

Self Evaluation Report

Stage 2

September 2012

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0. Introduction

The University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna (Vetmeduni Vienna) is an autonomous university that emphasises national socio-political interests and economic responsibility. The special challenges for the University lie in providing a top-notch academic education, fostering excellence in research, scientific and clinical services and ensuring international outreach. Of course, promoting the health and welfare of animals is at the heart of all our endeavours.

As the only academic educational and research institution for veterinary medicine in Austria, the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna embraces the concept of quality in the full scope of its complexity and feels especially committed to quality assurance according to both national and international standards.

As such, its quality assurance system provides for consistent and dedicated measurement and monitoring of processes with associated revision and feedback loops to enable error prevention.

0.1. General aspects of quality assurance

Quality assurance is a way for the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna to ascertain that it is always striving to do the best it can for its students, alumni, employees, clients, partners and stakeholders. Its quality assurance system is a way of checking – through regular monitoring and evaluation of its performance and through the collection of evidence – that it is continuously improving what it does and how it does it. Quality assurance is also a way of measuring what the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna does compared to internationally recognised standards. The systems the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna uses to check its quality are ongoing processes to help ensure that it is always meeting the latest standards.

0.2. Evolvement of the legal basis of quality assurance

Until passage of the Austrian Higher Education Quality Assurance Act ([HS-QSG](#)) in March 2012, there was no legal basis for a uniform quality assurance and quality accreditation of Austrian universities. Regardless the absence of special legal requirement, the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna has been working steadily and assiduously on the implementation and development of a quality assurance and quality management system since 2006.

Since 2007, Austrian universities have negotiated their budgets triennially with the Federal Ministry for Science and Research by way of a quality-based Performance Agreement ([Annex 1^{de}](#)), which, is based on the Development Plan ([Annex 2^{en}](#)). In principle, this Performance Agreement encompasses the requirements to be met by the University in the following areas:

- strategic goals, profile development, university and staff development
- research

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- courses of study and continuing education
- societal objectives
- expansion of internationalisation and mobility
- inter-university cooperation
- special sectors (such as the Research Institute of Wildlife Ecology and the University Clinics)

The Performance Agreement is – in and of itself – a means of quality assurance. It contains a set of goals and objectives underpinned with indicators and milestones, which are measured, monitored and reviewed at least on an annual basis.

In the framework of its Performance Agreement for 2007–2009, the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna was required to specifically define its goals and objectives in quality assurance and evaluation for each of the domains listed above. In the performance period 2010–2012 the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna entered into a binding contract to develop a quality assurance and management system in accordance with §14(1) University Act of 2002 (UG 2002). ([Annex 3^{de}](#))

0.3. The University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna`s Strategic Approach to Quality Assurance and Management

For the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna, the adherence to international standards and benchmarks in education, continuing and postgraduate education, research and scientific services is of utmost importance.

External evaluations conducted at regular intervals by recognised independent national and international institutions and experts complement the continuously evolving internal quality assurance system.

The international evaluation of teaching has been overseen for many years by the European Association of Establishments for Veterinary Education (EAEVE). By expanding the evaluation process to include quality assurance and quality management and by concerted efforts to include the EAEVE in the bylaw governing quality assurance bodies recognised by the Austrian Law, the University has striven to comply with the national Higher Education Quality Assurance Act (HS-QSG) while at the same time meeting international standards.

0.4. The University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna`s future objectives and organisation

In keeping with its commitment to quality, the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna aims to expand its quality assurance and management system to the entire University, with the goal of national audits and international accreditation.

One of the priorities is to integrate and harmonise existing quality assurance measures in research, undergraduate, postgraduate and continuing professional education, as well as in scientific and central services. By combining and integrating all measures quality management can be extended to the entire University through the employment

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of management information systems. The stated goal of the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna is to implement a campus-wide quality management system that ensures quality standards while remaining responsive to the needs of the University.

This responsiveness must be reflected in the University's organisational structure. At present, the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna is structured as five subject-specific departments and a number of inter-institutional cooperations with other research institutions (Messerli Research Institute, Graf Lehndorff Institute, Interuniversity Department of Agrobiotechnology (IFA-Tulln)). The Animal Hospital is composed of the clinical organisational units of Department 3 and of Department 4 in its entirety.

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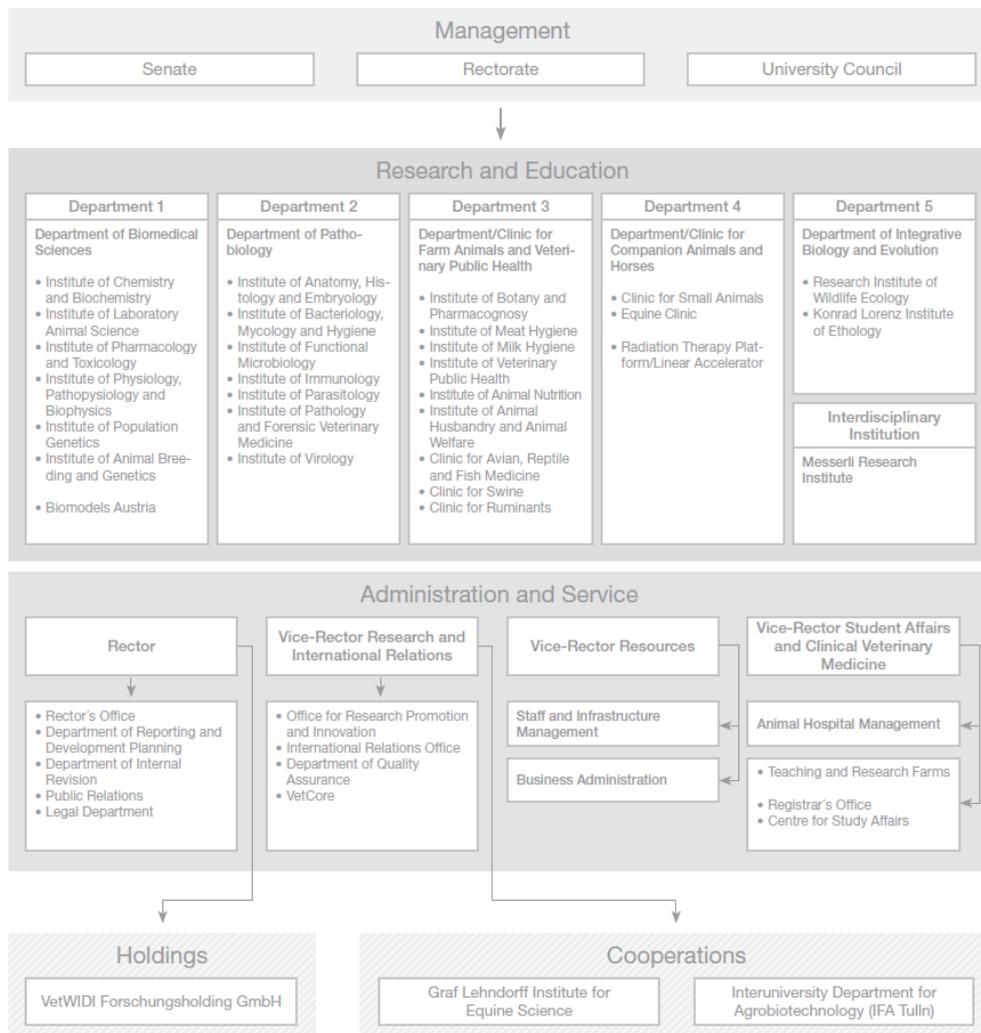


Figure 1: Organisational Chart of the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna (as of 6th July 2012)

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The following timeline shows the development of the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna's quality assurance system. Contemporaneously with the University Act of 2002 (UG 2002), a series of remarkable measures were introduced to monitor, evaluate, ensure and improve quality of teaching, research and scientific performance. Considered the cornerstone of quality assurance and management in Austria, UG 2002 is complemented by the Austrian Higher Education Quality Assurance Act (HS-QSG) of 2012.

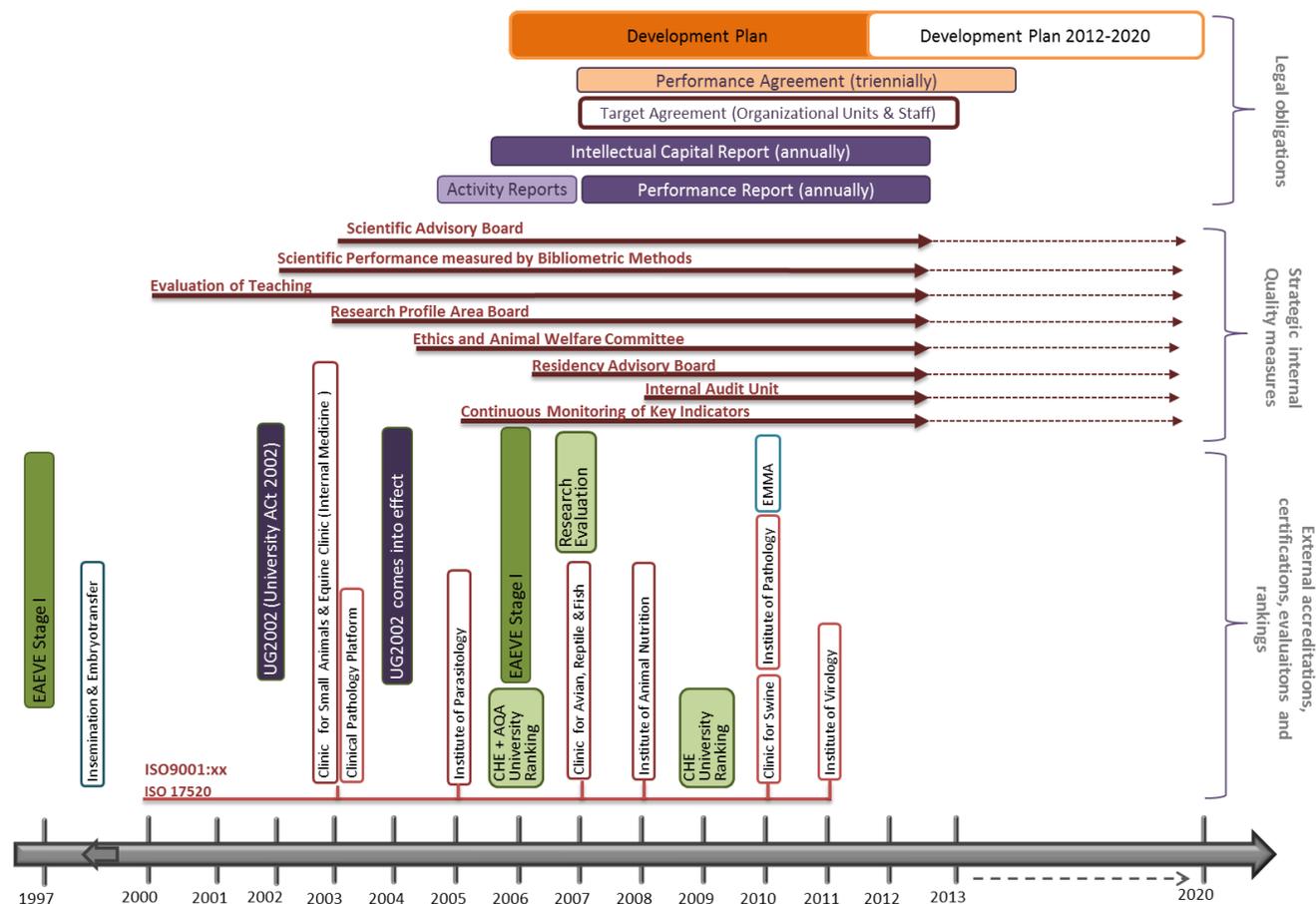


Figure 2: Timeline University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna's quality assurance measures since the EAEVE evaluation in 1997

1. Policy statement (AP1)

Bearing in mind that postgraduate education and research are the basis for the advancement of veterinary science and hence have a great impact on undergraduate education as laid down in the Principles and of the Evaluation of Veterinary Education in Europe, the Faculty must provide a clear policy and set of procedures for internal quality control and quality assurance of its teaching and research program. The policy should have a formal status and be publicly available. It should also include a role for students and other stakeholders. The policy statement is expected to include the:

- *Faculty's strategy for quality and standards*
- *organisation of the quality assurance system*
- *responsibilities of organisational units and individuals for the assurance of quality*
- *involvement of students in quality assurance*
- *ways in which the policy is implemented, monitored and revised*
- *relationship between teaching and research so that an established definition of research education and research quality is evident*

1.1. Strategy for quality and standards

Within an international context, the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna positions itself as a first-rate academic and research institute, wherein societal challenges are accorded high significance: expertise and comprehensive knowledge transfer in the treatment of animal patients as well as in maintaining the health of humans and animals are matters of utmost priority.

The realisation of quality consciousness in concrete terms through the implementation of a University-wide quality management system is a stated objective of the top leadership, one that was prominently taken into account in the formulation of strategic goals in the Development Plan 2020.

The University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna has defined a Quality Policy), which is published on the University [website](#) and builds on the following foundation:

- providing high quality in its three core areas: education, research, and scientific services
- building on the values contained in the quality policy to empower the people working with/in the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna in their commitment to meeting the highest quality standards
- monitoring and revising quality commitments regularly and making measurable improvements in all aspects of quality

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1.2. Organisation of the quality assurance system

The University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna's quality assurance system focuses on a series of specific processes. These are:

- undergraduate, postgraduate and continuing professional education
- research
- scientific services

Within each of these processes, a range of standards and goals has been defined that the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna is expected to meet. These standards and goals are partly self-determined by way of the Development Plan, partly negotiated with the Federal Ministry for Science and Research in the framework of the Performance Agreement, and partly a result of its socio-political and legal mandate.

After a thorough internal evaluation, the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna is now striving to have its quality systems externally accredited by the EAEVE to ensure that it meets both the national and international quality assurance standards required to be deemed a quality organisation.

Within its organisational structure, the quality management team has established a system of defined responsibilities and has started to record all the core processes that are relevant to the quality system. The position of quality manager was created by central appointment in order to ensure an adequate scope of action for further harmonisation of institution-wide quality measures aimed at continuously improving processes and procedures. This holistic approach will create synergies, leverage future deployments and optimise resource utilisation.

Students' participation is ensured by involvement of representatives of the Students' Union and other delegations of students in the University's most important bodies as shown in the graph (Fig. 3) below in yellow: University Council, Senate, Ethics and Animal Welfare Committee, Curricular Committee, Habilitation Committee, Appointment Committee, PhD Committee – emphasizing the importance of actively involving students and allowing for transparency throughout the decision-making processes.

In addition to their membership in the Senate, students are members of committees concerning the curriculum, awarding the *venia docendi* and recruitment of professors. Students in the latter committees are responsible for didactic opinions.

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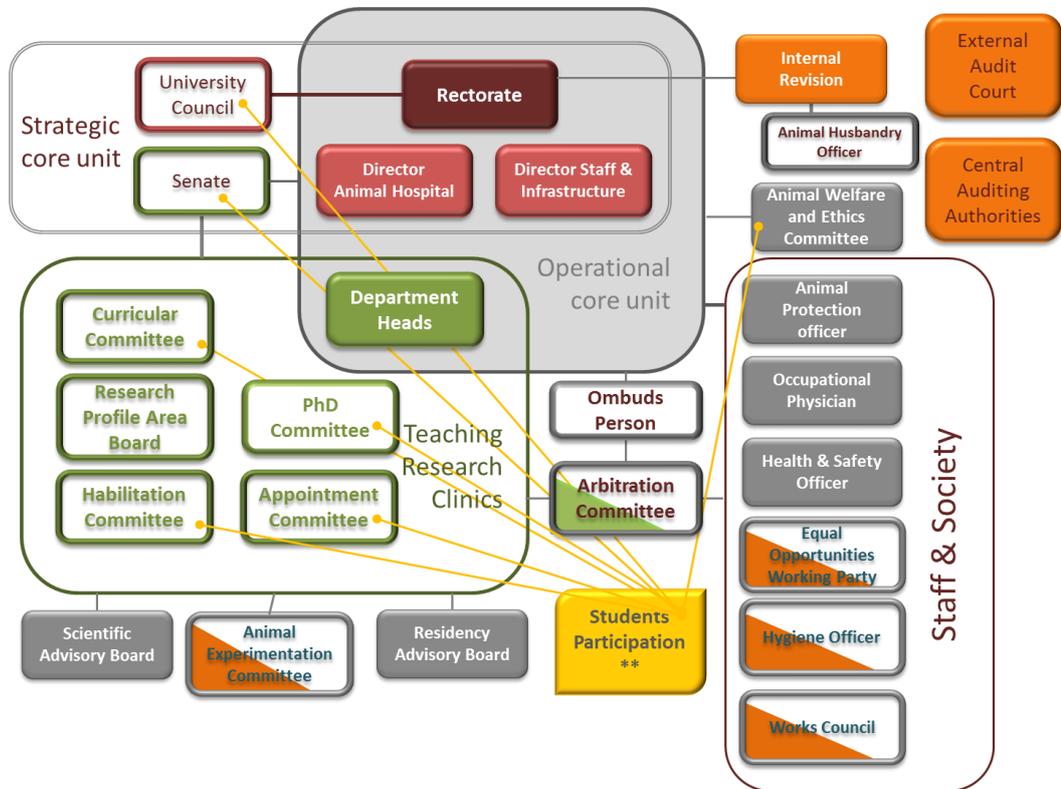


Figure 3: Highest collegiate bodies and decision-making bodies

Highest-collegiate bodies and decision-making bodies throughout the organisation of the University of Veterinary Medicine and their responsibilities

Explanation of the graph:

- | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|
| | Decision (1st level strategic and operational) | | Decision (2nd level strategic and operational) |
| | Decision (1st level strategic) | | Advisory + decision (specific) |
| | Decision w/o management power | | Decision (3rd level operational) |
| | Advisory | | Control |
| | Advisory / control | | Participatory |

1.3. Quality approach of the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna

Quality at the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna is considered a value that is inherent in the scientific reflective mindset. The culture of everyday collaboration is shaped by staff members exemplifying a strong commitment to quality.

The University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna bases its activities on its Development Plan, which is valid for a period of eight years and defines the University's core values, duties, guiding principles, future prospects and strategic goals. Furthermore, it lays out the main areas of profile and university development that need to be addressed to achieve those strategic goals and successfully position the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna as a top contender in the context of international competition. The Development Plan focuses on three core processes: undergraduate, postgraduate and continuing professional education; research; and scientific services. Further areas addressed are internationality and mobility, quality management, gender equality and equal opportunities, as well as personnel and organisational development.

The strategic goals defined in the Development Plan are translated into concrete measures by means of a performance agreement between the University and the Federal Ministry for Science and Research. This agreement, in turn, is further broken down into department, organisational unit and staff levels.

To complete the cycle, the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna monitors its performance continuously and reports annually by means of an intellectual capital report whose structure is standardised for all Austrian universities as determined by the Federal Ministry for Science and Research. It comprises a narrative part describing all activities of the University pertaining to its core processes, a defined set of indicators and the Performance Report, in which the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna places special emphasis on the fulfilment of the goals specified in the Performance Agreement and provides analyses, explanations and reasons for its performance.

1.4. Implementation of the quality policy

The implementation of the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna's quality policy can be divided into two main phases:

- The preparation phase:
 - decision of the Rectorate to implement quality assurance as an inherent part of the University's management strategy
 - declaration of mission, vision, strategy and quality policy
 - definition of terms
 - allocation of resources (financial, staff, etc.)
- The implementation phase:
 - training of staff in quality assurance and management

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- implementation of process approaches, including
 - identification of processes and definition of the process map
 - definition and documentation of processes
 - definition of criteria for process performance assessment
- implementation of heretofore non-existent procedures
- trial period (2007-2009)
- improvement of existing processes based on evaluation of the trial period (ongoing, starting in 2009)
- accreditation of the quality assurance system by the EAEVE in accordance with international standards and the Austrian Higher Education Quality Assurance Act (HS-QSG).

Furthermore, policy monitoring, i.e., monitoring the efficiency and effectiveness of the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna's quality policy, is an ongoing activity performed throughout the planning cycle to assess how well the policy is working. Quality policy effectiveness monitoring helps determine the need for further action, and points to possible changes and improvements that can be made in the policy statement or in actions taken to implement it.

When monitoring indicates that this is necessary, the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna takes appropriate action and prepares reports (e.g., an intellectual capital report and a performance report) at least annually on that account. In essence, policy effectiveness monitoring provides a means for determining how well the policy is working in practice.

Revision ultimately closes the loop in the 'plan-do-monitor-revise' cycle and builds on the monitoring process in an integrated and targeted manner.

1.5. Taking it a step further – the operational quality assurance system of the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna

While the Performance Agreement with the Federal Ministry for Science and Research governs quality assurance in its entirety and reflects the short- and mid-term goals of the University's Development Plan, the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna has taken care to bring the Performance Agreement down to the strategic operational level of departments and organisational units, thereby ensuring a quality assurance system that is integral to university life. This includes:

- triennial target agreements between the Rectorate and the heads of departments in accordance with §22(1)C6 of the University Act of 2002 (UG 2002),
- target agreements between heads of departments and heads of organisational units of the respective departments as regulated in §7(3)c of the Department Rules and

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- target agreements between heads of organisational units and their assigned subunits in accordance with §4(6) of the University statute

It goes without saying that all these target agreements must a) reflect the University's Development Plan and the Performance Agreement with the Federal Ministry for Science and Research, b) cover all the core processes of the University and c) include regular monitoring as well as annual performance evaluations and reviews.

