

**European Association
of Establishments for Veterinary Education**

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



REPORT on the RE-VISITATION

**to the ONIRIS (Nantes Atlantic National College of Veterinary Medicine, Food Sciences
and Engineering), Nantes**

27-28/02/2017

by the EXPERT GROUP :

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Introduction

The Oniris (Nantes Atlantic National College of Veterinary Medicine, Food Sciences and Engineering), Nantes, France was evaluated by ESEVT in October 2014.

The previous Visitation team considered that the Biosecurity and Health and Safety approach on the site was inadequate, including the lack of “knowledge of the policy document and its implementation, lack of a health and safety culture on site, too much training and information for students left to individual teachers leading to inconsistencies, isolation areas in particular were not properly signed nor working as expected in this modern day and age”.

Similarly, the team concluded that the directorate was disconnected and isolated from the community, lacking a well-defined strategy and clear objectives, with no adequate communication and dialogue regarding the decisions with staff, leading to confusion and disempowerment.

The departments were working as separate units or as individuals rather than all working together towards a clearly enunciated common goal to which they felt part of.

Student representation appeared inadequately listened to or taken into account.

These findings led to the identification of 3 Major Deficiencies:

1. Lack of implementation of Biosecurity processes;
2. Lack of clear objectives and strategy/timeframe/indicators to reach them;
3. Lack of consultative processes in decision making which leads to disconnect between the executive and the staff/students.

The decision by ECOVE, who met in December 2014, was Non Approval.

The Re-visitation Self Evaluation Report (Interim Report) was provided on time to the Re-visitation Team and provided relevant information.

The Re-visitation was well prepared and well organised by the Establishment. It was performed in agreement with the ESEVT 2012 (Budapest) SOP.

1. Correction of major deficiencies

1.1. Major Deficiency 1 (‘Lack of implementation of Biosecurity processes’)

1.1.1. Findings

A Biosecurity Group was set up subsequent to the 2014 visit, including representatives of the management and major clinics as well as Oniris Laboratory, Occupational Health and Safety service, students and administration. In 2016 this group was broadened, enlarging and with clearly defined tasks of updating the Biosecurity Handbook: the application of biosecurity rules, monitoring biosecurity indicators, setup of a training program for students and VTH staff, ensuring compliance with biosecurity rules throughout evolution, transforming the institutional mind-frame, and establishing action plans in case of a crisis. The expectations from this group include: to raise long term awareness towards Biosecurity as a collective goal, to design and implement mandatory biosecurity procedures and good practices at all levels and also to ensure a better communication between faculty and support staff, to share experiences and to recommend long term premises upgrade.

The awareness towards Biosafety in Oniris has been increased by updating the Biosecurity Handbook, implementing signage covering the traffic plan for the public with 3 different zones (free circulation, restricted and forbidden circulation areas), increasing the number of tools providing access to the SOP Biosecurity Handbook such as the creation of a specific Moodle page dedicated to Biosecurity for students, interns, and staff; creation of a specific intranet site

(biosecurite.oniris-nantes.fr), the Facebook page "@VirtualVetOniris" highlighting exercises related to Biosecurity measures, increasing the display of technical notes in clinics.

Training on Biosafety issues is in place for different target groups: staff, interns and students, at the end of the first year (BioS 1), during the second year (BioS 2) and at the end of third year (BioS3), the outcome of which is being validated by computer-controlled multiple choice tests, participation in self-learning questionnaires and practical exercises (digital passport) and continuously, by the assessment of the clinical behaviour of the students.

A Mandatory Conference "Biosecurity: a virtuous circle" for students, interns and VTH staff, the creation of questionnaires "Contaminator" available since 2015 for the 3rd year students, setting up of practical exercises focused on biosecurity and human safety, for students and interns, creation of video tutorials matched with biosecurity practices exercises for students, interns and VTH staff proved to be useful tools in Biosecurity training. The VTH staff improved its knowledge on Biosecurity due to the creation of a Handbook of technical notes and Health and Safety at Work Handbook.

