

**European Association of Establishments for Veterinary Education  
European System of Evaluation of Veterinary Training**

**REPORT ON THE VISIT TO THE FACULTY OF  
VETERINARY MEDICINE OF CAMERINO, Italy**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The Faculty of Veterinary Medicine of the University of Camerino, recently transformed in “School of Veterinary Medical Sciences” (SVMS) is the only veterinary teaching establishment in the middle-Italian Region “Marche”. The School has a long history, dating back to the early 19<sup>th</sup> century when it was located in the university town of Camerino. In the 1950<sup>th</sup>, the government closed the Veterinary Faculty to reopen it in 1989. However, the old premises and facilities at the Camerino campus were incompatible with modern standards of teaching and services. The decision for a most unusual move of the faculty was taken in the early 1990. SVMS was progressively relocated to the small mountainous town of Matelica, some 15 km distant from the Camerino university site. Today the move is completed and all new facilities are operational. The setup is unique, because the SVMS is the only establishment of higher education in this small rural town and occupies 5 campus sites distributed throughout the township. Although the School is probably the smallest veterinary school in Europe, it influences strongly local economics, culture and the life of the whole community. In return, the municipality was and is the strongest advocator of the SVMS and of its continuous development. Hand in hand with the township and the strong support of the University itself, the help of the Region, the Province and numerous local supporters such as industry, commerce and not in the least the clerus, SVMS has developed a very functional veterinary campus in an area which is neither standing out for farming nor being close to larger cities. The nearest airport is in the province capital of Ancona on the Adriatic Sea, about an hour driving distance, the closest veterinary School is in Perugia which is located equidistant in the opposite direction of Ancona, but across the Apennine mountain chain. Local farming and food animal production is moderate around Matelica, given the mountainous character of the area. Nevertheless, small ruminants, cattle, pigs and horses are being raised in numbers sufficient for teaching. Poultry and rabbit farming is on the other hand more developed and together with the rich fishing and fish farming industry have positive impact on teaching. Companion animals are being attracted to the School’s teaching hospital from a wide area including the large port city of Ancona.

## **1 OBJECTIVES & STRATEGY**

### **1.1 Findings**

SVMS offers a single cycle degree course in Veterinary medicine (DVM degree) as well as several shorter degree courses (three-year course, master level 1 & 2, national specialisation) in Safety of Animal Production, Management of Coastal Areas and Aquatic Resources, Diagnostic Imaging of Dogs and Cats, Animal Health Breeding and Production. Appropriate quality control and management on all levels, and especially in teaching, is an overall objective of the School; to that effect the SVMS is certified according to ISO 9001 standards. Successful implementation of the nationwide new veterinary curriculum is another strong objective of the School. Thereby theoretical classroom teaching is progressively diminished in favour of practical- and hands-on teaching. Learning outcomes, teaching quality assessment, hands-on learning, and research based teaching are all integrated in the School’s operational principles. The small size of the School with 25 students enrolled in the

first year is commensurate to the relative small size of the teaching faculty and the relatively modest case load in some areas.

Like all governmental teaching establishments in Italy, SVMS suffers major financial cut backs. In trying to overcome the precarious economic situation and to compensate for the overall shortage of personnel on all levels, especially support staff, fund raising measures are an important strategic goal. Also building plans are under way to further improve some facilities, among them anatomy and necropsy.

## **1.2 Comments**

The Schools objectives are clear and concise and are published. Quality assessment on all levels is a cornerstone of the School's strategic planning. The small size is not critical and under the local circumstances must be seen as advantageous. Nevertheless, specialisation, especially in the clinical areas is somewhat hampered by the relatively small size of School in association with case load and research output. The geographic and socio-economic situation of the School is not likely to be helpful for solving such shortcomings within the next future.

## **1.3 Suggestions**

- To continue focussing on quality assessment and management on all levels for achieving EAEVE stage II standards.
- To increase case load in all species (especially horses) by offering specialised and high-quality services; to this effect, strategies for attracting EBVS-specialists and to support residency training programmes should be focussed on.
- A rotating clinical internship programme should be instituted for several reasons but strategically also to ease the financial burden of 24 hours clinical services.

## **2 ORGANISATION**

### **2.1 Findings**

Based on a recent ministerial decree (2009) Italian Departments and Faculties (with research and teaching tasks, respectively) are progressively transformed in "Schools" that include both research and teaching tasks. Schools have a large degree of autonomy. The University of Camerino harbours 7 Schools of which SVMS is the smallest. SVMS is headed by the Director who is elected among the professors by the School Council for a 4 year term. He represents the School in the University Committee which is chaired by the Rector. On the School level there is a democratic and transparent administrative structure with School organs (School Council, Direction Council) and several Committees on curriculum, research, development etc. Instead of departments, the new structure consists of "Sections". SVMS has two sections: "Basic and applied sciences..." and "the Veterinary Teaching Hospital (VTH)". The concept of tutorship is well developed and an internationalization policy is strongly pursued.

### **2.2 Comments**

The new by law imposed university structure consisting of schools with sections (instead of faculties and departments) seems to facilitate transversality and interaction between schools without compromising autonomy.

Students are involved in all decision making organs of the School and University.

Strong integration in the regional and local economy, agro-industry and academic culture is a strong point of the School.

### **2.3 Suggestions**

- To further develop the network of socio-economic partners and to intensify international partnerships.

## **3 FINANCES**

### **3.1 Findings**

Overall financing (Ordinary Financing Funds - OFF, that is running costs and salaries) are provided by the government. OFF is passed on by the University administration to the School at a fixed and predetermined amount, thereby limiting financial autonomy of the School. On the other hand, full financial autonomy is exercised on income generated through services. An overhead of approximately 8% is paid to the University (3% for research grants). The School decided to use 50% of such income for investments in teaching. The other half is used to support research, acquisition and/or maintenance of equipment; some of these funds are also returned to those who generated them in form of proportionate distribution. Public funding is progressively shortened and there is a governmentally imposed freeze for replacing retiring staff. These austerity measures are affecting all Italian universities, though. Students pay an average annual tuition fee to the University of €1150. The fee is commensurate to family income; students with poorer economic background pay less. Tuition fee increases for all students proportionally to undue long study time ("off course students").

### **3.2 Comments**

Given the relatively small size of the School, the income for services and of research is still relatively modest. On the other hand, an increase of public funding cannot be expected in the foreseeable future; to the contrary, further cuts may be anticipated. This makes forward planning difficult if not impossible. Nevertheless, largely because of the strong commitment of each faculty member, and despite financial shortcomings, the operating costs of the School seem assured and investment plans through 3<sup>rd</sup> party funding are being made. Example: acquisition of MRI unit planned. Financing of the 24hr Emergency Service has been assured until the end of 2012 through Regional and bank grants. The incremental increase of tuition fees in proportion of unjustified "off course" status is a welcome measure to counteract this nationwide problem.

### **3.3 Suggestions**

- Intensify research efforts to generate increased 3<sup>rd</sup> party grants.
- Forster specialisation in clinics to become a centre of excellence in many areas, thereby increasing income (example: medical imaging).

- Introduce a rotating internship programme to, among other, reduce running costs of the Emergency Service/Intensive Care Unit.
- Intensify partnerships with the industry for the same reasons.
- Develop a plan to obtain sponsorship for residency and other staff positions from industry and other stakeholders (pharmaceutical industry, medical supply industry, agro-alimentary industry and commerce). Strategic financial planning should be increasingly guided by the principles of the private sector, rather than relying on and waiting for public funding. University and government should be continuously made aware that veterinary education is among the most expensive academic formations, if not the most expensive (near €20.000 per student and year). Tuition fees will have to increase, if the current economy prevents appropriate government funding of veterinary education in Italy; lowering of educational standards would be the inevitable result of any further cuts in funding.

