

FINAL REPORT AS ISSUED BY ECOVE ON 19 NOVEMBER 2015

**European Association
of Establishments for Veterinary Education**

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



**REPORT ON THE STAGE 1 VISITATION TO THE FACULTY
OF VETERINARY MEDICINE, UTRECHT UNIVERSITY, THE NETHERLANDS**

21 – 26 SEPTEMBER 2014

by the EXPERT GROUP

Visitor on Training in Animal Production, Food Safety & Quality and Veterinary Public Health

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INTRODUCTION

Faculty of Veterinary Medicine in Utrecht, the Netherlands (FVMUU) is one of seven faculties comprising Utrecht University. The University was founded in 1636, and in 1821 the training of veterinarians started. It is the only veterinary faculty in the Netherlands.

The Faculty has been regularly evaluated by ESEVT since 1988 and accredited by AVMA-COE since 1973 and was in for routine evaluation and accreditation in 2014.

The visitation in September 2014 was an AVMA-COE accreditation site visit, with 2 ESEVT observers (Giovanni Re, Turin, Italy and Mia Berg, student, Copenhagen, Denmark). Two experienced ESEVT evaluators (Philip Duffus, Bristol, UK and Hans Henrik Dietz, Copenhagen, Denmark) also served as regular AVMA-COE site team members.

Giovanni Re served as chair of the ESEVT Stage 2 process and was partly helped by Philip Duffus and Hans Henrik Dietz.

Philip Duffus served as chair of the Stage 1 and Hans Henrik Dietz served as Coordinator.

ESEVT had decided that a team of 4 ESEVT experts was sufficient to do the additional evaluation and accreditation of the issues not contained in the AVMA-COE site visit. Furthermore, it was made known to the ESEVT team that an ordinary, full ESEVT report was not expected, but that a report comprised of the AVMA-accepted report (covering the 11 AVMA-COE standards) plus a supplementary ESEVT report on Stage II, Animal Production, Veterinary Public Health and a list of the ratios would suffice.

AVMA has 2 annual meetings of the Council on Education (COE), one in March and one in September. The AVMA report on Utrecht 2014 is expected to be processed at the COE meeting in March 2015, and then this report with the permission of the FVMUU together with the short ESEVT report will be presented to ECOVE as the final ESEVT report.

During the site visit a representative of the Organisation of the Netherlands and Flanders Accreditation Organisation was also participating in the site visit.

The Self Evaluation Report was prepared according to the AVMA P&P, but not according to the ESEVT SOP laid down in the guidelines. However, the team received sufficient additional written and oral information.

The team experienced a very well organized site visit, excellent hospitality and an open door policy, where all requests from the team were professionally fulfilled.

The team found no evidence of major deficiencies and suggests that the Faculty be fully approved and accredited at Stage 1 and Stage 2 according to the rules laid down in the ESEVT SOP.

1 ANIMAL PRODUCTION

1.1 Findings

- The SER provided to the visitors was based on the format used by the AVMA. As such there was not a separate section devoted to only Animal Production. Nevertheless, there was in reality a wide range of subjects offered which more than adequately cover the ESEVT requirements
- The farm belonging to the University is not only within walking distance from the main faculty buildings, but is widely utilised for all aspects of animal production teaching from animal handling classes through to applied nutrition and farm management protocols. Within the farm there are commercial enterprises for pigs, dairy cows, beef systems and sheep production. The staff of this university owned facility were highly supportive of the teaching requirements
- The majority of this discipline is taught to all veterinary students in the Bachelor phase of the course; with more clinically related animal production subjects then taught within the Farm Animal Health/VPH track in the Masters phase
- Agronomy, Nutrition and Rural Economics are timetabled and include some non-lecture based teaching
- Animal production teaching is well integrated with related subjects e.g. herd-health management and ailments caused by poor or unbalanced nutrition
- Animal Welfare is taught within both the Bachelor phase and Masters phase, involving both Ethology and Behaviour

1.2 Comments

- There is a sufficient number of timetabled teaching and laboratory and “desk-based” work to balance the lectures
- Animal Production is delivered by a balanced combination of knowledge transfer (by means of lectures and self-tuition), application of knowledge and achievement of understanding (by means of seminars and group assignments), and development of skills (by means of practical and clinical rotations)
- Within the Masters phase, students are trained to acquire and apply knowledge and understanding, make judgments, and develop relevant competencies as required to enter the veterinary profession.