The importance of Biosafety measures for the institution was recognized by the Oniris Administration, and specific funds were allocated for this purpose. Based on the recommendations of the previous Visitation team, a functional isolation zone dedicated to large animals that complies with European standards for Biosecurity has been set up in existing premises.

1.1.2. Comments

Since the last visit in 2014, the school has made great efforts to improve not only the awareness on Biosecurity issues at Oniris, but also the level of training of all parties involved in the veterinary education at the school. The diversity of the tools and continuous assessment of knowledge used to raise awareness and improve the education of staff and students on Biosecurity issues leads to an increased motivation to be proficient for all those involved.

The team appreciated the effort the establishment has made to change the culture towards biosecurity issues.

1.1.3. Suggestions

None

1.1.4. Decision of the Re-visitation Team

The Major Deficiency 1 ('Lack of implementation of Biosecurity processes') has been corrected.

1.2. Major Deficiency 2 ('Lack of clear objectives and strategy/ timeframe/ indicators to reach them')

1.2.1. Findings

The administrative structure of Oniris has been substantially reorganized by the new General Director and the new Management team after being appointed in June 2015. Their mission is based on three pillars: research, teaching and innovation. The activity of the Directorate is supported, according to a very elaborate scheme, by the Board, Extended Board and Directorate support services. These structures meet regularly to solve current problems. The Board and Extended Board meetings are organized by the Delegate in charge of the cross coordination of projects, who also keeps track of the strategic targets of the institution, their consistency with research, teaching and innovation goals and the participative approach.

Oniris is administered by the Board of Trustees (32 members, of which 4 are student representatives and 16 members are from outside the institution including veterinarians), who

is responsible for all aspects of educational, administrative and financial operations. Practising veterinarians and students are also members of the Development Council (CP) for the Veterinary Education (curriculum improvement). Students are involved in the Education and Student Life Council, responsible for educational and academic organization that also makes proposals to improve curriculum and student welfare.

Frequent meetings between the partners for research, teaching and innovation at Oniris allow better communication among all the staff.

In order to build the strategic plan the first steps were taken in 2015, when an external audit aimed to clarify the shared system of values, the results of which were presented to the staff during a general meeting. A strategic map was jointly built by working groups during the steering meetings, aiming to help identify individual and joint scopes. Next (2016), guidelines for a new strategy were set by the General Director, subjected to the Steering Committee and staff and rewritten as strategic framework [*note stratégique*], which is publicly accessible on the intranet.

The strategic plan was then elaborated in several phases:

- 1) a multi-level self-evaluation [*rapport d'auto-évaluation HCERES*] based on the national external assessment process (HCERES)(2015-2016);
- 2) a SWOT matrix and perspectives at the levels of the teaching departments, research units, main support services and students (spring 2016);
- 3) the elaboration of a Strategic Plan by the Board, using a SWOT analysis for the whole institution, based on research, teaching and innovation, validated by teaching departments, research units and students. This strategy is published on the intranet.

Timelines and indicators [*plan d'actions*] were set up based on the Strategic Plan, to be completed by February 2017.

The implementation plan of the strategy [*projet d'établissement*], jointly designed (autumn of 2016) by the Extended Board during a consultation process, aims to increase the establishment's national and international visibility, to train highly qualified specialists (engineers and veterinarians) by increasing the quality of teaching and access to labour market, to support outstanding research by efficient organisation, strengthening networking and increasing leadership and to play a key role in innovation.

1.2.2. Comments

The team was presented with the full strategic plan and how it will be implemented, including who was responsible and the timeline to deliver the plan. Feedback from each of the teaching departments and each research unit has now been received. This has to be collated by the Directorate before it is sent to the Ministry of Agriculture for ratification. The basis of the plan was going to the Board of Trustees the evening of the end of the visitation.

1.2.3. Suggestions

The team encourages the Director and the Administrative structures of the Establishment to complete and finalise the plan as soon as possible and ensure the final document is distributed widely amongst the staff at Oniris to ensure compliance and buy-in by all.