## **4 CURRICULUM**

### **4.1 GENERAL ASPECTS**

#### **4.1.1 Findings**

The curriculum characteristics were found as they were described in the SER. The curriculum of the Degree Course in Veterinary Medicine (DCVM) in Italy is defined at national level by law (Ministerial Decree 270/2004). The SVMS of the UNICAM has been one of the first Italian Veterinary Schools to start changing its curriculum (since academic year 2008/2009). In the academic year 2012/2013 the old curriculum will be completely replaced by the new curriculum. At present, classes of the first 3 years are being taught by the new curriculum, while students of the last two years are still following the old syllabus.

The SER describes the curriculum at the SVMS of the UNICAM in the academic year 2009/2010. The DCVM consists of 3,574 hours (91.8 %) of activity in EU-listed subjects and 320 hours (8.2 %) of activity in non-EU listed subjects for the “core” subjects were carried out. Other 150 hours are spent in elective activities which students (old curriculum) must select from a list of two Professionalizing Integrated Courses (PIC).

One major improvement of the new curriculum is the increase in practical teaching (“Tirocinio”) throughout the period comprised between the 2<sup>nd</sup> and the 5<sup>th</sup> year, and comprising 42 University Learning Credits (ULC) corresponding to 1050 hours (1 ULC = 25 hours). The “Tirocinio” is a “hands on” activity where small groups of students (2 to 6), starting in the 2<sup>th</sup> year, are introduced to different professional areas (animal production, clinical medicine/preventive medicine, food hygiene/public health, and surgery and obstetrics) and perform a series of pre-defined tasks under the supervision of faculty (intramural) and of specifically contracted veterinarians (extramural). Acquired skills are registered and evaluated in a personal log-book. The “Tirocinio” in Animal Production and the major part of the “Tirocinio” in Food Hygiene/Public Health are developed outside the School in public or private institutions selected by the SVMS on the basis of specific agreements. In order to allow students attending the old curriculum to get benefit from the increased

exposure to hands-on practice of the new one, additional practical activity (115 hours) devoted to the acquisition of the so called “day-one skills” was planned starting from the academic year 2009/2010.

In general there is a good balance between lectures, practical classes and the “Tirocinio” in the new curriculum.

The degree course is concluded by defending in front of a committee a written thesis. The graduation thesis work must start at least one year before the graduation by carrying out experiments in the lab or writing an in-depth review paper. The presentation of the final dissertation is obligatory and allows students to acquire the last 10 ULC necessary for the completion of their curriculum (in all 300 ULC). A student cannot sit this final examination without completing the personal log-book, where the acquisition of the day-one-skills is documented and certified. Day-one skills are acquired during the practical activity of the single courses, during the “Tirocinio” or during the additional practical clinical training.

#### **4.1.2 Comments**

As far as the General Curriculum is concerned, the team was able to verify that all aspects of the learning programmes are covered in the Degree Course in Veterinary Medicine. The courses are properly delivered and include extremely valuable high quality practical activities.

The average duration of study time at the School of Veterinary Medical Sciences of the University of Camerino as assessed during the last 5 year period, is 7.96, which is considered excessive. This is explained by the students as they either have to work during their studies (about 20%), as they want to stay longer in order to have more chance to practice or as they do not take exams on time.

The “Tirocinio” is recognized by students, staff and contracted professors as a good approach in providing adequate practical skills.

The relationship between students and teaching staff is excellent. The large animal curriculum seems to be attractive for many students that appreciate the rural environment.

Many students are actively involved in the social network of Matelica for social service as well as for sportive and cultural activities. As member of the faculty they receive a special card, which gives them discounts in different shops and public services.

#### **4.1.3 Suggestions**

- It seems that “Tirocinio” activities are running accurately but we recommend that in the near future, a self-evaluation procedure, including an assessment of the standards of performance, should be implemented.
- The concept of problem-based teaching and learning, which seemed as only being applied in a few areas, should be strongly emphasized across the curriculum.
- The principle of research-based teaching should be more emphasized
- The team hopes that the full implementation of the new curriculum will correct the excessive duration of study time at the SVMS which also is linked to the problem of

“off course” students. (The team recognises that this is a nationwide problem and not occurring only at the SVMS).

## **4.2 BASIC SUBJECTS & SCIENCES**

### **4.2.1 Findings**

Basic Subjects form part of the “in-house” curriculum and are not taught elsewhere. Basic Subjects (170 hours) and Basic Sciences (663 hours) account for about 21% of the curriculum (3,894 hours). They seem to be adequately taught and are not excessive, since most of the subjects contained therein are taught with a veterinary orientation, both in content and in practical work. Moreover, “Tirocinio” which starts already during the second year of the new curriculum, serves as link between basic sciences and the topics taught later.

Students enrolled arrive with dissimilar educational backgrounds (classical, scientific or technical education). As a result, basic courses must be offered to adjust for these differences. These basic courses are provided by the Faculty prior to the beginning of the core courses, which is before the start of first year classes.

The level of practical work offered ranges from 12 to 40%, depending on the subject, with a reasonable hands-on participation of the students. The number of students per group in practical work ranges, depending on the availability of staff, facilities and equipment, from 4 to 12 for each instructor.

Another positive aspect of Basic Science teaching is that although not all teachers implicated are veterinarians, instructors focus their teaching on pre-professional orientation of these subjects, particularly for practical work.

Hygiene, security and waste disposal appears to be adequate. Arrangements for disabled students are appropriate.

### **4.2.2 Comments**

The curriculum includes the major basic subjects required for veterinary training. However the level of knowledge of students enrolling the first year is highly variable. This means that foundation teaching in the basic subjects (“Bridging courses”) has to be provided by SVMS. This is effectively done but constitutes an additional burden.

Basic Sciences are well covered with a good coordination and a strong veterinary orientation.

Hundred and twenty hours of anatomy lectures appears to be an unusually large percentage of the total curriculum.

The most important items of the basic disciplines are adequately and enthusiastically taught. Although there is a good coordination within the basic subjects, increased teaching integration would be of benefit.

### **4.2.3 Suggestions**

- The University of Camerino should guarantee the basic knowledge of all the students in EU-listed Basic subjects such as for instance in “Physics”, even if bridging courses on Basic Subjects are offered and different aspects of physics specifically related to veterinary medicine are given during different courses of the curriculum.
- Hundred and twenty hours of anatomy lectures may appear a too large percentage of the whole curriculum. It might be considered to include transversal knowledge in this course by including some of the diagnostic imaging anatomy (radiologic, CT, MRI and endoscopy).
- In general, students have free direct access to teaching materials through the SVMS website; however the use of e-learning tools (e.g. the free web application Moodle) should be promoted.
- The proportion of course work of practical nature should be increased in some subjects such as Animal Biology, Chemistry and Physiology.
- The organization of core teaching in the traditional independent subjects should be revised with the aim of enabling and encouraging interdisciplinary teaching.

## **4.3 ANIMAL PRODUCTION**

### **4.3.1 Findings**

Students perform practical training in food-producing animals (farm animals) with regards to breeding and genetics, morphological evaluation, nutrition, rearing techniques and animal welfare, on live animals in contracted farms. In addition, animal shelters are also included in cooperative agreements to allow students to carry out practical activity on nutrition and management of dogs and cats as well.

