



**VISITATION REPORT**

**To the Veterinary Faculty of the University of Ljubljana, Ljubljana, Slovenia**

**On 07 – 11 June 2021**

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## **Introduction**

The University of Ljubljana (UL) was created in 1919. Its Veterinary Faculty (which is called the Veterinary Education Establishment (VEE) in this report) was established in 1953, as a department of the Faculty for Agronomy, Forestry and Veterinary Medicine. Since 1990, the VEE has been an independent faculty of the UL. It is the only faculty in Slovenia that educates veterinary students at all levels of higher education.

The VEE was evaluated by EAEVE in 1998, evaluated again in October 2009, re-visited in March 2011 and granted the status of 'Approval' by ECOVE.

The main features of the VEE are:

- ) The National Veterinary Institute (NVI) is an organisational unit of the VEE, which offers students additional practical training in the diagnosis and control of animal diseases and in food safety and quality.
- ) The suitability of laboratory testing has been confirmed by the accreditation in accordance with Standard ISO/EN 17025 obtained in 2002.
- ) About 60 new undergraduate places are available every year at the VEE. In addition to these, there are about 80 students who do not have student status since they have interrupted the curriculum but are still entitled to study according to the national legislation.

The main developments since the last Visitation are:

- ) In 2012, advanced postgraduate specialised training was started in programmes for Buiatrics, Poultry health and poultry production systems, Diseases and healthcare of birds, small mammals and reptiles, Small animal veterinary medicine and Veterinary public health and food.
- ) In 2015, the Slovenian Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education approved the study programmes at the VEE.
- ) The VEE has invested in new equipment and facilities.

- ) In the study year 2016/2017, a new course called ‘Welfare, ethics and legislation’ was introduced into the core curriculum, together with new elective courses.
- ) The VEE has participated in several Erasmus+ programmes.
- ) In 2020, a new curriculum was approved by the UL Senate and was implemented.
- ) A Commission for Quality of Study, a Curriculum Commission, a Commission for Biosecurity, a Commission for Welfare of Animals in Experimental Procedures and a Working Group on special status students were established.
- ) The reconstruction of the animal isolation facilities was completed and plans for a new building for the VEE were initiated.

The Visitation followed the SOP 2019 and the ‘Exceptional Rules for ESEVT Visitations linked to the COVID-19 outbreak’, as adopted by EAEVE ExCom and GA in December 2020.

Adjustments made in the learning and study processes due to the exceptional situation of COVID-19 in 2020 and 2021 were explained in an addendum to the Self-Evaluation Report (SER).

## **Standard 1: Objectives, Organisation and QA Policy**

**1.1 The VEE must have as its main objective the provision, in agreement with the EU Directives and ESG recommendations, of adequate, ethical, research-based, evidence-based veterinary training that enables the new graduate to perform as a veterinarian capable of entering all commonly recognised branches of the veterinary profession and to be aware of the importance of lifelong learning.**

**The VEE must develop and follow its mission statement which must embrace all the ESEVT standards.**

### **1.1.1. Findings**

The VEE has a clear Mission and Vision, and a strategic plan for 2020–2025, which includes Objectives/Strategic Orientations in the following areas: Education, Science and Research, International Relations, Activity of diagnostic laboratories, Clinical activities, Core curriculum. Key Values are identified emphasizing the One Health concept, and ethical approach both to animals and to humans. The main objectives are presented in Appendix 17. These include:

1. EAEVE accreditation
2. ISO 17025 accreditation
3. Acquisition of international research projects
4. Involvement in international infrastructure projects
5. Publications of research results in top international journals
6. Increasing the internationalisation of undergraduate and postgraduate studies
7. Involvement of successful foreign researchers and pedagogues in the work of the faculty
8. To be an institution that sets welfare standards and a code of ethics for the treatment of animals
9. To continue the top laboratory diagnostic and analytical activities within the National Veterinary Institute (NVI) and to maintain high standards in ensuring the concept of ‘one health’
10. Continuous training of employees to ensure quality work in all areas of operation
11. Construction of a new faculty

12. Connecting the faculty with other world-renowned institutions

**1.1.2. Comments**

The VEE has a comprehensive mission statement and a strategy elaborated for the period 2020-2025.

**1.1.3. Suggestions for improvement**

None.

**1.1.4. Decision**

The VEE is compliant with Substandard 1.1.

**1.2 The VEE must be part of a university or a higher education institution providing training recognised as being of an equivalent level and formally recognised as such in the respective country.**

**The person responsible for the veterinary curriculum and the person(s) responsible for the professional, ethical, and academic affairs of the Veterinary Teaching Hospital (VTH) must hold a veterinary degree.**

**The decision-making process of the VEE must allow implementation of its strategic plan and of a cohesive study programme, in compliance with the ESEVT standards.**

**1.2.1. Findings**

The VEE is the only VEE in Slovenia and is one of the 26 faculties of the UL. The relation between faculties and the UL is defined in the Statute of the University of Ljubljana.

The main UL bodies are: Rector, the UL Senate, the UL Board and the UL Student Council.

The Ministry of Education, Science and Sport provides funds for the studies, based on the discipline and the number of enrolled and graduated students in accordance with the national and UL regulations. The Slovenian Research Agency finances research projects. The National Veterinary Institute (NVI) is a special organisational unit within the VEE. The activity of NVI comprises the regular activities of the public veterinary service in accordance with the concession contract financed by the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food. NVI also performs market activities for the needs of other customers. For the VEE students, the NVI contributes to practical training in preclinical and clinical sciences and food safety.

The person responsible for the veterinary curriculum and the person(s) responsible for the professional, ethical, and academic affairs of the Veterinary Teaching Hospital (VTH) hold a veterinary degree.

The organisation of the VEE, its management, quality assurance, the tasks of individual commissions and leaders are described in the document “Rules on Internal Organisation of Veterinary Faculty University of Ljubljana” and the “Quality Assurance Manual”.

The main VEE bodies are: Dean, the Senate with its working bodies, the Management Board, the NVI Council, the Academic Assembly and the Student Council.

The VEE Senate is the highest professional body of the VEE (e.g. adopts the annual work programme and the annual report of the VEE, decides on complaints from students in study cases, discusses and decides on the opinions of the Student Council of the VEE, follows the monitoring of the quality of education).

Table 1 in the SER outlines the composition and the tasks of the 11 working bodies of the VEE, including the Commission for Quality Assurance (CQA), and the three committees focusing on education: the Commission for Quality of Study (CQS), the Commission for Students' Affairs (CSA) and the Curriculum Commission (CC).

### **1.2.2. Comments**

The decision-making process of the VEE allows implementation of its strategic plan and of a cohesive study programme, in compliance with the ESEVT Standards.

The various bodies under the Senate have wide representations from the different units and from students.

The National Veterinary Institute contributes significantly to the enhancement of practical training in preclinical and clinical sciences and in food safety and quality providing it with a great variety of samples from the field.

### **1.2.3. Suggestions for improvement**

None.

### **1.2.4. Decision**

The VEE is compliant with substandard 1.2.

## **1.3 The VEE must have a strategic plan, which includes a SWOT analysis of its current activities, a list of objectives, and an operating plan with a timeframe and indicators for its implementation.**

### **1.3.1. Findings**

The strategic plan of the VEE is based on a thorough SWOT analysis updated annually and contains an operating plan with timeframe and indicators. Annual plans are also prepared based on the findings of annual reports. Appendix 17 provides further details on the strategic goals of the VEE for the period of 2020–2025 (see also 1.1).

The draft strategy was circulated through the heads of organisational units (OU) to the staff of each OU for review and comments. The collected suggestions were discussed at the VEE Management Board, the Council of the National Veterinary Institute and the final version was approved by the VEE Senate. The strategy is publicly available on the VEE website <https://www.vf.uni->

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[lj.si/en/about-us](https://www.vf.uni-lj.si/en/about-us), the annual reports are publicly available on the VEE's website <https://www.vf.uni-lj.si/en/annual-reports>, while plans are available on the intranet.

It is a major problem that the building facilities will not allow for the enlargement of the study programme and alternative ways of teaching. The VEE has plans for a new building partly substituting the existing facilities – final approval of the financing plan is pending.

### **1.3.2. Comments**

It is commendable that the strategy development process as well as the annual review and planning process of the VEE involve the staff and students, and efforts are made to involve external stakeholders to an even greater extent.

### **1.3.3. Suggestions for improvement**

None.

### **1.3.4. Decision**

The VEE is compliant with Substandard 1.3.

**1.4 The VEE must have a policy and associated written procedures for the assurance of the quality and standards of its programmes and awards. It must also commit itself explicitly to the development of a culture which recognises the importance of quality, and quality assurance, within their VEE. To achieve this, the VEE must develop and implement a strategy for the continuous enhancement of quality. The development and implementation of the VEE's strategy must include a role for students and other stakeholders, both internal and external, and the strategy must have a formal status and be publicly available.**

#### **1.4.1. Findings**

The QA system at the VEE is linked to the QA system at the UL level, where the QA system is determined by the "Rules on the Quality System of the UL" (September 2020). Appendix 3 in the SER outlines the "Quality Assurance Scheme for Self-evaluation of Study Programmes at the UL" which is following national and international regulations and the expectations of NAKVIS, the national accrediting agency.

The University service for quality coordinates and gives instructions for the annual self-evaluation process of each university member, prepared in the form of an Annual Business Report with the Quality Report. A collated quality report is examined each year by the UL Senate and by other bodies. The preparation of self-evaluation reports involves various groups (teachers, students, administrative and technical staff). This university service prepares the university-level analyses of the of students' questionnaires results, and it also coordinates the national accreditation process of UL – which has taken place recently (first half of 2021).

A relevant working body of the UL Senate is the Commission for Quality Assurance, which is composed of representatives from each university member and two students.

At the VEE level, the inclusion of the NVI within the VEE in 2002 was followed by the establishment of procedures for quality assurance and accreditation, related to testing and

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calibration laboratories (ISO/EN 17025). The VEE thus has a long tradition for dealing with QA aspects.

At the VEE a unit for quality assurance was subsequently established – this unit has since then widened its focus to other aspects of QA within the VEE, including the quality of education. The unit with three academic staff, engaged in QA part time, functions as a working group and a kind of secretariat, responsible for archiving, maintaining and disseminating quality documents (Quality Manual and Rules, Guidelines, Standard Operating Procedures, minutes of meetings, etc. which have been provided to the Visitation Team).

The highest decision-making body of the VEE is the Senate. It relies on the work of 11 commissions (the Habilitation Commission, the Commission for Students' Affairs, the Postgraduate Study Commission, the Commission for Scientific Research, the Commission of International Cooperation, the Commission for Quality Assurance, the College of Veterinary Clinics, the Curriculum Commission, the Commission for Biosecurity, the Commission for Quality of Study, the Commission for Welfare of Animals in Experimental Procedures).

The Commission for Quality Assurance participates in the design, maintenance and documentation of the management system, in internal quality audits, etc. It is composed of representatives from each institute or clinic (quality assurance responsables).

There are three commissions focusing on the QA of education.

The Commission for Quality of Study (CQS) was formed in 2019 – it consists of seven teacher members and two students, and is chaired by the person responsible for the quality of studies. This commission is responsible for the monitoring, evaluation and development of the pedagogical process, the implementation of student surveys of the activities and reports to the Senate.

The Curriculum Commission (CC) also has seven teacher and two student members and is chaired by the Vice Dean for Education. It discusses individual issues related to the curriculum, monitors it, assesses the compliance of the teaching materials with the detailed curriculum, and proposes necessary changes to the Senate.

The Commission for Student's Affairs (CSA) with five members from among teachers and associates of the VEE, and two students, is monitoring and promoting the quality of the educational process, and deals with all questions of students and teachers related to studies, deals with appeals, and other study related matters.

The Vice Dean for Education takes part in meetings of the various bodies related to QA, supporting coordination and management.

Hard copies of the quality documents are available in each unit where they are used. The responsible persons in each unit have access to the quality documents on the intranet as well. The staff and students are provided with information on the quality standards via the quality reports and via the discussion of these reports by the senates of the members and the UL, and at special workshops, training sessions and activities, which are held by the student organisation to foster quality. General monitoring and quality assurance mechanisms includes: planning and reporting, self-evaluations and external evaluations, and accreditations.

The performance of all VEE units is evaluated yearly in the Management Review, which includes a risk assessment and identification of opportunities. Evaluations include students' surveys, which are analysed by the Vice Dean and presented to teaching staff at the meetings with teachers of each course and at the yearly conference for teachers and assistants.

On the basis of this analysis, each year the VEE Plan is prepared for pedagogical, research, clinical and NVI activities. It includes a plan for training, employment, promotions, funding, maintenance and acquisition of new equipment and students' social activities, too.

In 2015–2018, the VEE was involved in an Erasmus+ project on Internal Quality management the results of which have been adopted in the VEE QA system.

#### **1.4.2. Comments**

The VEE has a formal strategy (see also 1.1 and 1.3) which is focusing on the continuous monitoring and improvement of the VEE and its activities. The organisation has been following these aims (e.g. by establishing more specialised committees).

The VEE has an established QA system. It has developed and implemented a policy and associated written procedures for the assurance of the quality and standards, which have been used operationally at the VEE since the late 1990s, and have been adopted by staff and students. It serves as the basis of a culture of quality, which recognises the importance of quality and quality assurance within the VEE.

It is commendable that the Vice Dean for Education takes part in meetings in the various bodies related to QA, supporting coordination and management and demonstrating the commitment of the management to quality. The experiences of the people responsible for QA have taught them that the standardisation of established procedures may be more efficient (bottom-up approach), than imposing regulations alien to the practice.

#### **1.4.3. Suggestions for improvement**

None.

#### **1.4.4. Decision**

The VEE is compliant with substandard 1.4.

**1.5 The VEE must provide evidence that it interacts with its stakeholders and the wider society. Such public information must be clear, objective and readily accessible; the information must include up-to-date information about the study programme, views and employment destinations of past students as well as the profile of the current student population.**

**The VEE's website must mention the ESEVT VEE's status and its last Self Evaluation Report and Visitation Report must be easily available for the public.**

### **1.5.1. Findings**

The VEE provides extensive and reliable information in Slovenian and in English (<https://www.vf.uni-lj.si/en/>) on the study programme both for undergraduate and for postgraduate students, on its accreditation status, its research activities, and clinical and diagnostic services. A special chapter of the homepage is devoted to quality assurance.

Stakeholder consultations are part of the QA loop. In the management review process, laboratory and unit managers, heads of institutes and top management consider and review all elements of operations, identify needs for new activities, equipment, and personnel, and solicit feedback from internal and external stakeholders (student surveys, customer surveys, customer needs, VEE staff insights, meeting reports). The findings are considered and recorded in the Annual Business Report with the Quality Report and taken into account in the preparation of the VEE action plan for the following year.

The VEE management organizes a meeting with external stakeholders at least once a year, with representatives of the main employers of VEE graduates (e.g. veterinarians, veterinary chamber, veterinary administration, pharmaceutical companies, veterinarians in the Slovenian Army, etc.) to discuss the performance of the graduates, and the need for additional knowledge and skills that should be included in the training programme, the need for continuing education programmes, etc. The management decides on the results of the discussions in the Dean's College, where it proposes the activities to realize possible changes.

On a yearly basis, representatives of the clinic for large animals discuss the issues of activities that could be performed together with recognised breeding organizations for the different animal species, livestock experts and farmers in order to plan coordinated activities. The meetings are coordinated by the Administration of the Republic of Slovenia for Food Safety, Veterinary Sector and Plant Protection (UVHVVR). Every year the activities that NVI performs for UVHVVR are also discussed at formal meetings with the representatives of NVI and UVHVVR.

The VEE has regular and formalized dialogue with the Veterinary Chamber, notably related to the private clinics, where feedback is provided to the VEE on the performance of students in practise and on issues for considerations for the development of the curriculum (e.g. soft skills, continuing education).

The relation with stakeholders from the various industries and parts of society – including the public health agency – is well developed, in formal as well as in more informal ways. The VEE was the first faculty of the UL to present its activities on posters at the walk by the riverbank for the citizens of Ljubljana.

The VEE recognises that it is not always easy to get feedback from stakeholders when they make surveys to gather feedback but the VEE is working on continuously developing the feedback mechanisms, e.g. by inviting all graduates to the VEE's Alumni Society.

### **1.5.2. Comments**

The VEE has a strong and active interaction with external and internal stakeholders.

The strong involvement of a variety of external stakeholders in the teaching process and the

development of the curriculum is worthy of praise.

**1.5.3. Suggestions for improvement**

None.