1.3 Suggestions

None

It is the opinion of the team, that the requirements regarding Animal Production as they are laid down in Annex I of the SOP are met.

2 FOOD HYGIENE & TECHNOLOGY AND VETERINARY PUBLIC HEALTH

2.1 Findings

- Within the highly integrated veterinary curriculum developed at Utrecht, the VPH course is taught by the staff of several departments
- VPH, including the disciplines of Food Hygiene and "One Health" is considered one of the top priority subjects (see: table 1 below) within the Utrecht curriculum. Because most course in the Utrecht Curriculum are integrated, the theme of VPH is implicitly a part of many courses. However, this theme is explicitly the subject of specific teaching programs like "block 21 Veterinary Public Health" taught in the third year of the bachelor phase, and specific parts in the master phase such as "block 5 Veterinary Public Health" for the Large Animal/Veterinary Public Health track
- Furthermore, VPH as a subject is explicitly incorporated in the integrated courses of the bachelor program, such as block 3 'From cell to tissue (muscle development), 'Infection and Immunity' (zoonoses), 'Neurology' (BSE), and the longitudinal courses 3, 4 and 5 within the bachelor phase (see table 2 below)
- In the master phase, VPH is also thoroughly integrated in the rotations and courses of the master programme, and explicitly in the block 'Hygiene, Microbiological and Pathological Diagnostics', block 1,3, 4 and 8 within the FA/VPH clerkship and in the basic rotation Farm Animals and Veterinary Public Health (see table 3)
- Additionally Food Hygiene, Veterinary Public Health and One Health is often the subject of the research project, in the bachelor phase (5 weeks) or in the master phase (3 months), and also in some of the elective courses in both the bachelor and master phases

Table 2.1 Food Hygiene/VPH subjects within Veterinary medicine curriculum Utrecht University

- Infectiology (1)
- Zoonoses (2)
- Pathology/Pathophysiology (3)
- Epidemiology (4)
- General microbiology (5)
- Food Microbiology (6)
- Food Technology related to Food safety (7)
- Food Safety (microbial, chemical and physical risks) (8)
- Public Health including water related problems (9)
- Environmental Health (10)
- Occupational Health (11)
- Toxicology (12)
- Slaughter Hygiene (13)
- Meat Hygiene (14)
- Meat Inspection (15)
- Export Certification (16)
- Notifiable Diseases (17)
- Quality Assurance of Food of Animal Origin (18)

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- Food Chain Quality (19)

Table 2.2 Courses and allocated time (in ECTS) explicitly for Food Hygiene/VPH subjects (numbers see table 1) within the bachelor program Utrecht curriculum

Course	time	subjects
From cell to tissue	0.5	3,18
Infection and Immunity	3	1,2,5,8,17
Longitudinal course 1	0.5	1,13,15,17
Longitudinal course 2	1	5
Digestion	1	2,17
Neurology, the sense and anaesthesiology	0.5	15,17
Longitudinal course 3	1	1,2,5,8
Epidemiology and Breeding	2	4
Veterinary Public Health	6	2,6,7,8,10,11,13,14,15,18,19
Integration and multi organ diseases	2	1,2,5,8
Applied legislation, ethics and environment	1	14,15,16,17,18
Longitudinal course 4	1	1,2,8,10,11
Longitudinal course 5	1	1,2,8,10,11
Total	19.5 (13 weeks)	

Table 2.3 Courses and allocated time (in ECTS) explicitly for Food Hygiene/VPH subjects (numbers see table 1) within the master program of the Utrecht curriculum

