

**European Association
of Establishments for Veterinary Education**



RE-VISITATION REPORT

To the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine of the Freie Universität Berlin

On 15-17 July 2018

By the Re-visitation Team:

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Introduction

The Faculty of Veterinary Medicine of the Freie Universität Berlin was visited (full Visitation) on the 13-17 of November 2017 by the ESEVT in accordance with the ESEVT SOP 2016. During the Visitation, the ESEVT Visitation Team identified a number of deficiencies. Based on these observations, the Committee of ECOVE concluded in May 2018, that one of these deficiencies was considered to be a Major Deficiency, leading to a Conditional Accreditation status for the Establishment. The Major Deficiency identified was “Insufficient number of hours of hands-on clinical training under the supervision of academic staff in order to achieve Day One Competences”. In addition to this Major Deficiency, seven Minor Deficiencies were recognized by the ESEVT Visitation Team and subsequently listed by ECOVE.

The overall atmosphere during the Re-Visitation was very friendly and constructive, and the whole Visitation was conducted in an open and professional way. The schedule for the assessment of the one Major Deficiency and Minor Deficiencies was achieved by a series of visits to the relevant teaching facilities. The short presentations by the academic staff in the beginning of the meetings were informative with the relevant persons participating in them.

The R-SER was a mixture of text and visual evidence. It was comprehensively put together and contained almost all the data the Visitation Team required. There were a few points of information that were clarified before the Visitation itself.

The Re-visitation Team was especially impressed by the meetings with students, both clinical students as well as those in earlier years receiving the didactic components of clinical teaching. It was obvious to the Visitors that the student body has approached the clinical reorganisation with a determination to be involved in the decision making and a similar determination to take full advantage of their increased commitment to clinical practice and patient care.

The Establishment is to be congratulated on the speed at which they organised their response to the Major Deficiency identified by ECOVE at the latter’s committee meeting in May 2018, and especially how this planned response involved all the major stakeholders at the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine.

1. Correction of the Major Deficiency

1.1. Major Deficiency: *“Insufficient number of hours of hands-on clinical training under the supervision of academic staff in order to achieve Day One Competences”*

1.1.1. Findings

Since the full Visitation in 2017, the Establishment has initiated a series of intense consultations, which has resulted in a set of measures to mitigate the identified Major Deficiency. Although full details are set out in the R-SER these measures are summarised below.

Three working groups were established with the involvement of both staff (academic and technical) and students, to come up with solutions to rectify the Deficiency. The suggested solutions adopted by these three groups were initially discussed in the Education Committee before formal adoption by the Faculty Council.

The major changes now adopted by the Establishment were:

1. A number of short-term measures designed to be compliant with the EAEVE standards and acting within the legal framework;
2. Mid-term measures which will require formal changes of the degree and examination regulations;
3. Establishing a clear “catalogue” of Day One Competences linked to learning objectives;
4. The introduction of a clinical logbook for students linked to the “catalogue” of Day One Competencies.

The short-term measures have already been implemented within the existing legal framework, so that the improvement of clinical teaching and formal compliance with EAEVE requirements are not delayed by formal constraints.

The mid-term measures will change the structure of the curriculum, resulting in an optimised system of clinical education. They require a formal adaption of the study regulations, a process which has been already approved by the Faculty Council.

The Re-visitation Team observed that practical clinical training is now implemented in a much wider range of applied modules during the clinical phase of the curriculum. On further examination of the timetables and after discussions with both clinical academic staff and students in their clinical years (both didactic and practical years), the Team found a more focussed approach to practical clinical learning. Additionally, two new training modules were identified: one implemented in December 2017 for general surgery and one implemented in February 2018 addressing selected subjects of general anaesthesiology.

The Re-visitation Team also observed a significant intensification of clinical teaching: namely, a far more effective integration of students into the everyday clinical rotations, an improved participation of students in weekend duties and students taking more responsibility for the in-hospital patients.

This short-term approach to clinical training and the mid-term measures that are planned, have gone a long way in a relatively short period of time to solve this Major Deficiency.

It is considered that the current short-term measures and the planned mid-term ones fully resolve the Major Deficiency previously identified in November 2017.

1.1.2. Comments

Both the clinical academic staff and students (both clinical and pre-clinical) clearly show their enthusiasm and commitment to this new approach to clinical training; clinical students especially appreciating this further integration within the clinical rotations linked to new responsibilities for individual patients.

The students also feel that the mandatory introduction of clinical logbooks has helped them emphasise the development of their Day One Competences.

