISITED</b>
<b>North Macedonia</b>	Skopje	Candidate member	Consultative Visitation	03-05.10.2016	<b>NOT VISITED</b>
<b>Israel</b>	Rehovot	Candidate member	Full Visitation	21-25.02.2011	<b>Non-Approval</b>
<b>Norway</b>	Oslo	Full member	Full Visitation	24-28.03.2014	<b>Accreditation</b>
<b>Russia</b>	Kazan	Associate	Consultative Visitation	01-05.10.2018	<b>NOT VISITED</b>
	Moscow	Associate	Consultative Visitation	23-27.04.2018	<b>NOT VISITED</b>
	St. Petersburg	Associate	Consultative Visitation	23-27.04.2018	<b>NOT VISITED</b>
	Stavropol	Associate	Consultative Visitation	10-14.09.2018	<b>NOT VISITED</b>
	Ufa	Associate	Consultative Visitation	01-05.10.2018	<b>NOT VISITED</b>
<b>Serbia</b>	Belgrade	Candidate member	Consultative Visitation	03-07.11.2014	<b>NOT VISITED</b>
<b>Switzerland</b>	VetSuisse	Full member	Full Visitation	16-20.10.2017	<b>Accreditation</b>
<b>Turkey</b>	Afyon	Candidate member	Full Visitation	08-12.04.2019	<b>Non-Approval</b>
	Ankara	Full member	Full Visitation	26-30.03.2018	<b>Approval</b>
	Aydin	Full member	Full Visitation	11-15.10.2021	<b>Non-Accreditation</b>
	Burdur	Full member	Full Visitation	07-11.10.2019	<b>Non-Accreditation</b>
	Bursa	Full member	Full Visitation	24-28.02.2020	<b>Non-Accreditation</b>
	Elazig	Full member	Full Visitation	19-23.03.2018	<b>Accreditation</b>
	Erzurum	Candidate member	Full Visitation	15-19.11.2021	<b>Non-Accreditation</b>
	Istanbul	Full member	Full Visitation	12-16.10.2015	<b>Approval</b>
	Kars	Candidate member	Full Visitation	21-25.03.2016	<b>Non-Approval</b>
	Kayseri	Full member	Full Visitation	17-21.09.2018	<b>Accreditation</b>
	Konya	Full member	Full Visitation	15-19.04.2019.	<b>Non-Accreditation</b>
<b>Ukraine</b>	Bila Tserkva	Full member	Full Visitation	04-08.10.2021	<b>Accreditation</b>

<b>Belarus</b>	Vitebsk	Associate	Consultative Visitation	22-26.03.2021	<b>NOT VISITED</b>
<b>Japan</b>	Yamaguchi & Kagoshima /VetJapan South/	Associate	Full Visitation	09-14.06.2019	<b>Accreditation</b>
	Hokkaido & Obihiro /VetNorth Japan/	Associate	Full Visitation	08-12.07.2019	<b>Accreditation</b>
	Ebetsu	Associate	Consultative Visitation	28-31.10.2019	<b>NOT VISITED</b>
<b>Jordan</b>	Irbid	Associate	Consultative Visitation	9.11-03.12.2021	<b>NOT VISITED</b>
<b>Thailand</b>	Bangkok	Associate	Consultative Visitation	24-28.06.2019	<b>NOT VISITED</b>
<b>Tunisia</b>	Sidi Thabet	Associate	Consultative Visitation	05-07.03.2018	<b>NOT VISITED</b>
<b>Brazil</b>	Sao Paulo	Associate	Consultative Visitation	15-19.11.2021	<b>NOT VISITED</b>

## ANNEX 6

**Table 4: Meetings of the EAEVE Committees during the Covid-19 pandemic**

Meeting	Date	Meeting
<b>ECOVE</b>	02.12.2020, 05.05.2021, 21.06.2021, 29.09.2021, 14.12.2021, 30.03.2022	Online Online Online Online and in Turin Online Online
<b>ExCom</b>	03.12.2020, 04.02.2021, 02.04.2021, 21.06.2021, 29.09.2021, 14.12.2021, 02.02.2022 31.03.2022	Online Online Online Online Online and in Turin Online Online Onsite
<b>SOP WG / Coordinators</b>	11.03.2021, 06.12.2021, 22-23.02.2022	Online Online Onsite
<b>CIQA</b>	15.06.2021, 28.09.2021, 18.01.2022	Online Online and in Turin Online

## ANNEX 7

**Table 5: Visitations completed in a hybrid mode**

Establishment	Date of Visitation	Number of Onsite Experts	Number of Remote Experts
Padua (FV)	19-23.10.2020	5	3
Cordoba (RV)	26-28.10.2020	1	1
Zaragoza (RV)	02-04.11.2020	1	1
Vitebsk (RV)	22-26.03.2021	2	1
Lublin (FV)	19-23.04.2021	4	4
Lugo (RV)	27-29.04.2021	1	1
Zagreb (RV)	10-11.05.2021	3	1
Camerino (FV)	24-28.05.2021	5	3
Elazig (RV)	02-05.06.2021	1	1
Ljubljana (FV)	07-11.06.2021	3	6
Lyon (FV)	07-11.06.2021	5	3
Porto (RV)	12-16.07.2021	1	1
London (RV)	25-26.08.2021	1	1
Bila Tserkva (FV)	04-08.10.2021	7	1
Aydin (FV)	11-15.10.2021	7	1
Glasgow (FV)	18-22.10.2021	7	1

**ANNEX 8****Principles of ENQA reviews**

- The review is an evidence-based process carried out by independent experts
- The information provided by the agency is assumed to be factually correct unless evidence points to the contrary
- The review is a process of verification of information provided in the self-assessment report (SAR) and other documentation and the exploration of any matters which are omitted from that documentation
- The process is transparent, and outputs are published

- The level of conformity with the ESG required for ENQA membership is that of ‘overall compliance’, not rigid adherence.