Course	time	subject
Master Uniform		
HMPD	1.5	1,2,5,6,7,8
Master differentiated		
Track FA/VPH:		
Block 1	4.5	1,2,3,18,19
Block 3	3	1,2,4,10,11,12,17,19
Block 4	1.5	1,2,16,17
Block 5	6	2,6,7,8,9,10,11,13,14,15,16,18,19
Block 6	3	1,2,16,17,18,19
Total	19.5 (13 weeks)	
Track CA and E		
Basic rotation FA/VPH	5	2,6,8,13,14,15,16,18,19
Total	6.5 (4.4 weeks)	

2.2 Comments

- The total time within the six year curriculum explicitly allocated to VPH varies with the tracks, and the choices of individual students. The track FA/VPH 26 weeks (10,8 % of total curriculum), the tracks Equine and Companion Animals 17 weeks (11% of total curriculum) (see tables 2 and 3)
- This training leads to day 1 skills, especially for students finishing the FA/VPH track, which are discussed and evaluated with the Dutch Food Safety Authority (NVWA). When veterinarians start working for this organization they enter a 3 months training programme which is adjusted to the VPH programme discussed above
- The meat inspection routines are generally taught by relying on small scale slaughtering units, by which the students are given the opportunity to study and practice the various slaughtering and processing steps in great detail. On the other hand, such units fail to demonstrate the upscaled automated slaughtering and processing methods, common to modern industrial practice
- The contents of the curriculum would appear to follow the recommendations of ESEVT, both in terms of addressing the various ‘major topics’ that provide the scientific basis for the professional qualifications of veterinarians in a control function (as stipulated in European legislation), and by applying the weighting factors of the various ‘content areas’ suggested in the ESEVT Guidelines
- Training exercises are generally conducted in small enough groups to secure appropriate interaction between students and teachership. Also, during meat inspection practicals, students are exposed to enough animal material of the major production animal species.

2.3 Suggestions

- It might be useful to familiarise students with modern, intensive and upscaled slaughtering and processing by providing video material on current industrial slaughtering, as for instance practiced in most export abattoirs
- It could be useful to set up a FA/VPH Working Group, which should include representatives from the various Departments that deal with VPH issues. Such a working group would be expected to seek opportunities to confront students with the VPH concept throughout both the bachelor and masters phases. The membership of such a team could also serve as role models indicating job opportunities for graduates in the VPH sector and acting as spokespeople towards governmental and industrial stakeholders.

It is the opinion of the team, that the requirements regarding Food Hygiene and Veterinary Public Health including meat inspection training as they are laid down in Annex I of the SOP are met.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The visit to the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, Utrecht 21 – 26 September 2014 was carried out in a cordial and very friendly and professional atmosphere. In addition, the team was supplied with all further information that was requested.

The self-evaluation report proved a helpful tool, reflecting the true status of the veterinary school in Utrecht.

Cooperation with the AVMA team took place in a friendly and flawless atmosphere and the ESEVT observers (Re and Berg) participated in all meetings but did not vote on the 11 AVMA standards. The ESEVT team fully appreciates the AVMA report, except for the following issues

- *to ESEVT it is not a deficiency that the Faculty is headed by a non-veterinarian*
- *to ESEVT the teaching in small animal isolation facilities is not an issue*

All over the campus the team noted that the Faculty was clean and tidy and all buildings were very well maintained and a considerable number of the buildings including, all the clinical departments were either new or recently rebuilt. The team saw an impressive amount of hands on training with animals many of which were owned by the university in its dairy herd, a large swine herd and the kennel and cattery. The team saw many examples of excellent teaching. By excellent teaching the team means a process where there is productive and intensive interaction between teachers at different levels and students and including an array of different didactic methods. But it also includes an environment where it is obvious that there is mutual respect for each other at all levels from first year students to senior professors.

The Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, Utrecht has its strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and threats. The team has identified several strong points:

1. The university has dedicated, enthusiastic and open-minded personnel, from professors to support staff. The same is true for students, who are well appreciated within the university as excellent students
2. The university has a healthy financial situation
3. The university has very good physical facilities at the same geographical location in the outskirts of Utrecht
4. Integrated curriculum
5. Excellent extramural teaching in the privatised ambulatory clinic
6. Excellent teaching and learning environment in animal production
7. Excellent clinical facilities for both companion animals, production animals and equine patients
8. A very robust case load especially in cattle
9. Many faculty with board certification
10. There is a good balance between animal species in teaching
11. Excellent IT service
12. Students are very engaged in research in both the bachelor and the master program
13. Tutor programme and E-portfolio are commendable

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The team has also identified some weaknesses, like the hands-on training in companion animal and equine surgery which should be improved.