1.1.3. Suggestions

It will be important that the Establishment proceeds with the longer-term decisions, agreed by the Faculty Council that will involve quite detailed discussions with the relevant university and national decision making bodies.

1.1.4. Decision

The Major Deficiency has been fully corrected.

2. Correction of the Minor Deficiencies

2.1. Minor Deficiency 1: *“Insufficient training on emergency cases for all students, especially in companion animals”*

2.1.1. Findings

In November 2017, the Visitation Team realized that training of students in emergency cases was very low: each student has to serve one weekend day (small animal) or one evening duty (equine clinic), in spite of the good number of cases coming into both the companion animals and equine clinics.

After the Visitation, the Faculty decided to reorganise internally the clinical rotations in the 5th year with mandatory involvement of all students in treating regular as well as emergency patients, inclusion of rotation students in the morning and afternoon rounds, and participation of students in evening and weekend shifts, whenever possible.

In addition, a higher number of practical training stations have been established by the systematic integration of existing Skills Net models into the training routines, such as a model for chest auscultation as well as intubation of dogs, which were approved by the Education Commission.

The introduction of the mandatory participation of students in emergency cases has also helped develop their experience in first opinion competences within a hospital increasingly involved in referral cases.

Finally, the daily seminars during the clinical rotations have been thoroughly evaluated for their practical training content, and in the majority redesigned to explicitly focus on hands-on emergency case training, such as CPR in small animals.

Following the Team recommendations, a student logbook was developed. Both students and teachers must sign it and the outcome is evaluated by the student's office, and thus will become an integral element of the related PDCA cycle.

Additionally, a 2-week hands-on emergency training module at the end of the 4th year is being implemented, with the legal process of changing the study regulation initiated.

As a sign of deep involvement in the rectification process, the Faculty has filled the position of a companion animal clinics manager in spring 2018, with the objective to assess all clinical processes and identify further areas of improvement in providing optimised training for all students, including emergency care.

2.1.2. Comments

The Establishment has initiated a good number of initiatives in order to rectify this Minor Deficiency.

Both students and teachers have actively participated in the planning and re-organisation of the Hospital rotations through their active participation in the Working Groups.

2.1.3. Suggestions

It is suggested that the Establishment proceeds with the improvements, always keeping in mind the need for the students to acquire hands-on training experience in emergency cases.

2.2. Minor Deficiency 2: *"Inadequate monitoring and evaluation of EPT"*

2.2.1. Findings

The November 2017 Visitation Team concluded that the supervision, monitoring and evaluation of all EPTs by the Establishment were insufficient, and that an efficient monitoring system for EPT should be established.

In 2016, the Dean's office developed an information brochure with paper-based and online evaluation forms for all extramural EPT. That brochure was made available to all students through the Establishment's website and the student information system (Blackboard), and students were requested to complete and return these evaluations to the Establishment. This system was insufficiently enforced, and until the time of the Visitation in autumn 2017, only a low number of evaluations had been returned, thus making it impossible to provide comprehensive evaluation reports.

Various measures were established at various levels that will enable the complete monitoring of extramural internships in both the agricultural and veterinary internships.

The agricultural based EPT takes place in the 1st year of study. Two weeks (equivalent to 70 hours) are mandatory if done at an official agricultural training and research station; four weeks - if done on a farm that is registered/certified to train agricultural students (apprenticeship). The Establishment has established new contractual agreements with two additional official agricultural training centres (Köllitsch, Echem). As of 2019, all students may complete their agricultural internships in quality controlled official training sites. Evaluation sheets were introduced, and they must be completed and returned to the study office before the EPTs are formally accepted for each student, which ensures 100 % return rates.

As for veterinary internships, the Faculty Council in May 2018 decided that evaluations for all EPTs have to be submitted by all students together with the official certificate of completion of the EPT signed by the EPT provider.

A better information strategy has been established: students at relevant times, beginning 9 months before the time slot for the EPTs, will be repeatedly informed about the importance of these quality control processes and their role within it. All students receive regular email reminders requesting the submission of evaluations for completed EPT modules.

Returned evaluations are analysed twice a year by the study office, and results presented to the education committee, Faculty Council and Faculty members responsible for the respective EPT.

2.2.2. Comments

The Establishment decided upon a series of changes that address the Minor Deficiency in ways that seem to provide a better control and monitoring of the EPTs. Summarizing, these are:

- The Faculty Council has now decided that evaluations for all veterinary EPTs have to be submitted by students together with a certificate of completion signed by the EPT provider.
- The evaluation questionnaires are monitored and then evaluated by the new appointment of a Coordinator for Extramural Internships.
- Finally, the overall survey results are presented to the Dean and additionally to the Education Commission.