**1.5.4. Decision**

The VEE is compliant with Substandard 1.5.

**1.6 The VEE must monitor and periodically review its activities, both quantitative and qualitative, to ensure that they achieve the objectives set for them and respond to the needs of students and society. The VEE must make public how this analysis of information has been utilised in the further development of its activities and provide evidence as to the involvement of both students and staff in the provision, analysis and implementation of such data. Any action planned or taken as a result of this data analysis must be communicated to all those concerned.**

**1.6.1. Findings**

There is systematic review of activities, embedded in the quality PCDA loop (SER Appendix 3). Activities are monitored by special commissions and reported on by the VEE Senate. All activities of the VEE are covered in the annual plan and report on the VEE activities which is presented at the Management Board, NVI Council and Senate which give the final approval.

Students evaluate each teacher, assistant and specific course online twice a year. The report is automatically generated and is available to the teacher from the course. The Dean obtains the reports for all teachers in order to react to exceptionally bad and good survey results.

The results are presented at the Commission for Students' Affairs (CSA), which consists of five representatives of teaching staff and two students. CSA is responsible, among others, for monitoring and promoting the quality of the educational process. The results of the students' survey, the conclusions from the meetings and solutions related to higher education are presented and discussed at the yearly conferences for the teaching staff.

At the UL level, the Commission for Quality Assurance prepares and compares the results of students' surveys between different members of the UL. The document "Evaluation report of students' questionnaire of the UL" is in Appendix 4. Minutes of the commissions' meetings are available to VEE staff and are published on the intranet.

**1.6.2. Comments**

The VEE performs both qualitative and quantitative assessment of its activities annually.

**1.6.3. Suggestions for improvement**

None.

**1.6.4. Decision**

The VEE is compliant with Substandard 1.6.

**1.7 The VEE must undergo external review through the ESEVT on a cyclical basis. Evidence must be provided of such external evaluation with the assurance that the progress made since the last ESEVT evaluation was linked to a continuous quality assurance process.**

**1.7.1. Findings**

In 2015, the Slovenian Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (NAKVIS) approved the study programmes at VEE. UL (institutional) re-accreditation started in 2020 and was completed in May/June 2021.

The VEE is annually evaluated by the Slovenian Accreditation according to ISO/EN 17025. In this accreditation not only laboratories, but also the faculty management and organization as well as the working conditions are included. At present, the VEE is using 155 accredited methods in its laboratories, mainly at the NVI.

The last ESEVT Re-visitation of the VEE was in March 2011. Since then, a number of changes have been implemented (see the Introduction).

**1.7.2. Comments**

The VEE and its quality system regularly undergoes external reviews by different agencies.

**1.7.3. Suggestions for improvement**

None.

**1.7.4. Decision**

The VEE is compliant with Substandard 1.7.

**Standard 2. Finances**

**2.1 Finances must be demonstrably adequate to sustain the requirements for the VEE to meet its mission and to achieve its objectives for education, research and services. The description must include both expenditures (separated into personnel costs, operating costs, maintenance costs and equipment) and revenues (separated into public funding, tuition fees, services, research grants and other sources).**

**2.1.1. Findings**

The VEE's revenues and expenditures are presented in Tables 2.1.1/2.1.1.1., 2.1.2 and 2.1.3. The majority of VEE's revenues comes from the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport, the Slovenian Research Agency, and income from clinical services, in addition to income from diagnostic services as part of the National Veterinary Institute (NVI) duties. The budget for education is provided through the University of Ljubljana as a lump sum based on six criteria decided by the Administrative board of the University of Ljubljana on a four-year financing contract. The VEE generates market funds by performing services for third parties, and the surplus from these activities can be used for the funding of educational activities or research.

The budget for education is supposed to cover expenses for first and second degrees, and studying at the VEE is free for Slovenians, other EU citizens and citizens from non-EU countries with special

agreements. For the third degree, the PhD, which is a four-year programme included in the Biomedicine programme at the University of Ljubljana, the tuition fee is currently 13,200 EUR per 4-year programme). The fee covers the costs of training, but not the material costs of the research work. These are covered from the costs of the research programs or projects.

The University of Ljubljana has both a long-term and an annual investment plan. Table 2.1.1.1 shows the expenditure on investments in the last 3 years, around one million euro per year.

The VEE is in close contact with the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport about the construction of the new premises. The faculty owns the needed territory for the buildings, they are at the top of the University list of important new investments, and they are listed on the priority list of important new governmental projects (post COVID-19).

### **2.1.2. Comments**

For the years 2017–2019, there has been an increase in both expenditures and revenues, and in 2019 the balance between these resulted in a small surplus.

Expenses for personnel make up about 2/3 of the total expenditures, which is comparable to other VEEs.

Diagnostic services for the state and third parties make a substantial part of the annual revenues, partly due to the incorporation of the NVI as an organizational unit of the VEE. This contributes to a more robust financial standing of the VEE.

### **2.1.3. Suggestions for improvement**

None.

### **2.1.4. Decision**

The VEE is compliant with Substandard 2.1.

**2.2 Clinical and field services must function as instructional resources. Instructional integrity of these resources must take priority over financial self-sufficiency of clinical services operations. The VEE must have sufficient autonomy in order to use the resources to implement its strategic plan and to meet the ESEVT Standards.**

#### **2.2.1. Findings**

The head of each institute decides on the use of funds for education, and if the funding allocated from the university is not sufficient, the institute head can propose use of the institute's market funds. The Dean is responsible for ensuring additional funding if the budgetary funds are not sufficient.

Money is usually spent in the organizational unit in which it originated. If there is a positive balance at the end of the year, it can be redistributed to institutes or clinics with a deficit. If necessary for activities that are vital for the VEE, for example, the implementation of the study programme, more funds can be allocated from sources that are received in the form of a lump sum (e.g. funds intended for the implementation of the veterinary study programme), partial funds from diagnostical and analytical activities for third parties and from clinical activities.

The clinical and field services are organized at several clinics belonging to different institutes. The activities and the budgets for these are planned at the end of each year for the following year. Heads of institutes/clinics plan the activities and predict how much they will earn and spend on the market. Generally, revenue from operating activities is spent in the organizational unit where the revenue was generated. If there is profit, which is not spent on the unit it can be reallocated for the other activities. Such questions are discussed in close dialogue with the administration and the units in question. The Senate makes the final decisions on the budget.

The need for new employments and the replacements on the systematized positions is usually planned by organizational unit heads in the annual plan for the next year. The plan is approved by the VEE Board and the VEE Senate. In exceptional cases, new activities with additional resources may result in new employments that were not previously planned. If a new position is systematized, it should first be approved by the UL Management Board.

#### **2.2.2. Comments**

The VEE confirms that it has the required autonomy in the allocation of governmental budget for education.

#### **2.2.3. Suggestions for improvement**

None.

#### **2.2.4. Decision**

The VEE is compliant with Substandard 2.2.

### **2.3 Resources allocation must be regularly reviewed to ensure that available resources meet the requirements.**

#### **2.3.1. Findings**

The faculty has a clear plan for major investments in the future. The realisation of a new VEE building is the main priority.

Spending of the VEE funds is done according to an annual VEE work plan. Planning activities take place at the end of the year. Organizational unit heads gather suggestions from staff and prepare a list of unit needs and priorities. At the end of the year, when the budget for the following year is known, priorities are set. Money from operational activities can be spent more flexible if it is available.

The Vice Dean for Education is responsible for the preparation of the educational plan. The yearly plan and report are approved by the VEE Administrative Board and the VEE Senate.

There are University criteria for how funding from the lump sum for education can be allocated to individual teaching staff and assistants for individual research work.

#### **2.3.2. Comments**

The new facility that is under planning is an excellent opportunity for the VEE to consider how

they can encourage more transversal collaboration by constructing the building in a way that facilitates such behaviour.

### **2.3.3. Suggestions for improvement**

The VEE should continue to work for the realization of the new facility.

### **2.3.4. Decision**

The VEE is compliant with Substandard 2.3.

## **Standard 3. Curriculum**

**3.1 The curriculum must be designed, resourced and managed to ensure all graduates have achieved the graduate attributes expected to be fully compliant with the EU Directive 2005/36/EC (as amended by directive 2013/55/EU) and its Annex V.4.1. The curriculum must include the subjects (input) and must allow the acquisition of the Day One Competences (output) listed in Annex 2. This concerns Basic Sciences, Clinical Sciences in companion animals (including equine and exotic pets), Clinical Sciences in food-producing animals (including Animal Production and Herd Health Management), Food Safety and Quality, and Professional Knowledge.**

### **3.1.1. General findings**

#### **3.1.1.1. Findings**

The VEE offers a one-degree course in Veterinary Medicine, in Slovenian. The course lasts 6 years. Table 3.1.1 reports the total number of curriculum hours (lectures, seminars, supervised self-learning, etc.) for each year/semester with a total of 10,800 hours of learning activity and a total of 360 ECTS (1 ECTS = 30 hours).

Appendix 6 reports on the new curriculum which has been activated for the 2020/2021 academic year, and which is currently valid only for first-year students. Major changes with respect to the previous curriculum include 3 new compulsory courses, 11 new electives and the introduction of a mandatory research project and a mandatory final exam (200 multiple choice questions).

There is good balance between the different types of activity (according to the SER, “supervised self-learning” is not foreseen in the national curriculum; here self-learning is considered as personal study and represents 42% of the total hours of the curriculum). It is evident that as the course progresses, the number of lectures is greatly reduced and is replaced by practical activity.

From the analysis of the core curriculum (Table 3.1.2; Appendix 6) it becomes evident that all EU-listed subjects are taught, either as specific courses or within the context of other courses. The only subject that has no hours and is not mentioned in the other courses is “Diagnostic Pathology”.

The number of total hours for each student in Basic Subjects and Sciences is 4,070 hours, 1,830 hours in Clinical Sciences, 540 hours in Animal Production, and 480 hours in Food Safety and Quality. Indicators report that non-clinical practical training accounts for 1,234 hours vs. 1,227 for practical clinical training. There are approximately 500 training hours in FSQ (intra and extra-mural). Further 990 hours are taken in various electives.

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The EPT takes place in the 6<sup>th</sup> year of study, and includes training in large animals, small animals and FSQ, for at least 60 days.

The educational aims established in the last three years include improvement of clinical teaching and facilities and changes to the curriculum to better guarantee acquisition of Day-1 skills. The Vice Dean for Education and several commissions (Curriculum Commission (CC); Commission for Student's Affairs (CSA); Commission for Quality of Study (CQS)) are responsible for proposing changes to the curriculum, which then need to be approved by the VEE's Senate. Compliance with the ESEVT Standards is considered a priority.

The UL conducts its study programmes according to the legislation governing higher education in Slovenia. The VEE can approve some changes to the curriculum although it must be approved by NAKVIS. However, major changes must be approved by the UL Senate.

As mentioned above, the CC, together with the Vice Dean, the CSA and the CQS, are involved in evaluating and proposing changes to the curriculum. The SER describes the annual process of curriculum review, which has a tiered approach, beginning with teachers and students of individual courses, reports to the various committees, all the way up to the VEE Senate. Specific criteria for analysing overlaps and redundancies were described clearly during the Visitation.

### **3.1.1.2. Comments**

The curriculum meets the requirements outlined in the EU directives on veterinary education and the SOP 2019 of ESEVT.

All the different committees and commissions responsible for the curriculum development and evaluation include student representatives, which is excellent.

### **3.1.1.3. Suggestions for improvement**

It is suggested to put more emphasis on:

- supervised self-directed learning;
- courses in Professional Knowledge and “soft-skills” in the curriculum.

### **3.1.1.4. Decision**

The VEE is compliant with Substandard 3.1.1.

## **3.1.2. Basic Sciences**

### **3.1.2.1. Findings**

Table 3.1.2. reports on the number of hours for each course offered during the 6 years of study.

The topics belonging to Basic subjects and Basic Sciences are all according to the EU-listed subjects in Directive 2013/55/EU. The exceptions are Medical Physics and Chemistry (Footnote 1 of Table 3.1.2. reads “Part of Biochemistry. Animal Biology and Chemistry are supposed to be studied prior to the entry to veterinary education”).

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The changes in the new curriculum (Appendix 6) regarding the basic subjects and sciences include the deletion of the Biophysics course; topics from Biophysics are now covered in Biochemistry and in the new elective course Biophysical Principles of Clinical Diagnostic Methods. In addition, there is a new, mandatory course in Animal Welfare.

Basic Subjects and Sciences cover a total of 4,070 hours (Table 3.1.2 and Appendix 6). The number of hours of practical (non-clinical) training is 280 hours, the majority of which (180 hours) is in Anatomy.

### **3.1.2.2 Comments**

The new curriculum (active from the academic year 2021/2021) has introduced some new courses and has reorganized several others (for example Biochemistry, now spread over the first 2 years). These changes have been positively commented on by the students during the Visitation.

### **3.1.2.3 Suggestions for improvement**

None.

### **3.1.2.4. Decision**

The VEE is compliant with Substandard 3.1.2.

## **3.1.3. Clinical Sciences in companion animals (including equine and exotic pets)**

### **3.1.3.1. Findings**

Related to clinical animal work, the VEE's curriculum includes a total of 1,205 hours (both in companion and food animals) which represents the 11.15% of the curriculum (total of 10,800 hours) and the 45,38% of the supervised practical training (total of 2,655 hours). Supervised clinical training starts in the sixth semester (57 hours) and increases in the fourth year (159 hours), in the fifth year (169 hours), but most of the dedicated hours for clinical training are focused in the sixth year (820 hours; 68.05%). The detailed data are presented in Table 3.1.1.

Details, related to the inclusion of the subjects in the VEE as described in Annex V.4. Veterinary Surgeon of the Directive 2013/55/EU of the European Parliament and the Council of 20 November 2013 amending Directive 2005/36/EC, are included in Table 3.1.2.

According to the initial information provided, 0 hours were dedicated to Diagnostic Pathology. However, Diagnostic Pathology is considered in Table 3.1.2. under Pathology (36/66), Poultry (24/55), Fish and bees (7/14) and Wild animals (10/25). Diagnostic pathology is also part of direct patient assessment in clinical courses and clinical rotations. So, the total hours dedicated to Diagnostic pathology (104 hours) is 30 hours (Lectures), 67 hours (non-clinical animal work), 7 hours (clinical animal work).

Although in Table 3.1.2, 0 hours were dedicated to the subjects Anaesthesiology, Preventive Medicine and Therapy in common animal species, a reference to their inclusion in other courses is included. So, the exact data were provided later by the VEE:

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<i>Subjects</i>	Lectures	Seminars	Supervised self-learning	Laboratory and desk based work	Non-clinical animal work	Clinical animal work	Others (field work)	Total
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
<i>Diagnostic pathology</i>	30				67	7		104
<i>Surgery</i>	45		75		38	6		164
<i>Anaesthesiology</i>	15		15		10	6		46
<i>Preventive medicine</i>	12		40					52

The total hours of clinical practical training in Equines are 300 hours (56 hours in animal clinical work). 360 hours are dedicated to Cats and dogs clinical training (80 hours in animal clinical work). Also, small animals (presumptively new small animals or exotic animals) clinical training is included (a total of 120 hours, 15 related to animal clinical work).

In relation to EPT in companion animals, a total of 10 weeks are focused on small animal rotation and 1 week in equine clinical rotations during the sixth year.

A total of 20 elective subjects (1,830 hours = 61 ECTS) related to the clinical sciences are offered to the students. These subjects are focused on many specialized clinical topics. From the total of elective subjects offered to the students (4,200 = 140 ECTS), 36 ECTS must be taken by each student as mandatory. Details are in Table 3.1.4.

A progression in the clinical training is offered, starting with the preclinical courses (1<sup>st</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> semester), continuing with the basic clinical competences in the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> year, and finally with the clinical training mainly in the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> semesters.

Students are assessed by clinical mentors using activity log sheets. However, this system is not a logbook as such. The individual competence assessment of each student is recorded and assessed by the staff member responsible for the practice, but not matched against the list of Day One Competences.

In intramural clinical training, clinical mentors are the academic staff of the university. These are tenured faculty, tenured track (teaching) or clinical track (clinical) personnel, all of whom are subject to university tenure and promotion rules.

In extramural clinical training, clinical mentors are veterinarians who must be licensed and registered with the national veterinary chamber.

Every student completes a total of 96 hours in necropsies in small animals, ruminants and in equine. These activities are completed in Pathology (66 hours) and in Poultry (30 hours).

### 3.1.3.2. Comments

None.