Quality assurance of core processes on the strategic and operational level is the foundation of any quality assurance and management system. It must, however, be accompanied by a commitment to quality assurance at the staff level to be fully functional. As such, the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna has made quality assurance an integral part of its staff management strategy. Measures taken on this account include:

- target agreements between the Rectorate and the University Council in accordance with §21(1)C6 University Act of 2002 (UG 2002),
- target agreements between the Rector and appointed professors according to the Collective Agreement ([Annex 8^{de}](#)) and
- annual target agreements between heads of organisational units and their assigned staff members in accordance with §20(5) University Act of 2002 (UG 2002) as well as §4(1) of the University statute ([Annex 7^{de}](#))

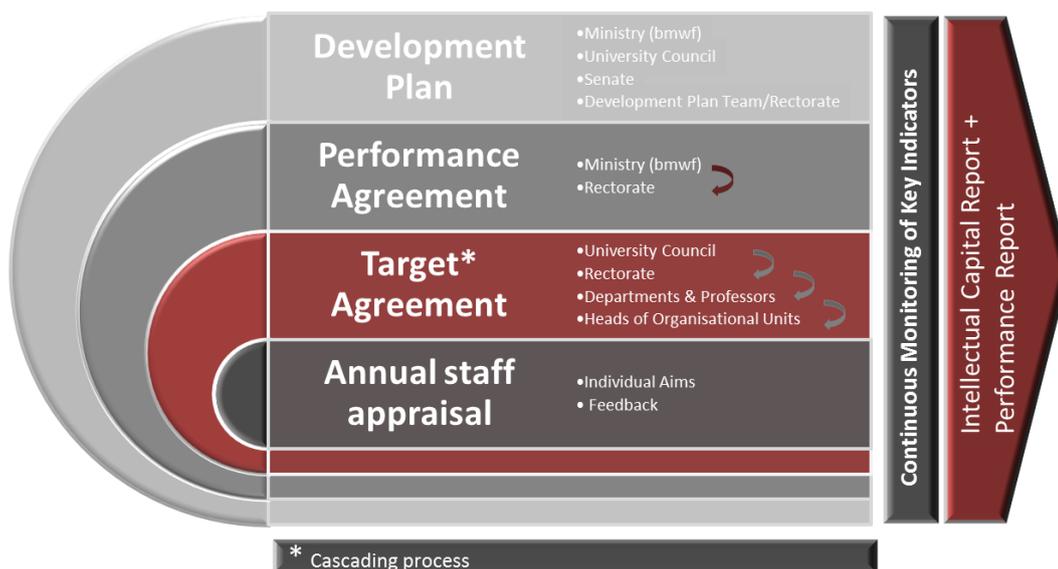


Figure 4: the University's steering process

University Management breaking down the strategic goals defined in the development plan to individual goals of each staff member.

These personal target agreements are specially tailored and linked to annual staff performance reviews; reviews are conducted in a top-down cascade. Furthermore, the performance of all professors, university lecturers and academic teaching and research

staff must be evaluated every 5 years at a minimum according to §2 of part 4 of the University statute. In addition to this – wherever possible – the University uses the concept of employee empowerment as a key motivational and productivity tool to ensure quality.

On a management level, university-wide key performance indicators have been specified. These parameters are gathered by means of various software tools and internal as well as external databases. They are compiled at regular - at least annual - intervals and serve to ascertain quality assurance on two levels. On the one hand, this quality assurance data is used to monitor compliance with goals specified in the Performance Agreement and the development of indicators defined in the Intellectual Capital Report. On the other hand, performance indicators are used to monitor the performance of departments and organisational units while at the same time governing their resources.

Exemplary distinct measures taken by the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna to ensure quality within its first core process - undergraduate, postgraduate and continuing professional education - include standardisation of admissions procedures in the areas of undergraduate and postgraduate studies, evaluation of academic staff, methods of instruction, examination formats and courses with feedback and action plans, teaching distinctions and incentives as well as peer review procedures for master's, doctoral and PhD theses and standard plagiarism checks for all final papers.

In the second core process - research - the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna provides continuous quality monitoring and assurance internally through the Research Profile Area Board and externally through the international Scientific Advisory Board ([Annex 9^{de}](#)). This continuous process of quality monitoring and assurance is complemented by a coordinated research evaluation conducted at regular intervals. This evaluation comprises a structured self-evaluation process with specific indicators and an on-site visit conducted by a group of international experts, thus enabling a detailed assessment of the University's research performance. It concludes with a report and recommendations made by the international experts. The next research evaluation is scheduled for 2013.

Initiative Doctoral Programmes ("Initiativkollegs") are reviewed by the University's Research Profile Area Board and may be transferred into FWF Doctoral Programmes ("Doktoratskolleg") provided positive evaluation by the Austrian Science Fund (FWF). Projects within the Postdoctoral Programmes are evaluated annually and may be reviewed at the discretion of external reviewers.

Additional quality assurance measures include

- the annual review and evaluation of publication performance (quality and quantity of papers),
 - number of citations
 - external fundraising performance
 - distinctions and incentives for publication,
- evaluation of research projects, education and continuing education programmes related to animals by the Ethics and Animal Welfare Committee.

In the third core process - scientific services, quality assurance and management is performed primarily by way of external certification and accreditation and is complemented by client surveys with feedback and action plans at regular intervals. In line with the ever increasing quality awareness of its clients, partners and stakeholders, the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna aims to achieve certifications according to ISO and accreditation according to European directives, wherever appropriate and beneficial to the work flows.

Parallel to these efforts, the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna is actively involved in the ongoing dialogue on the subject of quality assurance in Austrian higher education; it is well integrated into the Austrian quality management network (www.qm-netzwerk.at) and is in contact with national quality assurance agencies such as the Agency for Quality Assurance and Accreditation Austria (AQ-Austria).

1.6. Relationship between teaching and research

According to §1 University Act of 2002 (UG 2002) it is considered one of the fundamental principles of universities to provide research driven academic education.

The University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna offers a scientifically founded, research oriented, internationally competitive education as well as continuing education programmes with a strong practical component. It places emphasis on subject-specific expertise, broad social, personal and managerial competencies within the curricula and the best possible supervision of students.

The University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna focuses on the systematic support of young academics as a vital element of its profile. To this end, special emphasis is placed on expanding funding and training for young scientists. The University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna aims to optimise tried-and-true methods gleaned from experience with the entire academic lifecycle (for details please refer to Chapter 8: Research).

Participation in research activities is mandatory for all undergraduates. Within the curriculum 20 credits are foreseen for research done in connection with a diploma thesis. By the time a student has completed a diploma thesis, s/he will have gained a significant amount of scientific knowledge and skills as well as academic competencies.

The goal of this mandatory component within the curriculum is to foster student–research staff collaboration at the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna. Participating in research gives students the chance to learn how their chosen field of study is progressing, and how that progress is being influenced. Since research is an integral part of postgraduate education, participation in undergraduate research may be the first step towards future engagement in research (for details refer to Chapter 2.3: Post-graduate student education).

Top level research attracts internationally renowned scientists and thus guarantees state-of-the-art education based on recent methodologies and the latest technology integrated into practical work.

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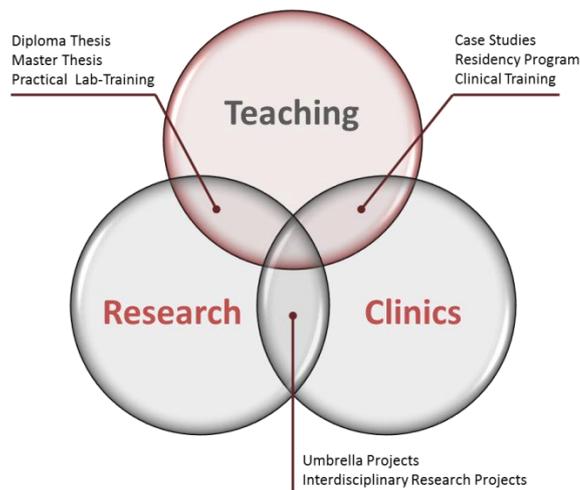


Figure 5: Interaction of Teaching, Research and Clinics

To increase visibility of its support and development of outstanding teaching, the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna has recently co-founded the “Centre of Excellence for E-Learning, Didactics and Educational Research in Veterinary Medicine” (KELDAT), which connects universities and faculties of veterinary medicine throughout the German-speaking world.

One of the long-term measures include the development of a “progress test” in line with the curriculum, in cooperation with other German-language educational institutions for veterinary medicine. This test provides a standardised method of assessing knowledge transfer. Furthermore, teaching and examination methods will be synchronised internationally.

The University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna seeks to intensify cooperation with other medical universities, such as through membership of the Austrian Association for teaching excellences in Higher Education (ÖGHG), the Association for Medical Education in Europe (AMEE), the Society for Medical Education (GMA) and the Veterinary Education Worldwide (ViEW).

1.7. Quality as a contribution to our cultural core values

The University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna’s unique position and legal mandate result in a high level of responsibility and visibility and serve to spur future development. The University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna strives to remain one of the best teaching and research institutions for veterinary medicine in Europe. In keeping with the core values of the University –competent, dedicated and responsible – its highly motivated staff members aim to deliver outstanding performance in the areas of education, research and scientific services. Daily interaction between staff, students, researchers, animal owners and cooperation partners must be based upon mutual respect and trust, a sense of responsibility, willingness to change and an optimal use of resources.

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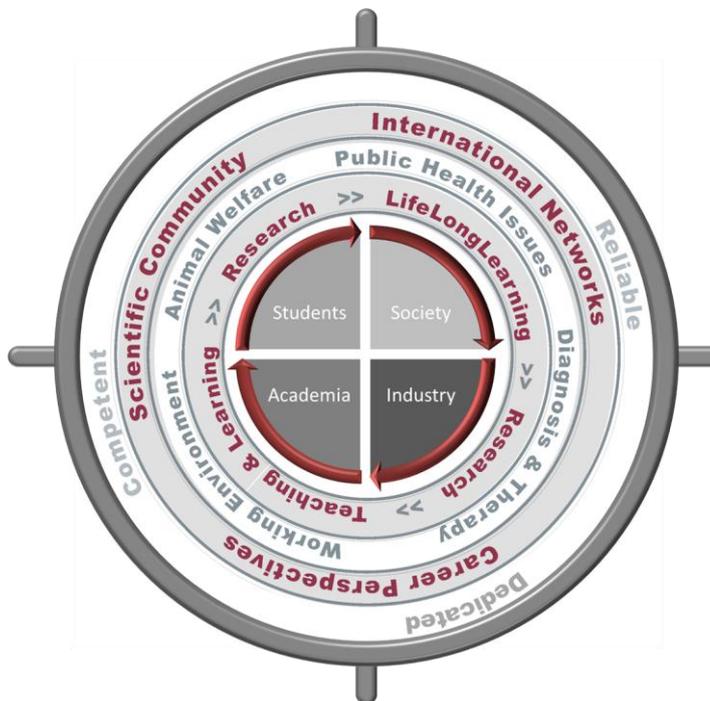


Figure 6: Different roles and goals within the University system

The people who constitute part of a university system inhabit different roles and embody different expectations depending on the situation. This represents one of the main challenges in higher education governance, particularly as it pertains to quality management. Occasionally it becomes necessary to realign goals and resolve conflicts of interest.

Main target groups and goals according to strategies defined in the Development Plan:

- students are provided the best teaching and learning conditions, resulting in long-term benefits for their professional careers;
- graduates are proud to keep relations with their alma mater after they graduate;
- scientists find a home base for internationally competitive and successful research;
- animal patients are treated with state-of-the art therapies and the most technologically advanced equipment;
- animal patient owners receive professional service, competence and accurate information;
- society can trust in food safety and scientifically-based expertise;
- all staff members experience a good workplace within which to develop successful professional careers;
- cooperation partners rely on accountability for respectful and competent collaboration.

The common goals of all contributors are defined by a series of feedback mechanisms and allow for constant reflection and continuous optimisation of core processes. Supportive structures are in place to continuously improve results and concomitantly

shape the framework for successful cooperation according to University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna's core competencies and strategies.

These goals reflect not only the general societal expectations towards higher education institutions, but include the specific challenges faced by a veterinary university. Due to a long history of participation staff members are highly involved in the reconciliation of quality requirements. Therefore, quality is not an abstract term, introduced from the outside, but is considered to be a steering instrument for daily actions as well as a guide that motivates each individual to optimise activities and results.

Particular emphasis has been placed for years on societal challenges, which are part of the strategic goals defined in the Development Plan.

The University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna fosters an organisational culture that considers diversity, gender, balance and equal opportunities as essential elements for increasing performance and for strengthening the University's competitive edge and that addresses special needs individually and impartially.

The University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna has proven itself as a pioneer in an academic context in this area. The following measures have proven to be successful:

- "gender mainstreaming"
 - support and funding of continuing education measures, exchange programmes and grants introduced to remove certain career obstacles
- "diversity management"
 - barrier-free access of the infrastructure and development of customised solutions for individuals with special needs
 - promoting tolerance, appreciation and team building through coaching, seminars and leadership training
- social permeability
 - supporting study progress and optimising conditions with the assistance of tutors and the Students Computer Centre
 - affordable housing in close proximity
- "work-life-balance"
 - "university and family" and "career and family" certificates ensure better balance between studies and family or career and family
 - preference given to students with care-taking responsibilities regarding registration for certain courses
 - parking provided free of charge for students with care-taking or professional responsibilities
 - flexible work hours, home office
 - individual solutions for returning to the job after a period of leave
 - childcare initiatives
 - health promotion initiatives

2. Assessment of students, postgraduate education and student welfare

2.1. Factual information

As a result of restricted admissions and to a selective procedure put into place in 2005, the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna recruits its students in a quality-based and objective manner, thus ensuring a high-quality education with instruction in small groups.

Currently the University offers 203 places per year for the Diploma Programme in Veterinary Medicine. To secure a university place at the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna, students have to be approved through an admissions procedure. The legal obligations for this procedure were defined in §124b University Act of 2002 (UG 2002) in 2005 and remain valid at least until 2015.

In general, as laid out by law, admissions are based on relative, rather than absolute, performance, i.e., there is no predefined "passing point". Applicants get ranked relative to one another and the highest-ranked receive an offer of admission. To secure a place in the incoming class, the applicant must accept the offer personally and formally within a determined time period. Otherwise, the place will be given to the next applicant in line.

The formal act of accepting the place at the university is called "admission" ("Zulassung"). This can only take place once all formal requirements have been completed. These are:

■ General requirements

All applicants must fulfil the general requirements, the achievement of general and special university entrance qualifications as defined by the University Act of 2002 (UG 2002).

The secondary school completion certificate ("Abitur, Matura") qualifies students for admission at higher education institutions.

Admission is also granted after the student passes a special entrance examination ("Berufsreifeprüfung").

For applicants without a secondary school completion certificate there is an alternative way of fulfilling the requirements. If they have completed an apprenticeship or training as a nurse or medical technician and pass a special examination ("Studienberechtigungsprüfung"), they are allowed to apply for admission to a medical studies programme.

An additional legal requirement is sufficient command of the German language.

■ Specific requirements

In addition to the general admission requirements, all applicants must successfully complete an admissions procedure as defined in § 124 (b) of UG 2002. The

rectorate, in consultation with the Senate and the University Council, issues a decree regarding the admission restrictions to be applied to the programmes offered by the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna for a particular academic year.

Currently the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna can enrol a total of 318 students for the following academic programmes (Table 2.1).

Table 2.1: Number of university places per academic programme at the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna (as of July 2012)

Academic programme	Number of university places per year
Diploma Programme in Veterinary Medicine	203
Bachelor's Programme in Biomedicine and Biotechnology	30
Bachelor's Programme in Equine Science	35
Master's Programme in Biomedicine and Biotechnology	15
Master's Programme in Interdisciplinary Master in Human-Animal Interactions	20
Master's Programme in European Master in Comparative Morphology	15

2.1.1. Information for students graduating from secondary school and information for first-year students

To recruit the best and most motivated applicants, information about the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna's academic course offerings, graduate profiles and career perspectives are actively provided in far-reaching initiatives, such as the science camp. For one week each year the University for Veterinary Medicine Vienna offers interested youths the opportunity to gain deep insight into the life at the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna, the campus and the veterinary profession.

Furthermore, at national student trade fairs and secondary schools, the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna offers information days on the veterinary curriculum and career options in the veterinary profession.

First-year students are warmly welcomed at the university. As part of the formal acceptance of the offer of admission, students get a "welcome package" ("Erstsemestrigenmappe"), a collection of very important information about the campus and the course of studies.

At the beginning of each academic year a welcome for new students is organised, called the "student welcome" ("Erstsemestrigenbegrüßung"). The first two days of class are dedicated to introducing the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna and offering a brief summary of what students can expect during the 6-year curriculum. This also

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includes general information about student life. Additionally the students are introduced to their tutors. The tutors help new students to get acquainted with the campus, the University and the city of Vienna.

2.2. Undergraduate education (AP2)

2.2.1. Admission of national and foreign students

The admissions procedure starts in November with enactment of the decree („Verordnung des Rektorats über die Zulassungsbeschränkungen zum Diplomstudium Veterinärmedizin und zu den Bachelorstudien Pferdewissenschaften sowie Biomedizin & Biotechnologie an der Veterinärmedizinischen Universität Wien im Studienjahr 2012/2013“) and is finished in July after the interviews. A detailed timeline is shown in Figure 7.

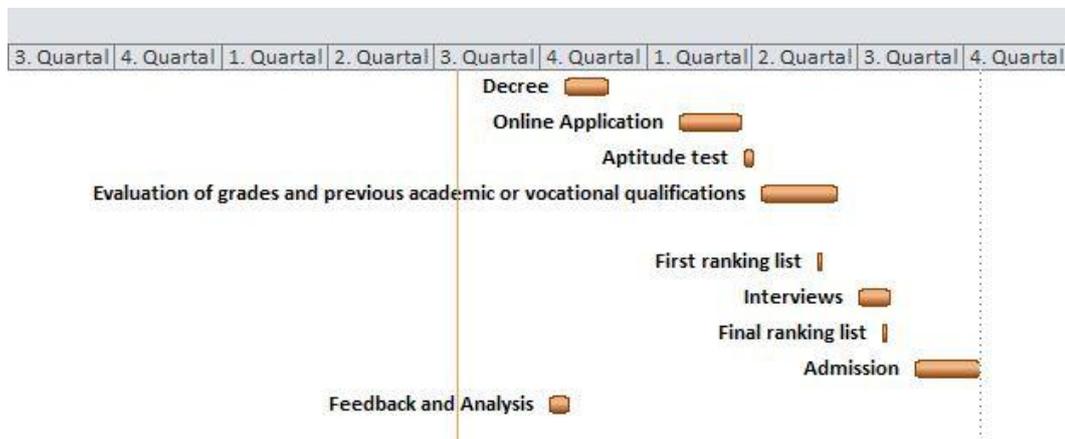


Figure 7: Timeline of the admission's procedure

Admissions procedure

■ Online application

Participation in the admissions procedure starts with the application for a place of study, with only one application per applicant being admissible. Students may apply online between February and March for placement in the academic year beginning in September.

■ Aptitude Test

After applying online all applicants are invited to take an aptitude test, which consists of two parts.

Part I deals with the requirements in studies and professional life of veterinary medicine. Part II is a multiple choice examination consisting of 60 questions, 20 each for biology, chemistry and physics. Applicants can achieve a maximum of 32 credits for part I and 60 credits for part II.

■ Evaluation of grades and previous academic or vocational qualifications

Applicants receive credits based on the grades achieved in the following subjects - German, physics, chemistry, biology and mathematics – up to a maximum of 35 credits. Previous academic or vocational qualifications are noted and summarised, yielding up to 21 additional credits.

■ Awarding of 75% of the places

At the end of the admissions procedure, the tally of credits accumulated at various stages results in a ranking list, with 75% of the places at that point granted to the best-ranked applicants.

■ Interview of applicants for admission to the remaining 25% of available places

For the remaining 25% of available places candidates must participate in an on-campus interview with an interview panel appointed by the Vice-Rector for Study Affairs and Clinical Veterinary Medicine that consists of one senior academic staff member, one veterinarian and one veterinary student representative appointed by the Students' Union. Candidates are invited in descending order according to their place on the ranking list. At a minimum, two times as many candidates as available spaces are invited for personal interviews. Applicants are asked about their personal motivation for wanting to enter the veterinary field, their understanding of the veterinary profession, also their experience with animals, social abilities, study habits, knowledge of animal welfare and more.

■ Final ranking of applicants

Combining the results of the interview with the credits previously achieved leads to a final ranking of applicants. Assignment of the remaining available places is done in descending order according to this ranking until enrolment capacity is reached.

Each year a small number of additional applicants are admitted in order to cover the drop-out rate anticipated among new students.

Development of admissions assessment procedures

In harmony with the goals defined in its Development Plan the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna strives to choose the best and most motivated applicants. A regular evaluation of the admissions procedure allows adaptation of the procedure and implementation of optimizing measures. The decree regarding the admissions procedure has to be approved by the Senate and University Council each year.