2.2.3. Suggestions

It is suggested that the monitoring of EPTs proceeds as predicted, making sure that the evaluation of the questionnaires will provide in the future good guidance in order to make the best out of the traditional Extramural Training that has such an important role in the practical preparation of future graduates.

2.3. Minor Deficiency 3: *“Insufficient signage for biosecurity and restricted areas”*

2.3.1. Findings

In November 2017, the Visitation Team realized that signage for biosecurity was not clear in all locations, referring to the risks that could be present and which level of personnel are allowed to enter.

The Establishment informed the Re-visitation Team that after the Visitation, all biosafety units have been checked in terms of regular and correct visitation, signage and for compliance by safety officers, and that no significant violations were recorded.

However, additional measures are about to be taken to improve the situation which are planned for the next months:

1. An electronic keyless access door opening system has already been implemented at the Ruminant Clinic and will be implemented on the entire South Campus Areas (South of Königsweg). This will allow for further restricted access to certain units.
2. The traffic of people and vehicles will be further restricted by infrastructure and construction measures on the occurrence of epidemic disease, e.g. a potential outbreak of

African swine fever. At all entrances to the Faculty areas, disinfection baths for vehicles and mats for unavoidable access of personnel can be installed shortly in case of epidemics.

3. An extended hygiene concept for the traffic of vehicles and people is under construction. Presently, visitors to the clinic area have to be recorded within a visitors' book at the secretariat. Technical personnel of the clinic control this process.
4. On a short-term basis, following the Visitation of the ESEVT Team, the Ruminant Clinic established a hygiene sluice. During the time they participate in the clinical rotations, all students are fitted with overalls owned by the clinic, that are cleaned by the clinic personnel or when visiting farms outside the clinic - additionally with disposable overalls. An additional separate building is under construction (to be finished by the end of 2018) with additional extensive showers, lockers and bathroom units for students and staff on the South Campus, designated "The Lavatorium":

2.3.2. Comments

All biosafety units have now been checked in terms of regular and correct visitation and associated signage.

The regulations imposed by the official authorities following what is legally established by the German Law seem to be enough to rectify the Minor Deficiency. The measures taken together with a more aware state of mind from both students and staff are the best warranty for the full compliance of the Faculty as far as safety rules are concerned.

2.3.3. Suggestions

It is suggested to the Establishment that it proceeds with the improvements with the advice of the authorities in the field of biosecurity.

2.4. Minor Deficiency 4: *"Inadequate isolation facilities in small animals"*

2.4.1. Findings

In November 2017, the Visitation Team stated that the existing isolation facilities had problems of insufficient signage to alert visitors, students and staff and that more space for changing rooms was necessary especially for small animals and farm animals.

There is an isolation unit for horses that was finished in November 2017, although as yet not having been occupied.

The Establishment took in hands the reorganisation of the isolation unit in the small animal hospital with measures taken in two steps:

Step 1

Necessary adaptations implemented in two phases:

- The first includes mandatory structural measures for limiting and supervising person traffic into restricted areas. The Team observed that these are in place and functioning.
- The second phase will include additional measures to improve the overall quality of the facility to a modern standard. Planning and concepts are guided by the necessity to implement any measures with minimal impact on running services and in a timely manner. The expected time frame is 2018-2020.

Step 2

The Team was informed that mid-term measures will require more extensive planning as well as the involvement of higher authorities beyond the Freie Universität, with the complete reconstruction of the in-patient area.

The equine isolation unit is currently fully functioning.

2.4.2. Comments

The measures completed in the short period after the November 2017 evaluation and the ones to be completed in the next year in order to overcome this Minor Deficiency are a clear sign of the attention the Establishment is giving to biosafety.

2.4.3. Suggestions

The Establishment is commended for the short-term achievements. It is suggested to the Establishment that it proceeds with the improvements to create safe and efficient isolation units for all diseased animals.

2.5. Minor Deficiency 5: *“Insufficient number of necropsies in cattle and pigs”*

2.5.1. Findings

Based on indicator I18, the number of necropsies in cattle and pigs was found to be too low to meet the EAEVE standards.

