**European Association
of Establishments for Veterinary
Education**

**Association Européenne
des Etablissements d'Enseignement
Vétérinaire**

REPORT ON THE STAGE 2 EVALUATION VISITATION TO THE SCHOOL OF
VETERINARY MEDICINE AND SCIENCE, THE UNIVERSITY OF NOTTINGHAM,
NOTTINGHAM, UK

10 – 12 November 2014

by the EXPERT GROUP

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INTRODUCTION AND GENERAL COMMENTS

The School of Veterinary Medicine and Science Nottingham was visited on 10 – 12 November 2014. A Stage 2 evaluation process was requested with the aim of obtaining EAEVE accreditation.

The basis of this report is the self-evaluation report (SER-2) prepared by the Faculty before the visit, EAEVE guidelines, observations and interviews performed during the visit. The SER-2 was supplemented with additional documents during the visit. Flow charts were provided both in SER-2 and in presentations on site.

The persons responsible for quality assurance were available during the visit.

Quality processes have been in place since 2006 and are refined on an ongoing basis as required by circumstance and developments.

The School admitted its 1st cohort of veterinary students in 2006. As part of the wider University, it is guided by the strategies, procedures and policies set at University and Faculty level. The School has also additional mechanisms for quality associated with various aspects of the School's operations, and perceives quality improvement as ongoing activity. The university and faculty level processes have been in operation since the School was founded, but some School level procedures have been implemented recently and some are reported as planned refinements. As a recently founded School, the test of time has not been passed in all operations and e.g. the workload of some of the control mechanisms may be tolerable for some years but may become evident in long term. Thus, constant monitoring of the procedures is important and is being done by the School.

The School mission is ambitious. The School describes itself as a progressive, dynamic and diverse community dedicated to improving the well-being of animals and people through innovation and educational excellence, outstanding clinical and community service, and world-leading research and technology transfer in basic, applied and clinical veterinary sciences. The School feels confident and committed to high quality results. The SER-2 is mainly descriptive and contains relative little self-evaluation or examples. However, the experts were presented on site with an extensive amount of documents including the outcomes of and responses to previous external evaluations. Additionally, the presentations by the Dean and other relevant staff during the visit confirmed that the Deming's DPCA cycle was actively used at the School. In fact, each presentation on the specific AP included a Quality Management example on how adopt-develop-implement-control-action–cycle was used to develop aspects related to education.

Some flow charts presented in the SER are simplified and do not describe the processes and responsible quarters in detail and at some points, the charts do not correspond completely to the text where the same mechanisms are explained.

The presentations on site gave valuable additional insight to the processes.

The responsibilities of Committees, Teams, and other bodies relevant to QUALITY MANAGEMENT are clearly presented in the School Organization document (1/1) provided on site.

Chapter 1.   POLICY STATEMENT [AP 1]

Findings

The aim for excellence in all areas became clear in the SER-2 and on site.

On site the experts found and were presented, by the Dean and other relevant staff, concrete examples of how the School's Quality Management system works. This became evident e.g. in comments and responses to previous RCVS evaluations (2009-2011-2014), and the presented development processes. According to the responses the School has also found ways to keep the quantity of assessment under review to ensure that there is no assessment overload, which had been a concern in previous assessments.

The School has established a number of focused Committees for quality assurance and control. A full data set of key indicators was presented in the documents on site.

Students are involved in relevant committees. A lot of student feedback is collected and the School finds this relevant and takes it seriously.

Comments

None

Suggestions

None

Evaluation in relation to Assessment Procedure 1

Satisfactory

Chapter 2. ASSESSMENT OF STUDENTS, POST GRADUATE EDUCATION AND STUDENT WELFARE

2.1 UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATION

STUDENT ADMISSIONS, UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATION [AP 2a]

Findings

The admissions system is extensive and thorough but it becomes clear that the School is recruiting the most excellent candidates and is willing to put a lot of effort on that. The workload of the process is considered worthwhile by the staff and the multifaceted process is also perceived to give valuable information for individual student support. There is an appeal process at the University level but so far there have been no formal complaints.