Hence, in 2010, part 1 of the aptitude test (requirements of studies and professional life of veterinary medicine) was completely reworked. Under supervision of an external consultant who is highly experienced with establishing selection criteria in admission procedures, a working group evaluated the test. Based on the recommendations of the working group, a new test was designed and validated by a panel of about 200 veterinarians.

The administrative workflow of the admissions procedure is documented and critical control points are identified. For instance, questions and complaints are collected in a

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single email account (zulassung@vetmeduni.ac.at) to ensure consistent information delivery, as well as centralised information gathering that will be summarised in an FAQ section on the University's website.

During the „Evaluation of grades and previous academic or vocational qualifications“ period of the admissions process (Fig. 7), persons in charge meet in regularly scheduled weekly meetings to discuss unclear cases in order to achieve consensus and agree on a general solution.

Table 2.2: Assessment of student admission into the Diploma Programme in Veterinary Medicine

	2011/12	2010/11
Number of online applications	1,422	1,346
Number of applicants passed the aptitude test	896	777
% of applicants from Austria	49.33	47.61
% of applicants from EU countries	49.77	51.61
% of applicants from Non-EU countries	0.89	0.77
Number of students admitted	222	188
Austrian students (% of admissions)	55.86	59.04
EU students (% of admissions)	43.24	39.89
foreign students (% of admissions)	0.90	1.06

2.2.2. Assessment of enrolled undergraduate students

Enrolled students are assessed regularly using consistently applied, published criteria, regulations and procedures. Student assessment procedures are designed to measure achievement of intended learning outcomes and other programme objectives, including Day-one skills.

In general, basic guidelines for the examination system are specified in the University Act of 2002, while general information is set forth in the University statute and detailed information is covered by the current curriculum.

While the University Act of 2002 (UG2002) is a federal law passed by the government, the constitution as well as the curricula are issued by the executive bodies of the University (Rectorate, Senate, University Council).

Matters related to the curriculum, examinations and assessment of students are handled in the Curricular Committee. The Curricular Committee consists of six members, among them two professors and two university lecturers appointed by the Senate as well as two students appointed by the Students' Union. The Vice-Rector for Study Affairs and Clinical Veterinary Medicine is an associate member.

The curriculum is structured in years (except the 2nd tier of courses). Continuing the course of studies is only possible if all exams from the prior year have been successfully completed and passed. Therefore, it is advisable to pass the professional examination on the first or second try. Otherwise, timing constraints will impede the course of study; in this case, students must reckon with a waiting period of up to two semesters. Apart from that, students can decide on their own when to take exams and in what timeframe they will complete their education.

The regulation for examinations (“Prüfungsordnung”) governs the part of the curriculum concerning assessment. It defines the content-related prerequisites for taking an exam, as well as the examination format (written, oral, board examination, comprehensive examination, courses with continuous exams, Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE) etc.).

Generally, there is a difference between examinations required to complete individual courses and comprehensive professional examinations covering the content of several subjects plus additional knowledge and skills acquired through self- study.

Course content is tested either at key points throughout the semester within the framework of the course (“prüfungsimmanenter Charakter”), for example in courses (“Übungen”), or via an oral and/or written exam at the end of the course. Content and assessment procedures are set by the lecturers responsible for each course and must be announced in VetmedOnline before the academic year starts. They can be changed from one academic year to the next.

The format of professional examinations is predefined within the curriculum. The results of examinations must be made available within one month.

In case of a failing grade, a professional exam can be retaken three times in the first study phase. In the second study phase, professional examinations can be retaken four times. In general, the last two retakes take place in front of an examination committee of at least three examiners to ensure integrity in terms of content and format. Additionally, in the case of retakes, students can ask for an accompanying senior examiner as a listener.

N.b.: If they wish to improve their grades students can retake an exam within six months, even if they received a passing grade. Experience shows, however, that students do not make use of this option very much.

Summative assessment

■ Examination procedures, information for students

Examination dates are set out in the course schedule. In general, three dates for each exam - at the beginning, in the middle and at the end of each semester - have to be offered.

The examination results do not rely on the judgement of only one single examiner, because all exams are comprehensive examinations or board examinations. With the exception of the oral exam at the end of the first year, every oral exam includes a practical/interactive/hands-on part, where knowledge gained by hands-on training is tested using anatomical specimens or patients or by referring to case studies.

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In addition to traditional oral or written examinations, other forms of assessment such as written assignments and OSCEs are also used.

The students are informed about the content and types of assessment through VetmedOnline, the web-based study management system. VetmedOnline makes course information - learning objectives, type of course, prerequisites, dates, responsible faculty and assessment - available to students at any time via the VetmedOnline campus intranet portal.

Help [vetmedonline](#)

103601 11W 3SH L Basics of Medical Biochemistry

Language [German](#) [English](#)

Operation [Copy description/lecturer to other course](#)
[planned allocation in curricula](#)
[edit course details of other educational institution](#)

Select [Detail view](#) [Edit](#)

Further info [Participants](#) [equivalent course](#) [Evaluation](#)

Course - detail view

General information

Title **Basics of Medical Biochemistry**

Number **103601**

Type **Lecture/Tutorial**

Semester hours **3**

Offered in **Wintersemester 2011/12**

Lecturer (assistant) **Gemeiner Manfred, Rausch Wolf-Dieter**

Organisation **Medizinische Biochemie**

Contact information

Allocation to curriculum **compulsory subject: 1 | elective subject: 0 | PhD studies: 0**

ECTS credits

Course categories **Allocations: 0**

Course description

Content **General chemistry**
 Atomic structure, periodic table of the elements, spectra, chemical bonds, states of matter, chemical equilibrium, electron transfer reactions and reactions to surfaces and chromatography.
 Basics in organic chemistry
 Bond hybridization, Hydrocarbons, functional groups, isomers, reaction-mechanisms, polymers, purification-methods and conformational analysis

Inorganic chemistry.
 Properties and biological relevant compounds of the elements listed in the PSE.

Previous knowledge expected **no**

Objective **General chemistry**
 (expected results of study and acquired competences) **Understanding of general chemistry, atomic structure, periodic table of the elements and reactions of the elements**
Basics in organic chemistry
Understanding the structure and characteristics of organic molecules and the reactions they undergo

Inorganic chemistry.
 Understanding the distribution of the elements in biological systems

Languages of instruction **German**

Teaching and learning method (delivery of skills) **Details**

Scheduled dates **Details**

Course criteria & registration **Details**

Exam information

Prerequisites according to curriculum **no**

Assessment (exam method and evaluation) **Details**

Exam dates & registration **Details**

Number of exam dates per semester **mindestens 3**

Statistical Evaluation of exam results **Details**

Further information

Recommended reading

Online information

Note

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Figure 8: VetmedOnline exemplary detail

Besides containing descriptions of all lectures and courses, VetmedOnline offers students the opportunity to register and deregister for exams. Results of assessments are also documented in VetmedOnline. VetmedOnline serves a vital information source for students and provides them with official grade certificates, which can be printed out by themselves.

By law, student performance in examinations is rated on a scale of 1 to 5 mapping to the terms “very good”, “good”, “satisfactory”, and “sufficient” for positive results and “insufficient” for a failing grade, respectively. For some practical skills-oriented courses pass/fail grading is used as appropriate.

■ Examination system and quality control of exam questions

Examination procedures are designed to measure the degree to which intended learning outcomes and other programme objectives, including Day-one skills, have been achieved. The veterinary curriculum comprises all of the above-mentioned exam methods.

Professional examinations take place at the end of each semester. At the end of the first and second year of study as well as during clinical training, some examinations will be held as comprehensive oral exams (five exams in total).

In general the types of examinations in the curriculum are comprehensive exams taken in front of a committee, which means that several subjects are tested in the framework of one examination that takes place on a single occasion in front an examination committee. According to the requirements for examinations, comprehensive exams can be either written or oral, and if required by the subject matter, complemented by a practical component.

In total, eight comprehensive professional examinations are written exams, which can mean either the traditional paper/pencil format or computer-based testing. Three out of eight exams are already computer-based exams. The long-term goal is for every written exam to be computer-based or computer-assisted.

Since 2007 the examination at the end of the uniform part of the curriculum has been performed as an “Objective Structured Clinical Examination” (OSCE). Initially, this OSCE had 11 exam stations; since 2010 it consists of 2 exams with 5 and 6 stations, respectively.

The oral exam given at the end of the track of specialisation is now taken in the form of an oral comprehensive examination with respect to academic discourse. It aims at examining the Day-one skills according to EU Directives 78/1027/EWG, 89/48/EWG and 2005/36/EG and to EAEVE standard operating procedures. Examination regulations were made to guarantee consistency across all tracks.

All online examinations and OSCEs are undergirded by detailed blueprints. In general, unless a different standard is used, students must earn 60 % of the maximum possible point score to pass the written examinations. (For instance, standard setting for the OSCE is a modified Angoff method.)

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■ Complaints about exams

Complaints about exam procedures and grades are regulated by law (§79 University Act of 2002 (UG 2002)). Advocating against the rating is not allowed. Complaints concerning formal matters must be justified and forwarded in writing to the Vice-Rector for Study Affairs and Clinical Veterinary Medicine within 2 weeks of the exam results being published.

If the complaint exposes formal legal flaws, the Vice-Rector for Study Affairs and Clinical Veterinary Medicine can decide to revoke the examination.

Formative assessment

Although the use of formative assessment is not obligatory, teachers may use formative assessment in different ways throughout the course of studies.

Examples include:

- self-evaluation at the beginning of the first semester in chemistry and physics
- questionnaires and self-monitoring tests in Vetucation®
- publication of old exam questions
- simulated exams for preparation for the professional examination
- feedback-driven small groups (esp. in anatomy and in the clinics)
- exam results for use in counselling students if they are struggling on their career path

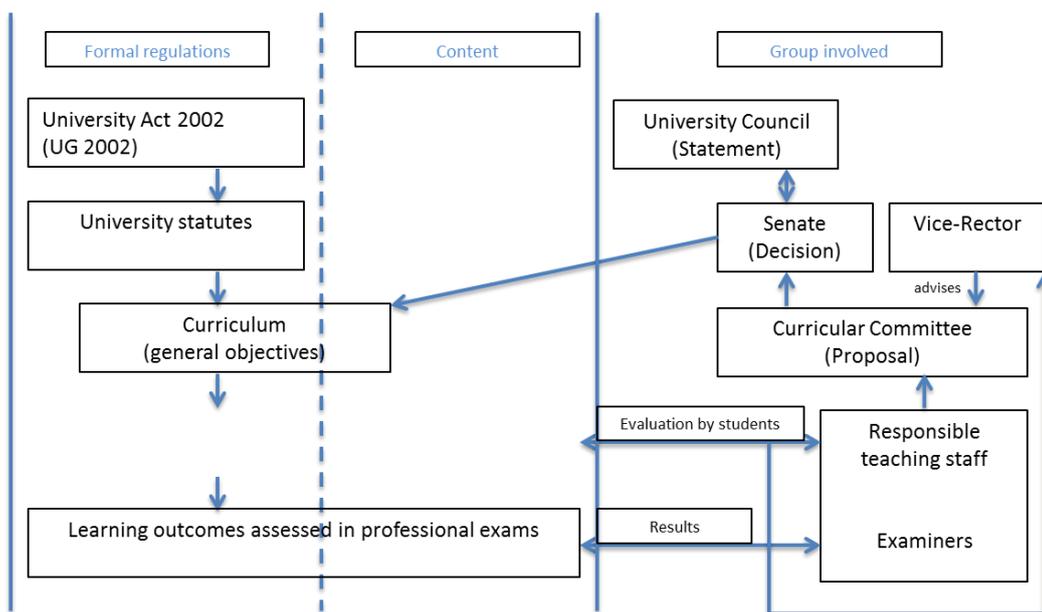


Figure 9: Scheme of constructive alignment

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2.3. Post-graduate student education: academic track (AP 3)

The University is strongly dedicated to lifelong learning (LLL) and has defined the following LLL categories for continuing professional education and postgraduate education:

Table 2.3: Lifelong learning / LLL categories

LLL category	LLL category description	education programmes offered
1	continuing education targeted at the further development of individual competencies for all University staff	Staff development programme including the leadership programme "Leading Vet", didactic training programme, coaching programme, mentoring programme for junior researchers etc.
2	structured postgraduate education programmes with emphasis on research	PhD, doctoral and post-doc programmes
3	structured postgraduate education programmes exclusively for postgraduate veterinarians with an emphasis on clinics (EBVS clinical specialty training)	14 residency programmes
4	structured international postgraduate master's programmes	Biomedicine and Biotechnology, European Master of Advanced Safety Sciences, European Master of Comparative Morphology (EUCOMOR), Master of Wildlife Management (in cooperation with the University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences), Interdisciplinary Master of Animal-Human-Interaction (IMHAI)
5	structured postgraduate university courses, exclusively for postgraduate veterinarians	internships in small animal medicine, equine medicine as well as reproductive medicine and ruminant medicine
6	structured CPE university courses, primarily (though not exclusively) for postgraduate veterinarians	Introduction to Laboratory Animal Medicine (FELASA / GV-SOLAS Category B); Animal-assisted Therapy and Animal-assisted Supportive Measures; Animal Physical therapy, Rehabilitation and Physical therapy; Functional Claw Maintenance; Hoof and Claw Fittings; Applied Cynology
7	CPE lectures, seminars and workshops	a complete list of CPE offers for 2011 can be found in Annex 16

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Of these LLL categories, category 2 and 4 are relevant to the academic track of postgraduate education.

Fostering clinical and research careers is one of the University's major goals. As such, it is an integral part of the Performance Agreement with the Federal Ministry for Science and Research, which means that a certain amount of the University's global budget is earmarked especially for advancing PhD, postdoctoral and residency programmes.

Furthermore, based on an agreement with the Austrian Science Fund (FWF), the University adds up to as many PhD positions as financed by the FWF within the FWF-Doctoral Programmes ("FWF-Doktoratskollegs") from the University's global budget.

Initiative Doctoral Programmes ("Initiativkollegs") and postdocs in the Postdoc Programme are entirely financed by the University's global budget.

Guidelines and curricula for the Master's, PhD and Postdoc Programmes are defined and monitored by the respective curricular committees.

2.3.1. Master's Programme

In addition to meeting generalised and specialised university entrance qualifications, as defined by the University Act of 2002 (UG 2002), successful completion of the admissions procedure is required. Pursuant to § 64(5) University Act of 2002 (UG 2002), admission to a master's programme requires the completion of a bachelor's level course in the pertinent field of studies at either a university or a university of applied sciences (Fachhochschule) or the completion of a similar course of studies at an accredited national or foreign post-secondary educational establishment.

■ Admissions procedure for the master's programme Interdisciplinary Master of Animal-Human-Interaction (IMHAI), European Master of Comparative Morphology (EUCOMOR), Master of Biomedicine and Biotechnology)

■ Online application

Participation in the admissions procedure starts with the application for a place of study, with only one application per applicant being admissible. Students may apply online between February and March for a place at the University in the following academic year.

■ Aptitude Tests and Filing of Applications

All applicants who have submitted online applications take an aptitude test and hand-deliver the supporting documents for the application.

The aptitude test consists of two parts:

- I. Technical questions in the chosen fields of study
- II. Questions asked in the form of an interview regarding the candidate's views about his or her chosen field of study

The two parts of the test may take place on different dates.

The number of candidates admitted to the second part of the test may be limited to, at a minimum, three times the number of places available. In case of a limitation, admission of candidates to the second part of the test will be based on:

- Assessment of application documents

Assessment of application documents with respect to:

- I. Completeness of documents
- II. Previous academic and vocational qualifications

Between 0 to 21 points are assigned to the application documents.

- Rankings and Processing of Applications

a) The ranking of applications is based on the total of points achieved by the technical questions, by the interview and the previous academic and vocational qualifications.

b) Applicants are awarded places in the incoming class on the basis of capacity in the courses of study in descending order of the total number of points achieved.

c) Applicants who participated in the admissions procedure but were not awarded a place will be put on a waiting list. If offers of enrolment are not accepted pursuant to §3, these places will be assigned to applicants on the waiting list in descending order of the overall score achieved.

- Acceptance of Placement at the University

Applicants who are awarded a place of study at the University in accordance with the present provisions, will be notified of the progress of their applications by e-mail or by post sent to the addresses indicated in the application. The notification also includes information about the next formal steps necessary to be taken according to the requirements of the admissions procedure.

If an applicant does not initiate the next formal steps in the admissions procedure within a period of ten calendar days after being requested to do so, the offer of a place at the university is rescinded and the next applicant on the list will be admitted pursuant to §2(5)(c).

2.3.2. PhD Programme

The international PhD Programme ([Annex 17^{en}](#)) of the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna aims to provide PhD students with the opportunity to develop into successful young scientists.

The working language of the PhD Programme is English. The minimum duration is 3 years. After successful completion of the PhD studies the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna awards the academic degree "Doctor of Philosophy" (PhD). The University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna offers the following Initiative Doctoral Programmes ("Initiativkollegs") within the PhD Programme:

- HIP: Modulation of the porcine immune system by host-specific infections

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- BIOREC: Biological responses to environmental challenges
- VetMedPhD: Research related to veterinary medicine with a broader scope of research subjects.

In addition, the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna offers the Doctoral Programme (“Doktoratskolleg”) “PopGen Vienna”, which specialises on population and evolutionary genetics. This programme is sponsored by the Austrian Science Fund (FWF) and as such is subject to peer review by the FWF.

The training is individually tailored for each PhD student. While each Doctoral Programme has its own specific research focus, the course modules are designed to provide the required subject-specific training, as well as training that addresses the individual needs of the PhD students (soft skills). The PhD requires two first-author publications, with one of them being in the upper 30% quantile of the field. In order to ensure that the PhD project can meet these expectations, all PhD project proposals undergo external peer review and only positively reviewed proposals are admitted.

The PhD Programme of the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna is founded on the concept of training by research. As such, PhD students dedicate most of their time (155 of 180 ECTS) to their research work (PhD project), although they are obliged to teach and attend courses and seminars equivalent to 23 ECTS over the course of three years. The education of PhD students encompasses both scientific training and complementary skills courses. It is interdisciplinary in nature and focuses on scientific precision, and the ability to work in a team of scientists from miscellaneous research fields.

Admission to the PhD Programme is regulated in the PhD curriculum. All recruitment is in line with the European Charter for Researchers, which provides the overarching framework of guidelines and requirements for the roles, responsibilities and entitlements of the PhD students, their employer and advisors. The Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers ([Annex 18^{en}](#)) provides the guiding set of principles and ensures that the selection process is fair and transparent, without any quotas.

The PhD Programme at the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna is open to students who have successfully completed university studies (comprising 300 ECTS credits) in the field of veterinary medicine, life sciences or a related discipline. The admission of outstanding students with a university degree comprising less than 300 ECTS credits is possible at the discretion of the Curricular Committee for Degree Programmes for Postgraduate Education.

The application packet is submitted to the prospective PhD advisor and includes the following documents:

- an informal application for a PhD position at the University indicating personal qualifications and motivation for attending the PhD Programme, as well as the areas of scientific interest and expectations regarding a future professional career;
- curriculum vitae;
- certificates;

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- a statement about English-language proficiency.

After consultation with senior researchers of the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna, the primary PhD advisor selects the most suitable candidate from the group of applicants. The details of the selection procedure are left to the primary PhD advisor.

Subsequently, the selected applicant is asked to submit the following documents to the Curricular Committee for Degree Programmes for Postgraduate Education, on the basis of which final approval may be granted:

- the letter from the PhD advisor, specifying the topic of the research project, commitment to provide scientific supervision, laboratory and office space and funding for three years;
- a description of the planned research project outlining the current state of research in the given research area and a project plan including a title in both German and English (selected in agreement with the PhD advisor); this document should make clear the challenging nature of the research project and the expected scientific impact.

New PhD students are admitted only at the beginning of each term.

- Supervision

The immediate progress of each PhD student is monitored continuously by the thesis advisor. This is complemented by annual progress reports, interim evaluations and, ultimately, the final exam. In this context, the Curricular Committee for Degree Programmes for Postgraduate Education and the appointed PhD committees are essential elements of the PhD Programme's quality assurance system. Concomitant quality assurance measures include a feedback system in which all PhD Programme graduates report back to the Vice-Rector for Study Affairs and Clinical Veterinary Medicine.

The Curricular Committee for Degree Programmes for Postgraduate Education is appointed by the Senate of the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna according to §25(8)3 University Act of 2002 (UG 2002) to develop, monitor and revise the guidelines and curricula of the PhD Programmes. In addition to ensuring continuous supervision and advancement of the PhD Programme, it mediates between PhD advisor and student in cases of conflict. The Curricular Committee for Postgraduate Education consists of six representatives, including two full professors, two associate or assistant professors or group leaders and two PhD students. The Vice-Rector for Research and International Relations and the Vice-Rector for Study Affairs and Clinical Veterinary Medicine are co-opted members.