As also clearly shown within ENQA’s website the “**Scope**” of the review covers:

- All external quality assurance activities of the agency under review that fall under the scope of the ESG, regardless of whether they are carried out in the agency’s predominant country/region of operation, in countries within or outside the EHEA, or whether they are compulsory or voluntary in nature
- The first ESG review of an agency will pay specific attention to the policies, procedures, and criteria in place. Comprehensive evidence of concrete results may not be required in all areas at this stage; however, the agency must be able to document how they expect to achieve results relating to all standards by the next review. For example, completed reports of thematic analysis may not be required if clear plans to complete such activities are demonstrated in the review
- The second and subsequent full reviews will require clear evidence of results in all areas. In addition, further reviews should reflect progress from the previous review. This is a mandatory element in both the self-assessment report and the external review report
- It should of course be noted that all reviews – whether first, second, or subsequent must always have a developmental approach and support the continuous enhancement of the agencies.

## ANNEX 9

### Points raised during the QA training courses in 2017, which reflected on the importance of QA components in each of the 10 Areas due to be assessed by the ESEVT team during a visitation

#### Area 1: Objectives and Organisation

- The development of a Mission Statement that must be embraced by all the ESEVT standards
- An organisational structure which allows input not only from staff and students but also from external stakeholders
- 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 timeframe and indicators for its implementation
- The VEE must have a quality policy which enhances the development of the culture of quality in the organisation

#### Area 2: Finances

- Allocation of funds must be regularly reviewed to ensure that available resources meet the requirements
- In addition, the lack of risk assessment within finances is relevant for QA; the VEE should always have a ‘plan B’
- Also, variations within this Standard from a QA perspective may be derived from the autonomy of the VEE, whether they depend on financial support from a “higher” university body or whether they have complete control of their finances as an autonomous VEE. In the former case, the VEE has to explain any difficulties in providing sufficient finances to the previously-set aims.

#### Area 3: Curriculum

- For the ESEVT team this Area is absolutely crucial from a QA perspective
- Programme learning outcomes must be regularly reviewed, managed and updated to ensure they remain relevant, adequate and are effectively achieved
- Standard 3.4 is the key section from a QA perspective as 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.



- Examples of how Standard 3.4 was deemed to fail under Area 3, would include:  
Insufficient committee structure on developing the curriculum and on monitoring the review outcomes
- Cyclicity is insufficiently emphasised; as it is an important issue for the ESG 2015 to have a system of periodic reviews. These periodic reviews might suffer from:
  1. Lack of input from a range of stakeholders
  2. Lack of sufficient information gathering for comprehensive reviews
  3. Lack of effective evaluation and responding to feedback
- At some VEEs, the committee on developing and reviewing the curriculum is merged with the team responsible for QA, whereas at others these two are separated. In the latter case, communication between the two is vital with written evidence
- There has to be a triangulation of the documents between the committee, the QA group and the stakeholders
- An important part of the programme at most VEEs is what is termed “External Practical Training (EPT)” or “Extra-Mural Studies (EMS)”, both of which refer to undergraduates spending time away from the VEE to gain experience within a wide range of veterinary related providers such as Farms, Abattoirs, Clinics, Government institutes etc. If EPT is widely utilised within a programme, the ESEVT team need to assess what are the QA mechanisms in place to:
  - Ensure a similar quality/standard of provision for a particular skill
  - Train EPT providers
  - Provide feedback to the VEE
  - Ensure effective management of EPT programme within the VEE

#### **Area 4: Facilities and Equipment**

- Facilities and equipment must be state-of-the-art
- It is important to have strategies in place for maintaining, upgrading and restoring all facilities and equipment related to learning
- Documentation should be available to demonstrate such strategies and non-compliance with this approach could be a deficiency from a QA point of view
- There should be a well-organised approach for delivering a clear operational procedure on biosafety and biosecurity with evidence of leadership within the VEE for this area; an area of critical importance in a “hands-on” teaching programme such as veterinary medicine. Significant problems in this area would again be recognised as a deficiency
- Also, evidence of any documentation relating to external QA (national agency or ISO certification, GLP, GPP, GCP)
- The QA of the Veterinary Teaching Hospital is more related to variations between European countries and the national ISO; such differences between VEEs among Europe has to be taken into account by the ESEVT experts

#### **Area 5: Animal resources and teaching material of animal origin**

- This is, of course, a unique Area with reference values/indicators to be assessed in each VEE
- Insufficiency within Area 5 could be a Major Deficiency on its own and compliance is covered by the ESEVT Indicators
- The number of animals that students encounter is considered as a learning resource
- For QA, the VEE must have a method of checking the numbers on a yearly basis and demonstrating how ‘low’ numbers are corrected
- Lack of such methods is a deficiency within the understanding and practice of QA
- Biosecurity and biocontainment aspects are also important (e. g. waste management)

