

**European Association
of Establishments for Veterinary Education**



RE-VISITATION REPORT

**To the Royal Veterinary College of the University of London,
London, United Kingdom**

On 25 – 26 August 2021

By the Re-visitation Team:

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Introduction

The Royal Veterinary College (RVC), hereafter in this report referred to as the Veterinary Education Establishment (VEE), is the largest and longest-established veterinary school in the English-speaking world and is a college of the University of London (UL). The RVC is one of 17 institutions which comprise the federal UL. The RVC offers undergraduate, postgraduate and Continuing Professional Development (CPD) programmes in veterinary medicine and veterinary nursing.

The VEE was evaluated by the ESEVT in November 2018 by a combined team representing the European Association of Establishments for Veterinary Education (EAEVE), the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS), the American Veterinary Medical Association Council on Education (AVMA COE), the Australasian Veterinary Boards Council (AVBC) and the South African Veterinary Council (SAVC).

Based on the ESEVT report, the ECOVE identified one Major and two Minor Deficiencies as stated on 29 May 2019. The VEE asked for a Re-visitation focussed on the identified Major Deficiency and the two Minor Deficiencies. This Re-visitation was scheduled for 25 -26 August 2021.

The VEE prepared a complete and clear Re-visitation Self-Evaluation Report (RSER), which was sent on time to the Re-visitation team. The Re-visitation (RV) Team was impressed with all the thorough work the VEE had done in preparing for the Re-visitation and the efforts of many people to address the deficiencies. Undoubtedly the VEE demonstrates understanding of the great importance of Food Safety and Quality (FSQ) and Veterinary Public Health (VPH) in veterinary education and emphasis has been put both on input and on learning outcomes in this field.

Changes to the VEE's teaching were introduced as soon as practicable after the ECOVE report was received in 2019, and were outlined in the RSER. Additional new initiatives are planned for the near future, such as the delivery of a new curriculum (starting in autumn 2021) and the development of an additional online virtual abattoir tool for teaching of FSQ and VPH.

The Re-visitation was performed according to the "Exceptional rules for ESEVT Visitations planned in 2021 considering the extraordinary circumstances linked to the COVID- 19 pandemic" as approved by the EAEVE General Assembly on December 3, 2020. Option B was applied, with the Coordinator as onsite expert and the Chairperson as remote expert. The Re-visitation was perfectly organised and completed in an excellent atmosphere. All requested documents and information were provided on time.

1. Correction of the Major Deficiency

1.1. Major Deficiency 1: Non-compliance with Substandard 3.5. because the number of hours in FSQ and VPH training is far below the recommended minimal value and there is limited evidence of execution of practical post-mortem meat inspection, resulting in insufficient acquisition of some of Day One Competences in clinical sciences.

1.1.1. Findings

The number of hours of FSQ & VPH training of the VEE is 71, which is far below the recommended minimal value (- 103.4 hours).

The VEE conducted a major re-mapping exercise of the curriculum after receiving the ESEVT report. This review was conducted after the introduction of a new software for mapping of the curriculum content. 70 additional hours of FSQ and VPH content were identified or added and 17,5 additional hours of Clinical Rotation (CR) activities relating to the FSQ and VPH teaching. This results in a total of 181,5 hours of FSQ and VPH content in the curriculum to which the students were exposed in the academic year delivered in 2020/21. Of these teaching hours, 140 are lectures and small group directed learning sessions and 41,5 hours are CR (some of the them being completed extra-murally).

Furthermore, approximately 15 more hours have been added to FSQ and VPH teaching across the whole curriculum by placing additional emphasis and focus on content relevant to FSQ and VPH in lectures and providing a recap, through the addition of a slide and lecturer comment, at the end of, or associated with, didactic teaching sessions on the virtual learning environment. This is used to identify and emphasise VPH implications of all relevant teaching taking a One Health approach.

Including this additional time in calculations of curricular teaching hours results in a total number of FSQ and VPH teaching hours in the current curriculum of 196,5 hours (academic year 2020/2021).

