

**European Association
of Establishments for Veterinary Education**

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



**REPORT ON THE STAGE 2 EVALUATION VISITATION
TO THE UNIVERSITY OF VETERINARY MEDICINE VIENNA, AUSTRIA**

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EXPERT GROUP

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INTRODUCTION

All of the documentation received shows that the process of assessing quality is in place for more than two years.

The SER2 report was prepared following the EAEVE requests and examples of documentation were present from the start of the visit for each assessment procedure. All the documentation is in English.

Full documentation of the assessment procedures and figures explaining the procedures were available from the start of the visit. The persons responsible for quality assurance were always available and very helpful; the communication with all students and employees interviewed and met was pleasant and profitable.

Various procedures exist to handle unexpected events and to be prepared for accidents, drills, e.g. fire drills and drills concerning accidental spilling of chemotherapeutics, are regularly conducted. The handling by the University of the present situation, where one of the two Stage-2 experts had to cancel participation also reflects that the University as a whole has the capacity and ability to amend to acute situations.

With the provided documents, the access to the Internet and Intranet web systems, and the interviews conducted, the amount of material available for the evaluation was considered definitely satisfactory.

Target agreements as well as goals defined in the framework of annual staff appraisals for academic and support (including technical) staff were provided during the site visitation, as well as their evaluation.

The vast majority of quality procedures, and all critical quality control procedures, they have been in action for at least 2 years.

There were no references to SER-1 in the SER-2 material.

Assessment Procedure	Tools	Starting point
AP1 Policy Statement	Development Plan	2006
	Performance Agreement	2007
	Target Agreement	2007
	Performance Reports	2007
	Activity Reports	2005
	Continuous monitoring of key indicators	2005
	Intellectual Capital Report	2005
	EAEVE	1997
	Internal Revision	2009
	Financial Statement	2004
	Organisation Guidelines	Continuous
AP2 Assessment of Students	Quality based, formal admissions procedure	2005
	Validation of the admission procedure	2011
	Analysis of the effects of the admissions procedure	2007
	(Breit, SM; Künzel, W.: Effect of the recently established admissions procedure on success in the first-year exams at the University of Veterinary Medicine Vienna, Austria. J Vet Med Educ. 2007; 34(3):335-339	
	Künzel, W., Breit, SM.: The Admission Procedure at the University of Veterinary Medicine Vienna, Austria. J Vet Med Educ. 2008; 35(1))	
	OSCE	2007
	Formal monitoring of student flow, graduates, dropout rates etc.	2005
AP3 Postgraduate student education / academic track	Regular assessment of students governed by UG 2002 and University Statutes and by regulation for examinations (part of the curriculum); predetermined and published	2002
	Quality based, formal admissions procedure	2005
	Detailed description of requirements, procedures and assessment (peer review) contained in curricula (publicly available). Concomitant quality assurance by specific and curricular committees as well as Research Profile Area Board	2008 (PhD); 2010 (Postdocs)
AP3 Postgraduate student education / professional track	Internal and external (FWF Austrian Science Fund) peer review of Doctoral Programmes	2008
	Detailed description of requirements, procedures and assessment contained in internship curriculum and residency statute (publicly available)	2006
	Concomitant quality assurance by specific internship committees and Residency Advisory Board	2006

	External quality assurance of residents and residency programmes by EBVS / ABVS	2003
AP4 Student welfare	Student feedback	Continuous
	Audit and accreditation “University and Family”	2010
	IT- and online services	2008 (VetmedOnline)
	Tutoring and counselling	continuous
AP 5 Teaching Staff	Appointment procedure regulated by UG 2002 and internal guideline	2002
	Evaluation by students, immediate superior (annual appraisal), in the framework of habilitations as well as for the purpose of distinctions and awards (teacher of the year)	continuous
AP 6 Learning Opportunities	Participation in international library ranking (BIX)	2007
	Teachers’ meetings (ULV, UPV)	2002
	Vetucation	2007
AP 7 Training Programme and awarding of title of veterinary surgeon	EAEVE	1997
	CHE Ranking (Biomedicine and Biotechnology)	2006
	Regular revisions of the curriculum (PDCA) → curricular committees	continuous (current revision began in 2010)
	SORA Analysis on career entry of veterinary graduates	2008
	Alumni Assessment Survey	2010
AP 8 Clinics, labs and farms	Animal Hospital information system (TIS)	2001
	ISO certifications / reference labs	continuous since 2003
	EC accreditation	1998
	EMMA accreditation	2010
	Internal QM Measures	2008 (e.g. Pharmacy, Equine Clinic, Small Animal Surgery)
	Guidelines	continuous
AP 9 Continuing Professional Education	Regular evaluation of University courses and continuing professional education offerings; feedback	2010
	Curriculum for university courses; concomitant quality assessment by University Course Advisory Board	continuous