#### **Area 6: Learning Resources**

- Area 6 has QA aspects: “The VEE must have appropriate funding for learning and teaching activities and ensure that adequate and readily accessible learning resources and student support are provided” (e. g. library, electronic databases and textbooks, IT, e-learning etc.)
- In addition, the regular analysis of students’ needs and requests regarding learning resources, i.e. ‘customer satisfaction’, is again within the approaches of QA
- Furthermore, external QA is possible for Area 6 when requested by another agency, such as from a central university education policy or even a national policy

### **Area 7: Student admission, progression and welfare**

- When evaluating the VEE against Standard 7 it is necessary to examine the flowchart for student admission and progression with at least three years’ worth of data
- Evidence should be provided of a regular review and subsequent reflection on the selection processes to ensure they are appropriate for students to complete the programme successfully
- Adequate training (including periodic refresher training) must be provided for those involved in the selection process to ensure applicants are evaluated fairly and consistently
- 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
- VEE policies for managing appeals against decisions, including admissions, academic and progression decisions and exclusion, must be transparent and publicly available
- 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 the ESEVT standards
- Data should be provided to illustrate actions taken following the above student input including feedback to the students

### **Area 8: Student assessment**

- From a QA point of view, the VEE must have a process in place to review assessment outcomes and to change assessment strategies when required
- QA will also include the quality control of the students’ logbooks/portfolios 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

### **Area 9: Academic and Support staff**

- Established criteria and transparent procedures should be used in the promotion of the staff
- For QA purposes, evidence should be provided of formal training for all staff involved with teaching, including good teaching and evaluation practises, learning and e- learning resources, biosecurity and QA procedures
- For QA, provision of evidence of a well-defined, comprehensive and publicised programme for the professional growth and development of both academic and support staff
- Evidence of formal appraisal and informal mentoring procedures including action and feedback.

### **Area 10: Research programmes, continuing and postgraduate education**

- The SOP used by ESEVT does not explicitly define QA within this Area. However, this remains a highly important Standard for the ESEVT visitation which ensures that training is research-based, and students have the opportunity to participate in research activities
- For postgraduate students, much of the points outlined under Area7 would also apply

## ESEVT Visitor Competency Framework

[LINK](#)

## Details of Publications where EAEVE is Mentioned

As mentioned earlier under section 4.5 International Activities, the following is a summary of the different areas in which EAEVE has been mentioned in print, which indicates the breadth and depth of its activities. The ‘mentions’ may be roughly grouped as follows, together with evidence of the varying publications:

5. EAEVE as the **accrediting body** – enumerated together with other accrediting bodies, even though without legal binding accreditation by EAEVE is considered necessary and beneficial and serves as the basis of
  - o comparison/benchmarking [1], [2], [3], [4], [5], [6], [7],
  - o source of prestige and motivation [8], [9]
  - o role in the job market [10]
  
2. ESEVT **standards triggering change** and efforts – different standards inspire VEEs to develop different fields of veterinary training such as
  - o Day-One-Competences (skills labs, skills training, development of competences both professional and “soft skills”, virtual patients, etc.) [11], [12], [13], [14], [15]
  - o improvement of biosecurity and biosafety [16], [17]
  - o re-thinking of FSQ and VPH training [18], [19]
  - o communication skills [20]
  - o curriculum development [21]
  - o teaching/learning methods [22], [23]
  - o evaluation methods [24], [25]
  - o ethics [26]
  
3. EAEVE **initiatives, projects, surveys**, for example
  - o European Veterinary Dissertation Project (1990–) [27]
  - o SOFTVETS competence model (2018– ) [28], [29]
  - o survey of animal welfare, ethics and law teaching (2012, 2019) [30], [31]
  - o student feedback used for development [32]
  
7. EAEVE **workshops and educational days** as sources of information [33]
8. EAEVE’s role in **ethical issues** in veterinary education or in veterinary professional ethics training [34], [35], [36]
9. EAEVE as **coordinator of projects or collaborator** with different international and national organisations (VETCEE, ECCVT, FVE, AVMA, RCVS, AWARE, etc.) [37], [38], [39], [40], [41]
10. EAEVE as subject to **criticism**
  - o impossible requirement of hands-on training for all students, e.g. in large-animal related clinical procedures [42]
  - o standards not feasible for developing countries. [43]

## Publications

[1] Yerlikaya N, Küçükbaşlan Ö. An example of accreditation applications of veterinary education in Turkey within the frame of current European Association of Establishments for Veterinary Education (EAEVE) parameters. *Eurasian J Vet Sci*, 2021, 37, 4, 303-312 DOI: 10.15312/EurasianJVetSci.2021.356.

”Results: As of December 20, there are 27 fully accredited veterinary schools out of 101 members of EAEVE. Accordingly, there are 3 approved faculties out of 13 member faculties of EAEVE in Turkey as of December 2020. AUFVM is identified as the first member and approved faculty of EAEVE. As an example of Turkey, AUFVM’s data is compared with foreign approved or fully accredited veterinary schools and strengths and weaknesses are determined.”

[2] Porrero IV, Femenía JO, Gómez-Martín Á, de la Fe Rodríguez C. La COVID-19 evidencia la necesidad de incrementar las competencias en economía de los estudiantes de veterinaria. *Revista electrónica interuniversitaria de formación del profesorado*. 2021 Jan 21;24(1).

”El análisis de los planes de estudio vigentes en las Facultades españolas de Veterinaria, revela, en primer lugar, que todas ellas cumplen con la normativa vigente en cuanto a la impartición de créditos que cubran las competencias en esta materia (ORDEN ECI/333/2008; EAEVE, 2019), si bien es difícil evaluar en los programas docentes su aplicación directa al estudio de las enfermedades o al cálculo del impacto económico de las mismas.”