A unique PhD Committee is appointed for each PhD student and must be approved by the Curricular Committee for Degree Programmes for Postgraduate Education. This PhD Committee supervises the progress of each student throughout his/her PhD studies. The PhD Committee serves a central role in helping the student formulate a personal career development plan, which specifies his/her training needs, complementary skills and the scientific objectives of the thesis. Each PhD Committee consists of at least two scientists with a habilitation degree or an equivalent scientific

qualification. At least one PhD advisor must be a member of the academic staff at the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna. The duties of the PhD Committee encompass:

- advising the PhD student on the most appropriate course work,
- supervision, individual guidance and monitoring of the PhD student's progress,
- evaluation of the annual progress reports,
- guidance and support during the writing of the PhD thesis and
- evaluation of the PhD thesis.

Each student must attend an annual PhD Committee meeting, in the framework of which s/he must summarise the progress of her/his PhD work. Two weeks before the PhD Committee meeting the student submits a written progress report; this is discussed at the meeting as well. Should their schedules not allow attendance at the committee meeting, external PhD Committee members participate by Skype or conference call. Students receive feedback on all their reports from every PhD Committee member. Subsequently, the PhD Committee briefly reports to the Curricular Committee for Degree Programmes for Postgraduate Education about the outcome of the annual PhD Committee meeting. Each year, in addition to the annual evaluation, at least one progress report meeting takes place between students and their PhD Committee.

Another important quality control element is the first-year evaluation, which is designed to ascertain that the student has the potential to successfully complete the PhD Programme. The extension of the contract given for the first year requires an unanimous vote by the PhD Committee.

■ Assessment

After completion of the PhD programme (normally at the end of the third year), the PhD examination is held by the PhD Committee. Upon application for a PhD examination, the PhD student has to submit proof of successful completion of the required courses and seminars and also a cumulative thesis based on at least two publications.

The PhD Committee evaluates the thesis based on the written reports of the PhD advisors and an external examiner, who is selected by the PhD Committee. The reports are independent of each other and each includes a concluding assessment of the thesis and a final grade ranging from 1 (excellent) to 5 (not sufficient).

The PhD defence consists of a public presentation – in English and at least 30 minutes in length – by the PhD student on the research project, followed by an open discussion of the project of at least 15 minutes. The disputation should take at least 45 minutes, yet not exceed 75 minutes. In cases where the student fails the examination, three further attempts are possible. In the event of repeated failures to pass the examination, it will be concluded that the student has failed the PhD examination. The Curricular Committee for Degree Programmes for Postgraduate Education is then notified about the examination result.

Following the defence the Curricular Committee for Degree Programmes for Postgraduate Education determines the overall result of the PhD student's performance and awards a final grade (1-5) by weighting the assessments of both the thesis and the disputation.

Currently, 54 students are enrolled in the PhD Programme, of which 41 are employed by the University.

2.3.3. Doctorate in Veterinary Medicine

This doctorate provides the opportunity for students with a veterinary degree to develop the skills needed for independent scientific work in the field of veterinary medicine and associated professions ([Annex 19^{de}](#)): Curriculum Doctorate). Graduates are awarded the title of "*Doctor medicinae veterinariae*". Similar to the PhD, the doctorate offers a structured training programme spanning 3 years. However, expectations concerning successful research are lower as compared with the PhD Programme. This is reflected in the prerequisites defined for the successful completion of the programmes, e.g., one peer-reviewed first-author publication is sufficient for the doctorate.

■ Supervision

The principal supervisor must have conducted several years of active research at the university level, confirmed at least by a *venia docendi* (habilitation degree).

■ Doctoral Plan

The project plan and the hypothesis, including the "training", have to be submitted to the Vice-Rector for Study Affairs and Clinical Veterinary Medicine within the first semester. The plan has to be signed by the principal supervisor and a co-supervisor and the heads of the respective organisational units and departments.

■ Training

Courses worth 15 ECTS have to be completed to enhance skills and competence on scientific and professional issues related to the Doctoral thesis.

■ Assessment

After submission the thesis is reviewed by the supervisor and an independent expert appointed by the Vice-Rector for Study Affairs and Clinical Veterinary Medicine. If the thesis receives positive reviews from both reviewers, the doctoral student is invited to present the work in the forum of a public defence. The defence is appraised by an assessment committee consisting of a reviewer, supervisor and the Vice-Rector for Study Affairs or a delegate.

In case of a negative review from one of the reviewers, a third reviewer is consulted.

■ Option for switching to PhD

Switching from the Doctoral to the PhD Programme is possible within the first three semesters without any increase in the amount of time needed to finish the degree.

2.3.4. Postdoc Programmes

Introduced in 2009, the aim of the Postdoc Programme is to foster young researchers showing high potential for a scientific career. In contrast to typical postdoctoral positions, the Postdoc Programme ([Annex 20^{en}](#)) of the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna offers a well-designed mentoring network and career track options for outstanding young scientists.

The first stage of postdoctoral career development is the junior phase, which lasts for up to four years and is accompanied by two mentors. After this postdoc phase scientists are offered the opportunity to continue as independent group leaders provided they have successfully applied for external research funding. After six years an independent group leader can apply for a position as senior researcher. The tenure position will start not earlier than after eight years of independent funding.

For the Postdoc Programme, there is an internal call for projects, which are subsequently peer-reviewed and evaluated by the University's Research Profile Area Board. Once a final selection of projects qualifying for the Postdoctoral Programme is made by the Research Profile Area Board, postdoc positions within these projects are advertised internationally.

Applications are reviewed by the respective project managers. Short-listed candidates are invited to an interview with members of the University's Research Profile Area Board, who then, in conjunction with the responsible project managers, select the most suitable candidates. Concomitant quality assurance is provided by the Curricular Committee for postgraduate studies.

Fellows of the Postdoc Programme are associated with one institute or clinic at the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna. The postdoctoral student is mentored by two scientists, at least one of whom is senior and established in the field.

2.3.5. Habilitations – *Venia Docendi*

According to the §103 University Act of 2002 (UG 2002) the rectorate can award authorisation to teach (*venia docendi*) to highly qualified experts upon request. The requirements are defined in the guideline for habilitation ("Habilitationsrichtlinien" [Annex 21^{de}](#)) approved by the Senate. A commission evaluates the scientific expertise in the requested subject and the teaching qualifications.

Table 2.4. Figures for postgraduate academic education

Academic year	Type of programme	Nr. students/ candidates enrolled	Nr. students/ candidates passed	Mean nr. of papers per student/ candidate ¹	Mean nr. impact factor obtained per student/ candidate
2010/2011	PhD	25	4	1.0	2.3
2010/2011	Doctorate	123	60	0.9	2.2
2010/2011	Postdoc	12	0	2.5	10.3
2010/2011	Habilitations	2	2	17.5	15.6
2009/2010	PhD	13	2	1.5	4.5
2009/2010	Doctorate	128	68	0.8	1.9
2009/2010	Postdoc	10	0	2.4	10.4
2009/2010	Habilitations	2	2	27.0	34.1

2.4. Postgraduate student education: professional track (AP 3)

Of the LLL categories described previously (Table 2.3: LLL categories)), category 3 and 5 are relevant to the professional track of postgraduate education.

2.4.1. Internship

Clinical specialty training is offered in the form of rotating internships in small animal medicine, equine medicine as well as subject-specific non-rotating internships in reproductive medicine and ruminant medicine, all with a duration of one year (selected Curricula: [Annex 22^{de}](#)). Internship positions are advertised and applications are reviewed by the respective internship committees (consisting of all teachers responsible for supervision of interns), whose tasks also include the interviewing and selection of candidates, as well as performing regular evaluations during the course of the internship.

Completion of an internship is a requirement for entering specialisation programmes at European colleges.

2.4.2. Residency

The University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna seeks to enhance its profile through targeted international recruiting and support of young academics. Especially the

¹ Mean numbers are calculated based on total number of candidates enrolled. Only original works that had an impact on the field were counted.

number of diplomates is to be increased to strengthen existing clinical expertise and further develop the Residency Programmes.

Residency Programmes are supervised by the respective colleges, which belong to the „European Board of Veterinary Specialisation“(EBVS). Some of the Residency Programmes are also approved by the respective colleges of the „American Board of Veterinary Specialties“(ABVS). Furthermore, there is an internal Residency Advisory Board (RAB) at the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna that provides additional supervision of residency positions.

The internal RAB is responsible for the number of resident positions per year, and safeguards the interests of the university and the residents and keeps track of all programmes. Each year residents fill out a questionnaire evaluating their training and the supervisor gives feedback to his/her resident. If the evaluation reveals that the resident or supervisor is not satisfied or that performance is not up to par, the RAB invites both for a personal interview. In cases of unsatisfactory performance the RAB recommends cancellation of the contract.

The application and admission procedure for residencies is regulated by the University’s Residency Statutes (see [Annex 23^{de}](#)). The residency positions are announced internationally. The number of positions available for clinical specialty training each year is defined by the RAB together with the Rectorate and is based on capacity and patient load.

Table 2.5. Specialty Training

Discipline	Number of interns	Number of residents ²	Number diplomates ³
Equine medicine (rotating internship)	5	-	-
Small animal medicine (rotating internship)	10	-	-
Reproductive medicine (subject-specific, non-rotating internship)	2	-	-
European College of Animal Reproduction (ECAR)	-	2	7
European College of Bovine Health Management (ECBHM)	-	0	5
European College of Equine Internal Medicine (ECEIM)	-	-	2
European College of Laboratory Animal Medicine (ECLAM)	-	-	1

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Discipline	Number of interns	Number of residents ²	Number diplomates ³
European College of Porcine Health Management (ECPHM)	-	-	4
European College of Poultry Veterinary Science (ECPVS)	-	-	2
European College of Small Ruminant Health Management (ECSRHM)	-	-	1
European College of Veterinary Anaesthesia and Analgesia (ECVAA)	-	2	2
European College of Veterinary Comparative Nutrition (ECVCN)	-	-	2
European College of Veterinary Clinical Pathology (ECVCP)	-	1	2
European College of Veterinary Dermatology (ECVD)	-	-	1
European College of Veterinary Internal Medicine- Companion Animals (ECVIM-CA)	-	2	2
European College of Veterinary Internal Medicine- Companion Animals; Cardiology (ECVIM – CA Cardiology)	-	-	1
European College of Veterinary Internal Medicine-Companion Animals; Oncology (ECVIM-CA Oncology)	-	1	1
European College of Veterinary Neurology (ECVN)	-	-	1
European College of Veterinary Ophthalmologists (ECVO)	-	1	1
European College of Veterinary Pathology (ECVP)	-	-	3
European College of Veterinary Public Health- Food Science (ECVPH – Food Science)	-	-	4
European College of Veterinary Pharmacology and Toxicology (ECVPT)	-	-	1
European College of Veterinary Surgery- large animal (ECVS – large animal surgery)	-	1	1
European College of Veterinary Surgery- small animal (ECVS –small animal surgery)	-	2	4

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Discipline	Number of interns	Number of residents ²	Number diplomates ³
European College of Zoological Medicine - Herpetology (ECZM – herpetology)	-	-	1
European College of Zoological Medicine – Small mammals (ECZM – small mammals)	-	-	1
European College of Zoological Medicine – wildlife population health (ECZM - wildlife population health)	-	-	1
European Veterinary Parasitology College (EVPC)	-	0	1
American College of Veterinary Anesthesiologists (ACVA)	-	-	2
American College of Veterinary Internal Medicine – Companion animals (ACVIM – CA)	-	-	1
American College of Veterinary Pharmacists (ACVP)	-	-	1
American College of Veterinary Radiology (ACVR-RO)	-	-	1

Reference date: 31.12.2011

¹ Residency programme in place

² Numbers refer to formal resident positions jointly funded by global budget and income of the respective units

³ The sum of the diplomates in the individual disciplines is 58, while the overall number of diplomates (headcount) is 53, This is due to five diplomates, who are boarded specialists at two different colleges.

2.5. Student welfare (AP 4)

2.5.1. Student health and welfare

The University follows rigorous safety measures and regulations as required by Austrian legislation. The safety measures in all relevant areas (e.g. laboratories, dissection and post-mortem halls and isolation facilities) are compliant with Austrian safety legislation. Safety supervisors are selected from the pool of academic as well as technical staff. All relevant protocols for safety procedures are posted in the respective facilities for safety and educational purposes, and students are instructed in safety procedures prior to their work in such areas. Particular care is taken to inform students about the prevention of zoonosis.

Rabies vaccinations are compulsory for all students prior to starting clinical training.

2.5.2. Student affairs and counselling

Student tutoring is an integral part of the orientation period. Senior students who have been through an in-house training to be tutors, help groups of first-year students get acquainted with the campus and the University from the students' point of view. The University takes student welfare very seriously, is well aware of the most common problems that may arise, and does its best to be proactive in helping students avert problems.

Students in each study programme elect a representative, who is the contact person responsible for providing up-to-date information to students and solving problems together with the Vice-Rector for Study Affairs and Clinical Veterinary Medicine. Additionally, every academic year the students select a representative to facilitate communication in case of problems or lack of clarity.

The Student Services at the University are responsible for student guidance and advice, dissemination of information to new students, protection of students' legal rights, registration of completed studies (general studies and the recognition of studies completed elsewhere), retakes of University examinations and communications with regard to academic affairs. Student Services help students in all practical matters, both at the department and faculty level, and know whom to contact if further action is needed.

Typically, students are contacted by e-mail via mailing lists. All students get a user-account providing specific access to the University's IT systems, including email, access to VetmedOnline, Vetucation®, Intranet etc. Information also is available via VetmedOnline, which students can access 24 hours per day.

International Study Affairs Office and International Relations Office (IRO) are responsible for the coordination of international student exchanges and mobility, as well as helping with their coordination. International Relations Office is also in charge of the overall coordination of the ERASMUS mobility programme at the University. The coordination officer for international affairs helps the students at the University in all matters regarding mobility programmes.

Balancing studies, career and family is a central topic for the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna. In 2010, the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna was awarded the "career and family" certificate, and in 2011 the "university and family" certificate. These certificates are bestowed by the Federal Ministry of Economy, Family and Youth and the Federal Ministry for Science and Research respectively to recognise universities that have successfully completed an independent audit to assess the possibility of balancing studies or a university career with having a family. Participation in the audit programme has provided valuable guidance to the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna in introducing family-friendly initiatives, while at the same time giving it the opportunity to position itself as an attractive employer.

2.6. Comments

To enable swift adaptation to emerging scientific needs and current trends the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna will create a number of qualifying positions

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(“Qualifizierungsstellen”), posts that give their holders the opportunity to qualify for tenure. The scientific areas to which these positions are assigned will be selected based on strategic considerations within the financial scope.

3. Assessment of teaching staff (AP5)

As the only university of veterinary medicine in Austria, the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna offers high-quality, research based international courses of study and continuing education programmes with a substantial practical component. The University continually seeks to further develop its offering of academic programmes and thus hone the skills of its graduates.

The next generation of curricula will give a high priority to student-centred learning, vertical and horizontal integration of teaching content and the early training of clinical-practical skills.

3.1. Factual information

The University emphasises the value of teaching; it supports and promotes outstanding teaching achievements. Developing the didactic expertise of teachers through specific training programmes makes possible the establishment of an innovative and interactive range of education programmes. Active participation of staff and students in teaching is rewarded by way of distinctions and incentives for teaching. In order to continuously improve and develop didactic expertise, the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna offers specific training and continuing education programmes for its teaching staff. Furthermore, interactive teaching is supported through the creation of adequate premises, platforms and innovative teaching methods.

Project-based inter-university cooperation helps to bring new insights into educational research, the results of which are used to improve didactic education for teachers.

3.1.1. Staff recruitment and appointment procedures

The evaluation of teaching and scientific merit takes place in annual review meetings between employee and her/his superior and in the work performance assessments associated with the new salary system (Collective Agreement) introduced in 2009.

Staff recruitment and appointment procedures comprise thorough assessment of candidates to ensure a high level of competence and excellent aptitude for the position offered. Of course, different categories of teaching and research positions (e.g. professor, university lecturer, clinical teacher, university instructor and teaching assistant) have different requirements.

Recruitment per se and especially tenure of professorships are largely defined by the University Act of 2002 (UG 2002) and are augmented by the University's internal regulations. Concurrently, the University defines its own rules concerning employment procedures for other academic positions.

■ Academic positions

Full professors with tenure and time-limited professorships are regulated in §98 and §99 University Act of 2002 (UG 2002). The definition and minimum salary of the remaining academic positions (e.g. senior lecturers and researchers, academic assistants, PhD students) are regulated by means of the Collective Agreement.

The Collective Agreement places a cap on teaching hours and does not allow teaching above this limit. Most of the teaching staff is limited to four semester hours of teaching. In this environment, conducting small group work and hands-on training is an organisational challenge.

During the recruitment of academic staff, substantial scientific and didactic qualifications are of utmost importance. In the case of full professorships, close attention is paid to scientific merit and social as well as managerial competence. As for senior lecturers, didactic expertise as well as professional experience are in high demand.

3.1.2. Development of academic staff

The development of teaching staff is supported by means of in-house training. The University operates a unit dedicated solely to faculty development with educational training courses offered regularly and on demand.

In cases of special interest, teachers are sent to external courses to acquire specialised expertise and disseminate lessons learned in-house in a train-the-trainer manner.

Examples of current course offerings:

- Didactic training (beginner and advanced)
- Presentation using the audience-response system
- Generating multiple choice questions (MCQs)
- E-learning and the use of e-learning platforms in teaching
- Use of VetmedOnline
- Training on the Objective Structured Clinical Examination format (OSCE)

3.1.3. Role of students in assessing teachers

Evaluation process

The evaluation of teaching is regulated by University Act of 2002 (UG 2002) and by the University statute.

In principle, according to §14 University Act of 2002 (UG 2002), Austrian universities are bound to perform assessments of evaluations and quality assurance

Based on § 14(7) University Act of 2002 (UG 2002), the University statute contains the following general guidelines for the performance, publishing and implementation of evaluations:

- All areas of the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna (research, teaching, Animal Hospital, services) have to be evaluated according to §14 University Act of 2002 (UG2002);
- According to the statutes, the course lecturers have to provide an evaluation of their courses in regular intervals to the Vice-Rector for Study Affairs and Clinical Veterinary Medicine.

The course evaluations are performed online by use of the web-based application VetmedOnline. The results of the evaluation process are communicated to the lecturers and the Vice-Rector for Study Affairs and Clinical Veterinary Medicine. Until the year 2009/2010 results were published on the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna intranet as a ranking. At the request of the University's Works Council ("Betriebsrat"), this practice was stopped in the 2010/2011 academic year as the return rate was too low to produce a representative result.

Until the spring semester 2012 the course evaluation was specific to the individual lecturer. Students could evaluate several lecturers within one course or several lecturers giving one lecture separately. The evaluation process ran the whole semester and the results were sent to the lecturers at the end of the semester. Lecturers could give their opinion to the Vice-Rector for Study Affairs and Clinical Veterinary Medicine regarding the results of the evaluation.

Starting the academic year 2012/2013 there will be "Evaluation New". A competence-based instrument for the evaluation, developed at the University Graz ("Grazer Evaluierungsmodell für Kompetenzerwerb (GEKO)"), will be implemented. It focuses on different types of action competence (i.e. professional, methodological, action, social, personal and media competence) and comprises both the point of views of students as well as instructors. The evaluation model supports the paradigm shift in teaching, from teacher orientated to student centred learning. The following fundamental changes will take place:

- The questionnaires are going to be remodelled:

The questions are output-oriented and focus on each student's acquisition of skills. The questionnaires are created according to the "Grazer Evaluierungsmodell für Kompetenzerwerb (GEKO)", where five basic competencies are defined. Apart from questions to evaluate the acquisition of competencies the following items are also components of the evaluation questionnaire: items which might influence the acquisition of competencies such as attitude and behaviour of the students, i.e., interest, effort, previous knowledge etc., also issues that deal with the general conditions of teaching and learning.

The focus will be on each student's self-assessment of his/her gained competencies. There will be different questionnaires for different types of training formats such as lectures, seminars or courses.

- The course evaluation will continue to be initiated and managed via VetmedOnline, but lecturers will have more responsibility and freedom in carrying out the evaluation. For example, in the future, lecturers will be able to determine the point in time at which the evaluation is done and its length. The new application will include questions created by the lecturer to supplement the standard questions. After closing the evaluation process the results are delivered to the lecturer immediately. Lecturers can give their opinion to the Vice-Rector for Study Affairs and Clinical Veterinary Medicine concerning the results of the evaluation and decide whether the results are published or not.

- At the beginning of the semester the Vice-Rector for Study Affairs and Clinical Veterinary Medicine invites students to take part in the evaluation. Instead of annually, all lectures are now evaluated every 4 semesters. Lecturers, however, can voluntarily choose to administer a course evaluation at any time.
- Additionally, there is a questionnaire - a mirror image of the student questionnaire - for lecturers to reflect on the aims of their courses. Comparing the answers given by students and instructors (“What have I learnt in this course?” vs. “What should students learn in this course?”) allows the instructors to define the important items of the evaluation. When a comparison of the point of view of students and teachers is done in this manner, the instructors gain revealing information as to the extent to which the goals of the course were achieved.

Results of teaching assessment of the faculty

The evaluation of the last two academic years is shown in Figure 10. About 300 teachers were involved in the evaluation. The evaluation results are consolidated into a single grade ranging from 1 to 5, where 1 is the best. More than 70 % of the teachers were rated very good (1) and good (2).