In order to increase that number, the following actions were taken by the Establishment:

1. Starting in December 2017, both farm animal teachers have done their best to encourage their collaborating farm managers and farmers to send their necropsy cases to the Establishment Pathology Department. Agreements were made with farmers in order to perform necropsies free of charge, irrespective of the official fees.
2. The official fees for farm animal necropsies were reduced.
3. A biweekly retrieval of typically diseased swine and cattle lungs, hearts, kidneys etc. are being collected from a local slaughterhouse where whole carcasses are obtained for the meat inspection course making possible to have about 30 fresh diseased organs for each rotation group to gain additional hands on experience in farm animal organ pathology.

2.5.2. Comments

The Establishment has clearly addressed this Minor Deficiency. Not all efforts were fully successful, but the numbers of the necropsies of cattle and pigs necropsied since November which were presented to the Re-visitation Team, already show an improvement in relation to the situation in November 2017.

2.5.3. Suggestions

The Establishment is commended for the achievements. It is suggested to the Establishment that it proceeds with the efforts to ameliorate the situation in the future.

2.6. Minor Deficiency 6: ***“Sub-optimal use of the VTH companion animal patients for clinical training of undergraduate students”***

2.6.1. Findings

In November 2017, the Visitation Team found that students mainly receive intramural hands-on training on VTH companion animal patients during clinical rotations in the 5th year. Therefore, the Team indicated that that patient pool was not sufficiently utilized for student training.

After the Visitation, immediate changes included an internal reorganisation of the clinical rotations with much stronger involvement of all students in treating regular as well as emergency patients. In addition, a clinical logbook was introduced in October 2018 for students to record their clinical training activities during the 5th year of study. Specific changes (depending on the respective clinic) include:

- Now, students follow the same daily workflow, including morning and afternoon rounds, as the veterinary staff do.
- Students are assigned to one or more in-patients, with all responsibilities and duties related to that patient. Under the supervision of the veterinarian officially in charge of the patient, the students have to take full responsibility for their patient, which also includes communication with the owner and record keeping.
- Participation of students has increased in evening and weekend shifts.
- Training of students for hands-on animal work by using new Skills Net models
- Shorter but more interactive case presentations done by students (Equine clinic)
- Improved coordination of activities among the clinics participating in the clinical rotation
- Development of a species-based clinical learning objective catalogue from which the clinical logbook for students was derived, implemented in the clinical year and used to monitor student hands-on training. This will also be used to monitor the overall quality of clinical hands-on training among the different units involved, allowing for early identification of persistent insufficiencies and to enforce further improvements.

2.6.2. Comments

The changes coming in place in spring term 2018 resulted in substantial improvement of the practical training in all clinics, with a higher number of companion animal patients seen by students. Adaptations are ongoing, and the proposed change of the study regulation to extend the clinical rotation will emphasize this process.

2.6.3. Suggestions

It is suggested that the Establishment proceeds with the improvements with the active collaboration of students and staff.

2.7. Minor Deficiency 7: ***“Insufficient specialised academic staff in some key clinical disciplines”***

2.7.1 Findings

The Visitation Team has identified insufficient specialised academic staff in some key clinical disciplines and classified this as a Minor Deficiency.

Regarding the situation with hiring permanent academic specialists, the university is in a competitive situation that has increasingly been characterized for several years by private employers and industry offering extremely attractive working conditions. As a result, a situation has developed over many areas in which it is becoming increasingly difficult for universities to recruit academic specialists. The Faculty has recognised this situation and is currently trying to actively counteract this development. Such actions included internal measures designed to make work at Freie Universität more attractive. The Establishment sees this challenge as follows:

- The establishment of such a system requires preparations that were already initiated by the Faculty in 2017. The aim is to achieve a balance between the needs of clinical training, the recruitment of highly qualified personnel and the interests of the Faculty. This must consider frames of teaching capacity and financial aspects. The process has been started in cooperation with administrative bodies of the Freie Universität. For example, one clear objective is that the orientation of the Clinic for Small Animals and the Clinic for Horses in particular will be clearly changed towards the training of students, hands-on learning and the involvement of appropriate specialists. Specifically, it is intended that the Clinic for Small Animals will be able to fill up to **five** academic positions with specialists in several fields; the positions will be designed in such a way that they will be employed on permanent contracts. Specifically, critical areas were examined for possible financing through hospital revenues and/or joint ventures.
- An example of this is the field of veterinary diagnostic imaging. The Faculty has faced major problems in filling a position in radiology for a number of years. Despite intense efforts, it was unfortunately impossible to successfully complete an appointment procedure in 2018 to fill a junior professorship in radiology. The concept that is currently being pursued is to create a highly attractive job situation for several certified radiologists, so that a new business model will attempt to establish a powerful and efficient unit with up to five positions. Furthermore, the aim is to fill a professorship for radiology for intensive student education, to work in cooperation with the privately organised radiology units. This model is currently in the planning stage and corresponding discussions have taken place with private interested parties. The concept is to be further focused and coordinated in the near future, so that it is assumed that a fully functioning imaging unit will be created within the next two years, both as a service facility and for student training.