From September 2021 onwards (academic year 2021/2022) a further 21 hours of teaching are being added to the curriculum. This will consist of an additional 15 hours of didactic teaching comprising the following: a compulsory five-hour food safety course that will be completed in first year, 7 hours of lectures and 3 hours of computer aided learning exercises (details in appendices II and III of the RSER). There will be a further 6 hours of practical teaching and reflection in the CR consisting of a full day on the virtual abattoir tool (see below) that will include completing virtual abattoir visits to commercial, high-throughput abattoirs through a 2D app with FSQ and VPH content and quizzes and a discussion session with a VPH lecturer and a 3D simulation of an abattoir visit (expected duration: 4 hours). Additionally, students will be required to complete a reflective essay focussed on their experience during abattoir visits (expected duration: 2 hours). This additional teaching will bring the total number of core curricular FSQ and VPH hours delivered in 2021/2022 up to 217,5 hours of which 47,5 hours will be in the CR.

Additionally, the VEE estimates that students spend approximately 70 hours in self-directed learning on FSQ and VPH teaching materials to prepare for assessments and reflect upon materials delivered through the didactic teaching and directed learning sessions.

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This addition of the new FSQ and VPH activities has been made through careful planning to ensure that existing content of the BVetMed curriculum was not reduced and that students' learning experiences were not compromised in the acquisition of other Day One Competences.

The RVC has been involved in the development of an online virtual abattoir tool (both in 2D and in 3D) for teaching of FSQ and VPH together with Glasgow and Surrey Universities and a private software development company using real footage from UK commercial, high throughput abattoirs. This tool has been endorsed by the RCVS and has been used for teaching of FSQ and VPH during the pandemic due to the lack of access to abattoirs during this period (except for Langford abattoir). This tool allows students to conduct a virtual abattoir visit in 2D via an online app.

The number of hours of extra-mural practical training in FSQ & VPH of the VEE is 25,33 being below the recommended minimal value (- 3,47 hours). No visits conducted to commercial high throughput abattoirs.

A formal agreement has been established with a commercial high throughput pig abattoir; students began visiting this food processing facility in February 2020. All undergraduate students will now visit three abattoirs, one high throughput and two low throughput abattoirs as part of CR. The number of hours of extra-mural practical training in FSQ and VPH is therefore 41,5. In the academic year 2021/2022 the additional 6 hours of teaching (outlined above) will bring this total up to 47,5.

The high throughput abattoir is located within one hour's drive of the RVC and processes both cull sows and boars and slaughter age pigs, slaughtering up to 1,400 animals per day for national and international markets. The abattoir visits are conducted with 2 of the VPH lecturers. The students (between 10-12 students) are divided into 2 subgroups, with each group visiting the lairage and the slaughter hall separately. It has been arranged with the abattoir that students have access to rejected organs and carcasses in a separate room in the premises so that they can exercise meat inspection principles and discuss food safety, animal health and welfare implications and enforcement conducted as part of official controls as well as observe and discuss the slaughter process with the facilitator. The visit to the lairage involves observing the unloading of animals, the ante-mortem inspection conducted by the official veterinarian and the stunning and bleeding of the animals and discussion of these aspects with the facilitator. During this part of the abattoir visit, the students are also presented with hypothetical case scenarios for discussion of potential implications for animal health, animal welfare and public health.

Limited evidence of execution of practical post-mortem meat inspection

Four hours of livestock post-mortem practicals have been added to the Pathology and VPH intra-mural rotations (IMR) since February 2020; of these, two hours are dedicated to poultry and pigs and two hours are used to deliver a FSQ and Pathology integrated session on post-mortem inspection of specimens from livestock. This session is delivered by food safety and pathology lecturers. Students are given one or more scenario each and are required to apply meat inspection principles, describe lesions observed and assess the implications of these for animal health, welfare and public health.

1.1.2. Comments

Despite the constraints of the UK commercial environment and the differing role of veterinarians in the VPH industry in the UK, the VEE was able to address this Major Deficiency, whilst maintaining the highly regarded pedagogical approach of the RVC. The

number of hours of FSQ and VPH training and of extra-mural practical training in FSQ and VPH are now above the minimal values of the ESEVT Indicators and relevant amendments have been implemented to compensate the current constraints and restrictions.