All students practice handling of different farm animal species and learn herd and farm management; this especially during the Tirocinio in Animal Production (2<sup>nd</sup> year), but also during the Tirocinio in Clinical Medicine (3<sup>rd</sup> year), during clinical practical activity (4<sup>th</sup> year) and during 8-week on-farm services at contracted farms,. Students are educated here by teachers of the veterinary school as well as by contract professors that teach the students at the farms to treat animals under field conditions. This organization, including the mobile clinic, fully compensates at this school for a university-owned farm, which is often present at other schools.

The contractual agreements of the SVMS with external farms and facilities offer the students' opportunities to enhance practical activity and to apply the knowledge acquired during the training performed at various farms. The students are given ample opportunity to get hands-on experience in a variety of clinical activities such as abdominal/rectal ultrasound, rectal pregnancy examination, wound suturing etc.

### **4.3.2 Comments and Suggestions**

- There is a very good balance between theoretical and practical teaching, and the team's impression is that the Camerino students are very well educated in the

principles of animal production. Particularly impressive is the concept of involving private farms in the student education. Students are included in virtually all steps of animal husbandry and management on the farm.

- There is no farm owned by the faculty, but the use of private farms for teaching is a very good substitute. The faculty has to be congratulated for this concept and its organization. In summary, we have the impression that the education in animal production is one highlight of the veterinary education at SVMS.
- Nevertheless, on-farm activities should be increased as much as possible by signing new agreements with both farmers and practitioners.
- Practical teaching on poultry and rabbit medicine and production should be implemented by reaching more agreements with producers of those animal species.

## 4.4 CLINICAL SCIENCES

### 4.4.1 Findings

The current compulsory Tirocinio covers the subjects of Animal Production, Food Inspection, Clinical Medicine and Preventive Medicine, and Surgery and Obstetrics. Clinical training is provided through obligatory clinical rotation. These happen during the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> year and will be solely dispended during the fifth year in the future. All activities are carried out in small groups of students (maximum 6).

The small number of technicians (only 3 in total) gives the students the opportunity to participate to all kinds of tasks including nurses', technicians' and groomer's ones. The voluntary participation of post-graduate students in the reception area of the small animal clinic is also very positive.

Ophthalmology teaching is lacking, in theory and practice. Cases are sent to a professor of ophthalmology in Perugia.

The overall caseload of the small animal clinic is relatively low and students might not be exposed to a sufficient variety of cases. This is particularly true for small animal surgery including Gynaecology. There is an average of 400 surgical cases per year; this number, however, should increase with the recent implementation of the emergency service. In any case, every patient is presently used at its best for teaching purpose.

All students of 4<sup>th</sup> year divided into small groups spend 4 afternoons (5 hours per afternoon) during the 2<sup>nd</sup> semester and 1 "*intensive week*" (10 hours a day for 5 consecutive days), from June to September, at the SACD (Small Animal Clinical Division). The other "*intensive weeks*" are carried out during the 5<sup>th</sup> year by students divided into small groups (2-5 students) that spend 2 weeks with 2 cattle practitioners, 2 weeks with 2 small ruminant practitioners, 2 weeks with 2 swine practitioners, 2 weeks with 4 poultry/ rabbit practitioners, 1 week at the LACD (Large Animal Clinical Division) with 2 equine medicine and surgery practitioners (besides the activities carried out with budgeted teaching staff members) and 1 week at the SACD. Field activity in equine medicine and surgery is carried out by the respective contract professor and other teaching staff members. Contract professors have been hired either because they were supporting the university since a long time and welcoming students, or because they applied for the position as advertised.

The mobile (ambulatory) clinic is working very well and is specifically practice-oriented. These practical exercises occur in very large farms having different forms of agreements with the university. Under the guidance and with the help of contracted-professors, students are allowed to exert a large amount of practical tasks. Given the low number of students, the large numbers of animals and the time spent in the farms, students have a very good exposure to the large animal practice.

Students are involved every night in emergency service. They have to attend a minimum number of emergency duties as follows: 8 night duties (4 at SACD and 4 at LACD), 4 on-call nights (2 at SACD and 2 at LACD), 2 Saturday, Sunday and public holiday duties (1 at SACD and 1 at LACD) and 1 on-call Saturday, Sunday and public holiday duty (at SACD or at LACD).

Furthermore, students make clinical training in both SACD and LACD during the practical parts of the lessons (30% of the total amount of hours).

The acquisition of each clinical skill is listed in the Log-book and is certified by signature of the supervisor of each particular activity.

#### **4.4.2 Comments**

The overall image is very positive. Hands-on teaching and learning is an obvious priority. It is successfully implemented in both the large and small animal clinics and is recognized by the students as one of the advantages of the Faculty. The highly motivated team of teachers in turn inspire the students who are overall very proud of their faculty. The surgical case-load which is just adequate for the number of students will certainly continue to grow in the future due to the recent opening of the small animal emergency service. This will increase the students' exposure to a larger variety of cases. The new curriculum will strengthen further the hands-on teaching which is a positive characteristic.

Lack of ophthalmology teaching is a weakness in the curriculum.

Because of the small number of students and the great flexibility of the teachers, students are able to follow their cases even in different services. This compensates to some degree the limited variety of cases provided in the small animal clinic.

#### **4.4.3 Suggestions**

- The lack of ophthalmology teaching should be compensated with the creation of a specialised consultation in ophthalmology. This should be implemented as soon as possible in order to offer the students a complete spectrum of medicine and surgery.
- Although there is some staff with European Board qualifications (Diplomates), not all of them supervise residents. Whilst workload (and case load) make this understandable, it would be desirable in future to reinforce such programmes. Incorporating Diplomates in the clinical specialties either as full-time or as visiting professors will help start new residency programs and will contribute greatly to the international recognition of the university and will stimulate clinical research.
- Since not every student has the possibility to perform neutering procedures, some connections with shelters or animal protection associations could be further planned. Contract professors could be encouraged and supported to get more continuing

education and to take part in theoretical lectures, thus improving their didactic skills and level of theoretical knowledge.

- Extending the offer of contract professors to visiting professors (Diplomates) would certainly help to bring new experience and knowledge and would further support international recognition of the university.

## **4.5 FOOD HYGIENE & TECHNOLOGY AND VETERINARY PUBLIC HEALTH**

### **4.5.1 Findings**

The hours listed for lectures, laboratory, desk based and non clinical animal work, and the arrangements for Tirocinio, appear satisfactory.

The presentation on the course content was easily verified by observation of the documents and records confirming the attendance of students at lectures, their detailed practical group activities and Tirocinio, as well as a selection of Theses.

Basic knowledge in Veterinary Microbiology, Virology and Immunology is delivered to students in the 2<sup>nd</sup> year, before starting the Food Hygiene course (3<sup>rd</sup> year). Animal Welfare with respect to food production from transport and pre-slaughter handling to stunning and post mortem assessment of any welfare concerns is taught during Food Inspection.

Visits are made to the major food species slaughterhouses, meat processing plants, cheese factories and fish markets. Most activities are undertaken in small groups, where for instance the whole class visits the Slaughterhouse in Perugia, they split into small groups.

Supervision is either by University staff, or with the involvement of Contract Professors who are Official Veterinarians (OV) and other OVs acting in the plants on behalf of the Regional Health Authority. There is a very useful working relationship between the University, Regional Health Authority and Food Business Operators which allows a wide range of hands-on experience by the student, both with anatomical pathology and inspection procedures, as well as laboratory practical activities relating to the course.