	Award of educational credits for CPE offerings by the Austrian Veterinary Chamber	2009
AP 10 Research	Research evaluation	2006
	Research Profile Areas and Board	2003
	Scientific Advisory Board	2003
	Bonification system for third party funding and publication performance	2003
	Bibliometric analyses	2003
	Internal and external (FWF Austrian Science Fund) peer review of Doctoral Programmes	2008
	Peer reviews in the framework of the Postdoc Programme	2010
AP 11 Internationalisation of education and research	Regular monitoring and publishing of staff and student mobility	2005
	Regular monitoring and publishing of the number of international cooperations and partnerships in teaching and research	2006
	Residency programmes and board examinations	2003
AP 12 Cooperation with Stakeholders and Society	Audit and accreditation "Career and Family"	2010
	Alumni Assessment Survey	2010
	Instructors' network (formal guidelines)	2010
	Amount and format of measures taken to increase media response (public relations)	2007 (Observer)

Chapter 1. Policy statement

Findings

Since 2006, the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna, has been working on implementation and development of a quality assurance and quality management system. Since 2007, the University has prepared a Developmental Plan that forms the basis for the Performance Agreement with the Ministry.

The University has defined a Quality Policy, which is published in German (also available in English (<http://www.vetmeduni.ac.at/quality-management/?L=2>)) on the University website. The quality policy describes the foundation of the quality policy and the overall quality goals.

The quality strategy employed includes a series of selected measures representing the overall quality goals. These measures are continuously monitored and discussed at least once yearly both at an organizational and an individual level. Actions are taken if there is no progress towards the quality goals.

The quality assurance system focuses on a) education, b) research and c) scientific services. In each of these three sectors, a set of standards and goals have been defined, partly self-determined by way of the Developmental Plan, partly negotiated with the Ministry, and partly as a result of legal mandates.

The strategic goals defined in the Developmental plan are then further broken down in a cascading process from the Rectorate through University Council, Departments, and Professors to departmental goals for each department and further to individual goals of each staff member and evaluated at least yearly during the annual staff appraisal.

A quality management team has been set up and it has established a system of defined responsibilities. A quality manager has also been employed to facilitate and develop initiatives relating to quality assessment.

Research education and research quality are easily distinguished as both have their own set of procedures and measures.

Students are represented in the University's most important bodies (University Council, Senate, Ethics and Animal Welfare Committee, Curricular Committee, Habilitation Committee, Appointment Committee, PhD Committee).

Comments

The whole concept of Quality, Quality control and Quality assurance seems to be deeply embedded in the lifestyle of the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna and a dedicated and holistic approach, which allows continuous improvement, is certainly evident.

Importantly, the University has undertaken new initiatives within development of leadership among future, talented and present leaders (“LeadingVet”), and as a means to assist young researchers; initiatives relating to formal career plan discussions (eg. Postdoc retreat) etc. have been initiated. Further, the University has a strong focus on equal opportunities.

Suggestions

The Quality Policy and the Quality Manual (as well as the Development Plan and Annual Report) are available in English. To facilitate internationalisation and international mobility, it is suggested that

even more key documents relating to quality assurance are presented in English on the University's websites.

Chapter 2. Assessment of students, post graduate education and student welfare

2.1 Undergraduate education

Findings

Admissions procedure:

The University offers 203 places per year for the Diploma Programme in Veterinary Medicine and an admissions procedure is in place, the legal obligations of which are defined in the University Act.

The admissions procedure starts online with the applicant applying online for admissions. Then applicants are invited to take an aptitude test consisting of two parts (Part 1 dealing with requirements in studies and professional life of veterinary medicine; Part 2 being a multiple choice examination with questions within biology, chemistry and physics). 75% of the places are then granted to the best – ranked applicants.

The remaining 25%, applicants are invited to an on-campus interview with an interview panel consisting of one senior academic staff member, one veterinary student and one veterinary practitioner. Usually, twice as many applicants as available spaces are invited, applicants being invited in descending order according to their place on the ranking list.