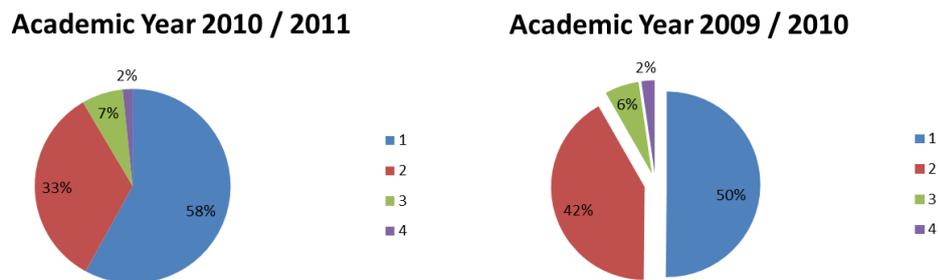


Figure 10: Results of teaching assessment

3.1.4. Teaching performance and excellence

Once a year the “Teacher of the Year” honour is awarded in the form of monetary rewards for the winners in several categories. Prior to 2012, the twenty best junior and senior teachers were selected based on the results of the compulsory evaluation. From this short list, students voted for their choice of junior and senior teacher of the year. This procedure was changed in 2012. Now it starts with a self-initiated application. A jury consisting of former teachers of the year, students and the Vice-Rector for Study Affairs and Clinical Veterinary Medicine selects the ten best applicants from each group – junior or senior teacher. Only then do the students vote for their choice of teacher of the year in each category. Traditionally only staff members have qualified for the award, but since 2012, the freelance veterinarians acting as instructors are included in the pool of nominations. In this way, the University desires to show its appreciation to the importance of these volunteers

Each year a jury composed of representatives of the e-learning team, students and the Vice-Rector for Study Affairs and Clinical Veterinary Medicine presents an award for an ambitious e-learning project.

Additionally, teaching activity of university teaching staff is acknowledged in financial terms by the awarding of a performance incentive, which will be redesigned in the near future.

3.2. Comments

■ Collective Agreement

Hands-on training in small groups requires lots of teaching hours from the teacher's point of view. The upper limit of teaching hours per teacher set by the new Collective Agreement leads to teaching resources being in high demand, a factor that is not reflected in the Performance Agreement. On the one hand the new agreement allows research based teaching, because it ensures time for the research activities of the staff members. On the other hand the university has to strike a balance between the budget and the resources. More senior lecturers will need to be appointed in the near future in order to allocate sufficient professional and teaching hours to meet the needs of the students.

■ "Evaluation New"

Student evaluations are one of the main pillars of the ongoing assessment procedures at University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna. Hence, it is important that the evaluation rate is adequate. Within the last couple of years, the evaluation rate for certain courses has been critically low. The Vice-Rector for Study Affairs and Clinical Veterinary Medicine invites students to feedback rounds at least once a year. In cooperation with the Students' Union, feedback on courses and examinations is gathered and discussed.

With regard to the competence-oriented course evaluation ("Evaluation New"), a followup measure to support the instructors is planned.

Traditionally, instructors made decisions about course content and the format of exams. Since the paradigm shift, instructors also have to take into consideration which competencies and skills the students should have gained at the end and how these can be achieved. The student-centred approach means competence-orientation as it is realised within the context of the course evaluation at the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna. The course evaluation is an excellent diagnostic and feedback instrument for gauging the students' acquisition of competencies.

■ Student's feedback

Four times a year the Students' Union publishes the newspaper RECTUM. Annually, the Students' Union awards the OSCAR or DETLEF to teaching and/or technical staff. Throughout the year, students have the option to give feedback about which teachers they liked (or didn't) by means of anonymous notes dropped into a suggestion box.

4. Assessment of learning opportunities (AP6)

The University's teaching philosophy is to promote in-depth learning based on understanding, high-quality expertise and the ability to apply knowledge to problem-solving. The purpose of teaching and supervision is to support learning and professional growth and to encourage lifelong learning and self-development.

4.1. Factual information

Learning opportunities is a term with a number of aspects, beginning with the delivery of and advice on instructional materials to individual lecturers, the furnishing of IT and library facilities at University level and the creation of an academic environment that provides adequate opportunities for independent study and interaction with the teaching staff.

■ delivery of and advice on instructional materials

Materials and documents need to be provided for independent study. Generally, students are allowed to choose their study materials (determined by law).

The students are encouraged to use veterinary textbooks. All course descriptions contain a reference list of textbooks on which the course syllabus is based.

In general, the aim is for the course notes to support students to read the textbooks. Lecture notes (also known as scripts) are available for some courses. In the first part of the Diploma Programme, where theoretical basics are covered, course materials are collected in scripts. Scripts are compiled either privately or by the department. In the clinical part of the study programme, the use of original literature requested in the respective courses to solve clinical problems (for example: Journal Club) is recommended.

Whereas students prefer to get handouts of the teachers' PowerPoint presentations well in advance of lectures, teachers believe that learning is better served when students write their own notes.

In some courses (such as case presentation), the final versions of the case presentations, produced by groups of students in collaboration, are shared with the whole course using Vetucation®.

■ adequate opportunities for independent study

Outside of the library there are rooms for independent study in the main buildings and main entrance hall. Some are organised by the Students' Union. IT-services provide a computer room with about 50 workspaces. In some institutes students can peruse demonstration materials outside of class, e.g. collections of bones (Anatomy) or histology slides (Histology). Since June 2012 a skills lab provides additional opportunities for independent study (see 4.3.)

In cooperation with the Students' Union executive committee, the library offers access to microscopes to support students in their laboratory courses. These microscopes may be used in the library rooms.

■ interaction with teaching staff

To strengthen interactive teaching during lectures the University for Veterinary Medicine, Vienna introduced an interactive audience response system in 2011. Students use a clicker to respond to questions posed by teachers to receive instantaneous feedback.

In addition to the student-teacher interaction during the courses, professors offer open office hours to give the students the chance to maintain personal contact with the professors. Throughout the campus they encounter opportunities to engage in voluntary internships, where the first “scientific contact” can lead to a diploma thesis. Students are especially welcome at the clinics during night and/or weekend shifts. To honour this level of engagement 21 voluntary emergency services within the course “Emergency Service” can be count as free electives worth 6 ECTS apiece.

Lifelong learning is promoted through special initiatives. In postgraduate education courses offered at the campus, zero- or low-cost spaces are reserved for students. Visits to world conferences on different species were initiated by professors on behalf of the students; these are supported by the Office for International Relations and counted as free electives. Due to the close contact between the Vice-Rector for Study Affairs and Clinical Veterinary Medicine and the organisational committees of national conferences, a number of students are invited by the committees to attend the conferences free of charge.

Student involvement in improvement of learning opportunities

In accordance with §91(1) University Act of 2002 (UG 2002), undergraduate students who need more than the number of semesters allocated per tier enjoy a grace period of two semesters, but must pay a tuition fee of €363,36 for each semester beyond that.

This fee is earmarked specifically for measures that are jointly defined by the Senate and the students as set out in §25(1)13 and §25(11) University Act of 2002 (UG 2002). As such, student representatives nominate one project and the Senate nominates three projects. Mostly, the measures are aimed at improving learning opportunities.

Upon payment of the tuition fee, students are asked to vote for the measures they wish to see realised.

Furthermore, students and student organisations have the opportunity to contact the academic staff, the Vice- Rector for Study Affairs and Clinical Veterinary Medicine and the Rector at any time and bring up issues concerning education or work at University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna. This possibility is considered an integral part of daily quality control efforts at the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna students as well as student organisations make frequent use of it.

4.1.1. Library facilities

The library of the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna is a central service provider of the University. Equipped with access to online and print media, learning facilities, up-to-date computer equipment and staffed with competent employees, the library is a main attraction for researchers and students.

The main library is specific to the veterinary training establishment. The library's collection focuses on veterinary medicine. It is the only library in Austria that collects and catalogues books, magazines and other materials specific to the field of veterinary medicine. The library offers 158 places to sit and read, 4 conference rooms (some furnished with multimedia equipment) and 6 student carrels. A multimedia room is equipped for watching DVDs or VHS tapes. A book scanner and an A3- flatbed scanner are also available. During the summer students have access to the rooftop garden, which seats 40.

Throughout the building library users have access to the Eduroam wireless network. In addition 19 computer workstations (all less than 2 years old) offer Internet access. A book drop and a self-service checkout machine provide additional customer value.

Full-text versions of printed materials are available electronically via an SFX link resolver. Furthermore the library offers access to the Electronic Journals Library (EZB) and the Database Information System (DBIS).

VPN-authorized users can access journals and databases to which the library subscribes from anywhere in the world.

During the academic year the library is open Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. until 10 p.m.

4.1.2. IT-learning facilities

■ Vetucation®

Since 2006, the e-learning platform Vetucation® has been available to the academic staff, members and students of the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna. Many of the members have supported efforts to modernise education by introducing online courses and new media.

Many lectures are also displayed there in PowerPoint form. Students have access to the learning management system for the duration of their sojourn at the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna, so they can easily review the fine points of any classroom lecture at any time during their course of studies.

The IT Centre for Audiovision provides courses on e-learning, including the use of e-learning software and VetmedOnline, for teachers and students.

■ Vetmediathek

The University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna introduced the Vetmediathek project in 2011. Vetmediathek, the central multimedia database of the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna, efficiently and securely manages pictures, videos, sound files and pdf documents. Based on international standards, Vetmediathek is distributed throughout the campus, providing users with functions such as keywords searches to locate and display multimedia-documents for study and research. Numerous features, such as workflows and predefined and customised image processing, allow the user to manage pictures professionally. This database is based on software products from "Fotoware", a company that is specialised in university requirements. Administrators work with multifunctional clients, staff and students can access the database via

specific web-platforms. The “Vetmediathek includes pictures, video and document archives for pdf documents.

■ WLAN

All students have access to WLAN on campus.

4.1.3. VetSIM

VetSIM, a model of a veterinary office where students can simulate life as a veterinarian, was opened in June 2012 to give students a way to intensify their practical skills in a friendly, self-guided learning environment. VetSIM is operated by students as a „skills library“, which means easy access for students and self-directed learning. Additionally curricular courses will be implemented to prepare the students for their clinical training. Peer-to-peer courses, mostly organised by students, will complement VetSIM.

VetSIM is designed as a veterinary office, with a reception area, an operating theatre, a laboratory and a consultation room. Mannequins of various species together with instruction manuals are available for students to practice on. The laboratory provides equipment so students can get acquainted with standard laboratory procedures performed in daily practice. The consultation room is furnished with an audio-visual device for simulated client communication training.

A discussion corner and a tutorial room come equipped with multimedia devices and are used for supervised clinical training.

As an added benefit, VetSIM can be used as a laboratory for postgraduate veterinary training.

It should be noted that VetSIM does not neglect the animals in the teaching of practical and communication skills. Simulation training lets students practise the skills they will need in dealing with patients, so that when they work with live animals the students are well prepared. During VetSIM training, students get feedback on their professional and social demeanour immediately, something which is rarely possible during hands-on clinical training in direct contact with live patients.

4.2. Comments

■ Assessment survey of newly graduated alumni

In the spring semester 2011, the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna conducted an online survey of graduates of the Diploma Programme in Veterinary Medicine and the Bachelor’s Programmes in Equine Sciences, and Bachelor’s Programme in Biomedicine and Biotechnology. The results are used to further improve the curricula. According to the survey, graduates are generally very satisfied with the University; they are well-prepared to launch their professional careers. Furthermore, the respondents are satisfied with their choice of programme and their profession. They indicated a preference for more problem-oriented and interactive instruction and listed economic and communication skills, along with the ability to take action, practical training and problem-solving skills as areas that should be further focused on in the context of academic training. The new curriculum will respond to the wishes expressed.

■ Workplace assessment

Workplace assessment was started at the equine clinic. Questions were generated based on the results of a SWOT analysis done by the management team. All employees of the equine clinic were asked questions about work-life balance, commitment to the University, satisfaction with the workplace and especially with the teaching environment, and the workload with regard to research, clinical service and teaching. The total response rate was about 65%. The results are now under discussion within the equine clinic so that measures for improvement can be worked out.

This workplace assessment will be rolled out to the other species clinics.

4.3. Suggestions for improvement

■ Analysis of competence acquisition

Based on the development of the curriculum and the shift to student-centred learning, a research collaboration with the psychology faculty of the University of Vienna was started in July 2012.

In this collaboration, the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna plans to establish an evidence-based analysis tool to monitor and measure the transfer and acquisition of competencies. In this perspective, not only teaching, but also the best way to learn, will be focal points of the study.

■ VETime:

To make life easier at the clinics by facilitating coordination, VETime, a planning tool for night shifts, should be implemented to help students schedule shifts. The idea is to define prerequisites, which will be checked on VetmedOnline and compared with the registration information of the students. Clinics can offer a number of places; the students can select the dates. The aim is to provide students easy access to night shifts while ensuring a minimum level of competence for clinical work. Students are asked to organise the required night shifts by themselves.

■ Teaching and Research Farm (TRF) on web

The University wants to increase the accessibility of instructional materials, especially of its Teaching and Research Farm (TRF). By offering students a way to view the daily routine demonstrations at the Teaching and Research Farm remotely via intranet or Vetucation®, the University would enable students to participate in teaching using a computer at home or in groups. A “virtual teaching farm” could provide insight into daily life of a farmer, or students could monitor the care of one or two cows throughout the year.

The implementation of an integrated study and teaching environment is planned where the emphasis will be on online transmission of necropsies to problem-oriented seminars and availability of lectures via the intranet.

5. Assessment of the training programme and the awarding of the title Veterinary Surgeon (AP7)

5.1. Explicit intended learning outcomes and putting in place a structure that promotes lifelong learning

The veterinary curriculum at the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna is designed to be a future-orientated, research based study programme using modern educational principles and learning platforms. The requirements of the EU Directive, and the Bologna Process as well as the University's own mission have been taken into account when preparing the list of objectives.

Because the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna's multifaceted curriculum endows students with the skills they need from the day they are awarded their diploma (Day-one skills), graduates from of the Diploma Programme in Veterinary Medicine are fundamentally well prepared to successfully launch a career in a fiercely competitive job market. Combined with lifelong learning and vocational education and training, the chance of an excellent career in a veterinary field of expertise is ensured.

Upon completion of all curricular requirements, the academic degree of "*Magister/Magistra medicinae veterinariae*" (*Diplom-Tierarzt/Diplom-Tierärztin*) is conferred upon the new graduates.

According to the Austrian law, the graduate is eligible for:

- The Austrian and EU veterinary authorisation, since the student has obtained the EAEVE Day-one skills needed to start a career as a practicing veterinarian, fulfilling EU Directive 36/2005;
- Enrolment in either a PhD or doctoral programme, since the student has obtained a solid basis of scientific knowledge and skills and is able to understand, retrieve, handle and critically evaluate scientific data and literature.

The official list of objectives is available in the curriculum and refers to the Day-one skills according to the EU Directive; these are briefly:

- comprehensive basic knowledge of the disciplines that form the basis of the work of a veterinarian, including food safety and veterinary public health;
- the ability to make scientifically and ethically justified decisions independently and critically;
- the ability to communicate and cooperate in a variety of ways;
- the ability to perform the professional duties of a veterinarian and practise veterinary medicine independently with respect to economics and entrepreneurship;
- the ability to identify and solve scientific problems
- the ability to follow developments in the field and to continue learning;

- the ability to pursue further academic and professional training;
- the awareness of a veterinarian's responsibility towards patients, clients and society.

The sequence of courses is regulated by the curriculum, the structure of which is supposed to facilitate working in a team and to enable students to complete some of their coursework at accredited universities abroad.

The Vice-Rector for Study Affairs and Clinical Veterinary Medicine is in charge of coordinating the implementation of the curriculum. In close cooperation with the Curricular Committee, catalogues of specified and coordinated learning outcomes are composed for every course and made available in an online format. Further tasks include the precise placement of students in groups, if needed, by separate registration for courses, and the compilation of the time tables.

In the current teaching program, steps have been taken towards intensifying the vertical integration of clinical activities and teaching. Learning outcomes are defined, board examinations are established and joint lectures are held by clinical and non-clinical teachers.

Course content and its representation in teaching are organised and controlled by the teachers. Only in cases of formal or strategic problems do the University's governing bodies, the Senate and Rectorate, get involved in the processes related to the curriculum.

At the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna teachers are responsible for teaching and assessment of student knowledge acquisition. Students are responsible for learning and making progress in their course of studies.

5.2. Procedures for formal curriculum and teaching programme approval and regular reviews

While the University Act of 2002 (UG2002) is a federal law passed by the government, the University statute as well as the curricula are installed by the executive bodies of the University (Rectorate, Senate, University Council; Figure 1).

Matters related to the curriculum and the assessment of students is handled in the Curricular Committee. The Curricular Committee consists of six members, among them two professors and two University lecturers appointed by the Senate as well as two students appointed by the Students' Union. The Vice-Rector for Study Affairs and Clinical Veterinary Medicine is an associate member. Proposals concerning minor and major changes to the curriculum can be sent by each teacher. Proposals are discussed and evaluated by the Curricular Committee.

In 2010 a SWOT analysis was performed on the current curriculum with a group of 70 teachers. The results led to the decision to start a process to change the curriculum. To strengthen horizontal and vertical integration an intensive dialogue between all teachers involved in the curriculum is necessary. Currently about 100 members of the academic staff are working on planning and on defining learning outcomes and concepts for the new curriculum.

5.3. Application of the ECTS to the programme and evidence for its use

In association with the Bologna process the previous system of weeks of study was changed to the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) (1 ECTS corresponds to a workload of 25 hours). The ECTS system is used as a standard method for determining transfer of course credits from foreign study certificates. In Austria the recognition of student performance is regulated by §78 of UG 2002 (recognition of examinations).

If ECTS points do not vary more than 20% between the ECTS points of the foreign study activity and the points required by the curriculum, the achievements are approved.

Degree certificates are accompanied by a diploma supplement that describes the overall content of the degree. The purpose of this supplement is to improve the international comparability of degrees and to facilitate mobility for either postgraduate study or employment.

The ECTS and the respective certificates (Learning Agreement, Transcript of Records) have been implemented at the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna for the ERASMUS exchange programme since 2003. The guidelines of the national Agency for Lifelong Learning describe the minimum number of ECTS credits necessary to receive a grant for foreign study.

5.4. Procedures for monitoring the delivery of the curriculum and the teaching procedure

The study guide is published electronically. The study guide and the brochure on veterinary studies, together with information provided by all the departments and the Animal Hospital, are available on the University's web page.

5.5. Assurance concerning the participation of students, stakeholders and graduates in quality assessment activities

Students are represented in the University's decision-making bodies (Figure 3) and in committees and working groups. The student feedback system was described earlier in this report (refer to 3.1.3: Role of students in assessing teachers)

In general, collecting feedback from stakeholders and graduates has been identified as one of the main areas in need of development. As people within the veterinary profession are closely connected and the trade is relatively small, there are plenty of opportunities for obtaining informal feedback. Annual veterinary conferences arranged by the Austrian Small Animal Veterinary Association ("Verein österreichischer Kleintierärzte") or the Animal Health Services ("Tiergesundheitsdienst") offer good possibilities for discussion. Instructors are invited to give feedback on the students performing extramural training and in turn, to share information about "what's going on at the University". The elective courses in which veterinarians can participate after they graduate are considered a valuable contribution in this aspect.

5.6. Comments

One of the main goals of the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna is to align its academic programmes with international findings based on the principles of student-centred learning. The main focus shifts from teaching content to learning and programme outcomes. Lecturers become coaches and thus are not just educators or simple reproducers of knowledge. Students should be able to decide for themselves about the intensity and amount of time dedicated to progress towards a degree. Facilities for independent study will therefore be further expanded.

On the one hand remodelling the curriculum broadens the current direction of vertical integration. On the other hand, due to organisational improvement, teachers are responsible for discussing and implementing the concepts and developing them further. So-called educational working groups are responsible for defined teaching concepts. They have to formulate the learning outcomes and educational content, define the assessment methods, work out didactic concepts and initiate optimisation procedures according to the evaluation results. The main value of learning outcomes in our curriculum is that they encourage greater focus on the student's point of view. The creation of learning outcomes will also make the generic outcomes of the course more explicit. Generic outcomes will be assessed in the same manner as subject-specific ones. Concrete learning outcomes will make cumulative learning explicit, and thus strengthen the profile of the curriculum.

As a first and early approach to the ECTS system in 2002, there was a roughly calculated ratio between presence hours and ECTS points, which is not fully seen as consistent with the purpose of the ECTS. By restructuring the curriculum, this issue is addressed. The extent (depth and breadth) of the preoccupation with certain knowledge and skills is defined by the learning objectives on the one side and the amount of ECTS points achieved on the other.

6. Assessment of quality assurance systems for clinics, laboratories and farms (AP8)

The Faculty should describe the system(s) of quality assurance it possesses to monitor and assure clinical, laboratory and farm services

Provide information on the system(s) of quality assurance in the clinical area, laboratory diagnostic services and farm facilities. List any existing accreditation from external quality assurance bodies

The University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna provides comprehensive - yet specialised - services by high level experts in the field of veterinary medicine, biomedicine and life sciences. The research based and innovative treatment, prevention and diagnostic services are facilitated by state-of-the-art equipment and infrastructure.