In conclusion, it is the opinion of the Visitation Team that the FVMU is in agreement with the ESEVT SOP for Stage 1. Therefore the Visitation Team recommends to Ecove the status of Approval for the FVMU.

Annex 1: Indicators (ratios)

		Guidelines	
R1.	no. undergraduate veterinary students:	1400	
	-----	----- = 4,44	<8,381
	no. total academic FTE in veterinary training:	315	
R2.	no. undergraduate veterinary students:	1400	
	-----	----- = 2,71	<9,37
	no. FTE total Faculty:	516	
R3.	no. undergraduate veterinary students	1400	
	-----	----- = 6,03	<11,0
	no. VS FTE in veterinary training	232*	
R4.	no. graduating annually:	200	
	-----	----- = 0,91	<2,0
	no. VS FTE in veterinary training (estimation):	220*	
R5.	no. FTE supportive staff in veterinary training:	113	
	-----	----- = 0,34	0,5-1,9
	no. FTE academic staff in veterinary training:	331	
R6.	Supervised practical training:	not available	
	-----	-----	>0,6
	Theoretical training (Lectures, Seminars, Self directed work):	not available	

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R7.	Laboratory and desk based work + non-clinical animal work: not available			
	-----	-----		<1,8
	Clinical work		not available	
R8.	Teaching Load:	10080		
	-----	----- = 3		2,6-46
	Self directed learning:	3360		
R9.	Total hours Vet Curriculum:	10080		
	-----	----- = 15		8,9-31
	Total no. curr. Hours Food Hygiene / Public Health:	1550		
R10.	Obligatory hours extramural work in Vet inspection:	?		
	-----	----- =		0,07-0,55
	Total no. curr. Hours Food Hygiene / Public Health:	1550		
R11.	no. of food producing animals seen at Faculty:	617		
	-----	----- = 3,08		>0,76
	no. of students graduating annually:	200		
R12.:	no. individual food-producing animal consultations:			
	outside of the Faculty (<i>indiv. animals examined</i>)	25409		
	-----	----- = 127		>8,3
	no. of students graduating annually	200		

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R12.b no. individual food-producing animal calls:			
outside of the Faculty (calls)	10136		
-----	-----	= 50,6	>8,3
no. of students graduating annually:	200		
R13. no. herd health visits:	900*		
-----	-----	= 4,5	>0,32
no. of students graduating annually:	200		
R14. no. equine cases			
(indiv. Animals in ambulatory equine practice):	4777		
-----	-----	= 23,89	>2,7
no. of students graduating annually:	200		
R14.b no. equine cases (calls in ambulatory practice):	3133		
-----	-----	= 15,6	>2,7
no. of students graduating annually:	200		
R14.c no. equine cases (cases in Faculty clinics):	5610		
-----	-----	= 28,0	>2,7
no. of students graduating annually:	200		
R14.d no. equine cases (hospitalised days):	2495		
-----	-----	= 12,5	
no. of students graduating annually:	200		

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R15.	<i>no. poultry / rabbit cases (ind.):</i>	<i>not available</i>		
	-----	-----	=	>0,41
	<i>no. of students graduating annually:</i>	200		
R16.	no. companion animals seen	12555		
	-----	-----	= 62,78	>48,0
	no of students graduating annually:	200		
R17.	no. poultry (flocs) and rabbit (producing units) seen:	120*		
	-----	-----	= 0,6	>0,03
	no. of students graduating annually:	200		
R18.	no. necropsies food producing animals + equines:	126		
	-----	-----	= 0,63	>1,0
	no. of students graduating annually:	200		
R19.	no. poultry / rabbit necropsies (Done also externally in Gesundheitsdienst)	1500*		
	-----	-----	= 7,5	>0,6
	no. of students graduating annually:	200		
R20.	no. necropsies of companion animals:	494		
	-----	-----	= 2,47	>1,6
	no. of students graduating annually:	200		

PS 1: All ratios could not be calculated due to the highly integrated curriculum.