Minor food species/foods are taught in theory, with some laboratory practical activity, for instance rabbits and honey.

There are good facilities for necropsy examinations in the dedicated area in the new slaughterhouse under construction, material is collected from other local premises at present and this will no doubt be developed further once the premises are fully operational.

### **4.5.2 Comments**

The staff must be congratulated for the work they have done to demonstrate so clearly how they have organised their courses and verified the activities that their students undertake.

Staffing, supervision and inspection arrangements will need to be finalised for the new slaughterhouse once it is operational. It will be extremely useful for teaching purposes to have access to small and large ruminant slaughter, swine and possibly horses, in one local site.

Two external examiners for the State Examination from the Regional Health Service commented how well the students were prepared in this matter.

#### **4.5.3 Suggestions**

- Although throughout the plant visits all students were seen to be appropriately dressed with protective clothing and hats it is evident from the presentation photographs that long hair is not always correctly contained, hair nets or covers should be used routinely on both safety and hygiene concerns.

### **4.6 ELECTIVES, OPTIONAL DISCIPLINES & OTHER SUBJECTS**

#### **4.6.1 Findings**

In the 5<sup>th</sup> year of the old curriculum each student must take an elective course called “Professional Integrated Course” (PIC) among several choices offered by the SVMS. Each PIC is composed by some modules and is oriented to practical work or topics of professional interest for a total of 150 hours. Overlapping with core subjects must be avoided and a practical approach must be maintained by teachers. The School proposes a list of PICs the previous academic year and students choose one of the PICs. Only PICs selected by at least 5 students are activated. At the end of the class, the student obtains the certification of the ULC after passing a single examination on all the topics studied in the PIC attended.

The SER shows the list of available elective compulsory subjects (old curriculum) divided in 2 different PICs (Table 4.0.j, page 57):

#### **PIC – Clinics of pets**

- Traumatology
- Ultrasonography including echocardiography
- Video-endoscopical diagnosis
- Dermatology
- Odonto-stomatology

#### **PIC – Clinics of horses**

- Video-endoscopical diagnosis
- Echographyc diagnosis
- Orthopedics
- Low-performance syndromes
- Instrumental diagnostics in obstetric (andrology and gynaecology)

#### **4.6.2 Comments and Suggestions**

- These PICs will disappear in the Academic Year 2012/13 as soon as the 5<sup>th</sup> year of the new curriculum is implemented.

## **5 TEACHING QUALITY & EVALUATION**

### **5.1 TEACHING METHODOLOGY**

#### **5.1.1 Findings**

Three different committees participate in the coordination of the teaching activities: the School Council, the Joint Teaching Committee (JTC) and recently activated Per-Year Committees (PYC). The aim of the learning process at the SVMS is in compliance with the Bologna Declaration and the recommended day-one skills of graduates. There is a reasonable balance between theoretical and practical teaching. Classroom attendance and all hands-on teaching are mandatory with the presence being checked. The attendance certification is obtained by the student in the first useful session of the School Council after the end of the semester, after communication by the responsible teacher of the list of students that attended a number of lectures considered adequate by the teacher and that must be higher than 70%.

Standard veterinary textbooks are supplemented by notes and documents, which are given to the students in order to favour the completion and the in-depth study of textbooks. Additional teaching material is also offered through the School website, coordinated by the Teaching Manager of the School and accessible through login and password assigned to each student at the first enrolment, as described further on.

Exposure to all common animal species (companion and food animals) seems to be satisfactory. Teaching of pathological anatomy on carcasses and organs is also well done. Herd health management through the visits to contracted farms is also regularly been done during the "Tirocinio". The 24 hours emergency service offers additional opportunities to gain practical experience.

The University Evaluation Board (UEB) has set up a system for the periodic, anonymous and voluntary evaluation of each teaching course based on the opinions of students. Every year, the UEB sends to the Ministry of Instruction, University and Research and to the National University Council for Evaluation of University System a complete report based on the evaluation forms distributed to the students at the end of the courses.

Hands-on teaching is a priority as well as tutorship seems to be a priority. This is reflected by the numerous comments we had on the close relationship between students and teachers. This goes beyond the pure professional level as many teachers become real mentors for the students.

Many "phantoms" have been home and hand-made in order to help students getting first impressions. In addition, in the small animal clinic as well as in the fields, the students have the possibility to practice ultra-sound, endoscopy etc. This is unusual enough to be acknowledged.

#### **5.1.2 Comments**

Specific learning objectives are clearly stated. Two main types of teaching methods are used: theoretical training and supervised practical training. Teaching at SVMS follows the

traditional system in which there is relative balance between theoretical teaching and practical teaching, adding more weight to the theoretical than to practical teaching.

There seems to be a broad good teaching atmosphere. Teachers are generally highly motivated and dedicated to their teaching work and are, as a general rule, quite open and friendly for students. In the classroom, students are taught principally by using power-point presentations and given written materials or articles, most of them available on the SVMS's web page, both providing an efficient platform for communication between teaching staff and students. The accessibility of internet sources is adequate.

Teachers stress quite often the importance of studying on English textbooks or research journals. However, students still tend to rely on their hand-written notes, on the official course notes if available, and on Italian textbooks.

In some courses a problem-based-learning method is used, but it does not seem to be widespread.

The limited number of students as well as the limited number of cases in the small animal clinic allows a real hands-on teaching as well as a real tutorship. In the near future, when small animal case-load increases, the number of teaching staff should be enlarged. It should be also mentioned that the majority of teaching staff is young and well motivated.

It might be useful to consider the use of standard operating procedures for given clinical situations.

Although the SVMS has obtained a considerable amount of financial resources to be used for its internationalization policy and, at present, the policy of the School is to increase the number of relationships for cooperation with EU and extra-EU faculties, the number of international agreements should be enlarged.

### **5.1.3 Suggestions**

- Implementation of problem-based learning should be encouraged as a way of making learning more effective and improving student motivation, especially in the clinical and public health areas. Moreover, the extension of the use of newer didactic concepts and techniques, such e-learning, should be promoted.
- The university should assure that student evaluations impact positively or negatively on changes in the curriculum and on evaluation of didactic skills of teachers. If possible, the results of the teacher's evaluation should be on the public domain.
- A system to reward teaching quality should be established.
- It might be useful considering writing Standard Operating Procedures for the most common clinical situations.
- The good relationship between teachers and students is an important point for success, and should be further encouraged.

## **5.2 EXAMINATIONS**

### **5.2.1 Findings**

The new curriculum is completed through the acquisition of at least 300 ULCs and the successful sitting of a final exam, which consists in the defending a written thesis. All the necessary ULCs can only be earned by successfully sitting the exam of each course. Teaching courses are distributed in 2 periods called “semesters”.

To facilitate the students in taking the different exams, examinations sessions are held throughout the year with about monthly frequency. According to the national law, the maximum number of exams necessary for obtaining the degree must not be higher than 30.

### **5.2.2 Comments**

All teachers spend several days during the year examining students, as they should offer at least 8 exam sessions per year.

No external examiner is employed except in the final examination (thesis) in which case the teacher assisting the student during preparation of his/her thesis has the option of requesting the help of an external advisor. In this case, the external examiner acts more like a “defendant” of the graduating student rather than a real examiner.

### **5.2.3 Suggestions**

- Although oral examinations allow students to develop communication skills, it would be a good approach to evaluate also the writing capabilities of the students.
- The team suggests, as a general rule, a more balanced examination structure with limitation of oral examinations within the whole curriculum.
- It seems to take a long time to graduate from the start of the course. It is to be hoped that the new curriculum will have a favourable influence on this, and that students should be encouraged to start their main body of the Tirocinio as soon as possible. However students don't seem to have a problem with taking nearly 8 years to graduate.