[3] Humpenöder M, Corte GM, Pfützner M, Wiegard M, Merle R, Hohlbaum K, Erickson NA, Plendl J, Thöne-Reineke C. Alternatives in Education—Evaluation of Rat Simulators in Laboratory Animal Training Courses from Participants’ Perspective. *Animals*. 2021 Dec;11(12):3462.

”Nevertheless, studies also demonstrate the limitations of current simulator-based training [78,82,96,97] which, in turn, underscore the necessity of live animal training also in veterinary medicine with regard to the mandatory ”Day One Competences” and the legal framework provided by the European Association of Establishments for Veterinary Education (EAEVE) [98–100].”

[4] Handke S. Quality assurance in higher education: Business and benefits. In: 5th International Public Policy Conference Barcelona, 5 th -9 th July 2021.

”The mission of EAEVE is to evaluate, promote and further develop the quality and standard of veterinary medical establishments and their teaching within, but not limited to, the member states of the European Union (EU).”

[5] Jørgensen HJ, Hopp P, Moldal T, Das Neves CG. Report on the Norwegian-Mongolian mission NOR-MON-HEALTH. *Veterinærinstituttets rapportserie*. 2020.

”The School of Veterinary Medicine (SVM) is a part of the Mongolian University of Life Sciences (MULS) and is the only higher veterinary education institution in Mongolia. .... An evaluation by the European Association of Establishments for Veterinary Education (EAEVE) in 2012 pointed out that the funding of the faculty from the government was scarce and a need to strengthen facilities for and practical teaching in anatomy, pathology and clinical sciences (Wanner and Fodor, 2012).”

[6] Paula EM. *Matrizes Curriculares dos Cursos de Graduação em Medicina Veterinária do Brasil: Análise com ênfase no Ensino da Saúde Pública Veterinária*.

Associação Europeia de Estabelecimentos de Educação Veterinária (EAEVE) e a Federação de Veterinários da Europa (FVE), estabeleceram, de maneira geral, que para manter a qualidade da formação e da atuação dos médicos veterinários é suficiente um curso para cada 7-10 milhões de habitantes (DV, 2020).

[7] Yerlikaya N, BAŞAĞAÇ GR. A study on veterinary training in Turkey within the context of European Union standards. *Ankara Üniversitesi Veteriner Fakültesi Dergisi*. 2018 Mar 1;65(1):29-37.

”Accreditation of veterinary medical programs and institutions in the world was first introduced by the American Veterinary Medical Association. The EAEVE, the official accreditation authority for veterinary schools in Europe, was established in Paris in 1988. This study was conducted to assess the structure and functioning of education in veterinary schools in Turkey within the framework of the selected parameters of the EAEVE. The data were collected via information forms, then calculated and

evaluated within the context of the Main Indicators (R1-R20) to be used in the evaluation of veterinary schools. The results were interpreted and shown in tabular form. According to the results, 13 out of 24 veterinary schools in Turkey were members of the EAEVE as of December 2015. Nine schools were visited; four of them succeeded in passing Stage 1 evaluation and obtained approval status. There were no accredited veterinary schools that fully comply with the EU standards. The durations of education, courses in the curriculum, and ratios of theoretical courses to practical courses of these schools were generally in compliance with the European Union (EU) Directive 2005/36. However, despite this positive picture, it is foreseen that the accreditation periods of Turkish veterinary schools, which have tried to complete their processes, will be difficult because of the unreliable records related to the numbers of animals examined, diagnosed, treated and necropsies performed, and the lack of data related to some R values.”

[8] Balieva G. Motivation of english-speaking students to study veterinary medicine at Trakia University. *Trakia Journal of Sciences*. 2021 Nov 1;19(4).

”The prestige of the FVM and its EAEVE status were leading motives for 29.89% of the respondents. The undergraduates` choice was also influenced by the low tuition fee compared to other European universities, indicated by 12.64% of the respondents, as well as the proximity of Bulgaria to the country of origin for 10.34% of Englishspeaking students (mainly Greece, Turkey and Cyprus citizens).”

[9] Özen R, Özen A. Veterinary education in Turkey. *Journal of Veterinary Medical Education*. 2006 Jun;33(2):187-96.

” Although EAEVE accreditation evaluations are not obligatory for those EAEVE members not located in EU member countries, some veterinary schools in Turkey have become members of the EAEVE and began the accreditation process in the 1990s. These efforts suggest that veterinary schools in Turkey can reach European standards in the very near future.”

[10] Loeb J. Can the UK go global in its search for vets?. *The Veterinary Record*. 2018 Oct 6;183(13):393.

„But there are significant differences across the EU, according to the European Association of Establishments for Veterinary Education (EAEVE). For example, the vet school at Portugal’s Lisbon Lusofona University failed EAEVE’s accreditation evaluation last year. It now has ‘non-approval’ status, as do several other Portuguese and Spanish institutions. Yet if the RCVS were to refuse to recognise the automatic right of any graduate from one of these non-approved EU universities to practice in the UK, it could be sued.

The RCVS is therefore forced to discriminate in favour of graduates from the EU, including from non EAEVE-approved institutions, and to discriminate against graduates from institutions outside the EU – even if these happen to have higher standards. Istanbul vet school, for example, has EAEVE approval status, meaning it has been judged as superior to the likes of Lusofona. Yet this carries no weight with the RCVS because the current registration system is based primarily on mutual recognition, not EAEVE standards.”