The interview addresses the applicants' personal motivation, their knowledge of the veterinary profession, their expectations, their experience with animals, social abilities, study habits, etc. The interviewers are trained before the interviews commence and they are provided with detailed instructions on the purpose of the interview, the interview process, questions and scoring.

A regular evaluation of the admissions procedure is in place. The decree regarding the admissions procedure has to be approved by the Senate and the University Council each year.

A working group under the supervision of an external consultant redesigned part 1 of the aptitude test in 2010. The recommendations by the working group a new test was designed and validated by a panel of 200 veterinarians from and outside the University

The admissions procedure is open for foreign applicants, but there is an additional legal requirement for sufficient command of the German language

An applicant can appeal the results of the entrance examination to the Admissions committee and the applicant can appeal the decision taken by the Faculty.

Table1: Assessment admission of students

	2011/12	2010/11
Number of students applying	1422	1346
Number of applicants passing the Aptitude test	896	777
Number of students admitted	222	188
Austrian students (% of admissions)	55.86	59.04
Foreign students from EU (% of admissions)	43.24	39.89
Foreign students (% of admissions)	0.90	1.06

The assessment procedures employed seems valid, useful and appropriate.

Assessment procedures of the performance of enrolled undergraduates:

Student performance is assessed regularly using consistently applied, published criteria, regulations and procedures.

Students are informed about course syllabus, learning objectives and outcome as well as examination methods. This information is made available on the VetmedOnline (the web-based study management system) which is easily accessed by both teachers and students.

The VetmedOnline is also used for communicating the results of the assessments to the students and it is also used to provide them with official graded certificates.

The basic guidelines for the examination system are specified in the University Act. General information is specified in the University Statute, and detailed information is given in the course syllabus.

The university statute and the curriculum are issued by the executive bodies of the University (Rectorate, Senate and University Council).

Matters relating to curriculum, examinations and assessment of students are handled by the Curricular Committee (consisting of 4 academic staff and 2 students).

The curriculum is structured in years. Continuing the course of studies is only possible if all exams from the prior year have been successfully completed and passed. Otherwise, timing constraints will impede the course of study; in this case, students must reckon with a waiting period of up to two semesters. Apart from that, students can decide on their own when to take exams and in what timeframe they will complete their education. On the other hand, students who have passed an examination are allowed to retake the examination in order to improve their grade.

There are two kinds of examinations:

- The course content examination that takes place during or at the end of the course and can be retaken 3 times, the last two of which take place in front of an examination committee
- The professional examinations that take place usually at the end of each semester, and at the end of the 9th semester in the form of an OSCE examination. The professional examination can also be retaken 3 or 4 times, the last two of which take place in front of an examination committee

A system of looking at the grade distribution in each course is in preparation and an external company has scrutinized some courses this way. Information on grades, copies of examination questions etc. for all exams are stored centrally and were available for inspection.

Most assessment of students take place as summative assessment though teachers may use formative assessment throughout the course of studies, e.g. in the form of publication of old exam questions, simulated exams, questionnaires and self-monitoring tests in the web-based, interactive and easily accessible Vetucation system.

Law regulates complaints about exam procedures. Complaints are to be sent to the Vice-Rector for Study Affairs and Clinical Veterinary Medicine who can decide to revoke the examination. Complaints concerning grades are not allowed.

Any student can access the Student Service at the University in case of problems with assessment and assessment procedures.

Comments

It is evident that the University has applied and presently applies considerable efforts and resources in order to develop and maintain up-to-date, relevant and appropriate admissions and assessment procedures.

Suggestions

It can be suggested to further develop the system for monitoring the grade (or pass/fail) distribution of each course on a regular basis as an additional means for the University's focus on constructive alignment.

2.2 Post-graduate student education; academic track

Findings

The University offers Doctoral, PhD, and Postdoc programmes and 5 Master programmes.

A certain amount of the University's budget is earmarked for PhD- and Postdoc-programmes. Further, the University adds up as many PhD-positions as the Austrian Science Fund finance.

A key committee for quality assessment within postgraduate academic training is the Curricular Committee for Degree Programmes for Postgraduate education that develops, monitors and revises the guidelines and curricula of the PhD-programmes.

PhD-programmes are in English and have an ECTS value of 180, 23 of which are reserved for PhD-courses and seminars.