## **6 PHYSICAL FACILITIES & EQUIPMENT**

### **6.1 GENERAL ASPECTS**

The premises in general are in good condition and are easily accessible, for both the students and staff. Although located in different areas, they benefit from being in downtown; Although the SVMS is set in a relatively small town, the major part of small animal caseload comes from surrounding areas, yet, patients are drawn also from neighbouring regions.

All lecture rooms, laboratories and dissection and necropsy halls are perfectly adequate for the present number of students. The isolation facilities are well designed to ensure adequate bio-security in both small and large animals.

#### **6.1.1 Findings**

We have found that the physical facilities of the clinical divisions of SVMS are more than adequate with very good equipment for examining and treating small and large animals with medical and surgical conditions.

The new building assigned to the Small Animal Clinical Division (SACD) is well-designed, spacious, and provides up-to-date premises and equipment for clinical training. Most of the facilities and services necessary for a good level of clinical care and teaching are available. The SACD is well equipped and more than adequate for the present clinical caseloads. The recently opened 24-hours emergency service is a key factor for the practical training of the present and future students.

In most cases health and safety matters are well solved. Furthermore, the students have to take a course on instructions for personal safety. Such course is mandatory for every student.

### **6.1.2 Comments**

Visits to several premises indicated satisfactory arrangements for the practical activities undertaken by students across a suitable range of food businesses.

The building which hosts the microbiology and infectious diseases laboratories does not have sufficient space.

### **6.1.3 Suggestions**

- Efforts should be made to increase the microbiology laboratory space to accommodate adequately students and staff.

## **6.2 CLINICAL FACILITIES & ORGANISATION**

### **6.2.1 Findings**

The VTH is a modern facility, very well equipped for small animal medicine and surgery, diagnostics and treatments.

The small animal hospital is very well equipped. It contains enough exam rooms for small animals, surgery suites, and recovery room. Facilities for possible infectious diseases in small animals (isolation unit), including waste management, are more than appropriate. Facilities for a 24-hour emergency service as well as the intensive care unit are also present and well equipped. Cats and dogs are hospitalized in separated, new and well equipped wards. Biohazard warnings and room designation are adequately displayed throughout the hospital. Sinks are not available in every room but always nearby. Disinfection solution dispensers are present in receiving rooms. Eye-wash solutions are also displayed in many areas of the VTH.

Storage of drugs, including opioids, is made in closed cabinets. Antibiotics usage and prescription are kept to minimal numbers and always discussed. Special procedures, such as endoscopy including surgical endoscopy, radiography, abdominal and thoracic ultrasound, MRI and CT are available. Clinical pathology service is available on a 24-hour basis and is after regular receiving hours operated by the veterinarian on call.

A room is dedicated to skill lab, equipped with computers and video display from the operating theatre.

Small animal patient numbers are low, as an average of 10 new animals per day is presented to the clinics and around 400 surgeries are performed yearly. The facilities for large animals are adequate with exam stands for horses and cattle and appropriate surgery suites for horses. Diagnostic imaging consists of digital radiography, ultrasonography, and endoscopy. There are proper recovery facilities, animal housing and isolation units for large animals. Appropriate aeration and waste management are available. For equine emergencies, a stand-by on-call system has been developed. The number of horses, approximately 180 per year seems little but sufficient for the number of students. The ambulatory clinic is active and regularly visits large farms where contracts have been signed with owners and partner-veterinarians.

Many students use their own cars to drive to the different teaching location activities. However, bicycling or even walking is convenient to reach most campus sites.

Students participate hands-on in all clinical activities. They are covered by liability insurance, even when driving their own cars

### **6.2.2 Comments**

There is a need for enlargement of the case-load in small animals. These numbers of patients have improved lately and will certainly continue to grow with the opening of the emergency service.

The low case-load may somewhat hamper the teaching, as during the 2 weeks of intensive clinical work, students may not be exposed to an adequate number of different case scenarios. On the other hand, the concomitant low number of students and the half-time in the clinic during the first semester of the fifth year of the studies may in part compensate for this possible deficit. The total amount of time spent by the student on clinics will also be notably expanded in the new curriculum.

Students clearly get a good hands-on and teaching experience during their clinical rotations. All teaching, including essential manipulations and skills acquired are being logged in the "Tirocinio" student's individual logbooks and signed by both the teacher and the student. The system works well; in fact, students have the option not to countersign any particular item if they feel that they haven't acquired the necessary skill. Then the teaching procedure is offered again. Practical teaching in all species and in all clinical subjects fulfils the required standards.

Further specialization (i.e. interns, residents, diplomats) is needed.

### **6.2.3 Suggestions**

- It is necessary to increase the caseload for small animals. Efforts should be made to attract Diplomates of the European Colleges to initiate specialization with residency programs and rotating internships.
- Increasing the experience of the young generation of teachers can be obtained by sending them abroad or by inviting visiting professors.

## **7 ANIMALS & TEACHING MATERIALS OF ANIMAL ORIGIN**

## **7.1 Findings**

### **Animal Production Area**

Students perform practical training in food-producing animals (farm animals) with regards to breeding and genetics, morphological evaluation, nutrition, rearing techniques and animal welfare, on live animals within contracted farms. In addition, animal shelters are also included in cooperative agreements to allow students to carry out practical activity on nutrition and management of dogs and cats as well.

The agreement of the SVMS with external farms and facilities offers the students' opportunities to enhance practical activity and to apply the knowledge acquired during the training performed at the University Farm. The students are given ample opportunity to get hands-on experience in a variety of clinical activities such as abdominal/rectal ultrasound, trans-rectal pregnancy examination, wound suturing etc.

### **Consultations and patient flow service**

The Veterinary Teaching Hospital (VTH) is currently open for 52 weeks throughout the year for seven days a week. Scheduled consultations are from Monday to Friday, from 9.30 to 12:00 a.m. and from 3:00 to 6:00 p.m. The consultation service is based on appointments. An emergency care is active both during consultation hours as well as during nights and week-ends. All services are available for both small and large animals. Animal species include dogs and cats as well as large animals, mainly horses and bovines but also ovine and caprine. With regard to total number of cases, it is well known that each animal can serve as more than one case, both because more than one condition may be present, but also because a patient may constitute a case in the surgery rotation or for the anaesthesia and ICU rotation, the diagnostic imaging rotation, internal medicine etc.

A small number of large animals including 4 cows and 4 sheep are presently housed for teaching purposes. They are typically used during lectures (clinics and animal production) to demonstrate various non-invasive procedures of clinical examination, physiological functions related to nutrition and feeding, and animal behaviour. Students are actively involved in the handling of animals, in performing sedation, intubation anaesthesia, in helping the chief surgeon as well as in the recovery phase.

### **Emergency Service**

An emergency service is also active during regular consultation hours. This 24-hr emergency service is staffed by 1 veterinarian and 2 students each for both the small animal and the large animal service who are on duty from 6:00 pm until 8:00 am of the following day, providing also intensive care for patients undergoing surgery during the day or needing continuous care for medical reasons, as well as answering small and large animal emergency calls from outpatients. Faculty surgeons are on standby (on call) to perform emergency procedures when needed.

### **Food Hygiene/Public Health**

All students undertake supervised visits to observe the slaughter of all major food producing species, meat processing plants, cheese factories, and fish markets. A bus is provided for

the class trip to Perugia but otherwise students must make their own travel arrangements, usually by sharing cars.