[11] Ferguson DC, McNeil LK, Schaeffe DJ, Mills EM. Encouraging critical clinical thinking (CCT) skills in first-year veterinary students. *Journal of Veterinary Medical Education*. 2017;44(3):531-41.

”A solid academic foundation must include training in professional ethics, responsibilities, and attitudes. Such skill development is tightly associated with “professional competence,” implying the continuing need to learn, adapt, and respond to different contingencies, and to seek help from better-qualified colleagues when needed.17,18 It is notable that similar competencies have been highlighted in standards set by the European Association of Establishments of Veterinary Education (EAEVE).19”

[12] Tinacci L, Guardone L, Giusti A, Pardini S, Benedetti C, Di Iacovo F, Armani A. Distance Education for Supporting “Day One Competences” in Meat Inspection: An E-Learning Platform for the Compulsory Practical Training of Veterinarians. *Education Sciences*. 2022 Jan;12(1):24.

”The Department of Veterinary Sciences of the University of Pisa also adapted its delivery to effectively cover the EAEVE DOCs in a remote delivery format. The integration of traditional teaching methods with Information and Communication Technologies (ICT), Multimedia and Digital training by the creation of e-learning courses [12–14], responds to the objectives of the veterinary education...Accordingly, EAEVE’s latest reform of teaching procedural standards [20] recommended this switch through introducing learning tools to improve students’ ability in a problem-solving, rather than in an encyclopedic, approach [25,26].”

[13] Carr AN, Kirkwood RN, Petrovski KR. Effective Veterinary Clinical Teaching in a Variety of Teaching Settings. *Veterinary Sciences*. 2022 Jan;9(1):17.

Potential strategies to improve clinical teaching in different teaching settings would vary with the learning settings. For example, in traditional academic settings, case-based learning with incorporation of simulation models is one proposed strategy. The involvement of learners in ‘teach-others’ is a strategy for both traditional academic and clinical settings. Finally, clearly addressing Day One competencies is required in any clinical teaching setting.... Factors that have led to the need for alternative methods of delivery of clinical teaching in lieu of exposure to real-life practice. ... Accreditation/Regulatory Requirements (e.g., AAVMC, EAEVE, RCVS, VSAAC)...

[14] Duckwitz V, Vogt L, Hautzinger C, Bartel A, Haase S, Wiegard M, Doherr MG. Students' acceptance of case-based blended learning in mandatory interdisciplinary lectures for clinical medicine and veterinary public health. *Veterinary Record Open*. 2021 Dec;8(1):e14.

” Additionally, the European Association of Establishments for Veterinary Education (EAEVE) recommends Day One Competences which should be considered when developing ILs [Interdisciplinary Lectures].”

[15] Reeh SB. Untersuchung zum Einsatz von Key-Feature-Fällen als virtuelle Patienten mit neurologischen Erkrankungen. Dr. Med. Vet, Diss. Hannover, TiHo, 2021.

”Die EAEVE führt zwar in einer Liste von Ersttagskompetenzen allgemeine Ziele, wie das Durchführen einer vollständigen klinischen Untersuchung, auf, gibt aber keine fachbezogenen Kompetenzen an. Um eine Vereinheitlichung der Lernziele nicht nur auf Ebene der Curricula, sondern auch fächerspezifisch zu definieren, wurden Bestrebungen von einzelnen Arbeitsgruppen (z.B. in der Lebensmittelhygiene (EVFST 2018)) angestellt.”

[16] Vukičević TT, Jelačić S, Korpes K, Kolenc M, Đuras M. Trying to solve the formalin issue in the veterinary anatomy teaching (Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, Zagreb). *VETERINARIA*. 2021 Nov 11;70(Suppl 1):15-25.

”According to the recommendation of *The European Association of Establishments for Veterinary Education* - EAEVE, it is necessary to replace formalin with one of the non-toxic alternative methods.”

[17] Wierup M, Allard Bengtsson U, Vågsholm I. Biosafety considerations and risk reduction strategy for a new veterinary faculty building and teaching hospital in Sweden. *Infection Ecology & Epidemiology*. 2020 Jan 1;10(1):1761588.

„Isolation facilities...For EU 8 M. WIERUP ET AL. accreditation of the veterinary education, an extra protective fence had to be installed to prevent contact with possibly rabies-infected small animals if allowed to enter the outdoor fenced area [37].”

[18] Fazlović N, Čaklovića K, Muminović AJ, Nedžad H, Članjak-Kudra E, Muftić A, Muftić E, Smajlović M, Čaklovića F. Smart 3D meat inspection. *MESO: Prvi hrvatski časopis o mesu*. 2022 Feb 14;24(1):74-9.

”Postmortal meat inspection is a crucial part of education for every future veterinarian and an essential part of the day one competence (EAEVE, 2019).”

[19] Seguino A, Braun PG, Del-Pozo J, Soare C, Houf K, Baillie S. Evaluation of a Harmonized Undergraduate Catalog for Veterinary Public Health and Food Hygiene Pedagogy in Europe. *Journal of Veterinary Medical Education*. 2021 Nov 5:e20210061.

”One objective of the EVFSTG was to discuss the proposal from **EAEVE** for a harmonized European VPH curriculum for all undergraduate students...”