Admission to the PhD-programme is regulated in the PhD-curriculum and respects the EU's Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers.

The PhD-programme is open to all students who have completed 300 ECTS of university studies in veterinary medicine or related disciplines, though admission of outstanding pre-graduate students is possible at the discretion of the Curricular Committee for Degree Programmes for Postgraduate education. English-language proficiency is required.

The primary PhD-supervisor after consulting with other senior researchers of the University selects the most suitable candidate from the group of applicants. The Curricular Committee for Degree Programmes for Postgraduate education grants final approval of admittance.

The progress of each PhD-student is closely monitored by a PhD-committee unique to each PhD-student and it is complimented by annual progress reports, interim evaluations and the final PhD-exam. Further, the first year evaluation is designed to ascertain that the PhD-student has the potential to successfully complete the PhD-study.

The final assessment of the PhD-student is the PhD-examination held by the PhD-committee. The PhD-student needs to present proof of required courses and seminars and a thesis based on at least two publications. The PhD-committee evaluates the material and also selects an external examiner who also prepares a report. Following a public presentation followed by an open discussion, the PhD-committee suggests if the PhD-student passes or fails. In case of failing, the Curricular Committee for Degree Programmes for Postgraduate education is notified. The committee ultimately assesses the overall result of the PhD-student's performance and awards the final grade.

The Doctorate in Veterinary Medicine is a structured training programme of 3 years duration for students with a veterinary degree. It has lower requirements compared to PhD-studies in that only 1 publication and 15 ECTS of courses are required. A thesis has to be submitted for evaluation by the internal supervisor and one external expert. A public defence is also held and evaluated by a reviewer, the supervisor and the Vice-Rector for Study Affairs. In case of a negative review from one of the evaluators, a third reviewer is consulted.

The Postdoc programme was introduced in 2009. Each Postdoc has two senior scientists as mentors and the duration of the programme is up to 4 years. There is an internal call for projects, which are subsequently peer-reviewed and evaluated by the University's Research Profile Area Board. When a final selection of projects qualifying for the Postdoctoral Programme is made by the Research Profile Area Board, postdoc positions within these projects are advertised internationally.

The respective project managers review applications. Short-listed candidates are invited to an interview with members of the University's Research Profile Area Board, who then, in conjunction with the responsible project managers, select the most suitable candidates. The Curricular Committee for postgraduate studies provides concomitant quality assurance.

Admission to the Master programmes is governed by law. Some Masters programmes (e.g. Masters programmes "Interdisciplinary master of Animal-Human-Interaction" (IMHAI), "European Master of Comparative Morphology" (EUCOMOR) and "Master of Biomedicine and Biotechnology") have additional admissions procedures (e.g., aptitude test, interview etc.). Master courses and the curricula are handled essentially as pre-graduate courses and curricula through the curricula committee.

Tables 2: figures for post-graduate academic education

Type	No. students enrolled		No. students passed		Mean no. papers per student		Mean Impact factor per student	
	2010/11	2009/10	2010/11	2009/10	2010/11	2009/10	2010/11	2009/10
PhD-students	25	13	4	2	1.0	1.5	2.3	4.5
Master	Approx. 100	Approx. 100	Approx. 80% pass rate	Approx. 80% pass rate				
Doctorate	123	128	60	68	0.9	0.8	2.2	1.9
Postdoc	12	10	0	0	2.5	2.4	10.3	10.4

2.3 Post-graduate student education; professional track

Findings

The involvement of the University in the official professional postgraduate education track (*Fachtierarzt*) takes place by means of participation on the examinations committee. The Austrian Veterinary Chamber awards the title.

The system of Internship and Residency is active at the University.

Internships:

Rotating internships are in action in small animal medicine, equine medicine. Subject-specific non-rotating internships in reproductive medicine and ruminant medicine, all with a duration of one year.

Positions are advertised. Applications are reviewed by the respective internship committees (consisting of all teachers responsible for supervision of interns), who also interviews and selects candidates, and conduct regular evaluations during the course of the internship.

Completion of an internship is a requirement for entering specialisation programmes at European colleges.

Residency:

Positions are announced internationally. The Residency Advisory Board and the Rectorate on the basis for capacity and patient load define the number of positions.

The application and admission procedure for residencies is regulated by the University's Residency Statutes. Each position is supervised by the internal Residency Advisory Board in addition to the

supervision made by the respective diplomates and the Colleges of the European Board of Veterinary Specialisation.