PS 2: Listed indicators are not specified per track

Annex 2 Student's report

Findings

The veterinary students at Utrecht University are very friendly, eager and hard-working. There were students involved in almost all tours, visits and meetings that the ESEVT team were involved in at the UU. This reflects the students' wide-ranging influence at the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine (FVM).

Organisation

Utrecht University has a well organised Faculty of Veterinary Medicine (FVM). The students are also well organised with one major vet students' association (DSK) to which most vet students belong. DSK is run by a board of 6 students (3 male and 3 female) who are appointed annually, and take a year out of their vet studies to be full-time DSK board members. The FVM UU financially and politically support this structure.

Furthermore, there are many more associations and clubs of various sizes and purposes, both social and academic.

There is a transparent and intuitive structure in place for means of communication, complaints etc. within the Faculty, which means that all students know who to contact in case of complaints.

There are students present in every council, board etc. at the FVM, and those students are elected by the student body or by the DSK.

Student Welfare

The veterinary students at UU are mostly young when they start their studies. Therefore it is paramount that faculty provide adequate support to help the students cope with the pressures of being a student in a demanding study such as veterinary medicine. The FVM has taken to this task with great pleasure and aplomb. Each student is assigned a tutor who helps assess the individual student's academic progress during their entire studies. Additionally, there are several different kinds of counsellors that the students can contact for personal help and guidance.

The UU campus is a very safe area, and the students feel absolutely secure both on and off campus. All students seem to feel involved, heard, and very well educated at UU. They were genuinely fond of their professors, teachers and each other.

Physical Facilities

Study facilities

The facilities in Utrecht are outstanding. There are numerous learning environments, where the

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students can bring their own laptops for studying and there are also many computers provided by the faculty. A few students did complain that many of the computers had recently been removed in favour of "bring-your-own-laptop" study spots, but as it is now mandatory for new students to bring their own laptop, the lavish amount of on-site desktops will likely become redundant in the near future.

Lecture Halls

Unfortunately, the demand that students bring a laptop, is not reflected in the lecture halls, as there are practically no electricity sockets for the students' laptops. However, it is expected that this will be rectified, as soon as the students voice the need

All lecture halls and teaching rooms are of sufficient size, bright and modern with ample opportunity to project both sound and pictures.

Clinics

All on-site clinics are safe, modern and professional. The students appreciate their time in the clinics, and many spend their free-time there.

A number of off-site clinics are used for rotation and for extra-mural studies (EMS). These facilities are also state-of-the-art. Many students rate these EMS's as their favourite part of the entire study.

Teaching and learning

As FVM UU has an integrated systems approach to their curriculum, clinical and non-clinical teaching occur simultaneously. The students are very positive about the curriculum - clinical and theoretical.

FVM teaches their students to peer-review, which also helps them evolve both personally and professionally.

All facilities, as well as the new curriculum and dedicated teachers, provide for an excellent learning environment.

Library and educational resources

The main campus library is modern, very spacious and very well suited to the students' needs. The FVM provides the students with access to literature in both physical and virtual form. FVM has a website that is easily navigable and which contains information on a wide range of topics, including advice on handling study-related stress.

Admissions

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Admissions to the FVM is done in three ways. And the students seem to appreciate and understand it.

Comments and recommendations

Veterinary students in Utrecht are generally very content. They hardly complain about anything, but are quick to praise and commend.

My only slight worry as a student, is that the FVM students are very young. So even though FVM attempts to involve students in all processes, it is conceivable that the students are easily and unnoticeably coerced into agreeing with decisions made by faculty.

There could also be more focus on international cooperation.

Annex 3 Decision of ECOVE

No Major Deficiencies had been found.

The Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, Utrecht University is classified after Stage 1 Evaluation as holding the status of: **APPROVAL**.