[20] Gruber C, Dilly M, Bahramsoltani M, Kleinsorgen C, Engelskirchen S, Ramspott S, Ehlers JP. Communication as teaching content of veterinary studies—a joint position paper from the DVG specialist group “communication and didactics” and the GMA veterinary medicine committee. *GMS journal for medical education*. 2021;38(4).

”According to the requirements of the European Association of Establishments for Veterinary Education (EAEVE), which apply across Europe, veterinarians should have certain general skills to practice their profession – the so-called day one competences – when they have completed their veterinary training [11]. The following day one competences are directly or indirectly related to communication (see table 2 (Tab. 2)).”

[21] Geukes A. Konferenzband uni. digital 2019: teaching, assessment, learning. 4-5 April 2019.

### 3. Eine digitalisierte Großveranstaltung nach dem erarbeitenden Lehrverfahren am Beispiel QuerVet

”Die Themen wurden von Dozierenden verschiedener Kliniken und Institute des Fachbereichs individuell ausgewählt, unterlagen aber keinem Gesamtkonzept. Studierenden-Evaluationen aus dem Jahr 2014 (Schunter, 2016) sowie die externe Evaluation der European Association of Establishments for Veterinary Education (EAEVE) zeigen klar die Notwendigkeit der Überarbeitung der Querschnittslehre sowohl im didaktischen Ansatz als auch in einer stärkeren Integration des Bereichs Veterinary Public Health (VPH) sowie der außerfachlichen Kompetenzen auf.”

[22] D’anselme O, Pelligand L, Veres-Nyeki K, Zaccagnini A, Zilberstein L. Analysis of teaching methods in anaesthesia in the undergraduate curriculum of four veterinary universities. *Veterinary Anaesthesia and Analgesia*. 2020 Sep 1;47(5):657-66.

”There are no standardized, worldwide-accepted pedagogical methods for veterinary universities to utilise when anaesthesia is taught. In this study, we focused on undergraduate anaesthesia teaching. The AVMA (American Veterinary Medical Association), the RCVS (Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons), EAEVE (European Association of Establishments for Veterinary Education) and the AVBC (Australian Veterinary Boards Council) proposed a set of aims and learning objectives required for their accreditation (“Day one skills”, see Appendix A). However, there is no information about what methods are currently used to secure these “Day 1 skills” and their effectiveness in producing competent practitioners, ready to perform anaesthesia on their first day in practice under the auspices of the same professional body...”

[23] Imhof L. *Die virtuelle Heimtierklinik-ein interaktives Lehrprogramm für Studierende* (Doctoral dissertation, Imu). München, 2020.

„Neben dem theoretischen Fachwissen sollen die Studierenden nach dem Studium auch klinischpraktische Fertigkeiten beherrschen, die von der European Association of Establishments for Veterinary Education (EAEVE) vorgegeben werden (Eaeofve, 2016).”

[24] Herrmann L, Beitz-Radzio C, Bernigau D, Birk S, Ehlers JP, Pfeiffer-Morhenn B, Preusche I, Tipold A, Schaper E. Status Quo of Progress Testing in Veterinary Medical Education and Lessons Learned. *Frontiers in veterinary science*. 2020:559.

”The European Association of Establishments for Veterinary Education (EAEVE) defined a list of “day 1 competencies” for veterinarians as approved by the European Coordination Committee for Veterinary Training (ECCVT) (28). Evaluating, promoting and developing the quality and standard of veterinary medical faculties in Europe are the aims of the EAEVE (29). These “day 1 competencies” are reflected in the PTT content (8).

The PTT is a formative interdisciplinary test, meaning that the results are non-graded and have no influence on the further course of studies (8). The decision to make the PTT formative is based on the aim to implement a tool to examine the students’ knowledge independent of the learning strategies (8). Thus, the PTT as a feedback tool enhances self-monitored learning and perhaps greater attention is given to teaching methods (27).”

[25] Steinberg E. Evaluation of Students Competences from Veterinary Medicine Study Programme in Order to Improve the Quality of Teaching and Learning. *Implicarea persoanelor interesate în asigurarea calității: un exemplu de diferențiere și integrare* Cathal de Paor 3 Evaluarea competențelor studenților de la programul de studii Medicină veterinară pentru creșterea calității predării și învățării.:16.

”The competence model was developed by the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine IQM-Team and approved by the Quality Management Council Board (Competence model Uni Ro, 2017). This model is based on the existing competences in our 19 Revista pentru Asigurarea Calității Vol. 9, Nr. 1 – 2, Decembrie 2019 ÎN ÎNVĂȚĂMÂNTUL SUPERIOR faculty and was developed and implemented in the 2012-2013 academic year. Also, the new competence model takes the European System of Evaluation of Veterinary Training (ESEVT) Standard Operating Procedures, 2016, regarding “Day One Competences” into consideration (SOP, 2016).”

[26] Kunzmann P. Wenn Tierärzte töten—Angewandte Ethik in ihrem Verhältnis zu Moral und Recht. *Berliner und Münchener Tierärztliche Wochenschrift*. 2020 Apr;133.

”Das Papier von FVE und EAEVE, der „FVE & EAEVE Report on Veterinary Education in Animal Welfare Science, Ethics and Law“ vom Juni 2013, rechnet ethische Kompetenzen zu den „day one competences“.

[27] Jonge GD, Elsinghorst T. European veterinary dissertation project. *In Libraries without Limits: Changing Needs—Changing Roles* 1999 (pp. 138-141). Springer, Dordrecht.