### 3.1.3.3. Suggestions for improvement

The content of the clinical subjects diagnostic pathology, anaesthesiology and preventive medicine should be listed in the core curriculum subjects in the SER and the VEE should specify better which

subjects are part of the core curriculum and which are in the electives. Only advanced topics should be included in the elective subjects because not all students take these subjects and it must be ensured that all students acquire the basic competences in the core subjects.

#### **3.1.3.4. Decision**

The VEE is compliant with Substandard 3.1.3.

### **3.1.4. Clinical Sciences in food-producing animals (including Animal Production and Herd Health Management)**

#### **3.1.4.1. Findings**

The EPT begins only during the 6<sup>th</sup> and final year of the curriculum.

For intramural clinical rotations, 2 weeks are devoted to production animals (out of 13) and 6 weeks are devoted to ambulatory clinics and herd health. The repartition between ruminants and equine is not detailed.

The ambulatory clinics and the Centre for Sustained Re-cultivation Vremscica (CSR) farm related to the VEE allows the students to be in contact with first line cases. Between 5 to 8 students participate in the clinical activities in ruminants and 2 to 4 in equine allowing each student to practise.

Out of the 3,840 hours indicated in the table 3.1.1. related to clinical work, 1,205 are dedicated for clinical work and 1,540 for supervised self –learning. For poultry no clinical work is in place. In the majority of the cases, the part devoted to supervised self-learning is the most important.

Regarding teaching related to livestock, the time is divided between:

- Ruminants – 330 hours (including all forms of learning)
- Poultry – 300 hours
- Pigs – 300 hours
- Fish and bees – 180.

In addition to the core curriculum, the students have access to elective courses. Some of them are related to

- Animal production: 540 hours in total, (with 305 of self-learning) with 6 topics, including Herd health management.
- Clinical sciences: more than 1,830 hours are offered but only 2 topics are related to production animals (ruminant's podiatry and cattle surgery).

Regarding Animal production, 420 hours are in the curriculum including self-learning (190 hours) without clinical work. The description of the teaching related to herd health monitoring was not detailed in the initial version of the SER. An amended version gave more details.

#### **3.1.4.2. Comments**

The discussion with Alumni confirms the dynamics, the enthusiasm and the skills of both the students and the academic staff.

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The link between the field practitioners and stakeholders and the academic staff seems to be very regular, strong and trustful. These allow the academic staff to bring back to the faculty the needs from the field.

The sheep and the cattle farms offer plenty of opportunities to build practical and clinical teaching and to address One Health approach and sustainability of agriculture (especially at the CSR).

The mobile clinic and the related organisation allow seeing a number of herds and cows and stay in contact with stakeholders and allow also to face 1<sup>st</sup> line treatment cases.

The small size of the groups allows the students to practice and improve their skills.

Fish and bees (usually considered as minor species) are well addressed in the curriculum.

### **3.1.4.3. Suggestions for improvement**

Currently, EPT occurs only in the 6<sup>th</sup> year. Earlier occurrence of EPT in the training could give the opportunity to the students to discover different areas of working.

### **3.1.4.4. Decision**

The VEE is compliant with Substandard 3.1.4.

## **3.1.5. Food Safety and Quality**

### **3.1.5.1. Findings**

Food safety and quality (FSQ), Veterinary Public Health (VPH) and One Health concept (OH) are in total taught for 1,290 hours, giving 43 ECTS. About half of these hours are categorized as supervised self-learning, and the number of hours in FSQ and VPH practical training (Indicator I6) is 240 hours per year (corrected in the reply from VEE). The number of hours of extra-mural practical training in FSQ and VPH (Indicator I7) is 80 (10 days of 8 hours). All elements described in the list of subjects (SOP Annex 2) are included, although hours allocated for the Zoonoses subject are included in the subjects Microbiology, Parasitology, and Food Safety, as well as clinical courses.

It is mandatory for all students to take elective courses in all study years. Within FSQ, VPH and One Health, a total of five elective courses are offered. Most of these teaching hours are lectures, seminars, and supervised self-learning.

The number of enrolled students for the last two years are:

- Veterinary Proficiency (max. 20 students): 11 students
- Cynology for Veterinarians (max. 30 students): 22 students
- Zoonoses (max. 30 students): 9 students

The new courses in Biosafety and Microbial and Antimicrobial Environment in Veterinary Medicine will not take place because too few students have registered.

A total of 140 hours laboratory training is distributed as follows:

- 55 hours of feed safety in the Hygiene in Pathology of animal nutrition course (year 3)

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- 40 hours laboratory work on milk and milk products in the course Hygiene & Control of Milk, Milk Products and Foods of Vegetable Origin (year 5).
- 45 hours laboratory work on meat and meat products in the course Hygiene Control of Meat, Fish and Products (year 5).

Practical training in meat control takes place in two slaughterhouses: one slaughterhouse for farm animals (i.e. cattle, pigs, horses, 85 km away) and one poultry slaughterhouse (15 km away). The farm animals' slaughterhouse is relatively small, slaughtering 150–200 pigs and 100–150 cattle daily. The students go in groups of seven, and they are supervised by teaching staff and official veterinarians. Each student goes to nine visits of eight hours to the farm animals' slaughterhouse, and to one visit of eight hours to the poultry slaughterhouse.

The course syllabus requires that the practical slaughterhouse examination must be taken before the theoretical examination in FSQ and VPH (exception is made during the COVID-19 pandemic).

In addition to the slaughterhouse visits, the students visit four food facilities for processing of food of animal origin (meat and dairy). The visits are led by the company's employees, and the students are supervised by a faculty teacher. The students write a report that must be approved by UVHVVR (authority for official control of food).

As EPT in the 6<sup>th</sup> year, students must complete at least 10 contact days with inspection activities within public veterinary service. This can be done in the units of NVI, at UVHVVR, in the cheese factory of the teaching farm, or at public veterinary service institutions in other EU countries.

### **3.1.5.2. Comments**

The FSQ teaching has a clear focus on animal-derived food, and less on other food items, drinking water and more environmentally related subjects. However, the new curriculum will have more focus on environmental perspectives. The Centre for Sustained Recultivation Vremscica is a very interesting infrastructure with opportunities for teaching the One Health concept and sustainable agriculture, and for integrating food safety, animal and public health into a wider perspective.

An elective course in “Cynology for veterinarians” can hardly be categorized as a FSQ and VPH course, although it might be regarded as an OH course.

The possibility of using NVI units for training in VPH should be commended.

### **3.1.5.3. Suggestions for improvement**

It is suggested that initiatives for increasing recruitment to the elective courses that could not be arranged for the first times should be considered.

### **3.1.5.4. Decision**

The VEE is compliant with Substandard 3.1.5.

## **3.1.6. Professional Knowledge**

### **3.1.6.1. Findings**

Subjects linked to professional knowledge are incorporated within lectures, seminars and electives and include, inter alia, information literacy and data management, professional ethics and communication, animal health economics and practice management, clinical practical training in common animal species, herd health management and veterinary legislation.

### **3.1.6.2. Comments**

Knowledge and skills are more easily assimilated than the aptitudes and attributes associated with the softer skills demanded in clinical settings.

Communication skills training is also provided for staff and students.

### **3.1.6.3. Suggestions for improvement**

It is suggested that more focus be placed during the professional knowledge training and education on these attributes.

### **3.1.6.4. Decision**

The VEE is compliant with Substandard 3.1.6.

**3.2 Each study programme provided by the VEE must be competency-based and designed so that it meets the objectives set for it, including the intended learning outcomes. The qualification resulting from a programme must be clearly specified and communicated and must refer to the correct level of the national qualifications framework for higher education and, consequently, to the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area.**

**The VEE must provide proof of a QA system that promotes and monitors the presence of an academic environment highly conducive to learning including self-learning. Details of the type, provision and updating of appropriate learning opportunities for the students must be clearly described, as well as the involvement of students.**

**The VEE must also describe how it encourages and prepares students for self-learning and lifelong learning.**

### **3.2.1. Findings**

The qualification resulting from the training fits into the national and EU framework.

The VEE has also participated in the 2015-2018 ERASMUS+ “Internal Quality Management: Evaluating and Improving Competence-Based Higher Education” project, which is reported as having had much impact on the QA system and culture. The VEE had to develop a procedure for evaluating students’ competences which can be used by students for self-evaluation as well.

All teachers (100%), responsible for particular courses, are obliged to submit a pedagogical report for the previous school year. Copies of such reports were provided to the Team. They have to answer questions on e.g. innovations introduced to the course, proposals for future improvement; involvement of external experts. Reports are submitted to Vice Dean for Education. He/she processes the data and presents it to the CSA and finally the VEE Senate, and it is included in the annual business report with the quality assurance report of VEE.

Approximately 50% of the teaching staff are taking extra courses on pedagogical improvement. The UL organises a number of different workshops for free, so anybody can take some of them for

self-improvement in a particular field (didactics, ICT, rhetoric, etc.).

Students are encouraged to study on their own and to take the opportunities available, such as online tests, self-assessment, journal clubs, personal feedback and competence check. The most common encouragement of self-learning is continuous completion of seminars and assignments through partial exams and colloquia. In addition, teachers provide additional examples in e-classrooms, quizzes, questions. In some units students are also called when there are interesting cases (clinics and pathology).

There is a UL Career Centre which, together with the VEE's career counsellor, assists students in planning their prospective career in a timely and active manner, and prepares them for searching an employment. Workshops, international relations, visits, networking, etc. are motivations for students.

### **3.2.2. Comments**

The VEE is a small faculty regarding the number of students, teachers and places, which makes teachers and students accessible and connected. This is often noticed and positively commented on by students and teachers, and was also noticed by the Visitation Team.

### **3.2.3. Suggestions for improvement**

None.

### **3.2.4. Decision**

The VEE is compliant with Substandard 3.2.

## **3.3 Programme learning outcomes must:**

- **ensure the effective alignment of all content, teaching, learning and assessment activities of the degree programme to form a cohesive framework**
- **include a description of Day One Competences**
- **form the basis for explicit statements of the objectives and learning outcomes of individual units of study**
- **be communicated to staff and students**
- **be regularly reviewed, managed and updated to ensure they remain relevant, adequate and are effectively achieved.**

### **3.3.1. Findings**

The VEE follows the instructions and rules defined in the Statute of the UL. In this document scores, general periods of examination, possibilities for repetition, etc. are given. The VEE itself has adopted the 'Study rules', regulating teaching and student assessment procedures, examination periods, appeal procedures in case of disagreements, tracking of records and recognition of achievements obtained elsewhere.

In order to achieve the educational aims, the strategy of the VEE includes a constant review and improvement of learning and teaching outcomes on the basis of students' evaluations and assessment results.

When preparing the new curriculum, the ‘Day One Competences’ were one of the starting points for the determination of the professional competencies to be obtained in each course. During their studies, students are reminded to pay attention to the ‘Day One Competences’. The Vice Dean for Education asked the course responsables to prepare or update the *Catalogue of Knowledge* for the current academic year. The VEE is strengthening competence-oriented training by developing a new curriculum and mapping Day One Competences on the subjects taught in this Catalogue.

Learning outcomes are presented to students in the introductory lecture. They are available to students in every course throughout the academic year in the course syllabus.

Changes in learning outcomes are usually prepared with curricula changes; they do not change “*ad hoc*”. Recently, the VEE has been following the strategy in UL that all changes are first mentioned in the annual SER and then go through the approval process.

The students participate in all important parts of the creation of study changes and study programmes. Undergraduate students are members of the CSA, CQS, CC and the Senate. They have two organisations: the Students’ Council and Students’ Organisation, which are called to give suggestions and opinions. Students can have meetings with teachers to discuss certain problems with their studies (timetable, exam terms, etc.). Students report to be active in bodies and can influence the processes. There have been curricular changes based on student initiatives.

### **3.3.2. Comments**

Students are well informed and knowledgeable about the learning outcomes and Day One Competences.

### **3.3.3. Suggestions for improvement**

It is suggested to further improve the transversal approaches in some fields, e.g. Herd Health Management and One Health.

### **3.3.4. Decision**

The VEE is compliant with Substandard 3.3.

**3.4 The VEE must have a formally constituted committee structure (which includes effective student representation), with clear and empowered reporting lines, to oversee and manage the curriculum and its delivery. The committee(s) must:**

- **determine the pedagogical basis, design, delivery methods and assessment methods of the curriculum**
- **oversee QA of the curriculum, particularly gathering, evaluating, making change and responding to feedback from stakeholders, peer reviewers and external assessors, and data from examination/assessment outcomes**
- **perform on going and periodic review of the curriculum at least every seven years by involving staff, students and stakeholders; these reviews must lead to continuous improvement. Any action taken or planned as a result of such a review must be communicated to all those concerned**

- **identify and meet training needs for all types of staff, maintaining and enhancing their competence for the ongoing curriculum development.**

### **3.4.1. Findings**

As mentioned in 1.1 there are 11 working bodies of the VEE's Senate, including the Commission for Quality of Study (CQS), the Commission for Quality Assurance (CQA), the Commission for Students' Affairs (CSA) and the Curriculum Commission (CC). All comments regarding the curriculum (with two student representatives) are collected by the CC, and if there is a recognised need to make changes, a proposal is prepared. Proposals may arise from the internal evaluation of teaching, the teachers' pedagogical reports, the student surveys, from annual meetings with teachers performed by the Vice Dean for Education, from pedagogical conferences, etc. The first proposal is presented to the Dean, then to students, staff and stakeholders.

The most recent revision of the curriculum was implemented in 2020/21.

Feedback from stakeholders, peer reviewers and external assessors and data from examinations are taken into account in the Management Review, conclusions for actions are included in the plan for activities, performance is reviewed when the Annual Business Report with the Quality Report is prepared.

Teachers are required to attend didactic courses, which are since 2020 well organized and provided free of charge by the centre of the University of Ljubljana. The recorded topics are also available all the time (<https://digitalna.uni-lj.si/>). In addition, the teaching staff members are also expected to attend courses from the specific research area in which they work. The need is identified during the annual meetings with the head of the unit, Vice Dean for Education, management review, pedagogical conferences and pedagogical reports.

### **3.4.2. Comments**

The committee structure includes effective student representation, and has clear and empowered reporting lines to oversee and manage the curriculum and its delivery.

### **3.4.3. Suggestions for improvement**

None.

### **3.4.4. Decision**

The VEE is compliant with Substandard 3.4.

**3.5 External Practical Training (EPT) is compulsory training activities organised outside the VEE, the student being under the direct supervision of a non-academic person (e.g. a practitioner). EPT cannot replace the core intramural training nor the extramural training under the close supervision of academic staff (e.g. ambulatory clinics, herd health management, practical training in FSQ and VPH).**

**Since the veterinary degree is a professional qualification with Day One Competences, EPT must complement and strengthen the academic education inter alia by enhancing student's professional knowledge.**

**3.5.1. Findings**

Students must complete at least 60 contact days of practical work (50 in a clinical environment and 10 on inspection activities in a veterinary public service facility). Of the 50 contact days in the clinical part of EPT, a minimum of 12 must be on major or production animals and a minimum of 38 contact days on an animal of their choice.

**3.5.2. Comments**

The time specified is ‘at least’ or a ‘minimum’ and many students do more.

**3.5.3. Suggestions for improvement**

None.

**3.5.4. Decision**

The VEE is compliant with Substandard 3.5.

**3.6 The EPT providers must have an agreement with the VEE and the student (in order to state their respective rights and duties, including insurance matters), provide a standardised evaluation of the performance of the student during their EPT and be allowed to provide feedback to the VEE on the EPT programme.**

**There must be a member of the academic staff responsible for the overall supervision of the EPT, including liaison with EPT providers.**

**3.6.1. Findings**

Students organise their own EPT. Collaboration agreements are arranged individually between EPT providers (the University has contracts with 60 veterinary clinics throughout Slovenia) the VEE, the Clinical Studies Coordinator and the student. The EPT provider signs off the student’s log documents and direct feedback from providers is given at the annual Veterinary Chamber symposium. These logbooks, after having been signed off by the EPT provider, are shared with the person at their faculty who is responsible for the externships. If they would like to do EPT training with a clinic that does not have an agreement with the VEE yet, they can do so by arranging the paperwork beforehand. The VEE has agreements with specific countries to do EPT, either at a faculty or a clinic.

**3.6.2. Comments**

Cooperation with private practitioners to facilitate EPT is commendable.

**3.6.3. Suggestions for improvement**

None.

**3.6.4. Decision**

The VEE is compliant with Substandard 3.6.