The university clinics at the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna are referral clinics offering 24-hour emergency service and an outpatient clinic. They see their socio-political obligation in providing clinical education and continuing education to veterinarians and animal keepers, ensuring responsible care for animal patients and providing excellent emergency care around the clock. The animal patients receive outpatient, inpatient and intensive medical care at the clinics. The university clinics of the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna make an active contribution to animal health, animal husbandry and welfare and public health through herd health management of livestock by means of their mobile clinic and collaboration with practicing veterinarians, as well as their cooperation with food production companies. Clinicians and their teams feel a responsibility to offer services and advice based on recent research findings for all issues related to individual animals as well as the animal stock. Clinical services are provided by the following clinics:

- Clinic for Small Animals
- Equine Clinic
- Clinic for Avian, Reptile and Fish Medicine
- Clinic for Swine
- Clinic for Ruminants

Furthermore, services provided by the clinical units for Anaesthesiology and for Diagnostic imaging are offered across all clinics although they are structurally part of the Clinic for Small Animals. Unique in Austria within the field of veterinary medicine, the “Radio-oncology and Nuclear Medicine Platform” offers specific diagnostics and treatment. The “Insemination and Embryo Transfer Platform” is located in facilities accredited according to Council Directive 92/65/EEC.

The diagnostic facilities offer a wide spectrum of specialised methods and comprehensive consulting services. They are set up as centers of excellence where research findings are integrated into scientific services, thus significantly contributing to knowledge and technology transfer in the development, optimisation and validation of methods.

Laboratory analytical and diagnostic services are inbound as well as outbound. They are offered by the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna's clinics and the following organisational units:

- Institute of Virology (ISO 9001)
- Laboratory Diagnostics Platform (ISO 9001)
- Institute of Bacteriology, Mycology and Hygiene
- Institute of Botany and Pharmacognosy
- Institute of Meat Hygiene
- Institute of Milk Hygiene
- Institute of Parasitology (ISO 9001)
- Institute of Pathology and Forensic Veterinary Medicine (ISO 9001)
- Institute of Animal Nutrition (ISO 9001)

Together, the University Clinics and the specialised diagnostic laboratories of the institutes listed above provide the diagnostic services required primarily by the Animal Hospital and are contacted for research purposes as well.

In line with the ever-increasing quality awareness of their clients many of the organisational units offering diagnostic services have established a quality management system and can boast of ISO-accreditation.

The University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna provides its researchers and students with a focused portfolio of cutting-edge core technologies and biochemical methods through its core facilities platform "VetCore". "VetCore" supports research on campus both in the fields of basic and clinical sciences by offering the following services:

- VetBioBank: biobanking services such as preparation of tissue sections and various staining methods, collection, storage and distribution of well-defined veterinary samples etc.
- Genomics, transcriptomics and proteomics: sample preparation and analytical services such as various PCR technologies, Agilent Bioanalyzer based analysis, RNA profiling, single cell analysis, laser capture dissection, MALDI-TOF/TOF, nano-HPLC etc.
- VetImaging: Imaging services such as confocal microscopy, laser capture microdissection, live cell imaging and transmission electron microscopy etc.

The core facility "VetCore" additionally provides the necessary advice, training and access to biostatistical and bioinformatics expertise to ensure state of the art

experimental planning and evaluation of results. “VetCore” also provides access to additional expertise, services and technologies through its extensive network of collaborating core facility partners at other universities and research institutions. (Annual Report [Annex 27^{de}](#))

The Teaching and Research Farm (TRF) of the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna is located about 50km south of Vienna. Different farm animals (cattle, small ruminants and swine) are kept on four distinct properties of around 263 ha, including 150 ha grassland. Together with the Animal Hospital on campus these model farms, which are dedicated to imparting hands-on practical knowledge, complement the veterinary medical education programme and research activities.

The TRF offers all the prerequisites for excellent teaching in the field, aimed at imparting practical knowledge and skills. Through continuous improvement it guarantees that today’s requirements in veterinary medical teaching and research within the livestock sector are being met. Students gain practical insight at the TRF during their clinical training. Moreover, a “mobile clinic” is available for outpatient treatment and herd health management of farm animals at the TRF.

6.1. Quality Assurance System

Quality assurance systems are vital to scientific services as one of the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna’s core processes; in fact, they are one of the cornerstones of animal healthcare and diagnostics. Quality assurance is compliance-driven, and serves to ensure that the clinical and diagnostic facilities of the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna meet high quality standards to provide high-quality scientific services.

Due to their outstanding efforts as frontrunners in quality management, the Clinic for Avian, Reptile and Fish Medicine as well as the Clinical Units of Internal Medicine of both the Clinic for Small Animals and the Equine Clinic have made a substantial contribution towards safeguarding a high standard of quality throughout the University. As such, the Clinic for Avian, Reptile and Fish Medicine has been accredited as a reference lab according to IEC/ISO 17520 and the clinical units of internal medicine of both the Clinic for Small Animals and the Equine Clinic have been certified according to ISO 9001. Many of the diagnostic facilities as well as the Laboratory Diagnostics Platform (formerly the central diagnostics laboratory) have followed suit and had at least part of their services certified. (For details, please refer to Chapter 7: Assessment of continuing education (AP9).)

The clinical units of Internal Medicine of both the Clinic for Small Animals and the Equine Clinic implemented a quality management system and obtained their ISO 9001 certification in 2003, when they were still organised as one clinic. Despite their restructuring into two separate clinical units, they have successfully maintained and refined their quality management system by conducting regular internal as well as external audits and continuously improving their processes.

The Clinic for Avian, Reptile and Fish Medicine has been accredited for its diagnostic laboratories according to ISO 17025 since 2007 and features reference laboratories for

the diagnosis of *Salmonella spp.* and a national reference laboratory (NRL) for fish diseases.

ISO/IEC 17025:2005 specifies the general requirements for the competence to carry out tests and/or calibrations, including sampling. IEC/ISO 17025 covers management requirements consistent with ISO 9001 and helps laboratories implement a quality management system aimed at improving their ability to consistently produce valid results.

As such, the quality assurance and quality management systems of the University's clinical and diagnostic facilities are designed to objectively and systematically monitor the quality and appropriateness of diagnostics as well as medical and clinical care.

On the University level, quality measures are governed by the Development Plan and the Performance Agreement with the Federal Ministry for Science and Research along the guidelines of Good Scientific Practice. In the case of the University Clinics, the Vice-Rector for Study Affairs and Clinical Veterinary Medicine in coordination with Animal Hospital management is charged with developing quality management deliverables that contain measurable objectives. In the case of the diagnostic core facilities and diagnostic laboratories the Vice-Rector for Research and International Relations is responsible together with the heads of departments.

In all cases, objectives are determined based on the Development Plan and the Performance Agreement as well as regulatory requirements, legal requirements and standards of veterinary medical best practices. It is the responsibility of the Vice-Rectors, management staff, heads of departments and organisational units to monitor and evaluate the compliance of each deliverable for their respective purviews. The deliverables are linked to a performance standard, which establishes the measures with minimum thresholds and goals for performance.

Monitoring and evaluation are designed to capture specific information that the University is interested in, such as patient or diagnostic sample numbers or revenue from clinical or diagnostic services. Methods include electronic systems to document quality assurance data and statistics.

In this regard, special emphasis is placed on the Animal Hospital Information System (Tierspitalinformationssystem - TIS), which has been in operation since 2001 and has the following main functions:

- administration and complete medical documentation of all the Animal Hospital's inpatients as well as outpatients
- entry of reference data for patients and patient owners
- appointment scheduling
- documentation and billing of services
- comprehensive documentation of all medical (including diagnostic) data in the electronic case history of each patient

- support of workflows such as requests for diagnostic services and the ensuing results transfer
- documentation and billing of diagnostic samples from external clients

The TIS is designed in a form-based manner and is continuously monitored, supported, developed and revised by the TIS-Team, a subunit of the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna's IT-Services. Since patient data is highly confidential, access to the TIS is limited to authorised persons only. This encompasses the scientific staff (including interns and residents) and support staff of the Animal Hospital, diagnostic facilities and Teaching and Research Farm as well as students, who receive a read-only TIS account, which enables them to access patient data for the purposes of (independent) study and case workups.

To complete the quality assurance system of the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna's clinical and diagnostic facilities, supplemental internal audits are performed to analyse processes and review documentation for compliance and to evaluate outcomes against performance standards.

Where deemed necessary by the Rectorate, evaluations may lead to performance improvement initiatives for the specific area of oversight. In a concerted effort, the Rectorate seeks ways to be more efficient and reach higher levels of quality. As an example, a major reorganisation process was started in 2012 in the Equine Clinic based on the suggestions obtained in the course of a regular audit. Improvement and streamlining of processes will be carried out by means of in-depths analyses and organisational development.

In addition, where appropriate and beneficial to work processes, quality assurance and quality management are performed by way of external certification and accreditation and are complemented by client surveys (including feedback and action plans) performed at regular intervals.

- Certification according to ISO 9001 (overall or in part)
 - Clinical Unit of Internal Medicine Small Animals
 - Clinical Unit of Equine Internal Medicine
 - Clinic for Swine
 - Institute of Pathology and Forensic Veterinary Medicine
 - Institute of Animal Nutrition
 - Laboratory Diagnostics Platform
 - Institute of Virology
 - Institute of Parasitology

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- Accreditation as reference laboratory according to I/IEC/ISO 17025
 - Clinic for Avian, Reptile and Fish Medicine
- Positive evaluation by the European Mouse Mutant Archive (EMMA)
 - Institute of Laboratory Animal Science
- Accreditation according to Council Directive 92/65/EEC
 - Insemination and Embryo Transfer Platform

The following timeline (Figure 11) shows the history and development of external certification and accreditation in the University's clinical and diagnostic facilities.

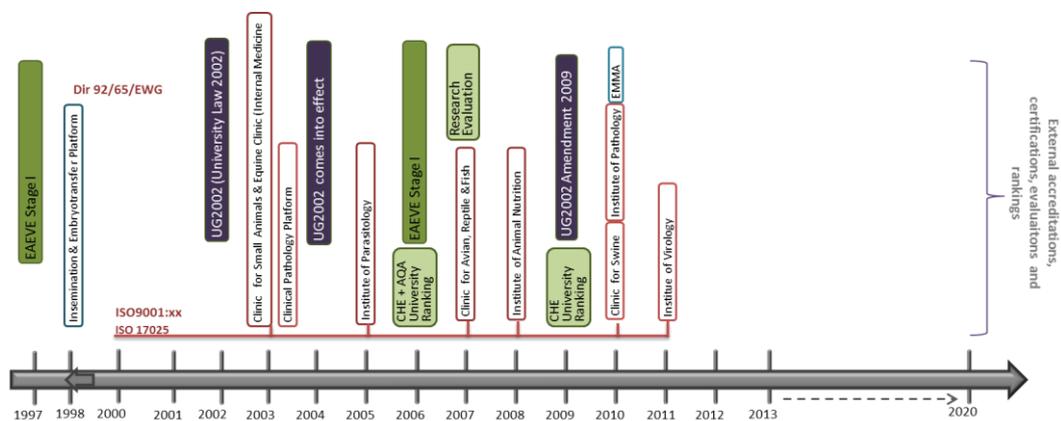


Figure 11: Timeline of external audits and evaluations since the first EAEVE evaluation in 1997

While the Teaching and Research Farm may be an outpost, it is nevertheless an integral part of the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna. As such, it adheres to the quality assurance systems that have been developed within the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna's core processes and complies with central regulations valid for the Animal Hospital, such as the Animal Hospital Guidelines (Anstaltsordnung), Epidemic and Pandemic Alert and Response Plan (Seuchenplan) and the Hygiene Instructions (Hygieneanweisungen). Furthermore, the Teaching and Research Farm contributes to the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna's quality assurance systems by continuously monitoring and analysing processes, collecting, compiling and reporting key data at least annually in the framework of its annual report and developing appropriate tools for quality improvement. For example, a checklist has been designed to assure that studies and research projects performed at the Teaching and Research Farm comply with standard procedures.

Aside from its role in teaching and research, the Teaching and Research Farm is a fully functional agricultural holding and has the distinction of being a model operation as regards animal husbandry, animal welfare and animal veterinary care.

Though the principles of quality assurance in agricultural production are not different from those defined for the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna's core processes, several additional aspects need to be taken into consideration, especially since the Teaching and Research Farm produces foodstuffs of animal origin for human consumption. As a consequence, the Teaching and Research Farm is subject to regular national and/or local inspections (which traditionally are very strict to ensure the high level of food quality Austria is known for) and is actively involved in several quality assurance bodies such as:

- the State Inspection Association (Landeskontrollverband) for dairy cattle, which regularly inspects the quality of the milk produced by the TRF's dairy herd and has rated the TRF a high-quality milk supplier (Class S)
- the Quality Assurance Program for Milk of the Agrarmarkt Austria Marketing Ltd. (AMA), which holds animal husbandry to the highest standard and supervises compliance with the regulations of the Udder Hygiene Programme
- Animal Health Services and its prevention programs
- the Cattle Breeders Association, which oversees the TRF's cattle breeding and breeding registries

Furthermore, the Teaching and Research Farm is monitored to make certain that its dairy cattle receive only feed that has not been genetically modified; the Teaching and Research Farm has been awarded the quality supplier distinction by the NÖ Molkerei (NÖM), one of Austria's main dairy processors.

Measures taken to ensure the safety of staff and students at the Teaching and Research Farm include treatment rooms that fulfil the safety criteria defined for working with large animals, a milking stand built as a tandem, sufficient locks on stalls and barns, as well as an adequate number of facilities for cleaning and disinfecting. In addition, students receive in-depth safety instructions and a trained safety officer is available on site.

6.2. Strategic Approaches to Quality Assurance

The University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna is aware of its socio-political mandate and its responsibility for the health of animals, humans and the environment. It therefore strives to further position itself as a renowned centre of excellence for the research based examination of special issues relating to veterinary medicine. It seeks to cement its reputation as a competent point of contact and reliable partner for animal owners and veterinarians by applying target-specific communication initiatives. As an organisation of experts, its goal is to take a leading role in defining clinical standards.

By means of conscientious process and resource monitoring, the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna has identified potential areas for performance and quality improvements, for example, by bringing together expertise and human resources in such a way as to achieve critical mass. For this purpose, the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna places particular emphasis on the subject-specific, structural and organisational implementation of species-specific clinics and aims to combine related species-specific organisational units into one common site. In the area of farm animals,

its focus also includes promoting the active integration of the Teaching and Research Farm. Continuous improvement of processes with a focus on optimisation of resources and exchange of experience across clinical units are core duties in line with the quality management system. By leveraging the results of its quality systems, University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna is able to constantly improve the level of service in the area of patient treatment while at the same time providing state-of-the-art learning opportunities within an excellent educational framework.

Furthermore, emphasis is placed on strengthening the position of the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna's diagnostic services as centres of excellence for innovative and market- based diagnostics. To this end, projected performance and quality improvement initiatives include the systematic concentration of expertise as well as targeted demand analyses. An Executive Board has recently been established to optimise and coordinate the service level of the "VetCore" facility, to provide accurate and specific feedback from user groups on campus, and thereby improve the utilisation of resources.

With regard to the Teaching and Research Farm, the goal is to establish an educational site for comprehensive education, including continuing education, as well as research in the areas of farm animals and food safety.

By strengthening the cooperation between the campus and the Teaching and Research Farm, fostering the principle "from stable to table" in food production, intensifying teaching, especially in the areas of advanced training, and expanding applied research projects, the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna strives to optimise integration of the Teaching and Research Farm into its core processes and – concurrently – its quality assurance systems.

The University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna also aims to further highlight the role of the Teaching and Research Farm as an agricultural holding and to continue to position it as a model and example as regards animal health, animal husbandry and animal welfare. The achievement of this goal will go hand in hand with increased cooperation with national and/or local quality assurance bodies and participation in quality monitoring programs.

7. Assessment of continuing education (AP9)

The Faculty should describe the system of quality assurance it possesses to monitor and promote the design, implementation and quality control of its own, or joint Continuing Professional Development (CPD) programmes in specific areas of practical veterinary medicine and whether there is a legal basis or other official requirement for continuing education.

This documentation should be accompanied by a list of courses offered in the preceding year (year n) and their assessment by the participants.

7.1. Factual information

7.2. Legal basis and official requirements for continuing education

As defined by §20(3) of the Veterinary Act (“Tierärztegesetz”), Continuing Professional Education (CPE) is mandatory for all practicing veterinarians, including veterinary specialists, production animal/herd health veterinarians and small animal veterinarians. The legal basis further encompasses:

- the guidelines for continuing education, as laid down by the Austrian Veterinary Chamber, regulating the documentary proof of CPE and the accumulation of at least 20 continuing education credits per year²;
- §14b of the Veterinary Act, defining that additional mandatory CPE is needed for specialist certification;
- the bylaw of the Federal Ministry of Health, defining the extent of CPE needed for specialist certification;
- §10 of the Veterinary Health Service Bylaw (“Tiergesundheitsdienst-Verordnung”), regulating the mandatory CPE of its members; and
- §56 University Act of 2002 (UG 2002), regulating university courses.
- §29 Food Safety and Consumer Protection Act (LMSVG), defining the extent of CPE needed for assignment of veterinarians for food and meat inspection

Furthermore, universities are called upon by the Federal Ministry for Science and Research to develop a coherent concept for lifelong learning in the framework of their Performane Agreements.

² Educational credits must be applied for; they are assigned by the Austrian Veterinary Chamber according to stringent rules. Applications for credits are successful if their design, content and subsequent implementation of CPE coincides with the Veterinary Chamber’s requirements. A list of CPE courses offered by the University in this context and the educational credits allotted can be found in Annex 16

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7.2.1. Organisation of Continuing Professional Education (CPE)

As stated in Chapter 2, the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna is strongly dedicated to lifelong learning (LLL) and, as such, adheres to its own LLL approach. In this context, the University has defined seven categories for Continuing Professional Education (CPE) and postgraduate education.

This table is an excerpt of Table 2.3 and shows an overview of CPE offerings structured according to the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna's LLL categories:

Table 7.1: LLL categories pertaining to CPE (complete table refer to Table 2.3)

LLL category	LLL category description	education programmes offered
6	structured CPE university courses, primarily (though not exclusively) for postgraduate veterinarians	Introduction to Laboratory Animal Medicine (FELASA / GV-SOLAS Category B); Animal-assisted Therapy and Animal-assisted Supportive Measures; Animal Physical therapy, Rehabilitation and Physical therapy; Functional Claw Maintenance; Hoof and Claw Fittings; Applied Cynology
7	CPE lectures, seminars and workshops	a complete list of CPE offers for 2011 can be found in Annex 16 and Annex 16a

7.2.2. Cooperation with other professional organisations and competent authorities

The University plays a fundamental role in the propagation of knowledge by offering a wide range of options for CPE. Within its LLL categories 6 and 7, it offers structured CPE university courses as well as lectures, seminars and workshops that are primarily – though not exclusively – directed at postgraduate veterinarians. As the only academic institution for veterinary medicine in Austria, the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna has a duty to offer CPE – especially in practical veterinary medicine – by organising CPE courses and/or seminars, lectures and workshops of its own or by providing its expert staff and diplomates for CPE offered by third parties, such as federal ministries or veterinary associations. Offering high-quality CPE is strongly encouraged by the Rectorate as a means to strengthen the standing of the university clinics and organisational units as centres of excellence, thus CPE is one of the main issues addressed in the University's Development Plan. At all CPE training events, the University acts in close collaboration with the Austrian Veterinary Chamber. The Austrian specialist certification is a good example of this. Though the specialist certification is awarded by the Austrian Veterinary Chamber, the specialist examination committee consists – as defined in §14c(1) of the Veterinary Act – of at least two delegates of the Austrian Veterinary Chamber and one University lecturer.

In the spheres of farm animals and horses, the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna has implemented CPE in cooperation with partners. Additionally, it is currently putting into effect an entirely new concept in the field of oncology, where the Veterinary

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Oncology Network Austria – a joint effort of the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna, a pharmaceutical company (Richter Pharma AG) and the Austrian Veterinary Chamber – was founded to impart practical knowledge to veterinarians on the safe and efficient delivery of state-of-the-art therapies to veterinary cancer patients. It is an innovative project in which courses are structured as modules and may lead to the award of a CPE diploma.

The University is an important partner of the Austrian Society of Veterinary Medicine (Österreichische Gesellschaft der Tierärzte, ÖGT), one of the main purveyors for veterinary CPE in Austria. Although it is an independent organisation, the ÖGT has a tradition of strong ties to the University: One of its proclaimed aims is to disseminate knowledge generated by the University's researchers. Both its president and vice president are academic staff members of the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna. Together with the University the ÖGT publishes a scientific peer-reviewed journal, the „Veterinary Medicine Austria“ (Wiener Tierärztliche Monatsschrift, WTM), six times a year.

7.3. Quality control of Continuing Professional Education

Regular surveys of CPE-clients, teachers, modules, programmes seminars and lectures are central elements of quality control efforts aimed at the University's CPE. Evaluations of in-house and third-party CPE – either in written form by way of questionnaire or orally by way of discussion – may be done annually or at the end of a CPE module.