The admission procedures are based on University policy and developed and reviewed by the School. The results of the developed procedures are validated by the analysis of student progression performed by the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee.

Comments

None

Suggestions

None

Evaluation in relation to Assessment Procedure 2a

Satisfactory

STUDENT ASSESSMENT, UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATION [AP 2b]

Findings

There are several excellent aspects in student assessment, e.g. the areas to be assessed are clearly defined, the assessment for each module is blueprinted to the module learning objectives and the storage of documentation (Competency Assessment Record) allows self-reflection. The assessment system is a coherent whole and includes both summative and formative assessment. Students are assessed for professionalism, knowledge and practical skills and competences. The use of assessment to encourage learning supports the development of students as lifelong learners. Students have responsibility of their learning and assessment of it.

There are time guidelines according to which the examinations need to be passed. Students have only one retake opportunity for the examinations, but there are guidelines for claims for extenuating circumstances and the School finds the current practice fair and well informed to the students. Support is offered to failing students.

Comments

The QUALITY MANAGEMENT of assessment could be shared as an example of good practice all over EAEVE member establishments

Suggestions

None

Evaluation in relation to Assessment Procedure 2b

Satisfactory

2.2 POST-GRADUATE STUDENT EDUCATION; ACADEMIC TRACK [AP 3a]

Findings

The entrance requirements, admission procedures, review of progress and funding options are described in the SER-2 and adequate administrative documentation was presented on site; the procedures were the same for national and foreign students. A Postgraduate Student Handbook is available. The procedures follow the University's general practices. The extent of the programmes was clarified on site.

The MRes program does not seem to attract students but the School expects it to become more popular with time and finds it relevant to offer as a programme.

Comments

None

Suggestions

None

Evaluation in relation to Assessment Procedure 3a

Satisfactory

2.3   POST-GRADUATE STUDENT EDUCATION; PROFESSIONAL TRACK [AP 3b]

Findings

The School offers Postgraduate Certificates, Masters and Doctorates. These are mostly run in conjunction with Clinical Associates. The admission criteria are described in the SER-2. The Postgraduate Student Handbook was presented in the documentation provided.

Comments

None

Suggestions

None

Evaluation in relation to Assessment Procedure 3b

Satisfactory

2.4   STUDENT WELFARE [AP 4]

Findings

Based on the extensive admission process, students entering the School are highly selected and likely to be very talented and motivated. The School employs a number of measures to ensure that students experiencing difficulties are identified and supported.

Student support is one of the key activities of the School and concrete examples of it were presented throughout the visitation. The tutoring system is established, there is a functioning expression of concern process and clear mechanisms to respond to problems. Postgraduate students' support is given less attention in the SER-2 but on site most of the mechanisms for undergraduate students were stated to be available also for postgraduate students. Postgraduate students are supported by a Senior Tutor and those on the academic track have more than one supervisor.

Comments

None

Suggestions

None

Evaluation in relation to Assessment Procedure 4

Satisfactory

Chapter 3.   ASSESSMENT OF TEACHING STAFF [AP 5]

Findings

A substantial number of the teaching staff hold postgraduate education qualifications. There are plenty of good practices, e.g. opportunities in various forms to develop, yearly appraisal process, personal development and performance review for salary progression, strong role of students in assessing staff, and an award system. Some development courses for staff are mandatory. Staff are able to attend courses during work time provided that this is planned in advance. A peer observation system for teachers has recently been implemented but not yet formally checked, however is being recorded. All new lecturers are expected to complete the Postgraduate Certificate of Higher Education and without it promotion is not possible. The requirement for the amount of training is lower for clinical teachers. Guidelines for support exist for poor teaching performance however they are very seldom needed in practice. Student feedback is routinely collected and the response rate in the National Student Survey has been especially high.

The research activity is monitored and results are utilized in the promotion process.

The induction system for new staff works well.