**3.7 Students must take responsibility for their own learning during EPT. This includes preparing properly before each placement, keeping a proper record of their experience during EPT by using a logbook provided by the VEE and evaluating the EPT. Students must be allowed to complain officially and/or anonymously about issues occurring during EPT.**

**The VEE must have a system of QA to monitor the implementation, progress and then feedback within the EPT activities.**

### **3.7.1. Findings**

Students must be in their 6<sup>th</sup> and final year to start the EPT programme. Students keep and submit a record of cases and activities. All documents must be verified by their institutions and mentors. The final assessment is graded by the students EPT mentor and reassessed by the Clinical Studies Coordinator. They keep two different types of record, one for EPT (signed off by EPT provider) with 3 cases/day and the other one with all the newly acquired knowledge they received during their clinical rotation (signed off by the head of their clinical rotation). These logbooks are paper versions and are individual documents stored in hard files, not electronically.

Feedback on EPT is gathered both from the EPT providers and from students.

### **3.7.2. Comments**

Though the sixth year is late into the veterinary programme to begin EPT, a great diversity of practical places is provided for students.

### **3.7.3. Suggestions for improvement**

None.

### **3.7.4. Decision**

The VEE is compliant with Substandard 3.7.

## **Standard 4. Facilities and equipment**

**4.1 All aspects of the physical facilities must provide an environment conducive to learning, including internet access. The veterinary VEE must have a clear strategy and programme for maintaining and upgrading its buildings and equipment. Facilities must comply with all relevant legislation including health, safety, biosecurity, accessibility to people with reduced mobility, and EU animal welfare and care standards.**

### **4.1.1. Findings**

The main campus of the VEE is divided in two sites (Gerbičeva and Cesta v Mestni log; 0.5 km apart) located in the southern fringes of Ljubljana and close to the centre of the city (5 minutes by public transport). Intramural facilities are supplemented with a private clinic for Large Animals located in Žalec (northeast of Ljubljana and 1 hour by car, approximately). Also, the faculty farm (named Centre for Sustained Re-cultivation) is located in Vremščica, 60 km from Ljubljana and is used for teaching topics related to food-producing animals.

Several regional units of the NVI are used for teaching purposes and student can practice in those labs and in the field.

All the clinical buildings are on the ground floor and accessible to people with reduced mobility. For other buildings a portable wheelchairs lift is provided.

Biosecurity procedures are defined and applied at the different facilities. Biosecurity and biosafety

measures training is provided to employees and students.

Every year the staff must prepare a plan for the purchase of equipment, which is approved by the management team and funded by the University. This activity meets the needs of the staff to have equipment for their routine work.

There is a plan for building new premises in 2–5 years with an estimated cost of 58 M€. In this new building the VTH and other labs will be available.

#### **4.1.2. Comments**

The inclusion of the National Veterinary Institute (NVI) laboratories and field activities in the teaching-learning process is noteworthy because it provides opportunity for the students to get acquainted with the real animal health responsibilities of the veterinary profession.

#### **4.1.3. Suggestions for improvement**

None.

#### **4.1.4. Decision**

The VEE is compliant with Substandard 4.1.

**4.2 Lecture theatres, teaching laboratories, tutorial rooms, clinical facilities and other teaching spaces must be adequate in number, size and equipped for the instructional purposes and must be well maintained. The facilities must be adapted for the number of students enrolled. Students must have ready access to adequate and sufficient study, self-learning, recreation, locker, sanitary and food service facilities.**

**Offices, teaching preparation and research laboratories must be sufficient for the needs of the academic and support staff.**

#### **4.2.1. Findings**

The VEE is provided with premises for consultations (8 for small animals, 4 for equine and 2 for exotics) and for surgical procedures (4 for small animals, 3 for equine and food animals and 1 for exotic animals). For lecturing, 9 lecture halls are located in different departments with a capacity 30–80 places. Also there are 5 rooms located in different departments, available for group work and 11 for practical work (labs). Additional rooms are located in the VTH for the students use.

Students are provided with storage space for their personal belongings in lockers in the various buildings where they do their practical training.

All facilities demonstrate that they are well maintained and clean.

#### **4.2.2. Comments**

Some laboratories and clinical consultations are limited in size to cope with large numbers of students at the same time in practical sessions. However, the number of students per group is small and therefore there are no complaints about this.

In the building next to the VTH, the students have a place to rest during their weeklong internship

at the hospital, which they call ‘the hotel’ (3 bedrooms, a kitchenette, a bathroom and a living room). In the VTH itself, there is little space for rest and recreation for staff and students, especially for the night shifts.

#### **4.2.3. Suggestions for improvement**

In each part of the VTH there should be space for rest and recreation for staff and students, especially for night shifts.

#### **4.2.4. Decision**

The VEE is compliant with Substandard 4.2.

### **4.3 The livestock facilities, animal housing, core clinical teaching facilities and equipment used by the VEE for teaching purposes must:**

- **be sufficient in capacity and adapted for the number of students enrolled in order to allow safe hands-on training for all students**
- **be of a high standard, well maintained and fit for the purpose**
- **promote best husbandry, welfare and management practices**
- **ensure relevant biosecurity and bio-containment**
- **be designed to enhance learning.**

#### **4.3.1. Findings**

Several places for all the different species are provided for regular hospitalisation and for isolation.

The Faculty farm, shared by the Biotechnical faculty, provides students with the opportunity to practise with sheep, cattle, equine and pigs as farm animals and for the clinical training pigs, cattle and horses in stables are provided in accordance with regulations of the competent authority in procedures using animals for teaching purposes.

Also, several contractual agreements with external partners are provided for teaching purposes; including a slaughterhouse for large animals located in Celje (85 km North-East of the VEE) and a poultry slaughterhouse located in Zalog (15 km North of Ljubljana).

#### **4.3.2. Comments**

The implementation of biosecurity measures in some of the facilities is suboptimal. For example, boots cannot be properly cleaned by automatic equipment but have to be cleaned by hand. In addition, the design of the facilities does not allow users to shower after using these facilities.

Expired drugs were found in the large animal pharmacy. Although these drugs were not used, they should be destroyed according to the biosecurity rules currently running in the VEE.

#### **4.3.3. Suggestions for improvement**

The VEE must provide the facilities with automatic boot cleaners and footbaths, especially at the entrance/exit of the necropsy rooms or at the entrance/exit of barns and in the ruminant and equine clinic facilities. This would ensure cleanliness and disinfection and prevent cross-contamination between facilities.

In addition, the VEE should ensure for staff and students the possibility to carry out a complete change of clothes and shower if necessary. This is especially recommended for all necropsy rooms, which should provide for decontamination and containment in case of detected infectious diseases.

#### **4.3.4. Decision**

The VEE is partially compliant with Substandard 4.3 because of suboptimal application of biosecurity measures in some facilities, e.g. inappropriate system for cleaning the boots in necropsy rooms and in farms.

**4.4 Core clinical teaching facilities must be provided in a veterinary teaching hospital (VTH) with 24/7 emergency services at least for companion animals and equines. Within the VTH, the VEE must unequivocally demonstrate that standard of education and clinical research are compliant with all ESEVT Standards, e.g. research-based and evidence-based clinical training supervised by academic staff trained to teach and to assess, availability for staff and students of facilities and patients for performing clinical research and relevant QA procedures.**

**For ruminants, on-call service must be available if emergency services do not exist for those species in a VTH.**

**The VEE must ensure state-of-the-art standards of teaching clinics which remain comparable with or exceeding the best available in the private sector.**

**The VTH and any hospitals, practices and facilities (including EPT) which are involved with the curriculum must meet the relevant national Practice Standards.**

#### **4.4.1. Findings**

The Veterinary Teaching Hospital is divided into clinics. A 24/7 emergency service is provided for companion animals, equine and ruminants (on-call service). Also, 24/7 emergency service for Large Animals (including Equine) is provided in the Clinic in Žalec (SVP).

#### **4.4.2. Comments**

Although in the SER it is stated that equine facilities are only available on-call at the Ljubljana campus, the VEE offers a 24-hour emergency service for horses in both Ljubljana and Žalec. On the other hand, the emergency service is offered 24/7 for ruminants exclusively in Žalec and on-call in Ljubljana.

The design of the hospital facilities does not allow for a completely cat-friendly practice. The VEE is aware of not providing a complete cat-friendly practice and it is planned that the new building will include separate entrances, waiting rooms and clinical facilities for both species.

The facilities allow the teaching/learning activities based on scientific evidence. Students/academic staff ratio is adequate and highly appropriate to ensure the efficient teaching/learning process. This is especially noteworthy for the clinical activity.

However, the lack of a computer system for the electronic recording of clinical case reports could be a limitation in the student learning process. For example, the students do not have easy access to the clinical cases for study before the patients' appointment. Also, the current paper records, do not facilitate the collection of clinical cases by students or teachers for retrospective studies.

#### **4.4.3. Suggestions for improvement**

Since the completion of the new facilities may take several years, an adaptation of the current facilities is recommended to ensure separate entrance, waiting room and consultation room for feline and canine patients. This will ensure a low level of stress for these species.

An electronic patient record system, covering all patients, would allow a more appropriate use of the information collected in such a large and noteworthy caseload as this VTH has.

#### **4.4.4. Decision**

The VEE is compliant with Substandard 4.4.

### **4.5 The VEE must ensure that students have access to a broad range of diagnostic and therapeutic facilities, including but not limited to: diagnostic imaging, anaesthesia, clinical pathology, intensive/critical care, surgeries and treatment facilities, ambulatory services, pharmacy and necropsy facilities.**

#### **4.5.1. Findings**

The laboratories for clinical pathology of large and small animals are divided into two labs. In these facilities the clinical laboratory work is provided by the equipment normally used for clinical diagnostic purposes. Almost 60,000 analyses have been completed in 2020 in both labs and students were involved performing the analyses in blood, milk and other samples.

The diagnostic imaging service is provided with X-ray machines, ultrasound and one CT scanner. They attend 1,700 patients for ultrasound, 1,600 for X-rays and 250 for CT studies and they are used for clinical and teaching purposes.

The Department of Anaesthesia is provided with the clinicians and the equipment needed. The VTH is provided with the anaesthetic machines and monitoring devices proper for any modern teaching veterinary hospital.

#### **4.5.2. Comments**

Laboratory work activity is commended because of the huge number of analyses completed in the different labs and the participation of the student in these activities.

Several clinical services (cardiology, surgery, etc.) provide patient care focused on the different species according to the higher standard of veterinary medicine.

#### **4.5.3. Suggestions for improvement**

An MRI equipment is required in order to complete the scope of diagnostic imaging equipment needed for the state-of-the-art veterinary care.

#### **4.5.4. Decision**

The VEE is compliant with Substandard 4.5.

### **4.6 Appropriate isolation facilities must be provided to meet the need for the isolation and**

**containment of animals with communicable diseases. Such isolation facilities must be properly constructed, ventilated, maintained and operated to provide for animal care and for prevention of spread of infectious agents. They must be adapted to all animal species commonly handled in the VTH.**

**4.6.1. Findings**

In 2020, a new isolation facility for small, large and wild animals was built. The isolation facility is provided in the VEE with an appropriate design. Also, other spaces for isolation are located at the SVP (in Žalec).

**4.6.2. Comments**

The isolation facility was not in use at the time of the Visitation. The large animal facilities was ready to receive animals but the small animal facility required the placement of the cages for immediate use. However, one week after the Visitation, the visiting Team received pictures demonstrating that the isolation facilities are in use in both large and small animals.

**4.6.3. Suggestions for improvement**

None.

**4.6.4. Decision**

The VEE is compliant with Substandard 4.6.

**4.7 The VEE must have an ambulatory clinic for production animals or equivalent facilities so that students can practise field veterinary medicine and Herd Health Management under academic supervision.**

**4.7.1. Findings**

The VEE has an ambulatory clinic for horses located in Cesta v Mestni in relation with the Large Animals Clinic.

Students have the opportunity to treat food-producing animals in the field under academic supervision at the Centre for Sustainable Cultivation in Vremščica and in three external/private farms.

**4.7.2. Comments**

The Team was impressed by the quality of the teaching farm used for practical teaching of the students. The quality of the teaching provided was found to be noteworthy.

**4.7.3. Suggestions for improvement**

None.

**4.7.4. Decision**

The VEE is compliant with Substandard 4.7.

**4.8 The transport of students, live animals, cadavers, materials from animal origin and other**

**teaching materials must be done in agreement with national and EU standards, to ensure the safety of students and staff and to prevent the spread of infectious agents.**

#### **4.8.1. Findings**

Two vans and six cars are available for student transportation. Also, bus rental is used if needed. A vehicle for live animal transportation is provided.

A waste management system is running with an external authorised company for the management of the biological wastes and wastewaters.

#### **4.8.2. Comments**

Within the autopsy room there is a morgue for the storage of carcasses after necropsies. This storage room is refrigerated, but the remains are not placed in bags. This waste is removed weekly by an authorised company.

#### **4.8.3. Suggestions for improvement**

None.

#### **4.8.4. Decision**

The VEE is compliant with Substandard 4.8.

**4.9 Operational policies and procedures (including e.g. biosecurity, good laboratory practice and good clinical practice) must be taught and posted for students, staff and visitors and a Biosafety manual must be available. The VEE must demonstrate a clear commitment for the delivery of biosafety and biosecurity, e.g. by a specific committee structure. The VEE must have a system of QA to monitor and assure clinical, laboratory and farm services, including a regular monitoring of the feedback from students, staff and clients.**

#### **4.9.1. Findings**

The Biosecurity Commission is responsible for the biosecurity and biosafety of the VEE. A biosecurity plan is in place and running which includes security and safety instruction for workers and students.

A quality assurance system is available and certified by an external agency according to ISO/EN 17025.

At the VTH, there is a system for client complaints.

#### **4.9.2. Comments**

Biosecurity signage includes a lot of text in Slovenian language and is not very user-friendly.

#### **4.9.3. Suggestions for improvement**

The signage system to inform about biosecurity rules could be improved. It should include texts in English for exchange students and more infographics.

#### **4.9.4. Decision**

The VEE is compliant with Substandard 4.9.

### **Standard 5. Animal resources and teaching material of animal origin**

**5.1 The number and variety of healthy and diseased animals, cadavers, and material of animal origin must be adequate for providing the practical and safe hands-on training (in the areas of Basic Sciences, Clinical Sciences, Pathology, Animal Production, Food Safety and Quality) and adapted to the number of students enrolled.**

**Evidence must be provided that these data are regularly recorded and that procedures are in place for correcting any deficiencies.**

#### **5.1.1. Findings**

The Appendix 7 gives details on the number of animals, cadavers and material of animal origin regarding ESEVT indicators. The numbers are all above the requirements.

Among the different Indicators, the number of necropsies are the lowest (but still above minimal values). For instance, for anatomical training, the number of cattle is null while the number of exotics animals (rabbit or rats) is high (38,00). Anatomical particularities of organic systems in equine, pig and sheep are demonstrated on fresh (obtained from slaughterhouse) or formalin-fixed (that are periodically renewed in 2 to 3 years), plastinated or corrosion cast specimens. Logistic reasons are the rationale behind these figures according to the academic staff.

The VEE has in addition a teaching farm and also access to an external unit in a rural area allowing to recruit high numbers of cases (both first line and referred cases): 34 and 18 cases/student/year respectively for ruminants and equine.

During their small animal clinical rotations, the students are divided among specialties whereas in other species it is more general (equine and ruminants).

The number of healthy animals used for preclinical training ranges from 2 to 10. The low number of students per class allows (between 2 to 8 according to different rotations) each student to practise on these limited numbers of animals. Nevertheless, the use of living animals has to be submitted and authorized by the relevant authority.

In 2019 for both production animals and small animals the number of patients seen intra-murally declined (from 910 to 703 for cattle and from 11,800 to 9,609 for small animals).

The majority (70 to 90% depending on species) of cases are first opinion cases. The number of referred cases per discipline is not detailed.

There is no Clinical Skills Laboratory in place, although several tools are available in different places of the VEE.

#### **5.1.2. Comments**

The limited size of students per group (2 to 8) allows every student to practise.

Close proximity and friendly atmosphere between faculty members and students in clinical settings is worthy of praise.

The farm and extramural activities provide a high number (and probably variety) of cases.

### **5.1.3. Suggestions for improvement**

It is suggested to use parts of large animal (equine, ruminants) cadavers for anatomy practicals and to develop the clinical skills lab available for students any time. It is also suggested that formalin-fixed pieces used in anatomy are replaced by alternatives as soon as possible.

### **5.1.4. Decision**

The VEE is partially compliant with Substandard 5.1 because of suboptimal number of production animal anatomical parts for practicals.