Stringent regulations are in place in the structured forms of CPE to maintain and ensure quality, including:

- **Standardised implementation and design**
 - University courses must be cleared with the Rectorate first. Their curricula are drawn up by the responsible course managers together with the Curricular Committee most closely involved in the subject matter and are evaluated and approved by the Senate, as regulated by the University statute.
 - Guidelines, design and curricula of University courses are defined and monitored by respective Curricular Committees.
- **Standardised admission procedures and concomitant quality assurance**
 - University courses are regulated and monitored in the curriculum.
 - University Course Advisory Boards (“Universitäre Beiräte”) appointed by the respective Curricular Committees and the course managers are in charge of admission and selection of applicants. They are also responsible for assessment and concomitant quality assurance.

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Table 7.2: examples of CPE offerings and their evaluation/assessment by participants.

Course title	Type	Duration	Frequency	Capacity
Introduction to Laboratory Animal Medicine (FELASA/GV-SOLAS Category B)	UC	10 days	twice/year	à 36
Functional Claw Maintenance	UC	13 days	annually	à 12
Hoof and Claw Fittings	UC	12 weeks	annually	à 12
Applied Cynology	UC	4 semesters / 60 ECTS	annually	à 30
Animal assisted therapy and animal-assisted supportive measures	UC	4 semesters / 60 ECTS	annually	à 45
Veterinary physical therapy, rehabilitation and physical therapy in small animals and horses	UC	4 semesters / 60 ECTS	annually	à 14
WPW Pferde (Viennese postgraduate continuing education for equine medicine)	modules	1-2 days/module	3-5 modules/year	à 24
WPW Nutztiere (Viennese postgraduate continuing education for ruminant medicine)	modules	1-2 days/module	3-5 modules/year	min. 15
UC= university courses				

Evaluation is conducted by means of any one, or a combination of

- questionnaire
- quick de-briefing
- in-depth group feedback

Soliciting feedback from participants by use of a questionnaire and/or a round-table discussion immediately following each seminar are the most common tool evaluation purposes in modules. Table 2.3.: LLL categories - shows selected continuing

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professional education offers by the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna that are subject to profound evaluation procedures and quality assessment.

University courses are evaluated by use of complex questionnaires addressing individual sections and lecturers, practical relevance, comprehensibility, level of participant engagement, atmosphere, etc.

Evaluation results are analysed, summarised and used to improve quality. As such, instructors can review how others interpret their teaching methods, thereby improving their instruction. The information can be also used by course administrators, along with other input, to make both summative decisions (e.g., decisions about professional fees) as well as formative recommendations (e.g., identify areas where an instructor needs to improve).

To enhance the quality of instruction, the University encourages instructors supervising the extramural work of undergraduate students to engage in CPE by contributing 50% of the fee for a CPE seminar of their choice in the field they are appointed to instruct.

7.4. Comments

Due to the strategic importance of LLL to the University, continuing education will play an increasingly important role in the coming years. The University strives to offer a coherent CPE programme. Developed in close collaboration with its stakeholders (including ministries, the Austrian Veterinary Chamber and alumni), the vision is to establish an LLL school in which all the administrative and organisational activities necessary to support business processes are centralised.

It has long been recognised that in a time of increasing specialisation and rapid development, high-quality CPE is imperative for a successful, state-of-the-art veterinary practice. The University takes seriously its role as a provider of CPE, as there is great demand among veterinarians for CPE based on the University's specialised expertise and/or resources. To this end, the University closely cooperates with veterinary organisations as well as the Austrian Veterinary Chamber in the planning and teaching of CPE courses and other avenues for learning. Concerted efforts are made to harmonise the administration of CPE offers as much as possible.

8. Assessment of research (AP10)

The institution should describe the system of quality assurance it possesses to develop and maintain and audit research programs. Of particular interest is how research provides opportunities for student training, staff promotion, and how research methods and results are conveyed into basic veterinary training, and to what extent bibliometric methods are applied.

A list of publications of year n (prior to evaluation) and year n-1 should be added to the SER 2, supplemented with the respective bibliometric data. Following implementation and adoption of Stage two (2) evaluation, information on year n-2 will be required.

Research activities at the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna are geared towards excellence in veterinary science and comprehensive basic life sciences as well as in applied and clinical research.

Research conducted by the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna is not only the cornerstone of a research based academic education, but also a vital component for addressing highly relevant societal issues such as animal health, preventive veterinary medicine, public health and food safety. Moreover, research provides the scientific basis for managing animal welfare and all that this means for animal husbandry, animal protection and animal ethics.

The University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna's main spheres of research have evolved around prominent and internationally visible researchers and research groups. In addition to participating in these established research fields the university endeavours to strengthen emerging research areas.

To counteract fragmentation of research efforts, internal programmes for the advancement of research are charged with providing a conceptual basis for research initiatives so that they are in alignment with the University's - research related - strategic aims. These concepts are outlined in the University's "Research Profile Areas" (Profillinien) and are published in the Codex of Research Profile Areas, executed by the Vice-Rector for Research and International Relations and a scientific board (Research Profile Area Board).

In their strategic dimension, these Research Profile Areas foster interaction between researchers in the fields of basic and applied clinical research and support coherence of research efforts. Concurrently, they make the University's profile more visible internationally among scientific and stakeholder communities. Furthermore, they offer a cohesive structure for mapping individual research focuses and identifying research potential while offering a framework for the strategic promotion of junior researchers. (for details please refer to 8.1.1: Research Profile Area Board)

The University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna was the first Austrian university to establish competitive internal research funding to promote its Research Profile Areas. This internal funding is governed by the Research Profile Area Board and includes:

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- The “Young Investigator Programme”: Start-up funding for young academics, making it possible for them to successfully raise external funding after conducting two years of research (internal board review)
- External funding bonus: Additional funding for projects financed with external funding to facilitate additional research beyond the scope of the project
- Funding thematic foci of umbrella projects such as Initiative Doctoral Programmes (“Initiativkollegs”) within the PhD Programme and the Postdoc Programme at the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna (selection by means of an international peer-review process)

In this way, effective steering processes have been established and will continue to be improved by international peer review and regular evaluation of performance indicators.

8.1. Development, Maintenance and Audit of Research programmes

One of the strongest management and quality assurance tools is the Development Plan, which is the basis for the triennially negotiated – legally binding – Performance Agreement between the University and the Federal Ministry for Science and Research.

Research related quality management deliverables with measurable objectives are developed in the framework of the Performance Agreement. These deliverables are monitored continuously, reported and published at least annually. Objectives are defined for each of the following research related areas (for details refer to [Annexes 4^{de}](#), Intellectual Capital Report “Wissensbilanz” including the Performance Report as well as [Annex 31^{en}](#) Annual Report 2011):

- promotion of junior researchers
- PhD Programme / graduation rate of PhD students
- Doctoral Programme (DK)* and “Initiative Doctoral Programmes”(Initiativkollegs)**
- postdoctoral programmes
- research infrastructure
- research output (publications, reports etc.)
- third-party funding
- inter-institutional cooperation
- invention disclosure, patents and soft IP

* DK= DoktoratsKolleg (funded by the Austrian Science Fund (FWF))

** internal funding by University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna

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The key research related objectives agreed upon in the performance agreement are reflected in the target agreements between the Rectorate and the heads of departments, as well as between the heads of organisational units and the heads of the subunits assigned to them.

As concerns strategic and continuous quality monitoring and quality assurance of research performance, they are provided internally through the Research Profile Area Board and externally through the international Scientific Advisory Board of the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna (refer to Development Plan 2020, Chapter 3 in [Annex 2^{de}](#)).

Additional quality assurance is provided by third party funding and contract research, since both are inherently linked to peer-reviews and (international) competition.

8.1.1. Research Profile Area Board

In keeping with the University's well-accepted paradigm "defining future focus areas and strengthening strengths", the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna seeks to streamline its research profile by focusing on its core areas of veterinary medicine and research in accordance with the defined Research Profile Areas, as well as by strengthening its unique national and international position. The goal is to expand its strategic influence and to help define its areas of focus within Austria as well as in greater Europe.

Specific quality measures to assure an accurate research profile and a solid framework for excellence have been established through the efforts of the Research Profile Area Board, supported by the University's international Scientific Advisory Board. The Research Profile Area Board provides mentoring support for young academics, and also has devised a competitive internal research funding scheme, which is unique among Austrian universities. A further function of the board is as a management instrument to develop the careers of academic staff and nurture linkages to interesting fields of research (internally as well as externally). Therefore it holds a steering function and specifically shapes and guides the strategic direction of research activities at the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna while respecting parameters of academic freedom.

The substantial amount of third-party funding achieved via national and international cooperation programmes supports a broad range of research activities. Young researchers can find many attractive opportunities, along with financial support, to participate in cutting-edge research and expand their career prospects. Further, competitive internal funding instruments lend strong support for young researchers to develop the additional skills they need to become independent group leaders. These instruments also help them improve their abilities, and thus, their chance of success when they apply for third-party funding.

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8.1.2. Implementing basic principles of quality: Good Scientific Practice / Ethics and Animal Welfare Committee

Scientific integrity is one of the basic principles for safeguarding quality of research with respect to ethical issues. At the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna research integrity is taken very seriously, therefore all scientific staff and staff involved in scientific services must sign a commitment to follow the guidelines of Good Scientific Practice. In addition, any scientific project involving living animals has to be submitted for review to the Ethics and Animal Welfare Committee, established in 2004 as an internal advisory board to the Rectorate.

The guidelines for Good Scientific Practice ([Annex 32^{de}](#)) in use at the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna (subject to the respective legal requirements) specifically regulate the following issues:

- Experiments involving animals as well as in vitro cultures – subject to the same principles as clinical studies in general;
- All experiments involving animals according to the 3R-principle (Refinement – Reduction – Replacement);
- Guidelines for experiments involving Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) according to the national Law on Genetic Engineering (Gentechnikgesetz or GTG);
- Principle procedures in cases of assumed scientific fraud according to international standards (US Office of Research Integrity);
- Measures for evaluation according to principles of quality assurance and quality management (e.g., disclosure of original data);
- Material Transfer Agreements (template and explanations).

8.1.3. Assessing the Quality of Research

The ongoing process of quality monitoring and quality assurance is complemented by a coordinated research evaluation conducted at regular intervals. This evaluation, comprising a structured self-evaluation process with specific indicators together with on-site visit conducted by a group of international experts, provides a detailed assessment of the University's research performance. It concludes with a report and recommendations made by the international experts. The next research evaluation is scheduled for 2013.

Additional quality assurance measures entail the annual review and evaluation of publication performance (quality and quantity), including measures such as number of citations, distinctions and incentives for publications and the amount of outside funding raised. Efforts are made towards standardisation of budgeting for external projects and services (Treasury Guidelines and internal guidelines for the controlling of research projects are available at the University's Intranet). The Ethics and Animal Welfare Commission performs additional quality assurance of research projects, education and continuing education programmes related to animals.

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At an individual level, research performance is an integral part of annual performance reviews between the Rectorate and the University Council, between the Rector and appointed professors according to the Collective Agreement, between the Rector and heads of departments and between heads of organisational units and their assigned staff members. Furthermore, §2 of Part 4 of the University statute provides for the evaluation of scientific performance of all professors, university lecturers and academic teaching and research staff every 5 years at a minimum.

On top of that, the University Act of 2002 (UG 2002) specifies that full professors have to be evaluated every five years. This individual evaluation is based on a self-evaluation report covering scientific performance, reputation in international panels and the scientific community as well as teaching engagement and mentoring competencies. This report is assessed by two independent external and two internal reviewers, and, in turn, results in a mutual agreement with the Rector, which is further discussed with the head of department before it becomes part of the professor's employment contract. A positive assessment may result in a raise of salary. In addition, research performance is generally linked to a variable salary component, especially in the case of professors employed according to the Collective Agreement.

In the field of postgraduate research education programmes, quality assurance primarily pertains to the Initiative Doctoral Programmes and Doctoral Programmes (DKs) within the PhD Programme as well as the Postdoctoral Programme.

As such, Doctoral Programmes (DKs) are peer-reviewed externally by the Austrian Science Fund (FWF). In addition, the PhD Programme features standardised admissions procedures as defined in the University statute; also, it is continuously monitored by its Curricular Committee. Concomitant quality assurance of the PhD Programme includes a feedback system in which all PhD candidates report back to the Vice-Rector for Study Affairs and Clinical Veterinary Medicine (for details please refer to 2.3.2: PhD Programme).

As concerns the Postdoctoral Programme, it, too, is characterised by a standardised admissions procedure and concomitant internal quality assurance provided by the Curricular Committee for Degree Programmes for Postgraduate Education. In addition, projects within the Postdoc Programmes are evaluated annually and may be optionally assessed by external reviewers (for details please refer to 2.3.4: Postdoc Programmes).

The guidelines of Good Scientific Practice lay out the general principles governing research activities at the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna. For all research projects involving living animals, prior assessment and consultation with the Ethics and Animal Welfare Committee is mandatory. The committee seeks the expertise of independent internal and external advisers to ensure that applications are based on a sound experimental premise according to statistical preliminaries, and legal, as well as ethical, frameworks. Applications must be approved internally by the Ethics and Animal Welfare Committee before they are submitted to the Federal Ministry for Science and Research and its Animal Experimentation Committee in accordance with §12 Animal Experiments Act.

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8.2. Interaction of Research and Training

At the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna, the most significant pillars for research based education are the mandatory undergraduate Diploma thesis and its postgraduate research programs.

8.2.1. Undergraduate Research (Diploma thesis)

Participation in research activities is mandatory for all undergraduates. Within the curriculum 20 credits are foreseen for research done in connection with a Diploma thesis. By the time a student has completed a Diploma thesis, s/he will have gained a significant amount of scientific knowledge and skills as well as academic competencies. The student is able to:

- identify scientific problems
- use an appropriate set of methods for the problem at hand
- base his/her theories and hypotheses on international research findings
- assume a critical stance towards theories and methods
- discuss matters of relevance raised by the thesis
- process data using correct methods of scientific analysis and present results objectively and in a concise manner
- draw clear and scientific, evidence-based conclusions
- assess the scientific and social impact of the thesis from an ethical point of view
- solve complex problems and carry out development assignments in a work context

The goal of this mandatory component within the curriculum is to foster student–research staff collaboration at the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna. Students are offered the opportunity to gain insight into a researcher's work, to learn how a research question is formulated and how a procedure is designed to investigate it. Furthermore, they can learn how evidence is gathered, examined, interpreted and presented and how results are evaluated and shared with the scientific and scholarly community or general public. This learning process is assisted by specific lectures aiming at imparting knowledge on how to go about research in a professional manner that follows the rules of Good Scientific Practice. Not least, students observe how research funding and other resources are obtained.

Participating in research gives students the chance to learn how their chosen field of study is progressing, and how that progress is being influenced. Since research is an integral part of postgraduate education, participation in undergraduate research may be the first step towards future engagement in research (for details please refer to 1.6: Relationship between teaching and research).

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8.2.2. Problem Based Learning Approach

The University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna intends to strengthen its problem-based learning approach to improve its students' problem-solving abilities, research skills and social skills from day one. Problem-based learning is an active and iterative process that the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna tries to combine with lectures to form a hybrid teaching model. This approach encourages students to identify what they know and do not know. Their motivation to solve a problem becomes their motivation to find and apply knowledge. The University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna believes that fostering motivation and teaching sharply honed problem-solving skills are the keys to developing a new generation of innovative and successful researchers.

8.3. Research Opportunities for Staff Promotion

Measures specifically designed and provided for young researchers:

- PhD Programme (refer to 2.3.)
- doctorate in Veterinary Medicine (refer to 2.3.)
- Postdoctoral Programme (refer to 2.3.)
- qualifying positions
- habilitation
- internships and residency programmes (the specific curricula allocate a definite part of the work load for integration into post graduate research activities as journal clubs and grand rounds) (refer to 2.4.)

These measures mark the transition between teaching and research; more details are given in 2.3: Postgraduate student education.

In general it is considered essential for young researchers to experience several facets of the veterinary medicine career. By promoting excellent research the number of research projects that obtain third-party funding is increased and the international reputation of research staff is enhanced. Top-level research attracts internationally renowned scientists and thus guarantees state-of-the-art education based on recent methodologies and the latest technology integrated into practical work.

The University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna also focuses on the systematic support of young academics as a vital element of its profile. To this end, special emphasis is placed on expanding funding and training for young scientists. The University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna aims to optimise tried-and-true methods gathered from experience with the entire academic lifecycle:

- strengthening performance-based support of young academics
 - talent scouting: recognizing potential at all stages of the academic and clinical career

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- special research funding schemes for young researchers (e.g. the “Young Investigator” programme”)
- individual mentoring and career planning
- introduction of new doctoral programmes with a focus on basic and clinical research
- expansion of the existing PhD Programme and its adaptation to the research profile
- creation of structures and procedures that allow the combination of PhD and clinical residency programmes
- creation and addition of research positions for young scientists within the Postdoc Programme (e.g., based on qualification agreements)

The University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna provides a number of central services, such as the Office for Research Support and Innovation (FFI), to promote young researchers. In addition to publication support and information dissemination support, the FFI offers courses and individual counseling to improve the quality of funding proposals, thereby increasing the number of successful grant applications. The FFI also provides tailored information (on-line and through seminars relating to grant opportunities), networking opportunities for researchers, research project management and accounting.

The Research Profile Area Board measures are supportive not only to young researchers during their early careers, but also to senior researchers in leading positions. By constantly improving their management skills and quality of leadership these experienced academics play an important role as mentors and champions of fellow researchers, also as managers of successful working groups and organisational subunits. In general terms, the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna offers a module-based leadership programme called “Leading Vet” that is tailored to professors and senior staff, which – indirectly – supports career development of individual young scientists within their departments. Additionally, coaching is provided, and also a mentoring programme tailored to the needs of young academics – PhDs, postdocs and residents. These programmes cover a wide range of skills and competencies needed by professional researchers: communication, teaching methodology, writing skills and project management as well as health for body and mind. Professors and senior staff can choose to take part in our 360° Leadership Feedback programme that is offered in cooperation with a business consultancy.

Strategies allowing for individualised career paths are part of the Development Plan. In order to promote international exchange, a focus is put on managing diversity, making provisions that allow staff members to balance family life with a professional career and safeguarding excellence of staff members. Continuous improvement of the recruitment procedures allows the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna to attract international scientists with high potential.

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8.4. Bibliometric methods

Publication activities have been monitored systematically since 2003 and are one of the main instruments used to evaluate scientific performance of researchers and organisational units.

Bibliometric methods are applied for various purposes:

- target performance comparison: measures scientific performance of individual scientists, scientific performance of organisational units.
- awards system (bonification): data regarding publication performance and citations are processed based on a weighted ranking of publications. This awards system ratings procedure is defined by the Research Profile Area Board. Results are published over the Intranet. Organisational units are financially rewarded on a regular basis and scientists with remarkable publication performance are honoured individually.
- bibliometric evaluation of candidates during appointment procedures: scientific performance of applicants is evaluated prior to interviews.
- bibliometric evaluation for performance reports: several parameters are gathered for the annual Performance Report to the Federal Ministry for Science and Research, for the annual Intellectual Capital Report and for the Annual Report

A comprehensive list with the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna`s publication results of the past two years are presented in [Annex 33^{en}](#) and [Annex 33a^{en}](#).

9. Assessment of internationalisation of education and research (AP11)

The institution should describe the system it possesses to promote and assess the development of international post-graduate education and of co-operating research projects with other countries, including developing countries (see also chapter 2).

Of particular importance is the description of the measures of encouragement applied to engage veterinary students and newly graduated in international mobility of training (e.g. EU programmes such as Erasmus, Socrates, Tempus, Marie Curie etc) as well as the effectiveness of the activities.

Being the only university for veterinary medicine in Austria, the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna obviously must look beyond its own national borders.. National and international as well as inter- and trans-disciplinary cooperation and networking are of particular significance to the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna with regard to the mobility of students and staff in teaching and research

Internationalisation and mobility are part of the agenda of the Vice-Rectorate for Research and International Relations, or, in cases where they directly concern students and teaching, of the Vice-Rector for Study Affairs and Clinical Veterinary Medicine. The Office for Research Promotion and Innovation (FFI) provides competent support for researchers and project managers while the International Relations Office (IRO) together with the International Study Affairs Office (ISAO) of the Vice-Rectorate for Study Affairs and Clinical Veterinary Medicine cover all aspects of mobility for students and staff. Both offices work in close cooperation, thereby making optimal use of synergies and successfully implementing knowledge management targeted to help recognise and communicate (internally as well as externally) available expertise and to identify opportunities, networks and potential cooperation partners.

9.1. Strategies for Internationalisation und Mobility

The long-term strategy for internationalisation at the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna is based on continuous enhancement of its activities with regard to international networks and a strategic increase of cooperation intensity to foster international visibility and improve scientific impact on international programmes and projects.

The administrative framework to enhance mobility for students and staff is one of the keys to success in international endeavours.

In order to support researchers in their engagement within internationally renowned projects, a specialised research service unit has been established within the Office for Promotion of Research and Innovation. Comprehensive support is provided to individuals and all organisational units by means of scouting for funding opportunities, identification of significant areas of interest and maintenance of contacts at scientific cooperation partners and institutions. This office also supplies financial and legal

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advice to scientists in the role of project managers. By such support it promotes the University's reputation as reliable and fully accountable lead partner who will be an attractive choice for international scientific projects.