”In May 1989 the first proposal for the European Veterinary Dissertation Service (EVDS) was done at the General Assembly of the European Association of Establishments for Veterinary Education (EAEVE) in Brussels. Some discussion at the Assembly and by correspondence led to a revised proposal, done at the Assembly of the EAEVE in Brescia, May 1990 by prof.dr. S.G. van den Bergh, dean of the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine in Utrecht.”

[28] Kleinsorgen C, Steinberg E, Dömötör R, Piano JZ, Rugelj J, Mandoki M, Radin L. “The SOFTVETS Competence Model”—a preliminary project report. *GMS journal for medical education*. 2021;38(3).

The European Association of Establishments for Veterinary Education (EAEVE) as accreditation authority for veterinary education establishments also requests proof of competence training within their visitation and has provided a list of Day-One-Competences ([3], Annex 2). ... For the inventory of practices, self-evaluation reports of European veterinary institutions from the accreditation throughout EAEVE, literature as well as published curricula were searched for elements regarding communication, entrepreneurial and digital skills training.”

[29] Kleinsorgen C, Steinberg E, Piano JZ. Competence Model. 2021. 12 p. [https://softvets.eu/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/SOFTvets\\_IO1\\_Competence-model.pdf](https://softvets.eu/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/SOFTvets_IO1_Competence-model.pdf)

[30] De Briyne N, Vidović J, Morton DB, Magalhães-Sant’Ana M. Evolution of the teaching of animal welfare science, ethics and law in European veterinary schools (2012–2019). *Animals*. 2020 Jul;10(7):1238.

”In 2013, the Federation of Veterinarians of Europe (FVE) and the European Association of Establishments for Veterinary Education (EAEVE) adopted the Day-1 competences on animal welfare science, ethics and law for veterinary undergraduate education after having surveyed 33 European veterinary schools in 2012. In 2019, a follow-up survey was done to monitor the evolution of animal welfare teaching in Europe. A total of 82 responses were received, representing 57 veterinary schools from 25 European countries. Overall results showed that the teaching of animal welfare science, ethics and law has increased in response to growing societal needs, and that welfare is more and more internally embedded in the profession, which is reflected in the curriculum.”

[31] De Paula Vieira A, Anthony R. Recalibrating veterinary medicine through animal welfare science and ethics for the 2020s. *Animals*. 2020 Apr;10(4):654.

”Thus, taken together, a turn towards a broader conception of health to include the welfare of the animal [5,6]—one which is constituted by both animal welfare science and normative components [2,7]—is strongly recommended for contemporary veterinary medicine.” (5 - Reference to: Morton, D.B.; Magalhães-Sant’Ana, M.; Ohl, F.; Ilieski, V.; Simonin, D.; Keeling, L.; Wöhr, A.C.; Zemljic, B.; Neuhaus, D.; Pesie, S.; et al. FVE & EAEVE Report on European Veterinary Education in Animal Welfare Science, Ethics and Law. Available online: [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/266958798\\_FVE\\_EAEVE\\_REPORT\\_](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/266958798_FVE_EAEVE_REPORT_ON_EUROPEAN_VETERINARY_EDUCATION_IN_ANIMAL_WELFARE_SCIENCE_ETHICS_AND_LAW)

#### [ON\\_EUROPEAN\\_VETERINARY\\_EDUCATION\\_IN\\_ANIMAL\\_WELFARE\\_SCIENCE\\_ETHICS\\_AND\\_LAW](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/266958798_FVE_EAEVE_REPORT_ON_EUROPEAN_VETERINARY_EDUCATION_IN_ANIMAL_WELFARE_SCIENCE_ETHICS_AND_LAW)

(accessed on 20 February 2020).

[32] Ruohoniemi M, Forni M, Mikkonen J, Parpala A. Enhancing quality with a research-based student feedback instrument: a comparison of veterinary students’ learning experiences in two culturally different European universities. *Quality in Higher Education*. 2017 Sep 2;23(3):249-63.



”Curriculum overload was noted in Bologna (EAEVE, 2014) and this has also been a problem in Helsinki (Ruohoniemi & Lindblom-Ylänne, 2009). In Helsinki, curriculum development has been systematic; since the evaluation in 2009, research-based measures have been taken to develop the curriculum (Ruohoniemi et al., 2017). In Italy, the development, monitoring and implementation of degrees is established by law and quality assurance operates through internal assessment of results, aimed to identify strengths and weaknesses and plan for improvement.”

[33] Nagy, Zsuzsanna *The role of information and communication technologies for the improvement of veterinary education standard in Ethiopia* (Doctoral dissertation, School of Oriental and African Studies).

References to presentations at EAEVE GA 2018, Hannover

[34] Persson K, Gerdtz WR, Hartnack S, Kunzmann P. *Assessing Moral Judgements in Veterinary Students: An Exploratory Mixed-Methods Study from Germany*. *Animals*. 2022 Jan;12(5):586.

”Although veterinary ethics is required in veterinary curricula and part of the competencies expected of a trained veterinary surgeon according to the European Association of Establishments for Veterinary Education (EAEVE), knowledge concerning the effects of ethics teaching and tools evaluating moral judgement are scarce.”

[35] Nakata H, Nakayama SM, Kataba A, Yohannes YB, Ikenaka Y, Ishizuka M. *Evaluation of the ameliorative effect of Spirulina (Arthrospira platensis) supplementation on parameters relating to lead poisoning and obesity in C57BL/6J mice*. *Journal of Functional Foods*. 2021 Feb 1;77:104344.