## **5.2 In addition to the training provided in the VEE, experience can include practical training at external sites, provided this training is organised under direct academic supervision and following the same standards as those applied in the VEE.**

### **5.2.1. Findings**

Equine and production animal clinics offer field services, which mostly focus on first opinion cases. Production animal clinical services are used to teach population medicine. These field services are supervised by academic staff.

EPT is possible for the students only after entering in the 6<sup>th</sup> year. Extramural clinical training is mostly provided by veterinary practices in Slovenia. Between 10% and 20% of students go abroad for extramural clinical training. Most cases seen during extramural clinical training are first opinion cases.

Students must spend a minimum of 12 contact days on an extramural clinical training programme in a production animal setting, which includes a minimum of four emergency duties. The remaining requirements (38 contact days) of extramural clinical training are done on animal species of the students' individual preference.

The nature of the supervision by the practitioner or the relationship between the academic staff and practitioners is not detailed. However, extramural facilities have specific instructions on how students should participate in their processes, and how these processes are documented.

### **5.2.2. Comments**

There are strong links with practitioners around, which makes it easy for students to find places for EPT.

The extramural teaching farm and the other locations complementary to the VTH allow a high caseload available for students.

### **5.2.3. Suggestions for improvement**

None.

#### **5.2.4. Decision**

The VEE is compliant with Substandard 5.2.

**5.3 The VTH must provide nursing care skills and instruction in nursing procedures. Under all situations students must be active participants in the clinical workup of patients, including problem-oriented diagnostic approach together with diagnostic decision-making.**

#### **5.3.1. Findings**

Students receive their nursing skills when they start their basic clinical course in the third year of the curriculum. Further, special nursing skills are developed while students are taking specific species health management core courses in years four to six of the veterinary curriculum.

By the time students reach clinical rotations in the sixth year they can independently participate in the clinical and non-clinical management of different animal species. Though the nature of the participation of the students within the clinics is not explained in the SER, the discussion with students confirm their active participation in VTH and in farm activities.

Clinical cases are discussed with mentors, and clinical procedures (intramural training) or case management (extramural training) are logged in students' clinical training documents. These documents are evaluated, discussed and signed off by students' clinical mentors.

#### **5.3.2. Comments**

Students are closely involved in all processes of the clinical services.

#### **5.3.3. Suggestions for improvement**

None.

#### **5.3.4. Decision**

The VEE is compliant with Substandard 5.3.

**5.4 Medical records must be comprehensive and maintained in an effective retrieval system (preferably an electronic patient record system) to efficiently support the teaching, research, and service programmes of the VEE.**

#### **5.4.1. Findings**

The VEE's patient recording system is not integrated nor centralised making it difficult to optimize their use for teaching and research. The Clinic for ruminants and pigs, and the exotic animal clinic keep medical records in the form of logbooks, which are filled by hand.

At the Small animal clinic, Farm animal clinic (external unit), Clinic for reproduction and Clinic for breeding and health care of horses, patient records are kept as a hard copy and electronically for each case. All clinical aspects of the case history are recorded, as well as client communications if necessary.

Reproduction clinic protocols are kept in a file for artificial insemination of mares and surgical procedures that are performed by students (hands-on).

For laboratory statements, the centralised computer systems LIMS and EPI are used. Especially, there is no follow-up in place of the variety of cases with which students are faced.

#### **5.4.2. Comments**

A patient recording system is in place but does not allow for students and researchers to easily search for a cohort of specific clinical cases.

#### **5.4.3. Suggestions for improvement**

It is suggested to modernise the current patient recording system.

#### **5.4.4. Decision**

The VEE is partially compliant with Substandard 5.4 because of suboptimal patient recording system.

### **Standard 6. Learning resources**

**6.1 State-of-the-art learning resources must be adequate and available to support veterinary education, research, services and continuing education. When the study programme is provided in several tracks/languages, the learning resources must be available in all used languages. Timely access to learning resources, whether through print, electronic media or other means, must be available to students and staff and, when appropriate, to stakeholders. State-of-the-art procedures for bibliographical search and for access to databases and learning resources must be taught to undergraduate students.**

#### **6.1.1. Findings**

The VEE Library (the only library for veterinary medicine in Slovenia) provides users with borrowing, information on materials, training in use of the library, reviews student research papers and doctoral theses, interlibrary loans and access to electronic information resources. The library has been building a specialised database for almost 15 years of full texts in electronic format. First year students are trained in use of library resources, searches of catalogues, bibliographic databases, citation indexes, portals of publishers and providers of full text e-journal packages. Study materials are acquired on the recommendations of lecturers, students and the librarian's discretion. All material is recorded in the library catalogue and in the public OPAC/COBISS. The library is well organised, offers enough access to the necessary study materials and through distant access also allows them to use these resources from home.

#### **6.1.2. Comments**

Access to a multitude of learning resources is provided to students, which is to be commended. Moreover, students are given the tools to use these resources through training on use of the library.

#### **6.1.3. Suggestions for improvement**

None.

#### **6.1.4. Decision**

The VEE is compliant with Substandard 6.1.

**6.2 Staff and students must have full access on site to an academic library administered by a qualified librarian, an Information Technology (IT) unit managed by an IT expert, an e-learning platform, and all the relevant human and physical resources necessary for the development of instructional materials by the staff and their use by the students.**

**The relevant electronic information, database and other intranet resources must be easily available for students and staff both in the VEE's core facilities via wireless connection (Wi-Fi) and from outside the VEE through a hosted secured connection, e.g. Virtual Private Network (VPN).**

#### **6.2.1. Findings**

The library (300 m<sup>2</sup>) employs three full-time qualified staff and is open 49 hours a week during term and the annual budget for 2019 was 176,000 Euro. 30 computers are available in the library for student use, across two different sites. The University of Ljubljana Digital Library portal facilitates the searching of the Global Index of the EBSCO Discovery Service information tool (UL library catalogues, UL repository, higher education collections, etc.). The Global Index covers scientific and professional outputs from all scientific fields, library catalogues, publishers and data base providers, magazines, books, proceedings, e-books and e-magazines and free open-source resources online. Subsidiary libraries exist in all departments, institutes or clinics and hold journals and books in their area of expertise, obtained from the VEE library.

E-learning is organised on the Moodle platform where information on each subject, content, timetables, study materials and results are available. Support for the teaching staff is available at the 'Computer Centre VFLJ' concerning IT and since 2020 also at the newly formed UL Centre for the use of ICT in the pedagogical process.

All rooms in the library have Internet access and access to licenced databases, e-journal packages or e-books is available on UL computers. Remote access passwords allow outside accessibility. Software with 9 interactive models is installed in the Computer Room to explore animal anatomy through virtual dissections of the pig, cattle, horse, dog, cat, bird, fish and frog.

#### **6.2.2. Comments**

The library budget is significant. It is commendable that all online resources are made available to students both on campus and at home.

#### **6.2.3. Suggestions for improvement**

Technical information regarding the distant access of library resources should be provided right at the time of admission to students.

#### **6.2.4. Decision**

The VEE is compliant with Substandard 6.2.

**6.3 The VEE must provide students with unimpeded access to learning resources, internet and internal study resources, and equipment for the development of procedural skills (e.g. models). The use of these resources must be aligned with the pedagogical environment and learning outcomes within the programme and have mechanisms in place to evaluate the teaching value of changes in learning resources.**

### **6.3.1. Findings**

Students have access to library materials from any higher education library within the UL network. The COBISS/OPAC catalogue contains records of all 915 participating Slovenian libraries that contribute records for 2,768,506 books, 1,943,510 articles, 146,388 magazines and 38,970 CDs/DVDs. Students also have access to databases such as CAB Abstracts, FSTA, Web of Science, PubMed, SpringerLink and SciDirect.

Students can use the Small Practice Room at Gerbiceva 60 for viewing histological preparations and the Anatomical Practice Room for anatomical preparations. Pathohistological preparations can be studied on microscopes in the practice room, or can be borrowed for a week.

Provisions have been made for students during the COVID-19 pandemic through uploading of various digital resources onto the Moodle platform so that they may have access when unable to physically visit the campus. This included access to scans of histological and pathohistological preparations, as well as footage of filmed laboratory and clinical practices.

### **6.3.2. Comments**

The VEE acknowledges that the uptake of available e-learning resources by students and teachers could be improved by better awareness of the services. Some activities with the use of mannequin or plastic models are available for students to work on but are not grouped in one place where they could visit at times of their own choosing and repeat the exercises.

### **6.3.3. Suggestions for improvement**

It is suggested to develop a structured skills lab, which should be easily and permanently available for students.

### **6.3.4. Decision**

The VEE is partially compliant with Substandard 6.3 because of a suboptimal skills lab.

## **Standard 7. Student admission, progression and welfare**

**7.1 The VEE must consistently apply pre-defined and published regulations covering all phases of the student “life cycle”, e.g. student admission, progression and certification.**

**In relation to enrolment, the VEE must provide accurate and complete information regarding all aspects of the educational programme in all advertisings for prospective national and international students.**

**Formal cooperations with other VEEs must also be clearly advertised.**

### **7.1.1. Findings**

Detailed information about the study programme (incl. admission procedures and requirements, progression and certification) is available at the website <https://www.vf.uni-lj.si/en/izobrazevanje/dodiplomski-studij>. There is also a site in English, for foreign students: [International Activity - Foreign Students \(uni-lj.si\)](#). Furthermore, Information Days, high school presentations and fairs are used to inform prospective students about the programme. All aspects of the student “life cycle” are clearly regulated.

There is also detailed information regarding cooperation with other VEEs for ERASMUS.

Students report to be well informed about the programme.

**7.1.2. Comments**

The information on the website is quite extensive and easily accessible in English and in Slovenian language even more so.

**7.1.3. Suggestions for improvement**

None.

**7.1.4. Decision**

The VEE is compliant with Substandard 7.1.

**7.2 The number of students admitted must be consistent with the resources available at the VEE for staff, buildings, equipment, healthy and diseased animals, and materials of animal origin.**

**7.2.1. Findings**

About 60 undergraduate places are available every year and approximately 400 students are registered at the VEE. The number of students is limited to 60 applicants; they are ranked and assessed according to grades and examination results. The number of places was set out several years ago based on the projected retirement of veterinarians and in coordination with the Veterinary Chamber of Slovenia.

The staff, buildings, equipment, number of healthy and diseased animals, and materials of animal origin are reported to be adequate for the number of students enrolled to meet the standards for veterinary education. Most of the facilities are old and small, but with continuous investment and improvement, the VEE finds it can follow the development in all areas.

The VEE has ongoing dialogue with external stakeholders on the appropriate number of admissions.

**7.2.2. Comments**

There is a broad agreement among VEE management and external stakeholders that the current number of students is appropriate to meet the needs of the labour market.

**7.2.3. Suggestions for improvement**

None.

**7.2.4. Decision**

The VEE is compliant with Substandard 7.2.

**7.3 The selection and progression criteria must be clearly defined, consistent, and defensible,**

**be free of discrimination or bias, and take into account the fact that students are admitted with a view to their entry to the veterinary profession in due course.**

**The VEE must regularly review and reflect on the selection processes to ensure they are appropriate for students to complete the programme successfully. If the selection processes are decided by another authority, the latter must regularly receive feedback from the VEE. Adequate training (including periodic refresher training) must be provided for those involved in the selection process to ensure applicants are evaluated fairly and consistently.**

### **7.3.1. Findings**

The selection of candidates is made by the University Centre for Applications and Informatics of the UL, which also takes care of the required differential examinations and examinations in chemistry, physics, and biology.

No interviews with applicants are conducted.

Approximately 3–5 international students are enrolled yearly. The language of instruction at the UL is Slovenian. UL has a special programme »Year plus«: learning Slovene for free to help international students to adapt to the Slovenian system and culture.

### **7.3.2. Comments**

The VEE is not involved in the application process, however, it can give feedback to the UL. Foreign students receive individual tutoring in English at the VEE.

### **7.3.3. Suggestions for improvement**

None.

### **7.3.4. Decision**

The VEE is compliant with Substandard 7.3.

**7.4 There must be clear policies and procedures on how applicants with disabilities or illnesses are considered and, if appropriate, accommodated in the programme, taking into account the requirement that all students must be capable of meeting the ESEVT Day One Competences by the time they graduate.**

### **7.4.1. Findings**

Students with disabilities can enrol so long as they achieve at least 90% of the minimum points required in order to qualify. There is a medical check only after the entrance examination. They may apply for 'special status' from the UL or another relevant higher education institution. When granted a status of "student with special needs" (SSS) they have more flexibility, e.g. longer periods of borrowing books at library, more time for exams, etc. This status is communicated by the students themselves to the professors discreetly.

A working group has been set up to deal with students' applications for special status and the possibility of adapting the course once special status (SS) has been obtained. The Working Group proposes adjustments for students to the CSA. Students with SS are accompanied by the

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Responsible Person for students with Special Status, who is also the head of the Working group, and provides support and advice in case of problems for this group.

At the VEE, 7 students (11 %) with disabilities enrolled in the programme last year. In recent years, teachers have been educated on how to handle such students. If a student fails to complete the prescribed obligations, he or she cannot finish the study programme.

Alternative exam formats are provided for students with disabilities or chronic illness. There are no differences in the graduation pattern between SSS and other students. This has been monitored by the Responsible Person for Students with Special Status from 2020.

People with disabilities can move around at campus, albeit in some places physical access may be restricted; measures are taken to deal with this e.g. by installing ramps, providing a stair climber.

### **7.4.2. Comments**

The VEE has established clear policies and procedures on students with special needs.

### **7.4.3. Suggestions for improvement**

None.

### **7.4.4. Decision**

The VEE is compliant with Substandard 7.4.

**7.5 The basis for decisions on progression (including academic progression and professional fitness to practise) must be explicit and readily available to the students. The VEE must provide evidence that it has mechanisms in place to identify and provide remediation and appropriate support (including termination) for students who are not performing adequately.**

**The VEE must have mechanisms in place to monitor attrition and progression and be able to respond and amend admission selection criteria (if permitted by national or university law) and student support if required.**

#### **7.5.1. Findings**

The criteria for progression are clearly defined in the study regulations. There is an effective tutorial system (with both student and teacher tutors) for students who have difficulties with their studies.

Students have one opportunity (by law) to change study programme or to retake a year; most students take advantage of enrolment for an additional year. Studies may be postponed due to extenuating circumstances such as maternity, prolonged illness, family circumstances, participation in professional sporting events, etc.

In order to progress to the next year following postponement of studies, students must fulfil the conditions for admission to all exams in the current year and fulfil the obligations from the current year regarding ECTS.

About 10% of the students who started their studies at the VEE leave before their final exams –

which is below the average at UL. In most cases, they change university or their study programme in the first 2 years. No specific surveys are conducted to investigate the causes of dropouts.

Student and teacher contact at the VEE is universally reported as very close, and students address problems in their progression directly with their teachers and/or tutor.

#### **7.5.2. Comments**

For students who make regular progress, the state funds an additional year, which most students take advantage of, and which extends the graduation period. They often use this year for studying/working abroad.

#### **7.5.3. Suggestions for improvement**

None.

#### **7.5.4. Decision**

The VEE is compliant with Substandard 7.5.

**7.6 Mechanisms for the exclusion of students from the programme for any reason must be explicit. The VEE's policies for managing appeals against decisions, including admissions, academic and progression decisions and exclusion, must be transparent and publicly available.**

#### **7.6.1. Findings**

Policies for managing appeals are transparent and publicly available in the "University Discipline Rules", the study regulations and the Guidelines for Handling Complaints and Monitoring Other Customer Feedback. If a student fails for the fifth time in an exam or colloquium, he/she will be excluded from the programme. Other relevant causes for exclusion from the programme are defined in the "University Discipline Rules".

In resolving student complaints, the recipient of the complaint completes the prescribed form (Corrective Action - Preventive Action) indicating root cause analysis, proposed action, and monitoring of implementation of the action. The documentation is filed, the person responsible for the quality of studies is familiar with the documents, and informs the Vice Dean.

The appeal process regarding the study process (usually dissatisfaction regarding assessment) is described in the Study rules. General complaints are addressed to the Vice Dean for Education, who is responsible for the study process. Mediations and other meetings are organised with the aim of solving any problems.

There is a Student Complaints Commission should students wish to appeal directly at UL level.

#### **7.6.2. Comments**

There are clear regulations for exclusion and the handling of appeals.

**7.6.3. Suggestions for improvement**

None.

**7.6.4. Decision**

The VEE is compliant with Substandard 7.6.