External visits during the “Tirocinio” are usually undertaken in the region, but special arrangements can be made to do this elsewhere by agreement with other Local Health Authorities.

The new local slaughterhouse is still under construction; material is presently obtained from other local premises providing organs etc for practical activity in the functional necropsy areas; animal materials can be stored under refrigeration on site.

Waste disposal appears satisfactory.

## **7.2 Comments**

The ratios of animals available for large animal clinical training are above the EAEVE reference values.

The new SACD’s building and the 24 hours emergency service will yield in further increase of clinical cases for practical (clinical) teaching.

## **7.3 Suggestions**

Further efforts should be made to increase the case loads in both small and large animals.

# **8 LIBRARY & EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES**

## **8.1 Findings**

The SVMS Main Library is located in Block 3 - Building C and is divided into three different areas:

- Office (administration area for the head of the library)
- Archive / consultation area (with 60 seats for consultation and 6 computers for electronic resources)
- Study/Reading area (with 12 positions)

The loan service shows a decrease of requests for on-site consultation which is counterbalanced by an increase of the requests for at home consultations over the last two years.

The relatively restricted opening hours seem problematic. From Monday to Friday the Library closes at 19:00 h. and it does not open on weekends.

## **8.2 Comments and Suggestions**

The variety of bibliographical resources (books and journals) is sufficiently large, given the size of the school, mainly when taking into account the small number of students enrolled and the number of teaching and support staff. However, it would be interesting to increase

the number of available hard copies of reference textbooks suggested by the teachers, and in general the number of up-to-date textbooks available for loan should be increased in all areas.

We believe it would be helpful for the students if the library were extending its services at least per one hour every day.

## **9 ADMISSION & ENROLMENT**

### **9.1 Findings**

Admission is governed by a National examination process; in Camerino the number of students admitted annually is 25 Italian students plus a small quota of foreign students.

A bridging course is necessary for any student who on admission is identified as deficient in Basic Subjects such as chemistry, physics, biology and/or biomathematics.

### **9.2 Comments**

The relatively small number of students allows close communication with teaching staff and very good hands-on experience in practical activities.

### **9.3 Suggestions**

The number of students could probably be increased up to 40 without loss of the above benefits.

## **10 ACADEMIC & SUPPORT STAFF**

### **10.1 Findings**

The number of teachers involved in the Degree Course in Veterinary Medicine seems to be adequate if we just check the ratios related with the teaching potential of the school, but the team considers that the total amount of teaching hours carried out by the teachers is too high, and keep teachers too often away from research activities. It is also evident that the number of support staff is by far too low, taking into consideration the needs of the School for technical support in both teaching and research.

### **10.2 Comments**

The existing shortage of teaching and support staff may, in the medium-term, adversely affect the quality of practical teaching, delivery of services to the community and also research opportunities in the School.

### **10.3 Suggestions**

A strategic plan for an increase in the number of teaching and especially of support staff would augment efficacy and efficiency; we strongly recommend that this should be reviewed on the university level.

## **11 CONTINUING EDUCATION**

### **11.1 Findings**

Although there are several activities related to continuing professional education, the SVMS organises, on average, only a relatively low number of courses and continuing education activities; this is an area which needs to be improved for reaching optimal levels.

Because of the very high teaching load for individual teachers, it is difficult to allow teachers to participate on a regular basis at external congresses and meetings in order to improve their own formation and knowledge. Congress participation is largely based on individual initiatives, receives little financial support and takes place on an irregular basis.

Three Continuing Education courses have been provided for the Official Veterinarians of the Regional Health Authority in the last 3 years, plus an E-learning platform in 2010-11.

#### **Continuing education provided to the personal and teachers of the Vet School.**

We have not found any organisation for continuing education programs for the staff. However, we received information that this is taken into consideration in the three-year evaluation that every staff member should submit. Continuing education is not provided to the animal technician but they would be happy to get it. Contract-professors get continuing education only on their own initiative and on a voluntary basis.

#### **Continuing education provided to the local veterinarians**

Continuing education programs have mainly focused on diagnostic imaging and food hygiene. This is an important area and it is well done.

### **11.2 Comments**

#### **Continuing education provided to the surrounded veterinarians**

As increasing the case load is a priority, other continuing education programs should be offered in order to support the development of other clinical sciences and to advertise as much as possible in the community.

### **11.3 Suggestions**

#### **Continuing education provided to staff and teachers of the Vet School.**

Staff should receive more support for getting continuing education in and outside of the university. The faculty or the university should provide support or make compulsory the attendance of didactic training for every teacher as well as to encourage the continuing education of everyone.

Inviting « visiting professors » to regularly support the current staff has been helpful in many universities and should be considered. Visiting professors can provide support in the technical and clinical services as well as provide continuing education for the veterinary community and add to internationality. These actions usually contribute to publicity for the

school and improve patient recruitment. In a second step, visiting professors, if Board-certified, can help organizing residency programs.

### **Continuing education provided to the local veterinarians**

Efforts should be made to increase the amount of continuing professional education offered to veterinarians working in the region of the Marche and, where the SVMS has particular expertise, to those from further afield.

Courses can be provided by Diplomates-visiting professors in cooperation with staff members.

## **12 POSTGRADUATE EDUCATION**

### **12.1 Findings**

PhD programs (“dottorato di ricerca”) are offered and consist in a 3 year program of which at least 6 months have to be spent at a research institution abroad. After the completion of a PhD program, a minimum of 3 publications are mandatory of which 1 in an internationally distributed peer-reviewed journal. PhD lecture courses, concerning subjects such as statistics, bioinformatics, molecular biology etc, are obligatory but there is no requirement for a minimum number of course topics and hours. Scientific congresses have to be attended during the PhD studies. The PhD students earn a salary, which is increased during the period spent abroad. The PhD thesis is generally written in English and is defended orally in public. Due to financial restraints, there are presently only 6 PhD students at the Camerino Faculty. Approximately 30% of the current senior teaching staff has a PhD degree.

Formal residency programs aiming at the European diploma are currently lacking in the clinical sciences.

School of Specialisation and International School of Advanced Studies in Food Hygiene and Technology provide training in these subjects for those wishing to undertake the Public Examination to become Official Veterinarians. Two Diplomates, one PhD student and one Contract Researcher are involved.

### **12.2 Comments and 12.3 Suggestions**

The Faculty should enhance and encourage the concept of EBVS-specialization by demanding of all employed Diplomats to establish and to run residency programs.

The “Diplomat status” should be a priority or “condicio sine qua non” when hiring any new faculty member, especially in clinical sciences.

The Faculty should prepare long-term plans to attract and to employ future Diplomats.

A rotating clinical internship program should be established – one program for small animals and one for large animals (equine).

International partnerships should be developed by attracting more foreign PhD students, promoting resident exchange and by inviting guest lecturers more frequently.

## **13 RESEARCH**

### **13.1 Findings**

The SER does not give much information about the current research activities in the SVMS. The impression is that the research efforts are more fragmented than cohesive, but during the visit of the School only limited time was available to further analyze this aspect. However, the data shown during the visit in the different subject areas indicate relevant research activities with both regional/national and some international aspects. The level and number of recent publications is of good quality in some areas.

### **13.2 Comments**

All students are exposed to some research activities (with varying degrees of intensity according to the selected subject of the mandatory dissertation) during the development of their theses. This time is spent either carrying out experimental work or writing an in-depth review paper.