„Ethical statement. All animal experiments were performed with the approval and supervision of the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee of Hokkaido University (approval number 19-0119), Japan. The institute of Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, Hokkaido University has been accredited by The European Association of Establishments for Veterinary Education (EAEVE) and regulated under the EU Directive 2010/63/EU, and all animal experiments are reviewed by AAALAC International.”

[36] Martinot S. *EAEVE is fully operational*. *The Veterinary Record*. 2020 Jul 25;187(2):e11 - (Letter).

”Finally, we would like to state that EAEVE is ‘fully operational’, with more than 100 members, and is highly engaged in the quality assessment of veterinary education, with more than 20 visitations conducted each year.”

[37] Jonker FH. *A personal view on basic education in reproduction: Where are we now and where are we going?*. *Reproduction in Domestic Animals*. 2022 Jan;57:7-15.

„In the Netherlands, the website [medicaleducation.nl](http://medicaleducation.nl) is intended for the distribution of medical computer-based training lessons. Several instructional materials from different Dutch medical colleges are available and can be found and used by students using their institutional access. In Europe, a comparable veterinary site should be developed that can be entered through institutional access. The European Association of Establishments for Veterinary Education (EAEVE) or societies like ESDAR could have a coordination role. The content should preferably be owned by the original makers to facilitate easy updating.”

[38] Tlak Gajger I, Mañes AM, Formato G, Mortarino M, Toporcak J. *Veterinarians and beekeeping: What roles, expectations and future perspectives?-a review paper*. *Veterinarski arhiv*. 2021 Nov 17;91(4):437-43.

”A recent investigation (IATRIDOU et al., 2019) carried out in cooperation with the European Association of Establishments for Veterinary Education (EAEVE), the Federation of Veterinarians in Europe (FVE) and some experienced lecturers from Veterinary Faculties, looked into whether the biology and diseases of honeybees and other beneficial insects are included in the study curricula in the 77 European veterinary education establishments - the Faculties of Veterinary Medicine (FVM), in the EU territory, as well as in the European Free Trade Area (EFTA). The results showed that 57 % of FVMs include teaching regarding honeybee veterinary medicine in their core study curriculum, but only 43% of them had these topics as separate subjects.”

[39] Avignon D, Farnir F, Iatridou D, Iwersen M, Lekeux P, Moser V, Saunders J, Schwarz T, Sternberg-Lewerin S, Weller R. *Report of the ECCVT expert working group on the impact of digital technologies & artificial intelligence in veterinary education and practice*. 2020. URL: <https://www.vet.unipi.it/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Relazione.pdf>

”The European Coordination Committee on Veterinary Training (ECCVT), having considered the outcomes of the workshop on the use of digital technologies in veterinary practice that took place in May 2018, has decided on the establishment of a joint working group of experts to reflect on the opportunities, risks and overall impact of digital technologies and artificial intelligence (DT&AI) in veterinary education and veterinary practice.”

[40] Liatis T, Patel B, Huang M, Buren L, Kotsadam G. Student Involvement in Global Veterinary Education and Curricula: 7 Years of Progress (2013–2019). *Journal of Veterinary Medical Education*. 2020 Nov;47(4):379-83.

”Since 2014, inspired by the students as partners concept, EAEVE has been collaborating with IVSA and SCOVE by advertising the position of the student expert within the veterinary student community. During the 2015–2019 period, 61.5% (24/39) of the student experts who participated in the EAEVE evaluation teams were selected via IVSA/ EAEVE’s selection procedure...”

[41] Sivc C, Sira XC. *societa’ italiana delle scienze veterinarie*. LXVIII CONVEGNO NAZIONALE SISVet CONVEGNO SICV XI CONVEGNO AIPVet XII CONVEGNO SIRA Pisa, 16-18 Giugno 2014 Università di Pisa. WORKSHOP 1 (organizzato da SISVet - Conferenza dei Direttori): EAEVE – ANVUR, Due sistemi di valutazione a confronto

”Sarà quindi un’occasione importante per fare il punto su questioni di comune interesse e per l’aggiornamento specialistico. Oltre alle comunicazioni scientifiche si svolgeranno i seguenti Workshop: • EAEVE - ANVUR Due sistemi di valutazione a confronto, organizzato da SISVet e Conferenza dei Direttori.”

[42] Fanelli D, Tesi M, Rota A, Panzani D, Camillo F. Variables Affecting Veterinary Students’ Ability to Accurately Interpret Ovulation in Live Mare Palpation. *Journal of Veterinary Medical Education*. 2021 Sep 27:e20210031.

”This last point is in contrast with the EAEVE guidelines, which recommend exposing all students to the same hands-on training. However, it is impossible to guarantee that 60 students ...”

[43] Maccabe AT. Advancing Veterinary Medical Education Worldwide: Where Do We Go From Here?. *Journal of Veterinary Medical Education*. 2020 Oct;47(s1):99-100.

”Some regions of the world do not have viable accreditation systems. Although some accrediting agencies, such as the AVMA’s Council on Education and the European Association of Establishments of Veterinary Education (EAEVE), operate transnationally, their standards may not be appropriate for VEEs in the developing world.”

## ANNEX 12

### Judgements reached by ECOVE between September 2017 – March 2022

[LINK](#)



*Photo courtesy of Håkon Sparre, VEE of the Norwegian University of Life Sciences*