**7.7 Provisions must be made by the VEE to support the physical, emotional and welfare needs of students. This includes, but is not limited to, learning support and counselling services, career advice, and fair and transparent mechanisms for dealing with student illness, impairment and disability during the programme. This shall include provision of reasonable adjustments for disabled students, consistent with all relevant equality and/or human rights legislation.**

**There must be effective mechanisms for resolution of student grievances (e.g. interpersonal conflict or harassment).**

**7.7.1. Findings**

There are different offices, tutors and student organisations available. Information on this is provided online.

The VEE has three student organisations: Student Council, International Veterinary Students' Association (IVSA) and Student Organisation of Veterinary Faculty (SOVF). The Student Council provides information and answers questions about the course of study, faculty organisation, and provides any other information that concerns students. Student representatives, who are members of the Student Council, correspond with professors about various dilemmas students may have. IVSA and SOVF provide students with a variety of social events.

The VEE has a tutoring system where tutors help students with all things study-related: additional explanations of study material, preparations for exams that students may have trouble with, and sharing study material to lower class students. There are professor tutors and student tutors. Positions are voluntary. Tutoring is organized at the level of the teacher, the student (tutors for foreign students and tutor for regular students), and the subject. All activities of the tutors are monitored and coordinated by the tutor coordinator. Tutors are available to students and teachers throughout the year.

Besides the tutoring system, the UL also provides a counselling system in the form of mental health experts that work for the faculties. Students can send these experts an email, get a consultation, and receive further support/advice (for free).

The welfare needs of students (such as accommodations, sport facilities, psychological mentoring, etc.) are mostly provided by the UL.

### **7.7.2. Comments**

Students express that support measures are available and accessible. The small size of the VEE and the proximity to co-students and staff facilitates that students feel they can often handle welfare and related issues. The well-established tutor system, which is commended by the students, contributes to this. In most cases the students feel they are taken seriously and that most professors listen to them and do their best to accommodate their needs.

The VEE has not reported any cases where students have appealed to the Student Council or to the faculty on interpersonal conflict or harassment. The VEE has received grievances regarding the conflict between a student and a professor, and students reported of a case where they have tried for many years to change the exam form for a specific course, but had not made any progress in this, in spite of the issues being raised in surveys and in the relevant commission.

The strong support to physical and welfare needs of students and the efficient tutor system is commended.

The PCDA cycle is well enacted in the VEE; for some specific cases related to student grievances, however, it could not be closed with the prescribed procedures.

### **7.7.3. Suggestions for improvement**

None.

### **7.7.4. Decision**

The VEE is compliant with Substandard 7.7.

**7.8 Mechanisms must be in place by which students can convey their needs and wants to the VEE. The VEE must provide students with a mechanism, anonymously if they wish, to offer suggestions, comments and complaints regarding compliance of the VEE with national and international legislation and the ESEVT standards.**

### **7.8.1. Findings**

Students can express their opinions through different organisations: the Student Council, which includes representatives from each study year, and the different commissions where students are members. Student Council members are elected by all students who are at the faculty. Students vote for all candidates, not just those from their year. A maximum of two council members with the most votes are elected from each class. Their mandate lasts for one year.

Students express their opinions via surveys, which are discussed at different levels and are taken into account in the SER of the VEE.

Students also complete a general satisfaction survey at the VEE. The sample of students is chosen so that approximately as many students are included in the survey each year as are enrolled in a

generation or year. Each student completes such a survey only once during his or her undergraduate career.

During the lockdown of COVID-19 a special survey was conducted to get feedback from students (and teachers) about the study process and problems during the epidemic.

A survey to ask teachers and students about cognitive and practical skills was conducted in 2018 and is planned for the next generation.

Students most often express their opinions through the student representatives. Each class also has a common email, e.g. Vets 2019 @ gmail.com, which they can also use if they want to make suggestions/complaints anonymously.

#### **7.8.2. Comments**

All the relevant mechanisms are in place.

#### **7.8.3. Suggestions for improvement**

None.

#### **7.8.4. Decision**

The VEE is compliant with Substandard 7.8.

### **Standard 8. Student assessment**

**8.1 The VEE must ensure that there is a clearly identified structure within the VEE showing lines of responsibility for the assessment strategy to ensure coherence of the overall assessment regime and to allow the demonstration of progressive development across the programme towards entry-level competence.**

#### **8.1.1. Findings**

The VEE follows clear guidelines, established both by UL and the VEE, that regulate assessment procedures. The VEE recently developed a so-called “catalogue of knowledge”, that identifies teaching outcomes and links these to D1Cs.

There are three periods of assessment (winter, summer, fall), when lectures are suspended. Exams can be oral, written, practical or a combination of these. Performance during clinical practical training in small groups is also part of the assessment process.

#### **8.1.2. Comments**

A variety of testing methods are used in assessing theoretical knowledge. This promotes a thorough understanding of the taught material.

#### **8.1.3. Suggestions for improvement**

None.

#### **8.1.4. Decision**

The VEE is compliant with Substandard 8.1.

**8.2 The assessment tasks and grading criteria for each unit of study in the programme must be published, applied consistently, clearly identified and available to students in a timely manner well in advance of the assessment. Requirements to pass must be explicit.**

**The VEE must properly document the results of assessment and provide the students with timely feedback on their assessments.**

**Mechanisms for students to appeal against assessment outcomes must be explicit.**

#### **8.2.1. Findings**

Teachers are responsible for informing the students about assessment methods, criteria, and conditions for admission to assessment, at the beginning of each academic year. The same information is also available online throughout the teaching period.

Assessment is conducted according to the UL Statute, with marks ranging from 5–10. These are converted to percentages by the VEE (see Table 8.2). Assessment performance goes from excellent knowledge to insufficient.

Following the initial grading, students are allowed to review their exam and grading(s) of their answers/performance. VEE considers this transparency to be the integral part of the assessment strategy and requests for feedback from teachers following assessment are well-received by the teachers. In one case, assessment strategy of a teacher was modified following feedback from students.

Students appeal through the Dean and the VEE establishes an *ad hoc* committee to examine the appeal. The process is clearly explained and available online.

#### **8.2.2. Comments**

The VEE provides all necessary information for students regarding assessment and appeals. Exam feedback relies heavily on the student–teacher relationship which is positive as it suggests that these relationships are good.

#### **8.2.3. Suggestions for improvement**

None.

#### **8.2.4. Decision**

The VEE is compliant with Substandard 8.2.

**8.3 The VEE must have a process in place to review assessment outcomes, to change assessment strategies and to ensure the accuracy of the procedures when required. Programme learning outcomes covering the full range of professional knowledge, skills, competences and attributes must form the basis for assessment design and underpin decisions on progression.**

### **8.3.1. Findings**

The SER refers to Substandard 3.4 (Curriculum), stating that the above strategy for assessment is the same as for curriculum.

Meetings are held between the Vice Dean, teachers and assistants, to discuss feedback from the student survey as well as pedagogical reports written by teachers. Changes are proposed to the Dean, staff, students and stakeholders before they are implemented. This occurs on an annual basis.

The newly-developed “catalogue of knowledge” links learning outcomes to D1Cs and teachers develop assessment goals accordingly.

### **8.3.2. Comments**

The VEE is continuously improving its assessment strategies and is dedicated to assuring transparency and fairness in all assessment procedures.

The process described in 3.4 for curriculum evaluation is linked to assessment evaluation and the VEE is developing a more coordinated process for ensuring acquisition, and evaluation, of learning outcomes.

### **8.3.3. Suggestions for improvement**

None.

### **8.3.4. Decision**

The VEE is compliant with Substandard 8.3.

## **8.4 Assessment strategies must allow the VEE to certify student achievement of learning objectives at the level of the programme and individual units of study.**

**The VEE must ensure that the programmes are delivered in a way that encourages students to take an active role in creating the learning process, and that the assessment of students reflects this approach.**

### **8.4.1. Findings**

The SER refers to point 8.1 to describe its strategies for certifying the achievement of learning outcomes for individual courses. Students can express their opinions on eventual “shortcomings” through representation in different committees and with the pre- and post-assessment surveys.

### **8.4.2. Comments**

The VEE is commended for allowing students to express their opinions and this has likely contributed to the development of the “catalogue of knowledge”, that will become an important instrument for verifying learning outcomes and assessment strategies.

### **8.4.3. Suggestions for improvement**

None.

### **8.4.4. Decision**

The VEE is compliant with Substandard 8.4.

**8.5 Methods of formative and summative assessment must be valid and reliable and comprise a variety of approaches. Direct assessment of clinical skills and Day One Competences (some of which may be on simulated patients), must form a significant component of the overall process of assessment. It must also include the quality control of the student logbooks in order to ensure that all clinical procedures, practical and hands-on training planned in the study programme have been fully completed by each individual student.**

#### **8.5.1. Findings**

Focus is on the teachers' responsibility to establish learning goals according to Day One Competences. There is no description of direct evaluation of clinical skills or logbook verification (however, Substandard 3.1.5. reports that logbooks are mandatory, and that verification of skills' acquisition is carried out by "passing the exam").

#### **8.5.2. Comments**

Assessment strategies for clinical skills and the relative Day One Competences are not clearly illustrated. There is no logbook as such, only single forms to be filled out with each clinical procedure performed by students during their clinical rotations. These are signed by the responsible teacher. This system makes it difficult for students to "check" that they have completed all the required activities.

#### **8.5.3. Suggestions for improvement**

It is suggested that the VEE enhances the current logbook system to ensure that every student carries out the necessary clinical training that is required for the acquisition of D1Cs.

#### **8.5.4. Decision**

The VEE is compliant with Substandard 8.5.

### **Standard 9. Academic and support staff**

**9.1 The VEE must ensure that all staff are appropriately qualified and prepared for their roles, in agreement with national and EU regulations and must apply fair and transparent processes for the recruitment and development of staff.**

**A formal training (including good teaching and evaluation practices, learning and e-learning resources, biosecurity and QA procedures) must be in place for all staff involved with teaching.**

**Most academic staff (calculated as FTE) involved in veterinary training must be veterinarians. It is expected that more than 2/3 of the instruction that the students receive, as determined by student teaching hours, is delivered by qualified veterinarians.**

#### **9.1.1. Findings**

The appointment of the faculty's personnel is regulated by Slovenian legislation. For each recruitment a job description is prepared.

In the next 3 years an increase of the academic staff is expected (at least 3 positions). At this stage

the gap analysis has not been conducted to identify the disciplines in which these new recruitments shall happen.

After the first appointment for a higher education teacher or assistant, training within the framework of the study program for training “Fundamentals of university didactics” in the extent of 10 ECTS is mandatory. In addition, each year the action plan provides a guideline for the training of teachers at the VEE, each of whom must attend at least one training course per year.

94% to 96% of the academic staff are veterinarians depending on the year. Most academic staff involved in the veterinary training are veterinarians and more than 2/3 of the curriculum hours are delivered by qualified veterinarians.

### **9.1.2. Comments**

The mandatory course on Fundamentals of university didactics for recently recruited academic staff is an early opportunity to improve didactic skills.

### **9.1.3. Suggestions for improvement**

None.

### **9.1.4. Decision**

The VEE is compliant with Substandard 9.1.

**9.2 The total number, qualifications and skills of all staff involved with the programme, including teaching staff, ‘adjunct’ staff, technical, administrative and support staff, must be sufficient and appropriate to deliver the educational programme and fulfil the VEE’s mission.**

**A procedure must be in place to assess if the staff involved with teaching display competence and effective teaching skills in all relevant aspects of the curriculum that they teach, regardless of whether they are full or part time, residents, interns or other postgraduate students, adjuncts or off-campus contracted teachers.**

### **9.2.1. Findings**

Appendix 7 indicates numbers in accordance with ESVT Indicators.

The academic staff has to produce a plan every year and they have to make reports on their teaching activity, priorities and demonstrate how they take into account student’s assessment.

There is a limitation in the number of PhD students (less than 3 according to Table 9.2.1) (see Chapter 10).

Among the 119 veterinarians involved in the curriculum and students’ supervision, 24 have a national specialist title and 8 of them have also a European or American diploma of specialist (no specialist in surgery, pathology, parasitology, internal medicine or diagnostic imaging for instance).

According to Table 9.2.1, there are no residents or interns, however during 2020 a formal internship programme was provided by the Equine clinic and by the Small Animal Clinic.

The VTH does not have clinical specialists in all specialties.

#### **9.2.2. Comments**

The absence of clinical specialists in some specialties could lead to an insufficiency in the learning of some competences of the students. It has been detected that CT results are sent to external experts for reports due to the absence of a specialist in diagnostic imaging. In addition, equine clinicians demand to have a surgeon with expertise in these tasks, as they can only perform day-to-day surgical activities in this species.

It is relevant that the process in place with annual reports from academic staff explaining goals and modification of teaching takes into account students' assessment.

Both the Indicators and the onsite visits confirm the close proximity and friendly atmosphere between academic staff and students

#### **9.2.3. Suggestions for improvement**

The VEE is encouraged to progress in the establishing the unified internship programme under the umbrella of the VTH on all animal species.

The rare situations for which the feedback of the students is not taken into account should be addressed.

An effort could be made to improve specialisation at the VEE level especially in the VTH e.g. diagnostic imaging and equine surgery.

It is recommended to use the EBVS system for postgraduate veterinary specialisation.

#### **9.2.4. Decision**

The VEE is partially compliant with Substandard 9.2 because of suboptimal number of specialised clinicians, e.g. in diagnostic imaging and equine surgery.

**9.3 Staff must be given opportunities to develop and extend their teaching and assessment knowledge and must be encouraged to improve their skills. Opportunities for didactic and pedagogic training and specialisation must be available. The VEE must clearly define any systems of reward for teaching excellence in operation.**

**Academic positions must offer the security and benefits necessary to maintain stability, continuity, and competence of the academic staff. They must have a balanced workload of teaching, research and service depending on their role. They must have reasonable opportunities and resources for participation in scholarly activities.**

#### **9.3.1. Findings**

For the pedagogical training of staff, see 9.1.

VEE personnel are encouraged to apply for EU grants to increase their teaching knowledge especially regarding new information technology and participated in several ERASMUS+ projects related to e.g. the assessment of competences. A period abroad is also mandatory for certain positions.

Teaching excellence is rewarded by the “teacher of the year” title, which is being introduced.

Research (and habilitation) are necessary for the progression of the career. However, the academic staff (both in basic sciences and in the clinics) do not have enough time to develop in-depth research activities.

### **9.3.2. Comments**

The obligation for a period abroad for recently recruited academic staff is a great opportunity and is to be commended.

### **9.3.3. Suggestions for improvement**

None.

### **9.3.4. Decision**

The VEE is compliant with Substandard 9.3.

**9.4 The VEE must provide evidence that it utilises a well-defined, comprehensive and publicised programme for the professional growth and development of academic and support staff, including formal appraisal and informal mentoring procedures.**

**Staff must have the opportunity to contribute to the VEE’s direction and decision-making processes.**

**Promotion criteria for academic and support staff must be clear and explicit. Promotions for teaching staff must recognise excellence in, and (if permitted by the national or university law) place equal emphasis on all aspects of teaching (including clinical teaching), research, service and other scholarly activities.**

### **9.4.1. Findings**

The criteria and processes for promotion are clearly defined in the regulations of the UL and the VEE (Rules on Promotion to Wage Classes at the University of Ljubljana, The guide on the appointment, introduction and training of staff at the Veterinary Faculty), which are public. A great number of the staff are involved in the working bodies of the VEE (e.g. different persons represent the OU at different committees).

Several workshops on teaching and assessment skills are organized and promoted for academic staff. The faculty promotes the involvement in international projects oriented towards the improvement of teaching activities, curricula, quality assurance or similar. One of the conditions for applying for professor position is at least three months’ educational or research activities at a foreign institution.

The promotion is based on factual elements: work results, independence, creativity and precision, reliability, quality of cooperation and organisation of work and other competences related to work. Any new personnel are followed by a mentor.

The reports are more oriented to the development of academic rather than the support staff, however, the support staff also receives the training necessary to perform new tasks.

As already mentioned, out of the 119 veterinarians involved in the curriculum, only 24 are national specialist among which 8 are European or American specialists. There are no specialists in some

important disciplines such as parasitology, pathology, clinical pathology, internal medicine, surgery or diagnostic imaging.

**9.4.2. Comments**

The workshop on teaching and assessment skills are a good opportunity for discussion and improvement.

The promotion process is based on factual figures and elements.

**9.4.3. Suggestions for improvement**

None.

**9.4.4. Decision**

The VEE is compliant with Substandard 9.4.