Comments

None

Suggestions

None

Evaluation in relation to Assessment Procedure 5

Satisfactory

Chapter 4.   ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES [AP 6]

Findings

Again, the School expects excellence in all aspects of the student learning opportunity and environment. The curriculum is outcome-based and centred on student learning. The number of lectures is small and active learning techniques are utilized. Opportunities for students to interact with teaching and support staff have been reported. The University has invested significantly in technological infrastructure and library facilities are available for students at all times. The physical environment is modern and facilities are described in detail. The students met during the visitation expressed enthusiasm and active engagement in their learning sessions. The culture for excellence is made clear to the students from day 1 and is expected of the staff in their everyday actions.

Some specific resources as Clinical Skill Centre is available for 5th year students 24/7.

Comments

None

Suggestions

None

Evaluation in relation to Assessment Procedure 6

Satisfactory

Chapter 5. ASSESSMENT OF TRAINING PROGRAMMES AND THE   AWARD OF THE TITLE OF VETERINARY SURGEON [AP 7]

Findings

The process for development and publication of learning outcomes is clearly presented. Students participate in quality assessment activities. The School provides a structure that promotes life-long learning.

The SER-2 does not contain evidence of application of ECTS to the programme. On site it was found that ECTS credits are used only when documenting studies of foreign students to their home faculties or if students ask for the Diploma Supplement.

The Annual Module Review is an essential component of curriculum management.

Feedback is collected from recent graduates and stakeholders.

Comments

None

Suggestions

A table of conversion from UK credits to ECTS values would be helpful and make the system easily understandable for non-UK students

Evaluation in relation to Assessment Procedure 7

Satisfactory

Chapter 6.   ASSESSMENT OF QUALITY ASSURANCE FOR CLINICS, LABORATORIES AND FARM [AP 8]

Findings

The School aspires to be a centre of academic and research excellence and seeks to ensure high standards in all areas, including health and safety.

Information of health and safety is widely available and new staff have an induction to the building safety and emergency procedures. Students receive a briefing from the School Safety Officer and information is provided in various forms during studies. The School has a Safety Plan and a Disaster Recovery Plan.

The School Safety Committee organizes and implements audits (undertaken by the University Safety Officer). The School is required to have an external audit by the University safety office every three years.

All staff and students are required to undertake an induction training before being able to use laboratories.

The Senior Research Technician ensures that issues relevant to laboratory quality assurance are raised to the Laboratory User Group and if necessary, to the Research Committee and Management Team.

The farm facilities have arrangements for both internal and external quality assurance.

Development of in-house histopathology service was reported as an example of Quality Management.

The University has a contractualised arrangement with the Clinical Associates. Clinical Associate safety is controlled by the Schools Safety Officer. At the Clinical Associates quality assurance is reported to be part of daily clinical work. The accreditations held by Clinical Associates have been reported in the SER-2.

Comments

None

Suggestions

None

Evaluation in relation to Assessment Procedure 8

Satisfactory

Chapter 7.   ASSESSMENT OF CONTINUING EDUCATION [AP 9]

Findings

The CPD courses organized 2013/2014 have been listed and satisfaction rating by attendees has been reported. Courses have been planned according to staff request after needs clarification and there appears to be a sufficient amount of them. Feedback is systematically collected of the courses and has been positive.

The courses are advertised on the web but the list there turned out to be somewhat different from that presented in the SER-2. (Because the courses on the web are yet to be delivered in 2014/15 and the courses listed in the SER 2 have been delivered in 2013/14).

Comments

None

Suggestions

None

Evaluation in relation to Assessment Procedure 9

Satisfactory

Chapter 8.   ASSESSMENT OF RESEARCH [AP 10]

Findings

The University ensures that all research is conducted according to appropriate ethical, legal and professional frameworks and standards, through a Code of Research Conduct and Research Ethics. The University's Research and Graduate Services provides support and advice to staff on a wide range of matters.

An induction process to new members of academic staff is in place. Research activity within the School is divided into 6 themes, and all research-active academic staff are members of one or more themes. All academic staff members are expected to do research. A research mentoring system has been established. Clinical academic staff are encouraged to join active research groups. The Vision of the School clearly highlights the importance of both teaching and research and one of the challenges is to maintain an appropriate balance between teaching and research. The appraisal process is one tool for that.