### **13.3 Suggestions**

We recommend introducing centralised coordination of research strategies towards veterinary themes, especially trying to integrate to some extent basic and clinical sciences and to integrate research on animal production, animal health and the safety and quality of food; also to encourage collaboration with national and international third party resources (industry)

To better commit undergraduate students to research, it would be very attractive to allow replacement of the thesis monography with an international peer-reviewed publication with the student as first author.

It would be very interesting for the students of the SVMS to promote their involvement in research during their entire permanence at the School. This could be done by implementing different research activities like, for example, intramural student's scientific congresses where work would be carried out by students in collaboration with their teachers/PhD students and presented in a way similar to regular congresses.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The SVMS defined the following general main objectives after the last EAEVE's evaluation:

- To implement the Tirocinio
- To change from the old to the new curriculum
- To create new physical facilities for the small animal's clinics
- To increment the number of hours devoted to practical teaching
- To enhance the number and diversity of cases available for practical clinical teaching and for necropsy work
- To transform the Faculty and Departments into a School with competences in both teaching and research

We hereby acknowledge that those objectives have all been reached, which translates into an overall major increase in standards and quality of teaching and services when compared to the last evaluation.

Many positive aspects emerged during the visit, which consistently matched the SER content. Amongst the most relevant ones are:

- The positive atmosphere that is clearly evident in the establishment, mirroring the good and close relationship between the students and the teaching and support staff;
- The unique but well functioning move to new premises in the township of Matelica;
- The relatively low average age of the teaching and support staff, and the high level of motivation and willingness, which enabled them to deal with the drastic changes that the faculty has had to overcome in recent years
- The excellent relationship of the School with the veterinary profession, the agricultural and business community and the society in general within the Marche region and especially within the communities of Matelica and Camerino.
- The commitment and dedication of the whole staff and young collaborators in both the small and large animal clinics, which has enabled them to overcome the difficulties related to the shortage of teaching and support staff, in order to actually expose the students to an adequate caseload of horses and, food producing and companion animals
- The awareness of the faculty that good teaching is a the priority
- The increase of "hands-on" activity in the new curriculum. The team was able to verify that all aspects of the learning programmes are covered in the Degree Course of Veterinary Medicine, which enables a new veterinary graduate to enter, with sufficient skills, the working community and to face the varied and demanding tasks of the profession. The courses are properly delivered and include a valuable practical activity of high quality. During all formal and informal meetings with local

representatives and visiting students, complete satisfaction was expressed with the teaching programme offered.

- The satisfactory condition of most of the new facilities and the high standard of equipment in some areas.

However the team noted that due to national and local factors, lack of funds is probably the main problem of the School, which essentially prevents the enrolment of new permanent staff as well as the possibility of extending or making more stable the appointments of non permanent staff. We consider the total amount of teaching load for individual academic staff as too high and the number of support staff as too low. Nevertheless, related standards are acceptable.

The building which hosts the microbiology and infectious diseases laboratories has insufficient space for proper teaching in any larger groups.

As far as the General Curriculum is concerned, all aspects are covered and the courses are properly delivered and include valuable high quality practical activities.

The average duration of study time is 7,96 years which we consider excessive. We expect that the full implementation of the new curriculum will correct this undesirable situation which also is linked to the problem of "off course" students.

Basic science teaching is satisfactory in all areas; nevertheless a more transparent and uniform system should be introduced to screen incoming students for adequate basic knowledge in the EU-listed Basic Subjects (physics, chemistry, animal and plant biology, biomathematics).

Hands-on teaching and learning is a priority and is successfully implemented in both the large and small animal clinics. The surgical case-load which is just adequate for the number of students; it should be monitored and should increase. The lack of ophthalmology teaching is a negative point and should be corrected. Introduction of rotating internship programmes and residency programmes should be a strategic priority. There is some staff with European Board qualifications on faculty without being involved in resident training; EBVS-Specialisation and resident training in as many areas as possible should be a strong objective

In Animal Production, students are very well trained. and this subject area is without doubt one highlight of the veterinary education at the School of Veterinary Medical Sciences of the University of Camerino.

In the area of Food Hygiene and Public Health, training is satisfactory.

All progress of practical and hands-on teaching is recorded and verified in a student logbook. Graduation is only possible when log book entries are complete and satisfactory. The staff must be congratulated for the work they have done to demonstrate so clearly how they have organised their courses and verified the activities that their students undertake.

## **DECISION BY ECOVE: FULL APPROVAL**

**However, one minor deficiency (low number of teaching staff) was identified by ECOVE and is to be rectified as soon as possible.**

### **Annex 1 Student`s Report (optionally separate)**

#### **ORGANISATION**

The Veterinary Faculty is located in the city Matelica, half an hour away from the campus of the city Camerino. It is distributed in different places in Matelica, making necessary the use of private transportation since there is not a public one to connect them. This is one of the problems even though students organize themselves and are used to bring their own vehicle.

The faculty is very small (approximately 500 students). This characteristic is very important as it leads to an environment really homely and friendly. Having a low number of students, the professor- student relationship is more close, allowing a better monitoring of the progress of each student and a more personalized teaching, improving learning and making nicer.

When they start the career, each student has two types of tutors: the senior ones, that are professors that lead the student during his whole career, by guiding them, and the junior ones, that are last year's students that advise, orientate and help student with every day's problems. The junior tutors are selected through interviews. The student's problems that are not solved by the tutors are taken to the school board where they are being discussed and solved.

The installations and the equipment are new; this indicates that the teaching is of good quality. The university has not its own farm, but it has animals for practices allocated in the hospital for big animals.

#### **ADMISSION AND ENROLMENT**

In the faculty of Camerino, this year they have enrolled only 25 students, since the number of students of the past years has been decreasing until the visit of the EAEVE, still, Camerino has reached up to 80 students. The average number of students is 40 per year that would be the ideal. Before the enrolment, when they finish their studies at school, the students have to pass an exam consisting of different of two parts; one of general knowledge and one, more specific, relating to the health science. According to the final grade, every student will have or not the opportunity to choose a career; higher the grade, more possibilities to enter to a career.

In Italy, the system of payment of the enrolment of the university is based to the income of the family, it is known as "rates", that is to say, the rich families pay more enrolment than the families with less annual income, being in that way the payment different. Therefore, some students have free education. This system is fine, since it permits to good, academically, students, but with less economic possibilities, to have the same opportunities with the students of better economic position.

**Suggestions:**

Not enrol over 40 students per course.

**STUDENTS ACCOMODATION, SAFETY, UNION FACILITIES, SOCIAL PROGRAMMES AND SPORT**

In the city of Matelica, there are various residences of students in order to accommodate all the students of the Veterinary School; still, there are several of them that live in shared houses in the suburbs of the village. The accommodation is very cheap; it does not exceed the 150 Euros per month per person.

The public transportation is one of the weak points of this faculty; it barely has one to communicate the different points of the city, making necessary the use of private vehicles. Still, students organize their route in order to pick up their colleagues.

In the university there is no any place where the students can meet each other and can socialize, but beside that many of the students belong to different associations of the university, being very active organizing extra academic activities. Every year, they organize a trip to meet other European faculties of Veterinary.

According to the University Statute, two students represent all students of the SVMS within the School Council. Furthermore, three students of the SVMVS have been elected by the whole student community of the UNICAM for representing all the students of the University: one within the Administration Council, one within the University Senate and one within the University Sporting Centre

Regarding to the athletics, the University's centre of sports is in Camerino, being necessary to move to this city to do sports. In fact, the SVMS has not its own sport premises, but there are several agreements with public and private sporting centres located in Matelica that allow students to use structures at special prices. Once a year, the faculty organizes a day of sports activities (trophies) to promote it.