**9.5 A system for assessment of teaching staff must be in operation and must include student participation. Results must be available to those undertaking external reviews and commented upon in reports.**

**9.5.1. Findings**

Students' assessment is managed at the UL level in compliance with the Student Survey Rules at the University of Ljubljana (see also 1.6). Teachers receive their own evaluation results, and the Dean has an overview of all results. A UL-level statistical survey and benchmark report is prepared.

Every year, students have to assess the content of the curriculum. This assessment is mandatory. The results are discussed within dedicated groups and the academic staff has to produce answer and report how they take into account students' responses.

From the Visitation and discussion with the students, only one critical situation was noticed for which repeated complaints of students were ineffective, otherwise the process is effective.

**9.5.2. Comments**

The annual assessment and report prepared by the academic staff are good opportunities to continuously improve teaching.

**9.5.3. Suggestions for improvement**

The single exception for which recurrent students complains are not taken into account should be addressed by the VEE.

**9.5.4. Decision**

The VEE is compliant with Substandard 9.5.

## **Standard 10. Research programmes, continuing and postgraduate education**

**10.1 The VEE must demonstrate significant and broad research activities of staff that integrate with and strengthen the veterinary degree programme through research-based teaching.**

### **10.1.1. Findings**

All research activities at VEE are financed through the national research agency (ARRS) and international projects. Due to this fact, the faculty has not developed its own research strategy, but follows the strategic goals of the two large ARRS programmes that the faculty is responsible for: one focused on basic sciences, reproduction and clinical medicine of dogs and cats and one focused on food hygiene, the environment and clinical veterinary medicine of large animals and poultry. These programmes secure a long-term funding of research and are evaluated every 5 or 6 years. The programmes are up for new evaluation in 3–4 years.

In addition to the two major programmes, the faculty staff can apply to ARRS for funding of other research projects. However, this opportunity is seriously hampered by an old national rule that that VEE is entitled to a maximum of two new projects per year, and for most years, only one project. Another source for funding is governmental calls for specific topics of national importance, mainly within studies of zoonoses and food safety.

VEE staff is also involved in some international research collaborations, and they participate in many EU-funded COST Actions.

Most of the teaching staff is actively involved in research, although this is not satisfactory for all. Some financial initiatives are established to encourage staff to collaborate more extensively.

### **10.1.2. Comments**

The VEE's research activities are not very extensive, but they have ambitions to increase the quality (not quantity) of publications, engage more in interdisciplinary research, acquire more internationally (EU and other) funded projects, and strengthen collaborations with strong research teams in other EU countries.

Their participation in many EU-funded COST actions is a good first step to become partners in new research consortia.

### **10.1.3. Suggestions for improvement**

It is suggested that although the VEE is dependent on external funding for research, they should develop their own research strategy focusing on tools and measures for continuously increasing and improving their research activities.

### **10.1.4. Decision**

The VEE is compliant with Substandard 10.1.

**10.2 All students must be trained in scientific method and research techniques relevant to evidence-based veterinary medicine and must have opportunities to participate in research programmes.**

**10.2.1. Findings**

All students must do an independent research work in basic science, public veterinary services, pathobiology and/or clinical sciences. This work is an assignment representing an independently written manuscript and its oral defence. The assignment is done under the guidance and supervision of a mentor. The aim is that each student is trained to prepare a professional manuscript, and to defend its content during the public lecture.

Student projects are mostly in the fields of the two research programmes or current research projects as students are included into the ongoing research work. The work is therefore funded from these sources (research programmes or research projects).

**10.2.2. Comments**

The student research assignment consists of three ECTS, i.e. 90 working hours. This is a very limited time period.

The VEE actively encourages faculty members from all different fields to include students in their ongoing research work, and there is a positive attitude among teachers to do so.

**10.2.3. Suggestions for improvement**

It is suggested that the VEE closely follow the outcomes of the students' training in scientific methods and research techniques, and eventually consider extending this type of training.

**10.2.4. Decision**

The VEE is compliant with Substandard 10.2.

**10.3 The VEE must provide advanced postgraduate degree programmes, e.g. PhD, internships, residencies and continuing education programmes that complement and strengthen the veterinary degree programme and are relevant to the needs of the profession and society.**

**10.3.1. Findings**

The PhD programme at the VEE is run as part of the University of Ljubljana PhD programme Biomedicine, which is a four- to five-year programme. The requirements for supervisors demand that supervisors have experience in publishing quality scientific papers in international journals. The number of PhD students at the VEE is low, one main reason for this being the low funding of PhD students by ARRS. However, this year, 7 new PhD students were enrolled.

The Equine clinic offers a formal internship and an American College of Veterinary Sports Medicine and Rehabilitation residency in an alternative format.

There are currently no residency programmes under the EBVS-umbrella available at the VEE.

National specialization programmes are offered in five different areas. Supervision of these students by faculty members is embedded in the activities of the VEE. The VEE also organizes seminars, etc. for veterinary practitioners, either alone or in collaboration with the Veterinary Chamber of Slovenia.

#### **10.3.2. Comments**

The establishment of residency programmes is seriously hampered by the Slovenian legislation stating that anybody employed for more than two years must get a tenure position. Solving this legal issue and increasing the number of residents is vital for the further development of the quality of the teaching programme.

#### **10.3.3. Suggestions for improvement**

It is suggested that the VEE goes into a dialogue with EBVS discussing how this situation can be improved, for example with the support from EBVS initiating collaborations on residents training with VEEs in other countries.

#### **10.3.4. Decision**

The VEE is partially compliant with Substandard 10.3 because of suboptimal numbers of students involved in postgraduate programmes, e.g. PhD and specialisation.

### **10.4 The VEE must have a system of QA to evaluate how research activities provide opportunities for student training and staff promotion, and how research approaches, methods and results are integrated into the veterinary teaching programmes.**

#### **10.4.1. Findings**

The QA system is described under Chapter 3.2 of the SER. Quality assessment of the research itself is based on external reviews of research projects, research programmes and graduate students (receiving fellowships from Slovenian research agency). As all funding for research work is external, and funders require regular reports about research progress, these reports are also used as a quality assessment of research work at the VEE.

The number of publications, impact factor and category of the journals, number of citations and acquisition of research projects are regularly measured.

#### **10.4.2. Comments**

The VEE is commended for their well-established QA-system for all activities.

#### **10.4.3. Suggestions for improvement**

None.

#### **10.4.4. Decision**

The VEE is compliant with Substandard 10.4.

## 11. ESEVT Indicators



### ESEVT Indicators

Name of the Establishment:					
Date of the form filling:					
Calculated Indicators from raw data		Establishment	Median	Minimal	Balance <sup>3</sup>
		values	values <sup>1</sup>	values <sup>2</sup>	
I1	n° of FTE academic staff involved in veterinary training / n° of undergraduate students	0,164	0,15	0,13	0,038
I2	n° of FTE veterinarians involved in veterinary training / n° of students graduating annually	2,705	0,84	0,63	2,075
I3	n° of FTE support staff involved in veterinary training / n° of students graduating annually	5,555	0,88	0,54	5,015
I4	n° of hours of practical (non-clinical) training	1234,500	953,50	700,59	533,910
I5	n° of hours of clinical training	1227,000	941,58	704,80	522,200
I6	n° of hours of FSQ & VPH training	422,500	293,50	191,80	230,700
I7	n° of hours of extra-mural practical training in FSQ & VPH	80,000	75,00	31,80	48,200
I8	n° of companion animal patients seen intra-murally / n° of students graduating annually	302,273	62,31	43,58	258,693
I9	n° of ruminant and pig patients seen intra-murally / n° of students graduating annually	34,091	2,49	0,89	33,201
I10	n° of equine patients seen intra-murally / n° of students graduating annually	18,114	4,16	1,53	16,584
I11	n° of rabbit, rodent, bird and exotic seen intra-murally / n° of students graduating annually	15,045	3,11	1,16	13,885
I12	n° of companion animal patients seen extra-murally / n° of students graduating annually	110,102	5,06	0,43	109,672
I13	n° of individual ruminants and pig patients seen extra-murally / n° of students graduating annually	61,670	16,26	8,85	52,820
I14	n° of equine patients seen extra-murally / n° of students graduating annually	9,341	1,80	0,62	8,721
I15	n° of visits to ruminant and pig herds / n° of students graduating annually	2,727	1,29	0,54	2,187
I16	n° of visits of poultry and farmed rabbit units / n° of students graduating annually	0,193	0,11	0,04	0,149
I17	n° of companion animal necropsies / n° of students graduating annually	1,568	2,11	1,40	0,168
I18	n° of ruminant and pig necropsies / n° of students graduating annually	1,466	1,36	0,90	0,566
I19	n° of equine necropsies / n° of students graduating annually	0,182	0,18	0,10	0,082
I20	n° of rabbit, rodent, bird and exotic pet necropsies / n° of students graduating annually	1,000	2,65	0,88	0,120
I21*	n° of FTE specialised veterinarians involved in veterinary training / n° of students graduating	0,545	0,27	0,06	0,485
I22*	n° of PhD graduating annually / n° of students graduating annually	0,091	0,15	0,07	0,021
1	Median values defined by data from Establishments with Accreditation/Approval status in May 2019				
2	Recommended minimal values calculated as the 20th percentile of data from Establishments with Accreditation/Approval status in May 2019				
3	A negative balance indicates that the Indicator is below the recommended minimal value				
*	Indicators used only for statistical purpose				

**12. ESEVT Rubrics** (summary of the decision on the compliance of the VEE for each ESEVT Substandard, i.e. (total or substantial) compliance (C), partial compliance (PC) (Minor Deficiency) or non-compliance (NC) (Major Deficiency))

Standard 1: Objectives, Organisation and QA Policy	C	PC	NC
1.1 The VEE must have as its main objective the provision, in agreement with the EU Directives and ESG recommendations, of adequate, ethical, research-based, evidence-based veterinary training that enables the new graduate to perform as a veterinarian capable of entering all commonly recognised branches of the veterinary profession and to be aware of the importance of lifelong learning. The VEE must develop and follow its mission statement which must embrace all the ESEVT standards.	X		
1.2 The VEE must be part of a university or a higher education institution providing training recognised as being of an equivalent level and formally recognised as such in the respective country. The person responsible for the veterinary curriculum and the person(s) responsible for the professional, ethical, and academic affairs of the Veterinary Teaching Hospital (VTH) must hold a veterinary degree. The decision-making process of the VEE must allow implementation of its strategic plan and of a cohesive study programme, in compliance with the ESEVT standards.	X		
1.3 The VEE must have a strategic plan, which includes a SWOT analysis of its current activities, a list of objectives, and an operating plan with a timeframe and indicators for its implementation.	X		
1.4 The VEE must have a policy and associated written procedures for the assurance of the quality and standards of its programmes and awards. It must also commit itself explicitly to the development of a culture which recognises the importance of quality, and quality assurance, within their VEE. To achieve this, the VEE must develop and implement a strategy for the continuous enhancement of quality. The development and implementation of the VEE's strategy must include a role for students and other stakeholders, both internal and external, and the strategy must have a formal status and be publicly available.	X		
1.5 The VEE must provide evidence that it interacts with its stakeholders and the wider society. Such public information must be clear, objective and readily accessible; the information must include up-to-date information about the study programme, views and employment destinations of past students as well as the profile of the current student population. The VEE's website must mention the ESEVT VEE's status and its last Self Evaluation Report and Visitation Report must be easily available for the public.	X		
1.6 The VEE must monitor and periodically review its activities, both quantitative and qualitative, to ensure that they achieve the objectives set for them and respond to the needs of students and society. The VEE must make public how this analysis of information has been utilised in the further development of its activities and provide evidence as to the involvement of both students and staff in the provision, analysis and implementation of such data. Any action planned or taken as a result of this data analysis must be communicated to all those concerned.	X		
1.7 The VEE must undergo external review through the ESEVT on a cyclical basis. Evidence must be provided of such external evaluation with the assurance that the progress made since the last ESEVT evaluation was linked to a continuous quality assurance process.	X		
<b>Standard 2: Finances</b>			
2.1 Finances must be demonstrably adequate to sustain the requirements for the VEE to meet its mission and to achieve its objectives for education, research and services. The description must include both expenditures (separated into personnel costs, operating costs, maintenance costs and equipment) and revenues (separated into public funding, tuition fees, services, research grants and other sources).	X		
2.2 Clinical and field services must function as instructional resources. Instructional integrity of these resources must take priority over financial self-sufficiency of clinical services operations. The VEE must have sufficient autonomy in order to use the resources to implement its strategic plan and to meet the ESEVT Standards.	X		
2.3 Resources allocation must be regularly reviewed to ensure that available resources meet the requirements.	X		
<b>Standard 3: Curriculum</b>			
3.1 The curriculum must be designed, resourced and managed to ensure all graduates have achieved the graduate attributes expected to be fully compliant with the EU Directive 2005/36/EC (as amended by directive 2013/55/EU) and its Annex V.4.1. The curriculum must include the subjects (input) and must allow the acquisition of the Day One Competences (output) listed in Annex 2. This concerns Basic Sciences, Clinical Sciences in companion animals (including equine and exotic pets), Clinical Sciences in food-producing animals (including Animal Production and Herd Health Management), Food Safety and Quality, and Professional Knowledge.	X		
3.1.1. General findings			
3.1.2. Basic sciences	X		
3.1.3. Clinical Sciences in companion animals (including equine and exotic pets)	X		
3.1.4. Clinical Sciences in food-producing animals (including Animal Production and Herd Health Management)	X		
3.1.5. Food Safety and Quality	X		
3.1.6. Professional Knowledge	X		

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<p>3.2 Each study programme provided by the VEE must be competency-based and designed so that it meets the objectives set for it, including the intended learning outcomes. The qualification resulting from a programme must be clearly specified and communicated and must refer to the correct level of the national qualifications framework for higher education and, consequently, to the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area.</p> <p>The VEE must provide proof of a QA system that promotes and monitors the presence of an academic environment highly conducive to learning including self-learning. Details of the type, provision and updating of appropriate learning opportunities for the students must be clearly described, as well as the involvement of students.</p> <p>The VEE must also describe how it encourages and prepares students for self-learning and lifelong learning.</p>	X		
<p>3.3 Programme learning outcomes must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ensure the effective alignment of all content, teaching, learning and assessment activities of the degree programme to form a cohesive framework</li> <li>• include a description of Day One Competences</li> <li>• form the basis for explicit statements of the objectives and learning outcomes of individual units of study</li> <li>• be communicated to staff and students</li> <li>• be regularly reviewed, managed and updated to ensure they remain relevant, adequate and are effectively achieved.</li> </ul>	X		
<p>3.4 The VEE must have a formally constituted committee structure (which includes effective student representation), with clear and empowered reporting lines, to oversee and manage the curriculum and its delivery. The committee(s) must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• determine the pedagogical basis, design, delivery methods and assessment methods of the curriculum</li> <li>• oversee QA of the curriculum, particularly gathering, evaluating, making change and responding to feedback from stakeholders, peer reviewers and external assessors, and data from examination/assessment outcomes</li> <li>• perform ongoing and periodic review of the curriculum at least every seven years by involving staff, students and stakeholders; these reviews must lead to continuous improvement. Any action taken or planned as a result of such a review must be communicated to all those concerned</li> <li>• identify and meet training needs for all types of staff, maintaining and enhancing their competence for the ongoing curriculum development.</li> </ul>	X		
<p>3.5 External Practical Training (EPT) is compulsory training activities organised outside the VEE, the student being under the direct supervision of a non-academic person (e.g. a practitioner). EPT cannot replace the core intramural training nor the extramural training under the close supervision of academic staff (e.g. ambulatory clinics, herd health management, practical training in FSQ and VPH).</p> <p>Since the veterinary degree is a professional qualification with Day One Competences, EPT must complement and strengthen the academic education inter alia by enhancing student's professional knowledge.</p>	X		
<p>3.6 The EPT providers must have an agreement with the VEE and the student (in order to state their respective rights and duties, including insurance matters), provide a standardised evaluation of the performance of the student during their EPT and be allowed to provide feedback to the VEE on the EPT programme.</p> <p>There must be a member of the academic staff responsible for the overall supervision of the EPT, including liaison with EPT providers.</p>	X		
<p>3.7 Students must take responsibility for their own learning during EPT. This includes preparing properly before each placement, keeping a proper record of their experience during EPT by using a logbook provided by the VEE and evaluating the EPT. Students must be allowed to complain officially and/or anonymously about issues occurring during EPT. The VEE must have a system of QA to monitor the implementation, progress and then feedback within the EPT activities.</p>	X		
<b>Standard 4: Facilities and equipment</b>			
<p>4.1 All aspects of the physical facilities must provide an environment conducive to learning, including internet access. The veterinary VEE must have a clear strategy and programme for maintaining and upgrading its buildings and equipment. Facilities must comply with all relevant legislation including health, safety, biosecurity, accessibility to people with reduced mobility, and EU animal welfare and care standards.</p>	X		
<p>4.2 Lecture theatres, teaching laboratories, tutorial rooms, clinical facilities and other teaching spaces must be adequate in number, size and equipped for the instructional purposes and must be well maintained. The facilities must be adapted for the number of students enrolled. Students must have ready access to adequate and sufficient study, self-learning, recreation, locker, sanitary and food service facilities.</p> <p>Offices, teaching preparation and research laboratories must be sufficient for the needs of the academic and support staff.</p>	X		
<p>4.3 The livestock facilities, animal housing, core clinical teaching facilities and equipment used by the VEE for teaching purposes must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• be sufficient in capacity and adapted for the number of students enrolled in order to allow safe hands-on training for all students</li> <li>• be of a high standard, well maintained and fit for the purpose</li> <li>• promote best husbandry, welfare and management practices</li> <li>• ensure relevant biosecurity and bio-containment</li> <li>• be designed to enhance learning.</li> </ul>		X	
<p>4.4 Core clinical teaching facilities must be provided in a veterinary teaching hospital (VTH) with 24/7 emergency services at least for companion animals and equines. Within the VTH, the VEE must unequivocally demonstrate that standard of education and clinical research are compliant with all ESEVT Standards, e.g. research-based and evidence-based clinical training supervised by academic staff trained to teach and to assess, availability for staff and students of facilities and patients for performing clinical research and relevant QA procedures.</p> <p>For ruminants, on-call service must be available if emergency services do not exist for those species in a VTH.</p>	X		