1.2.4. Decision of the Re-visitation Team

The Major Deficiency 2 ('Lack of clear objectives and strategy/ timeframe/indicators to reach them') has been corrected.

1. 3. Major Deficiency 3 ('Lack of consultative processes in decision making which leads to disconnect between the executive and the staff/students')

1.3.1. Findings

Oniris is a National College, integrating veterinary medicine, food sciences and engineering. The newly appointed heads of the three veterinary medicine teaching departments (a. pre-clinical sciences, b. veterinary public health and farm animal production and c. companion animal and equine clinical sciences) are members of the Extended Board, thus being able to contribute to designing the documents issued by this body and share them with the staff.

Each department has set its own dynamics and organization. At least 6 meetings are scheduled per year, being a place for discussions with the faculty members and the support staff, from where the proposals are shared with the Directorate. Debates with the staff on progress in current issues, outcome assessments and future tasks are organized by the Directorate twice a year. For each Teaching Department and Research Unit yearly meetings are organized by the General Director.

Job profiles and descriptions of all faculty members were updated and clear selection procedures for the new faculty member positions were set in place under collective arbitration. A “Harmonization Commission” was created to standardize staff promotions within Oniris. Working groups were set up and made public on the intranet and information about the new projects is provided during special meetings. A Commission was set up to select projects based on a transparent internal offer for new investments. The budget for teaching was entirely delegated to Teaching departments since 2016.

Students’ representatives meet monthly with the General Director, administrative or academic staff for debating students questions/requests and minutes are published.

1.3.2. Comments

The majority of staff spoken to commented on the improvement in communication from the top down as well as within/between the teaching departments and research units. The students found the ‘open door’ policy of the Director very useful and felt that they could ask any questions they wished and that the Director would respond to these. The number of meetings at all levels for debate and discussion has greatly improved since the previous meeting.

1.3.3. Suggestions

The team urge the establishment to continue to embed the new system of communication both up and down the management structures.

1.3.4. Decision of the Re-visitation Team

The Major Deficiency 3 (‘Lack of consultative processes in decision making which leads to disconnect between the executive and the staff/students’) has been corrected.

2. Correction of the Minor Deficiencies

2.1. Minor deficiency 1 “Academic teaching and support staff”

2.1.1. Findings

The communication between the General Directorate and the teaching and support staff on career possibilities and promotion within Oniris has been amended. Information on the procedures is clearly found on the newly restructured intranet. Meanwhile, an open and objective procedure for career development including appointment, tenure, promotion, and dismissal for all staff is in place. A “Harmonization Commission”, the Staff Technical Committee and Human Resources Service are involved in the promotion of the support staff to ensure greater visibility and consistency of the process. The promotion criteria for all staff is

clearly understood. The criteria for academic staff is ruled by the Ministry of Agriculture and the recruitment ceiling affects both promotion and the new posts.

2.2.2. Comments

The improvement in awareness of career development and promotion possibilities within Oniris was a very positive change, leading to more confidence of the staff in the Directorate.

2.2.3. Suggestions

None

2.3. Minor deficiency 2 “Curriculum/teaching quality and evaluation”

2.3.1. Findings

Veterinary curriculum is subject to periodical national reviews based on the standards defined at the national and European levels, and took place in 2001, 2005 and 2008. A new project of revision is in progress based on the Day-One-Competencies of the EAEVE and includes faculty from the 4 French Vet Schools and practitioners.

Day-One-Skills (now Day-One-Competences) have been posted on Moodle and have been available for all students since 2015. All students are given information about Day-One-Competences at the beginning of each new academic year since 2015-2016. Presentations are available on Moodle for all students. The Day One Competencies are assessed by the teachers at the end of each academic year and also at the end of clinical rotations.

Student feed-back on teaching is taken into account in revision of the curriculum and teaching methods.