The School has research finances available for every academic staff member. The University and School run training courses on research techniques, research management and leadership, as well as statistics workshops.

The University's academic staff promotion process recognizes a high level of achievement in research and scholarship; for candidates for the teaching and learning track, evidence of educational research is required. Criteria and details are available to all staff. The Personal Development and Performance Review process ensures that individuals are rewarded based on their contribution. Bibliometric methods may be used in these processes.

The University is research-led and the School aims to deliver research-informed teaching. Integration of research into teaching is shown in learning objectives and teaching materials. Students have a 50 credit Research Project module in year 3. Projects can be conducted also abroad. A marked number of student projects have been presented by undergraduates in congresses or been published in peer reviewed journals. All staff are expected to supervise up to two projects. Additionally, there are other opportunities for undergraduate students to be formally involved in research.

Each postgraduate student is allied to one of the School's 6 research themes. Their output is monitored by the Postgraduate, Teaching, Learning and Assessment and Research Committees.

Research outcomes and outputs are assessed by the Research Committee and the Research Sub-Deans. The UK-wide Research Assessment Exercise is the main external audit and was performed in 2008 and is repeated every 5 years. It is not optimal from the School's point of view but considered important. The School has been successful in managing large scale knowledge transfer and applied programs.

A list of publications by School staff for 2011-2014 is included in the SER-2

The School has developed and implemented a Quality Management process associated with research applications and proposals due to the absence of University guidelines.

Comments

None

Suggestions

None

Evaluation in relation to Assessment Procedure 10

Satisfactory

Chapter 9. ASSESSMENT OF INTERNATIONALISATION OF EDUCATION AND RESEARCH [AP 11]

Findings

The University's strategy and support is described but not all university level activities are relevant to the School. The School's innovative curriculum and organization has attracted visitors worldwide.

International students are admitted to the School, staff are international, students' placements abroad are possible, students and postgraduates can conduct research projects abroad, scholarships for attending congresses are available and there are international research projects, also with developing countries.

However, the School students do not participate in the Erasmus project and the individual visiting students are considered on a case by case basis.

Staff has taken the advantage of funding options for mobility mainly for research purposes. International research collaboration is vital and there have been 3 recent major EU-funded projects in the School. School staff and Clinical Associate clinicians are members of international research networks, international societies and colleges.

Comments

None

Suggestions

The participation in the Erasmus programme for research projects could be an option for further internationalisation and is "curriculum independent".

Evaluation in relation to Assessment Procedure 11

Satisfactory

Chapter 10. ASSESSMENT OF COOPERATION WITH STAKEHOLDERS AND SOCIETY [AP 12]

Findings

The School publishes readily accessible, up-to-date information about the study programme in various forms. The School also holds open days and other events to the public. The wider profession is involved in School activities. The Centre for Evidence Based Medicine is important in information exchange in the veterinary profession. The School has an alumni association and Alumni Officer.

The School is also proud of the Community engagement and gives concrete examples of extra-curricular activities of students that have led to benefices for the Society and to the development of skills in organization, leadership and communication for students.

The community based clinical teaching is a unique example of wide and continuous consultation by the stakeholders on the curriculum.

Guidelines are present for the correct use of social media and University brand.

Comments

None

Suggestions

None

Evaluation in relation to Assessment Procedure 12

Satisfactory

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Satisfactory: AP 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11,12

Less satisfactory: None

Not satisfactory: None

Considering all points addressed in this report, the visiting team is of the opinion that there are no major shortcomings.

The team suggests to the ECOVE that the School of Veterinary Medicine and Science, University of Nottingham, Nottingham, UK be granted full accreditation by EAEVE.

ANNEX 1 DECISION OF ECOVE

No major shortcomings have been found.

The School of Veterinary Medicine and Science, University of Nottingham is classified after Stage 2 evaluation as holding the status of: **ACCREDITATION**