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The VEE must ensure state-of-the-art standards of teaching clinics which remain comparable with or exceeding the best available in the private sector. The VTH and any hospitals, practices and facilities (including EPT) which are involved with the curriculum must meet the relevant national Practice Standards.			
4.5 The VEE must ensure that students have access to a broad range of diagnostic and therapeutic facilities, including but not limited to: diagnostic imaging, anaesthesia, clinical pathology, intensive/critical care, surgeries and treatment facilities, ambulatory services, pharmacy and necropsy facilities.	X		
4.6 Appropriate isolation facilities must be provided to meet the need for the isolation and containment of animals with communicable diseases. Such isolation facilities must be properly constructed, ventilated, maintained and operated to provide for animal care and for prevention of spread of infectious agents. They must be adapted to all animal species commonly handled in the VTH.	X		
4.7 The VEE must have an ambulatory clinic for production animals or equivalent facilities so that students can practise field veterinary medicine and Herd Health Management under academic supervision.	X		
4.8 The transport of students, live animals, cadavers, materials from animal origin and other teaching materials must be done in agreement with national and EU standards, to ensure the safety of students and staff and to prevent the spread of infectious agents.	X		
4.9 Operational policies and procedures (including e.g. biosecurity, good laboratory practice and good clinical practice) must be taught and posted for students, staff and visitors and a Biosafety manual must be available. The VEE must demonstrate a clear commitment for the delivery of biosafety and biosecurity, e.g. by a specific committee structure. The VEE must have a system of QA to monitor and assure clinical, laboratory and farm services, including a regular monitoring of the feedback from students, staff and clients.	X		
<b>Standard 5: Animal resources and teaching material of animal origin</b>			
5.1 The number and variety of healthy and diseased animals, cadavers, and material of animal origin must be adequate for providing the practical and safe hands-on training (in the areas of Basic Sciences, Clinical Sciences, Pathology, Animal Production, Food Safety and Quality) and adapted to the number of students enrolled. Evidence must be provided that these data are regularly recorded and that procedures are in place for correcting any deficiencies.		X	
5.2 In addition to the training provided in the VEE, experience can include practical training at external sites, provided this training is organised under direct academic supervision and following the same standards as those applied in the VEE.	X		
5.3 The VTH must provide nursing care skills and instruction in nursing procedures. Under all situations students must be active participants in the clinical workup of patients, including problem-oriented diagnostic approach together with diagnostic decision-making.	X		
5.4 Medical records must be comprehensive and maintained in an effective retrieval system (preferably an electronic patient record system) to efficiently support the teaching, research, and service programmes of the VEE.		X	
<b>Standard 6: Learning resources</b>			
6.1 State-of-the-art learning resources must be adequate and available to support veterinary education, research, services and continuing education. When the study programme is provided in several tracks/languages, the learning resources must be available in all used languages. Timely access to learning resources, whether through print, electronic media or other means, must be available to students and staff and, when appropriate, to stakeholders. State-of-the-art procedures for bibliographical search and for access to databases and learning resources must be taught to undergraduate students.	X		
6.2 Staff and students must have full access on site to an academic library administered by a qualified librarian, an Information Technology (IT) unit managed by an IT expert, an e-learning platform, and all the relevant human and physical resources necessary for the development of instructional materials by the staff and their use by the students. The relevant electronic information, database and other intranet resources must be easily available for students and staff both in the VEE's core facilities via wireless connection (Wi-Fi) and from outside the VEE through a hosted secured connection, e.g. Virtual Private Network (VPN).	X		
6.3 The VEE must provide students with unimpeded access to learning resources, internet and internal study resources, and equipment for the development of procedural skills (e.g. models). The use of these resources must be aligned with the pedagogical environment and learning outcomes within the programme and have mechanisms in place to evaluate the teaching value of changes in learning resources.		X	
<b>Standard 7: Student admission, progression and welfare</b>			
7.1 The VEE must consistently apply pre-defined and published regulations covering all phases of the student "life cycle", e.g. student admission, progression and certification. In relation to enrolment, the VEE must provide accurate and complete information regarding all aspects of the educational programme in all advertisements for prospective national and international students. Formal cooperations with other VEEs must also be clearly advertised.	X		
7.2 The number of students admitted must be consistent with the resources available at the VEE for staff, buildings, equipment, healthy and diseased animals, and materials of animal origin.	X		
7.3 The selection and progression criteria must be clearly defined, consistent, and defensible, be free of discrimination or bias, and take into account the fact that students are admitted with a view to their entry to the veterinary profession in due course. The VEE must regularly review and reflect on the selection processes to ensure they are appropriate for students to complete the programme successfully. If the selection processes are decided by another authority, the latter must regularly receive feedback from the VEE. Adequate training (including periodic refresher training) must be provided for those involved in the selection process to ensure applicants are evaluated fairly and consistently.	X		

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7.4	There must be clear policies and procedures on how applicants with disabilities or illnesses are considered and, if appropriate, accommodated in the programme, taking into account the requirement that all students must be capable of meeting the ESEVT Day One Competences by the time they graduate.	X		
7.5	The basis for decisions on progression (including academic progression and professional fitness to practise) must be explicit and readily available to the students. The VEE must provide evidence that it has mechanisms in place to identify and provide remediation and appropriate support (including termination) for students who are not performing adequately. The VEE must have mechanisms in place to monitor attrition and progression and be able to respond and amend admission selection criteria (if permitted by national or university law) and student support if required.	X		
7.6	Mechanisms for the exclusion of students from the programme for any reason must be explicit. The VEE's policies for managing appeals against decisions, including admissions, academic and progression decisions and exclusion, must be transparent and publicly available.	X		
7.7	Provisions must be made by the VEE to support the physical, emotional and welfare needs of students. This includes, but is not limited to, learning support and counselling services, career advice, and fair and transparent mechanisms for dealing with student illness, impairment and disability during the programme. This shall include provision of reasonable adjustments for disabled students, consistent with all relevant equality and/or human rights legislation. There must be effective mechanisms for resolution of student grievances (e.g. interpersonal conflict or harassment).	X		
7.8	Mechanisms must be in place by which students can convey their needs and wants to the VEE. The VEE must provide students with a mechanism, anonymously if they wish, to offer suggestions, comments and complaints regarding compliance of the VEE with national and international legislation and the ESEVT standards.	X		
Standard 8: Student assessment				
8.1	The VEE must ensure that there is a clearly identified structure within the VEE showing lines of responsibility for the assessment strategy to ensure coherence of the overall assessment regime and to allow the demonstration of progressive development across the programme towards entry-level competence.	X		
8.2	The assessment tasks and grading criteria for each unit of study in the programme must be published, applied consistently, clearly identified and available to students in a timely manner well in advance of the assessment. Requirements to pass must be explicit. The VEE must properly document the results of assessment and provide the students with timely feedback on their assessments. Mechanisms for students to appeal against assessment outcomes must be explicit.	X		
8.3	The VEE must have a process in place to review assessment outcomes, to change assessment strategies and to ensure the accuracy of the procedures when required. Programme learning outcomes covering the full range of professional knowledge, skills, competences and attributes must form the basis for assessment design and underpin decisions on progression.	X		
8.4	Assessment strategies must allow the VEE to certify student achievement of learning objectives at the level of the programme and individual units of study. The VEE must ensure that the programmes are delivered in a way that encourages students to take an active role in creating the learning process, and that the assessment of students reflects this approach.	X		
8.5	Methods of formative and summative assessment must be valid and reliable and comprise a variety of approaches. Direct assessment of clinical skills and Day One Competences (some of which may be on simulated patients), must form a significant component of the overall process of assessment. It must also include the quality control of the student logbooks in order to ensure that all clinical procedures, practical and hands-on training planned in the study programme have been fully completed by each individual student.	X		
Standard 9: Academic and support staff				
9.1	The VEE must ensure that all staff are appropriately qualified and prepared for their roles, in agreement with national and EU regulations and must apply fair and transparent processes for the recruitment and development of staff. A formal training (including good teaching and evaluation practices, learning and e-learning resources, biosecurity and QA procedures) must be in place for all staff involved with teaching. Most academic staff (calculated as FTE) involved in veterinary training must be veterinarians. It is expected that more than 2/3 of the instruction that the students receive, as determined by student teaching hours, is delivered by qualified veterinarians.	X		
9.2	The total number, qualifications and skills of all staff involved with the programme, including teaching staff, 'adjunct' staff, technical, administrative and support staff, must be sufficient and appropriate to deliver the educational programme and fulfil the VEE's mission. A procedure must be in place to assess if they display competence and effective teaching skills in all relevant aspects of the curriculum that they teach, regardless of whether they are full or part time, residents, interns or other postgraduate students, adjuncts or off-campus contracted teachers.		X	
9.3	Staff must be given opportunities to develop and extend their teaching and assessment knowledge and must be encouraged to improve their skills. Opportunities for didactic and pedagogic training and specialisation must be available. The VEE must clearly define systems of reward for teaching excellence in operation. Academic positions must offer the security and benefits necessary to maintain stability, continuity, and competence of the academic staff. Academic staff must have a balanced workload of teaching, research and service depending on their role. They must have reasonable opportunities and resources for participation in scholarly activities.	X		
9.4	The VEE must provide evidence that it utilises a well-defined, comprehensive and publicised programme for the professional growth and development of academic and support staff, including formal appraisal and informal mentoring procedures. Staff must have the opportunity to contribute to the VEE's direction and decision-making processes. Promotion criteria for academic and support staff must be clear and explicit. Promotions for teaching staff must recognise excellence in, and (if permitted by the national or university law) place equal emphasis on all aspects of teaching (including clinical teaching), research, service and other scholarly activities.	X		

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9.5 A system for assessment of teaching staff must be in operation and must include student participation. Results must be available to those undertaking external reviews and commented upon in reports.	X		
<b>Standard 10: Research programmes, continuing and postgraduate education</b>			
10.1 The VEE must demonstrate significant and broad research activities of staff that integrate with and strengthen the veterinary degree programme through research-based teaching.	X		
10.2 All students must be trained in scientific method and research techniques relevant to evidence-based veterinary medicine and must have opportunities to participate in research programmes.	X		
10.3 The VEE must provide advanced postgraduate degree programmes, e.g. PhD, internships, residencies and continuing education programmes that complement and strengthen the veterinary degree programme and are relevant to the needs of the profession and society.		X	
10.4 The VEE must have a system of QA to evaluate how research activities provide opportunities for student training and staff promotion, and how research approaches, methods and results are integrated into the veterinary teaching programmes.	X		
<i>C: (total or substantial) compliance; PC: partial compliance (Minor Deficiency); NC: non-compliance (Major Deficiency)</i>			

## **Executive Summary**

The Veterinary Faculty (which is called the Veterinary Education Establishment (VEE) in this report) of the University of Ljubljana (UL) was established in 1953, as a department of the Faculty for Agronomy, Forestry and Veterinary Medicine. Since 1990, the VEE has been an independent faculty of the UL.

The VEE was evaluated by EAEVE in 1998, evaluated again in October 2009, re-visited in March 2011 and granted the status of 'Approval' by ECOVE.

The SER was provided on time and written in agreement with the SOP 2019. Replies to the pre-Visitation questions from the experts were provided before the start of the Visitation. In agreement with the 'Exceptional Rules for ESEVT Visitations linked to the COVID-19 outbreak', an Addendum was also provided on time for explaining how the COVID-19 outbreak has affected the VEE and what actions have been taken to alleviate the impact of the lockdown.

Because of the travel restrictions linked to the COVID-19 outbreak, the Visitation was postponed from February to June 2021 and six experts had to complete the Visitation remotely, as agreed by ECOVE. Webinars were organised permanently between the onsite (three) and remote (six) members, which were allowed to see the intramural facilities via a video and audio system and to discuss in depth with the relevant local colleagues.

Despite this difficult context, the Visitation was very well organised and was in agreement with the 'Exceptional Rules for ESEVT Visitations linked to the COVID-19 outbreak' and with the 'Minimum requirements concerning health and safety measures to protect ESEVT Experts' health and to prevent the spread of COVID-19', as adopted by ExCom in June 2020. The Liaison Officer did a great job to adapt the schedule of the Visitation, to search for the requested information, to organise the relevant meetings and e-meetings, and to ensure the health and safety of the Visitors.

### **Areas worthy of praise (i.e. Commendations), e.g.:**

- ) the fact that the National Veterinary Institute (NVI) significantly contributes to the enhancement of practical training in preclinical and clinical sciences and in food safety and quality;
- ) excellent atmosphere between staff and students;
- ) high availability of staff to assist undergraduate students;
- ) strong support for the physical and welfare needs of the students and efficient tutor system;
- ) excellent ratio student/teacher for practical and clinical training;
- ) well-established quality assurance system;
- ) excellent teaching farm for preclinical and clinical training, including One Health concept and sustainable agriculture;
- ) high caseload in the different disciplines and species;
- ) strong involvement of local stakeholders in the teaching process.

Additional commendations are described in the Visitation Report.

**Areas of concern (i.e. Minor Deficiencies):**

- ) partial compliance with Substandard 4.3 because of suboptimal application of biosecurity measures in some facilities, e.g. inappropriate system for cleaning the boots in necropsy rooms and in farms;
- ) partial compliance with Substandard 5.1 because of suboptimal number of production animal anatomical parts for practicals;
- ) partial compliance with Substandard 5.4 because of suboptimal patient recording system;
- ) partial compliance with Substandard 6.3 because of suboptimal skill lab;
- ) partial compliance with Substandard 9.2 because of suboptimal number of specialised clinicians, e.g. in diagnostic imaging and equine surgery;
- ) partial compliance with Substandard 10.3 because of suboptimal numbers of students involved in postgraduate programmes, e.g. PhD and specialisation.

Additional suggestions for improvement are described in the Visitation Report.

**Items of non-compliance with the ESEVT Standards (i.e. Major Deficiencies):**

None.

## **Glossary**

ARRS: Slovenian national research agency

D1C: Day One Competences

EAEVE: European Association of Establishments for Veterinary Education

EBVS: European Board of Veterinary Specialisation

ECOVE: European Committee of Veterinary Education

EPT: External Practical Training

ESEVT: European System of Evaluation of Veterinary Training

ESG: Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area

FSQ: Food Safety and Quality

FTE: Full-Time Equivalent

IT: Information Technology

NVI: National Veterinary Institute

OU: Organisational Unit

PDCA: Plan Do Check Act

QA: Quality Assurance

SER: Self Evaluation Report

SOP: Standard Operating Procedure

UL: University of Ljubljana

VEE: Veterinary Education Establishment

VPH: Veterinary Public Health

VTH: Veterinary Teaching Hospital

## **Decision of ECOVE**

The Committee concluded that no Major Deficiencies had been identified.

The Veterinary Education Establishment (VEE) of the University of Ljubljana is therefore classified as holding the status of: **ACCREDITATION**.