2.3.2. Comments

The way Day One Competencies are delivered and assessed varies across the course. In some areas, for example the equine rotation, the Day One Competencies are listed and given to the students to ensure completion and sign of by the end of the rotation. In other areas, these are taken as implicit within the course.

2.3.3. Suggestions

Mapping of Day One Skills across the curriculum as a whole could assist future development of it.

2.3. Minor deficiency 3 “Facilities”

2.3.1. Findings

Since the last visitation, there have been a number of amendments made to the facilities to enhance the access of the more numerous students accepted by school. WiFi has been enabled across most of the campus as well as the development of VPN to allow access remotely.

2.3.2. Comments

Both staff and students commented positively on the WiFi and VPN access.

2.3.3. Suggestions

None

2.4. Minor deficiency 4 “Animals and teaching materials of animal origin”

2.4.1. Findings

A number of laboratory animals (rabbits) are still used in Physiology and Pharmacology. The number of animals attending small animal hospital has risen in the past three years, due primarily to the opening of the small animal emergency clinic. The equine caseload is slowly increasing, particularly after the emergency facilities have been opened. All anaesthetic inductions are being carried out by veterinarians.

2.4.2. Comments

Although the team recognizes that the number of live animals used has dropped since the previous visit, they remain concerned that alternative methods other than the use of live animals for practical physiology and pharmacological teaching are not yet in place.

The team is pleased that the anaesthetic inductions are now carried out exclusively by veterinarians or vet students under direct supervision of a veterinarian.

2.4.3. Suggestions

The team would strongly suggest that an alternative to use of live animals should be implemented as soon as practically possible.

2.5. Minor deficiency 5 “Clinical facilities and organization”

2.5.1. Findings

The team viewed the new small animal theatre areas due to be opened within the next month. They also toured the equine and bovine facilities and observed the changes made since the previous visit. The flooring in the equine facilities has been entirely replaced.

2.5.2. Comments

The investment in facilities was visible to the team during the re-visit. The staff was satisfied with the improvements in infrastructure, and had no concern on managing the enlarged space.

2.5.3. Suggestions

None

2.6. Minor deficiency 6 “Research”

2.6.1. Findings

The strategy for research has been clearly enunciated in the Strategic Plan of Oniris, under the point “To sustain outstanding research for tomorrow changes”, with clear objectives and activities being detailed. The establishment has in place a policy of supporting its research units through different mechanisms, integrating the researchers into national research structures or university consortia, external projects or own budget.

2.6.2. Comments

Academic staff were clear on the strategic directions of the research and on their place to deliver this. Oniris supports its young staff in applying for grants.

2.6.3. Suggestions

None

2.7. Minor deficiency 7 “Miscellaneous”

2.7.1. Findings

The Ministry of Agriculture and its Directorate General for Studies and Research regulates the numerus clausus and also the core funding and this has not changed since the last evaluation.

FINAL REPORT AS ISSUED BY ECOVE ON 17 MAY 2017

Oniris applied in 2016 for EAEVE evaluation of QA in teaching and submitted a QA SER based on the Uppsala SOP.

2.7.2. Comments

None

2.7.3. Suggestions

None

As the team focused on the 2014 major deficiencies (Budapest SOP) the ESEVT indicators have not been recalculated.

3. Conclusion

The Re-visitation Team considers that the Major Deficiencies identified during the Visitation done in October 2014 (i.e. 'Lack of implementation of Biosecurity processes', 'Lack of clear objectives and strategy/ timeframe/ indicators to reach them', 'Lack of consultative processes in decision making which leads to disconnect between the executive and the staff/students') have all been addressed and corrected by the Establishment to the satisfaction of the team, and therefore the team recommends to ECOVE the status of Approval for the Oniris.

Annex 1 Decision of ECOVE

The Committee concluded that the Major Deficiencies identified in 2014 had been rectified.

The 'ONIRIS (Nantes Atlantic National College of Veterinary Medicine, Food Sciences and Engineering), Nantes' is classified after Re-Visitation as holding the status of **APPROVAL**.