1.1.3. Suggestions

None.

1.1.4. Decision

The Major Deficiency has been fully corrected.

2. Correction of the Minor Deficiencies

2.1. Minor Deficiency 1: Partial compliance with Substandard 3.2. because the number of hours of practical (non-clinical) training and the number of rabbit, rodent, bird and exotic pet necropsies is below the ESEVT Indicators.

2.1.1. Findings

The VEE introduced additional necropsy classes involving piglets and chickens during the two-week pathology and veterinary public health rotation that is undertaken as a core activity by all veterinary students. These additional classes ensure that every student undertakes at least one piglet and one chicken necropsy during the rotation, in addition to the diagnostic necropsies that span a broad variety of companion animal, farm and exotic species.

It is shown that the number of ruminant and pig necropsies currently meets the ESEVT requirements. Although the number of rabbit, rodent, bird and exotic pet necropsies does not yet reach the minimal value of the ESEVT Indicators, the inclusion of the new classes involving dissections of chickens (introduced during the 2019/2020 academic year) and rabbits (to be introduced in the 2021/2022 academic year) will ensure that each undergraduate student will examine one chicken and one rabbit in addition to the full range of diagnostic necropsies included in the pathology and veterinary public health rotation each academic year.

2.1.2. Comments

The low number of rabbit, rodent, bird and exotic pet necropsies on patients is compensated by the fact that all undergraduate students undertakes at least one piglet and one chicken necropsy during the CR.

2.1.3. Suggestions

None.

2.2. Minor Deficiency 2: Partial compliance with substandard 5.1 because of low numbers of hours in non-clinical training (I4), low number of hours of FSQ and VPH training (I6, I7) and low numbers of necropsies on rodents, birds and exotic pets.

2.2.1. Findings

The Minor Deficiency in necropsy numbers for rodents, birds and exotic pets has been addressed by the additional class involving poultry dissection that was introduced at the beginning of the clinical rotation cycle in February 2020 and is outlined in 2.1.1 above.

As non-essential travel and non-emergency veterinary procedures were significantly reduced in the UK during that period of lockdown, there was an overall reduction in necropsy submissions. The lockdown restrictions in place in the UK also meant that abattoir and fallen stock centre exposure for students became impossible during the academic year 2020/2021 and mitigations that were put in place by the VEE through the virtual abattoir app and the 3D virtual simulation. Furthermore, FSQ and VPH activities were also delivered through online webinars and CALs across the Pathology and VPH rotation, and IMR with contracted collaborative partners, Synergy and Endell veterinary practices. The resumption of on-campus rotations in September 2020 has coincided with a gradual increase in necropsy numbers towards pre-pandemic levels in the academic year 2020/2021 and the VEE anticipates that increase will continue, in parallel with the restoration of student access to abattoirs and fallen stock centres teaching this year. This will also allow the incrementation of the FSQ and VPH activities during IMR, which will be raised to 41,5 hours as the result of the introduction of new abattoir sessions and the remapping exercise as described above, increasing further to 47,5 hours in academic year 2021/2022.

2.2.2. Comments

Taking into account the corrections and the compensations, the values of these Indicators are now above the minimal recommended values.

2.2.3. Suggestions

None.

3. ESEVT Indicators

3.1. Findings

ESEVT Indicators for the two full academic years 2017/2018 and 2018/2019, preceding any adjustments necessitated by the pandemic, are included. These illustrate that the Minor Deficiency in ruminant and pig necropsies had been addressed by the 2018/2019 academic year and that there was a residual Minor Deficiency in rabbit, rodent, bird and exotic pet necropsies, which is compensated by the piglet and chicken necropsies done now by each student and will be rectified by the introduction of rabbit necropsies in the 2021/2022 academic year.

3.2. Comments

None.

3.3. Suggestions

None.

4. Conclusions

The Major Deficiency and the 2 Minor Deficiencies have been fully corrected.

Decision of ECOVE

The Committee concluded that the Major Deficiency identified after the Joint Visitation on 02 – 09 November 2018 had been corrected.

The Royal Veterinary College, University of London is therefore classified as holding the status of: **ACCREDITATION**.