One more disadvantage is the lack of a cafeteria; you have to leave the building in order to eat, going, for example, to the new hospital of small animals or to restaurants with special prices for students. Anyway, an area devoted to arrange a cafeteria is already present (in Block 3, Building C) and is going to be working within a short time (as reported in Annex 7, Plan 4.b.1 of the SER).

Moreover, the city hall of Matelica, has a big cultural proposal for the students; during the year they offer with low prices or for free various courses.

**Suggestions:**

Build a cafeteria

Let there be public spaces that encourage student association.

**TEACHING METHODOLOGY AND EXAMINATIONS**

The students are pretty satisfied with the methods of teaching and with the professors; it has to be highlighted the very close relationship between professors- students and the whole of the students.

Electronic resources are well used, even though now the web page is not working; the lectures are given in 'Power point' or in a digital format.

There are "key" lessons which are required to be passed; else the student can not continue with other lessons.

The exams are oral, like in every university in Italy. This type of examination allows the student to become fluent when speaking in public, have a global vision of all the materials given, to apply knowledge, and remember other subjects.

The problem with these tests is the difficulty of assessing students in an objective manner, as there are more factors involved in further consideration of the responses. The students can be doing their exams whenever they want to, when they are prepared. They have one opportunity per month. The exams are public, everyone can see them if they wish to.

Practices are covered during courses (for professionalizing subjects at least 30% of hours must be practical) and by a system of practices called "tirocinio" which is required by law in Italy. In the veterinary school of Camerino this system has been distributed starting in the second year to the fifth year, increasing the number of hours as the student passes the course.

External practices are truly custom and complete, allowing the students to acquire a major operation of the various species, letting them work with almost all of them.

The second semester in the 5th year, the tirocinio increases the number of hours, and the organization is good. The system is distributed in "intensive weeks". Students alternate two weeks with an intensive week of lectures throughout the second quarter, allowing them to give priority to this issue and without worrying about their theory classes.

The practice groups are very small, being the maximum number of 6-7 students, but usually consist of groups of 4. This is important aspect for the good quality of teaching.

During practical training, students have different facilities and tools to enhance learning. Almost all room at the two hospitals have cameras and projectors so that students can easily see the procedures.

In addition, large animal surgery can be seen live on the private network of the school, allowing the students access them and view them from home or elsewhere in the school.

The small animal hospital, has a multitask room for students to practice and review. It is equipped with tables, books and material like an ultrasound scan which has been set for students to gain experience with ecography. In addition, there are two rooms equipped with chairs and a screen projecting the surgeries. These rooms are used for special surgery and visited by many students, this allows them to discuss and learn the techniques without hindering the course of the operation.

Both hospitals have areas of hospitalization for animals with infectious diseases to prevent transmission to other hospitalized animal (isolation rooms)

**Suggestions:**

The exam should have a written part and it must have more value in the final result than the oral part. This will assess the students with greater objectivity.

Increase the hours dedicated to English, for students to acquire more skill when it comes to practice

### **TEACHING QUALITY AND THE ASSESSMENT THEREOF**

The group of professors of Camerino is quite young, very enthusiastic and most importantly they are hardworking. This is a very positive aspect for the university. There are several qualified teachers specialists in Europe and known within their field.

The theoretical and practical lessons are obligatory. The students have a log-book to demonstrate their attendance.

The involvement of students in the school is very high. The fifth-year students have to do a final-year project; they are the so-called "thesisistas". A teacher is designated as their tutor and he is in charge of the researching work of each student.

These students are doing the intensive weeks and they are the base of support of the two hospitals, along with teachers and technical staff.

Regardless, the so-called "off-course" students are very active as internal students of different areas. This makes everything to work easier, like it happens in teaching hospitals where the number of teachers is quite small.

The students evaluate the quality of the teaching method provided. Besides the problems are transmitted to the student delegates so they can be lead to the Faculty Board in order to solve them. The vast majority of these problems are solved without any problem and quickly.

One of the problems of this university is the average of years that it takes for a student to finish their studies, which is around 7.5 years. This may be due to the evaluation system of the subjects, which requires a lot of preparation by the students. It might be also being caused for the high number of hours spent in the school during the day, making it difficult for the students to have a good preparation for the examinations.

Another problem is the lack of teachers. There should be a higher number of teachers to allow the development of the investigation. That increment of the teachers would also cover the absence of other teachers at certain times, as many of them have no substitute.

#### **Suggestions:**

Create a system of veterinary "resident" students recently graduated who might work as veterinarians in order to help teachers. That would enable teachers to perform other work related to teaching and investigation.

Keep the role of the "internal students", making it possible for students to improve their skills as future veterinarians.

### **CLINICAL LEARNING AND HANDS ON APPLICATIONS**

There are enough clinical cases to ensure each student having hands-on experience.

Tirocinio is the faculty clinical cases programme which is well structured.. Students have the opportunity of learning productive management of animals and their handling.

The rest of practical course focus in each professional specialization the students may choose and those are really complete.

The main problem is that there is not public transport to each farm so they have to organize sharing cars.

In addition to Tirocinio programme, the students have the chance of doing an internship in the different services offered by the faculty as volunteers. These internships help them improving their skills in animals managing at the clinic. It is also good because they help teachers at the time they learn in different fields.

Small animal's hospital is really good and has high growing potential. Students have created digital database of each patient which will be really useful in the future. The small animal's rehabilitation area is really good being a reference in Italy.

The Faculty also has some agreements with companies in Italy and other countries where students may learn procedures to start with an investigation career.

### **Suggestions:**

Some labs are too small so it would be necessary to create a new big lab dedicated exclusively to teachers' research and postgraduate work leaving the small labs to graduates and external analysis.

In infectious diseases cases, although students practice biomolecular techniques for virus identification, they should also work with viral diseases using classic culture and isolation techniques.

Create a resident veterinarians system where graduated students may do part of teachers work to allow them focusing more time on education and research.

It would be necessary to have a technician staff of anatomic room. Is important the study of the more small animals cases there.

.Since students have courses and practical cases in different blocks it would be recommend set up a bus service to connect these different places.

It would be also a good idea to offer ophthalmology services in small animal hospital.

Looking the existing agreements, it would recommend keep working in this way signing agreements with other countries creating research groups within the faculty.

### **LIBRARY**

The library is placed in Block number 3 in the building where theoretical courses are given. The range of bibliography is wide enough although it would be recommended increase number of copies of each reference to let more students use them at the same time. Students may also look up using available computers connected directly online with UNICAM server. In addition, the university community may connect to WIFI net available in whole

Faculty signing up with a key. There is also a “work room” where students can do their teamwork.

The main problem is the opening and closing time. From Monday to Friday the Library closes at 19:00 h. and it does not open on weekend

**Suggestions:**

Increase number of copies of each reference of the bibliography to improve the ratio book/student.

Increase opening time to let students use after courses and during exams period.

**CONCLUSIONS**

The small number of students gives a lot of potential to the Camerino Veterinary Faculty.

This fact let lecturers teach in a more personal way doing a great follow up on their students. As a result, students are really involved with the university and the profession. Teachers and the rest of employees generate really good ambience.

Clinical cases are really complete and students have the opportunity of learning about many different domestic animal species.

It would recommend keeping working in international research agreements to increase the visibility of the Faculty in Europe. In addition, the University should keep offering exchange programs with other universities.