In order to attract internationally renowned scientists the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna employs an optimised appointment management system. International recruiting of young academics for the PhD and doctoral, postdoctoral and residency programmes are based primarily on formal, standardised, qualitative criteria.

The University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna's participation in national science platforms like BIOS Science Austria is an example of national networking within a specific area of life sciences (agricultural, animal health and the environmental sciences). Austrian universities and government agencies pool their efforts to tackle current challenges like climate change, natural hazards and global security of food and water. By placing its experts in EU task forces and engaging in science platforms like BIOS, the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna further increases its international visibility and impact.

Scientists of the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna are involved in networks whose mission is to improve food safety and food hygiene in developing countries. For example, through *Vétérinaires Sans Frontières* (<http://www.vsf.at>), they transfer their knowledge and skills to African countries.

9.2. Enhancing mobility of veterinary students and postgraduates

Students and graduates of the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna enjoy access to diverse grants and scholarships for a wide variety of mobility programmes. Information about these programmes is constantly updated and publicised across diverse communications channels through the International Relations Office (IRO) working closely together with the Vice-Rectorate for Study Affairs and Clinical Veterinary Medicine. Targeted informational events for students and new staff members are offered through personal and individualised counselling. IRO and ISAO provide guidance to applicants of mobility programmes throughout the administrative process and accompany them until formal acknowledgment of their records.

9.2.1. ERASMUS

The University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna can point to success in the area of mobility measures to enable international activities of students and staff members in the context of the ERASMUS programme – for both incoming and outgoing mobility actions – since 1995. In order to put into effect (for the benefit of students and teachers participating in mobility programmes) the latest developments in the sphere of lifelong learning programmes (LLP) according to the annually updated guidelines, staff members of the International Relations Office (IRO) and the International Study Affairs Office (ISAO) regularly attend ERASMUS conferences as well as national higher education conferences organised by the National Agency for Lifelong Learning or the OeAD GmbH respectively. Every year the IRO seeks approval for the implementation of mobility measures – as well as financial support for the organisation thereof and for the deployment of scientific and administrative staff – from the National Agency for LLL.

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According to ERASMUS guidelines, mobility of personnel must be co-financed by the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna, while mobility of students (SMS and SMP) – pursuant to nomination – is financed directly by the OeAD.

The University actively supports and accredits mobility actions for staff members. Within the framework of ERASMUS the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna has signed bilateral agreements with about 35 partner universities in consideration of the quality criteria specified in the ERASMUS policy statement ([Annex 34^{en}](#)) and tries to increase the appeal of student mobility (outgoing and incoming). The ECTS system and its key documents (Learning Agreement, Transcript of Grades) have been in use for incoming as well as outgoing activities since 2003 for student mobilities within the SOCRATES/ERASMUS framework and since 2007 for mobilities within the follow-on LLP/ERASMUS programme. The University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna adheres to the quality standards set out in the Extended ERASMUS University Charter (see [Annex 35^{en}](#)).

9.2.2. Scholarships offered by the University and the Society of Friends of the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna

- In addition to the support for mobilities offered through LLP/ERASMUS, the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna – in the interest of autonomy – directly makes available to students several grants, such as the Joint Study-Free Mover grant (worldwide), the grant for the Advancement of Scientific Studies offered in connection with bachelor's, master's, diploma und doctoral theses done abroad, participation at conferences and courses on specific topics abroad. All of the procedures related to these funding measures have been professionally analysed and documented.
- In addition, the Society of Friends of the University of Veterinary Medicine provides sponsorship in the form of research grants for doctoral students and postdocs active at the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna.

The IRO at the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna fosters international relations by welcoming incoming scholars – for example, by inviting scientific cooperation partners – as well as by dispatching University employees to other institutions to learn new scientific methods, improve skills for project planning and successful implementation.

9.2.3. Other scholarships

On its website www.grants.at, the OeAD GmbH posts a database of grants – for both incoming and outgoing mobilities – that is comprehensive, publicly accessible and constantly updated. This information forms one of the bases of IRO counselling.

Current postings for grants, for example, in the areas of scientific-technical collaboration (WTZ), TEMPUS, bilateral initiatives, ERASMUS MUNDUS, “appear”, etc. are publicised across the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna`s Intranet, as well as through the regularly published newsletter VetmedIntern.

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The University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna supports recent graduates (both incoming and outgoing) in their efforts to gain professional work experience during placements abroad (as financed by the LLP/LEONARDO da VINCI-programme).

9.3. Networking Activities

9.3.1. VetNEST and VetNEST-Extended

In 1993 the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna was a founding member of VetNEST (Veterinary Network of European Student and Staff Transfers), an alliance of veterinary universities and faculties from Brno, Budapest, Košice, Ljubljana, Vienna, Wrocław and Zagreb. This network puts on numerous summer schools every year, involving up to several VetNEST faculties; these summer programmes are primarily offered to students from VetNEST faculties, but also – on a space-available basis – to other international students. The complete schedule of events is posted on the VetNEST website, which the IRO maintains and updates. In this context, the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna points to the extremely successful summer programme it has organised for the past nine years together with the veterinary medicine faculty in Brno. This summer school is open to students of all nationalities and constitutes an established element of the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna's course offering.

The University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna is actively involved in the VetNEST-Extended university network consisting of the seven VetNEST members plus veterinary medicine faculties in Sarajevo, Belgrade, Skopje and Tirana. The goals of the VETNEST-Extended are in alignment with the aims of the Bologna Declaration, in particular the creation and management of an exchange system between universities, the harmonisation of curricula and the mutual recognition and introduction of curricular elements across all educational tiers.

After successful application for funding of network activities through CEEPUS III, VetNEST-Extended offers scholarships of various durations: from 1-2 weeks for the attendance of summer schools up to four months for an entire semester abroad.

9.3.2. ASEA-UNINET und EURASIA PACIFIC UNINET (EPU)

The University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna has been an active member of the two large university networks, ASEA-UNINET (<http://www.uibk.ac.at/asea-uninet/>) and EURASIA PACIFIC UNINET (<http://www.eurasiapacific.net/>), which foster postgraduate research cooperation through individual stipends for interns, PhD students and scientists and also by providing incentives for research projects and international workshops. It is worth highlighting that a staff member of the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna will assume the presidency of the EPU in autumn 2012.

9.3.3. Partnership Agreements

The University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna has cultivated intensive partnership agreements with the Szent Istvan University in Budapest and the University of Veterinary and Pharmaceutical Sciences in Brno for the support of exchanges of students and scientific personnel by means of the universities' own financial resources.

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These exchange opportunities are used predominantly for 1-month Animal Hospital internships and for research cooperation.

9.3.4. Cooperation Agreements

The University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna has cooperation agreements with the following universities and research institutions: Instituto de Ciencia Animal, La Havana, Cuba; Assiut University, Egypt; Kasetsart University, Thailand; University of Trieste, Italy; Northwest A&F University (FWAFU), P.R. China; Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais, Brazil. It also has numerous agreements for research and academics at the departmental and institutional levels; these are being steadily expanded.

For many years the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna has been a member of the EUA (European University Association), and also, via its International Relations Office, a member of the EAIE (European Association of International Educators) and the EAEC (European Association of ERASMUS Coordinators).

9.3.5. Cooperation with the International Division of the Students' Union of the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna

The Students' Union, the International Relations Office (IRO) and the International Student Affairs Office (ISAO) work together in close cooperation. They organise diverse events for incoming and outgoing exchange students: campus tours, city tours, excursions, cultural evenings and informational evenings; they have also set up a buddy system. These measures serve to better integrate incoming exchange students and thus to increase internationalisation at the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna. Outgoing exchange students, on the other hand, receive valuable information through the sharing of experiences about foreign sojourns.

9.3.6. International Veterinary Students' Association (IVSA)

The local representation of the IVSA is very active and is supported by the IRO on an as-needed basis. Please refer to the [Annex 36^{de}](#) regarding IVSA activities undertaken in the prior year.

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9.4. Postgraduate education with an international profile

The following degree programmes are internationally promoted and offered (partly) in English

- **International Master in Human–Animal Interaction ([Annex 15b^{en}](#))**

In view of the fact that the status of animals in (human) society changes, a scientific approach to human – animal interactions takes on greater significance. The Master’s Programme ([Annex 15a^{de}](#)) is launched in autumn 2012/13 and is conducted (mainly) in the English language. It places a particular focus on an international context in the field of human-animal interactions as well as connecting students worldwide. It will be taught by members of the new Messerli Research Institute which was founded under the aegis of University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna, in cooperation with the Medical University of Vienna and the University of Vienna. Students will receive comprehensive, research oriented training in many areas of human-animal interactions.
- **European Master in Comparative Morphology ([EUCOMOR](#))**

This Master’s Programme ([Annex 15^{de}](#)) constitutes an outstanding example of the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna’s international activities. The University is part of a consortium that has developed this Master’s Programme. Consisting of the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna along with the University of Antwerp, Belgium (responsible for project coordination), Justus Liebig University of Giessen, Germany, the Poznan University of Life Sciences, Poland, and the University of Naples Federico II, Italy, the consortium was able to successfully submit a “Curriculum Development project” in the framework of the Life Long Learning Programme (LLL). The programme will be implemented for the first time at the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna in October 2012 starting as a pilot. This Master’s Programme was additionally submitted as an ERASMUS MUNDUS master’s programme in April 2012 and approved in July 2012.
- **Master of Biomedicine and Biotechnology**

Master’s Programme in Biomedicine and Biotechnology are conducted in the English language and place a particular focus on an international context as well as connecting students worldwide. Approximately 90 percent of students in the Master’s Studies of Biomedicine and Biotechnology gain experience abroad in the course of their studies – either as interns or while performing Master’s Thesis work. As a result of the international reputation of this programme (regular very good evaluation results from the CHE Centre for Higher Education), the student body is made up of diverse cultures and citizens.

Master’s Programme graduates are optimally prepared to attend international PhD programmes at renowned institutions (e.g. Cambridge (UK), Harvard) and are qualified for such coveted university places
- **PhD Programme (for details refer to Chapter 2.3.2. PhD Programme)**

The international PhD Programme of the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna is dedicated to the highest standards of training with the aim of providing PhD

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students with the opportunity to develop into successful young scientists. The operational language of the PhD Programme is English.

- Master in Wildlife Management (partly in English/ in cooperation with the University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences, Vienna)

9.5. Postgraduate education for professionals (taught in German)

- Internships
- Residencies (European Colleges of Veterinary Specialisation)

These programmes are open to an international pool of candidates. Nevertheless, knowledge of German facilitates client communication.

International mobility is encouraged and supported by the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna within the Residency Programme.

9.6. Assessment of Internationalisation and Mobility

Though it fosters and encourages internationalisation and mobility wherever possible, the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna believes that the quality of internationally attractive undergraduate and postgraduate education, continuing education and research cooperation must be given priority over quantitative increases in mobility numbers and cooperation agreements. This attitude is reflected in its Development Plan as well as in its Performance Agreement with the Federal Ministry for Science and Research.

(International) guidelines and/or procedural documentation ensure the quality of foreign residency in the context of mobility programmes. In order to receive a scholarship and begin a foreign exchange, candidates must comply with all rules and regulations. Through the close cooperation and professional competence of its staff members, the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna is able to offer a truly unique service, a one-stop shop, where all the formal as well as content-based (e.g., recognition of credits from exchanges, learning agreement) are organised, prepared and processed by the International Relations Office and the Vice-Rectorate for Research and International Relations.

Mobility programme statistics are monitored and regularly published in the Intellectual Capital Report ("Wissensbilanz" [Annex 4^{de}](#)) and the integrated Performance Report.

9.7. Comments

The University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna has been setting an example in the area of foreign exchanges (incoming and outgoing) since 1995 and is constantly working to build the mobility programme even more. The University's endowing of its own support programmes is the key to being able to expand beyond third-party scholarship programmes.

Even though the University does a good job of fostering international activities among its staff, the area of personnel mobility could be further developed through better motivational tools (financial incentives, personnel development, career planning).

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9.8. Suggestions

To retain its competitive edge in an increasingly globalised educational market, the University of Veterinary Medicine Vienna must optimise its human resources, as well as social and logistic infrastructures in order to present itself as an “international campus”.

The process of internationalisation is directed both internally and externally. The goal is to integrate all core areas of the University – education, continuing education, research, scientific services, administration and service provision – into this process. The most important factors that determine success are target group oriented continuing education, the introduction of individual, team and culture-oriented measures that further international competence, and furthering of communication and subject-specific expertise among staff.

The University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna sees its quality-oriented strategy as the foundation for recruiting international students, young academics and teachers of the highest calibre. International profiling of the academic offerings, internationally networked research, and strong international cooperation and partnerships are the cornerstones of the successful development of the University.

10. Assessment of cooperation with stakeholders and society (AP12)

The institution should provide proof that it regularly publishes up to date, objective and accurate information, both quantitative and qualitative, about the study program.

Published information might also include the views and employment destinations of past students and the profile of the current student population. This information should be readily accessible and should not be used simply as a marketing opportunity. The institution should describe to what extent it meets its own expectations.

Is there an alumnus association and how does the Faculty maintain communication with former students?

10.1. General information

Using all modern communication tools at its disposal, the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna endeavours to communicate its specific competence in both animal health and food safety, as well as its broad expertise in various interactions between animals, humans and the environment. The goal of its public relations activities is to increase the visibility of the University, in particular when it comes to public health and animal welfare issues, and to stress its importance for society. In 2011, the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna additionally focused its communications efforts on publicizing its research and science initiatives and results in a comprehensive manner to make recent scientific findings available to a wider audience.

Communication with stakeholders and the public at the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna works in a centralised fashion via the Rectorate and Public Relations Office. It occurs also via its institutes and clinics in direct contact with their stakeholders and clients. In such cases, support and guidelines (e.g. corporate design) are provided by the Public Relations Office.

The Public Relations Office is run by four persons (as of June 2012), who coordinate, support and facilitate the following communication formats:

- media relations (press releases, press conferences)
- internal communications (internal newsletter)
- corporate identity/corporate design
- new media (worldwide web, social media)
- promotional materials (folders, brochures)
- giveaways
- presentations
- events and campus tours

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10.2. Communication strategy

The external communications strategy emphasises the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna's courses of study, its higher education and continuing education offerings, its research and services, and underscores their importance to society.

Thus, the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna's most important target groups are:

- potential students for its degree programmes and candidates for its higher and continuing education programmes
- veterinarians
- animal owners (i.e. owners of pets, small or large animals and farm animals),
- research organisations
- enterprises
- interest groups and policy-makers
- children and adolescents
- the general public

As the only university in Austria where it is possible to study veterinary medicine, the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna enjoys a high level of awareness throughout the country. Therefore the thrust of the communications strategy is to publicise less well-known courses of study (e.g., livestock medicine) and/or career options (e.g., veterinary public health, research).

Another objective is to expand national and international awareness of the bachelor's and master's programmes and to present the unique features of each.

Concrete communications efforts include:

- the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna's website (www.vetmeduni.ac.at): Under the "academics" tab, the web site has extensive information about the courses of study and degree programmes and about the admissions process.
- job fairs: The University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna participates in a minimum of three higher education fairs and job fairs in Austria, at least one in Vienna and two in other states.
- the "Campus Feeling" tour: The University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna hosts periodic campus tours for prospective students. In the informal atmosphere of these tours, prospective students can ask graduates and current students about their experiences, while at the same time forming a first impression of the University. These tours are designed to help prospective students choose a suitable field of study and to challenge preconceived ideas and set realistic expectations.
- Science Camp: During the summer break the science camp gives interested youths the opportunity to experience the opportunities of veterinary education and learn

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about the veterinary profession. The programme includes scientific experiments, workshops and field trips.

- **Road Shows:** The University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna and the Veterinary Chamber of Austria visit agricultural secondary schools to promote interest in veterinary medicine among students with an educational background in agriculture. Presentations focus on livestock medicine, food safety and veterinary public health in order to demonstrate the diversity of the veterinary profession to this important target group.
- **informational folders and brochures:** All of the measures described above are augmented by folders of pertinent printed information that give a compact and comprehensive overview of the admissions procedure and each course of studies.

10.3. Communication with alumni

The University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna has for long realised that the inclusion of alumni and veterinary professionals in the decision-making processes of the University is imperative for its healthy development.

The veterinary profession is therefore strongly involved in the development of the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna by means of regular interaction with university management. At the Rectorate's request, a practicing veterinarian (who was also a representative of the Austrian Veterinary Chamber) was nominated as an associate member of the University Council, thereby giving the veterinary profession insight into and a means of participating in the core decisions and strategies pursued by the University. In addition, instructors (most of whom are practicing veterinarians), alumni and external lecturers are strongly involved in the SWOT analyses performed by the University. The most recent survey was carried out in 2011 and concerned the strengths and weaknesses of the current veterinary curriculum. Concurrently, an online survey of alumni was conducted. The results obtained from surveys are valuable road maps – they have direct influence on the ongoing changes of the veterinary curriculum.

Besides cooperating with veterinary practitioners in terms of referrals, the University also works together with local veterinarians within the framework of clinical training. Thus, more than 100 local veterinarians volunteer as instructors (without payment by the University) to train students who choose to do their clinical practicals extramurally.

Practicing veterinarians that want to be involved in extramural training can apply to become instructors. The Vice-Rector for Study Affairs and Clinical Veterinary Medicine nominates instructors after receiving the application and hearing statements given by the respective departmental representative and the Veterinary Chamber. The guidelines for approval are published and can be looked up on the University's web site ([Annex 37^{de}](#)).

The instructors are appointed for terms of 3 years which can be extended for three more years, provided the instructor still fulfils the requirements. Annually national veterinary conferences are ideal venues for meeting with instructors and engaging in discussions with alumni. Instructors are invited to give feedback on the students

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performing extramural training under their auspices; naturally they also get information about what's going on at the University.

Until 2012 instructors take also part in the annual competition for the awarding of best teachers/instructors ("teacher of the year"). Traditionally only staff members have qualified for the award, but since 2012, the freelance veterinarians acting as instructors are included in the pool of nominations as a distinct category. In this way, the University desires to show its appreciation to the importance of these volunteers.

10.4. Communication: special topics

Human–Animal Interaction and Animal Welfare

The relationship between humans and animals has many different aspects; as such, it is subject to constant transitional forces particularly as they pertain to the ambivalence between animals as partners and animals for human use. These contradictions are actively addressed at the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna.

With its Messerli Research Institute, founded in 2010 and supported by the Messerli Foundation (Sörenberg, Switzerland), the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna - in cooperation with the Medical University of Vienna and the University of Vienna - has created a flagship institution. Research performed at the Messerli Research Institute is devoted to the interaction between humans and animals, as well as its theoretical principles in animal cognition and behaviour, comparative medicine and ethics. The Messerli Research Institute's work is characterised by its broad interdisciplinary approach (biology, human medicine, veterinary medicine, philosophy, psychology, law) and strong international focus.

Together, the Messerli Research Institute and the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna's Institute of Animal Husbandry and Animal Welfare contribute to the Service Unit for Animal Welfare and Veterinary Law, which serves to benefit the health and well-being of animals and works to create awareness about animal welfare efforts among students and the general public.

10.5. Other tasks

A university's responsibility to society is not limited to being a provider of higher education and continuing education. The University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna is also a research and service institution. Knowledge and technology transfer are among its crucial tasks.

Since 2010 the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna has worked on being an effective communicator of its accomplishments in diverse fields of research. Up to 40 press releases per year are distributed to national and international media outlets. In addition, the research fields of the University are presented in the context of various events, such as open houses or the research festival of the city of Vienna.

Veterinarians and animal owners are important clientele for the Animal Hospital, especially in instances of clinically challenging cases. Thus, the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna expedites communications surrounding its specialised expertise in

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the clinical and laboratory diagnostics areas. To that end, the Animal Hospital has its own independent web site (since 2012); it also organises seminars for animal owners on topics such as "First Aid for Dog Owners" or "All About the Hoof – Hoof Care for Lay People".

The message about the meaning of the educational, research and service offerings of the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna is embedded in all venues that are geared toward a broad public audience. These include:

- website: The University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna constantly tries to improve the way it presents itself on its web site (www.vetmeduni.ac.at) by adding more optional items in addition to the mandatory information; the goal is barrier-free access;
- social media: On its Facebook fan page, the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna displays important news and updates, including information about the admissions process;
- tours: In addition to its standard scheduled tours, the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna can customise tours and arrange tour dates to accommodate groups as diverse as school classes, scientific delegations, teachers and farmers/agronomists.
- open houses (every two years)
- public lectures "Mini Med Animals": a series of lectures for the interested public about animal health and animal welfare.
- Children's University: Children between the ages of 7 and 12 can opt to take part in special lectures and workshops geared to their age group. Children's University is organised through the collective efforts of five Viennese universities; 2012 is the first year that the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna is on board. Teaching events were completely booked up far in advance of the registration deadline;
- Vetmed Magazine: The magazine of the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna appears three times a year, not only with the purpose of sharing information about current happenings at the University, but also to address in detail issues that are of central importance to the field.
- Annual Report: In 2011 an Annual Report (issued in two languages) has been produced for the first time to reflect the University's activities in all its facets in a comprehensive report.

The University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna considers combining higher education and family as well as careers and family one of its central social responsibilities. The University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna therefore underwent an external audit specifically for this topic area and now proudly bears the distinction contained in the "highereducationandfamily" certificate (<http://www.familieundberuf.at>).

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