2.7.2. Comments

The Establishment is seriously addressing the problem that also has to do with legal limitations. It is expected that in two years the Deficiency will be significantly diminished.

2.7.3. Suggestions

None.

3. ESEVT Indicators

Name of the Establishment: Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, Freie Universitaet Berlin, Germany					
Date of the form filling: 01/06/2018					
Calculated Indicators from raw data		Establishment values	Median values¹	Minimal values²	Balance³
I1	n° of FTE academic staff involved in veterinary training / n° of undergraduate students	0.12	0.16	0.13	0.00
I2	n° of FTE veterinarians involved in veterinary training / n° of students graduating annually	0.62	0.87	0.59	0.03
I3	n° of FTE support staff involved in veterinary training / n° of students graduating annually	1.40	0.94	0.57	0.84
I4	n° of hours of practical (non-clinical) training	651.00	905.67	595.00	56.00
I5	n° of hours of clinical training	708.00	932.92	670.00	38.00
I6	n° of hours of FSQ & VPH training	285.50	287.00	174.40	111.10
I7	n° of hours of extra-mural practical training in FSQ & VPH	250.00	68.00	28.80	221.20
I8	n° of companion animal patients seen intra-murally / n° of students graduating annually	61.24	70.48	42.01	19.23
I9	n° of ruminant and pig patients seen intra-murally / n° of students graduating annually	4.25	2.69	0.46	3.78
I10	n° of equine patients seen intra-murally / n° of students graduating annually	15.82	5.05	1.30	14.52
I11	n° of rabbit, rodent, bird and exotic seen intra-murally / n° of students graduating annually	27.73	3.35	1.55	26.19
I12	n° of companion animal patients seen extra-murally / n° of students graduating annually	n.a.	6.80	0.22	n.a.
I13	n° of individual ruminants and pig patients seen extra-murally / n° of students graduating annually	51.41	15.95	6.29	45.12
I14	n° of equine patients seen extra-murally / n° of students graduating annually	n.a.	2.11	0.60	n.a.
I15	n° of visits to ruminant and pig herds / n° of students graduating annually	2.17	1.33	0.55	1.63
I16	n° of visits of poultry and farmed rabbit units / n° of students graduating annually	0.07	0.12	0.04	0.02
I17	n° of companion animal necropsies / n° of students graduating annually	1.99	2.07	1.40	0.59
I18	n° of ruminant and pig necropsies / n° of students graduating annually	0.63	2.32	0.97	-0.34
I19	n° of equine necropsies / n° of students graduating annually	0.38	0.30	0.09	0.29
I20	n° of rabbit, rodent, bird and exotic pet necropsies / n° of students graduating annually	4.42	2.05	0.69	3.73
I21*	n° of FTE specialised veterinarians involved in veterinary training / n° of students graduating annually	0.47	0.20	0.06	0.41
I22*	n° of PhD graduating annually / n° of students graduating annually	0.61	0.15	0.09	0.53
1	Median values defined by data from Establishments with Approval status in April 2016				
2	Recommended minimal values calculated as the 20th percentile of data from Establishments with Approval status in April 2016				
3	A negative balance indicates that the Indicator is below the recommended minimal value				
*	Indicators used only for statistical purpose				
Comments I4	excludes 250 h of extramural training in VPH / food safety / meat inspection / vet admin -> I6				
Comment I5	Establishment values 2017/18 have increased by 28 hours due to two additional modules IN ADDITION, students spent at least 500 hours of EPT in veterinary practice				

4. Conclusions

The Major Deficiency is considered fully corrected.

Minor Deficiencies 1-6 have been fully corrected and Minor Deficiency 7 is well on the way for full correction in the mid-term.

FINAL REPORT AS ISSUED BY ECOVE ON 22 NOVEMBER 2018

Decision of ECOVE

The Committee concluded that the Major Deficiency had been corrected.

The Faculty of Veterinary Medicine of the Freie Universität Berlin is therefore classified as holding the status of: **ACCREDITATION**.