The internal board keeps track of all programmes. Each year, residents fill out a questionnaire evaluating their training and the supervisor gives feedback to his/her resident. If the evaluation reveals that the resident or supervisor is not satisfied or that performance is not up to par, the internal board invites both for a personal interview. In cases of unsatisfactory performance the Residency Advisory Board recommends cancellation of the contract

Table 3: figures postgraduate professional specialisation

Diplomate title offered	Number of diplomates on staff	Number of interns 2012	Number of residents 2012
Equine medicine	2	5	
Small animal medicine	4	10	3
Reproductive medicine	7	2	2
European College of Anaesthesia and Analgesia	2		2
European College of Veterinary Clinical Pathology	2		1
European College of Veterinary Ophthalmologists	1		1
European College of Veterinary Surgery	5		3
Other European or American Colleges	35		
	58	17	12

Comments

The University is actively advancing the post-graduate clinical training and a large number of staff is already holding a Diplomate-degree and a number of the University's facilities are also acknowledged for intern and resident training.

Suggestions

None

2.4 Student welfare

Findings

Austrian law regulates in detail safety measures at the University. Focus of the legislation is directed at employees and the students indirectly benefits from all these security measures. Organizationally, safety supervisors are selected from the pool of academic as well as technical staff. In addition, the University employs an occupational health doctor. All relevant protocols for safety procedures are posted in the respective facilities for safety and educational purposes.

Importantly, students are instructed in safety procedures prior to their work e.g. in laboratories and clinics and students are informed about the prevention of zoonosis.

Senior students, who have been through an in-house training to be tutors, help groups of first-year students get acquainted with the campus and the University from the students' point of view.

Students elect a representative, who is the contact person responsible for providing up-to-date information to students and solving problems together with the Vice-Rector for Study Affairs and Clinical Veterinary Medicine. Additionally, every academic year the students select a representative to facilitate communication in case of problems or lack of clarity.

The Student Services at the University are responsible for student guidance and advice, dissemination of information to new students, protection of students' legal rights, registration of completed studies (general studies and the recognition of studies completed elsewhere), retakes of University examinations and communications with regard to academic affairs.

Student Services help students in all practical matters, both at the department and faculty level, and know whom to contact if further action is needed.

Typically, students are contacted by e-mail via mailing lists. All students get a user-account providing specific access to the University's IT-systems, including email, access to VetmedOnline, and Vetucation.

International Study Affairs Office and International Relations Office help international student. International Relations Office is also in charge of the overall coordination of the ERASMUS mobility programme at the University. The coordination officer for international affairs helps the students at the University in all matters regarding mobility programmes. Further, a "buddy-system" is in place so that foreign students are linked to mentor student.

In 2010, the University has been awarded the "career and family" certificate, and in 2011 the "university and family" certificate by the Federal Ministry of Economy, Family and Youth and the Federal Ministry for Science and Research in recognition of the fact that the University successfully has completed an independent audit to assess the possibility of balancing studies or a university career with having a family. Further, the University has two child-care centres available for students and employees on campus.

The University and the Student Union offer student counselling. Counselling is also provided for students with financial problems, the Student Union even has a small budget for students with per-acute financial problems.

A psychologist is available to the students.

Amble housing opportunities in close proximity of the University are available for students.

Comments

The University is actively addressing problems that the students face both related to student's health and welfare, tutoring of students and counselling of students.

There are able possibilities for students to give feedback anonymously e.g. by letter boxes placed throughout the University, through student representative etc.

Suggestions

None

Chapter 3. Assessment of teaching staff

Findings

Teaching staff is assessed in several ways beginning at staff recruitment and appointment where students are members of committees awarding the *venia docendi* and recruitment of professors.

Once employed, teaching staff is supported by means of in-house training primarily by means of regularly offered courses developed and managed by the University, e.g. Didactic training (beginner and advanced).

Course evaluations are performed on-line. Results were until 2009/2010 published in the intranet but this was stopped in 2010/2011 because response rates were too low to produce a representative result. The University therefore initiated a new evaluation system (Evaluation New/GEKO) in the academic year 2012/2013 with more emphasis on competencies.

Results of the evaluations are communicated in writing to the teachers and to the Vice-Rector for Study Affairs and Clinical Veterinary Medicine. The lectures are invited to optimize the courses and didactic concept. Until the year 2009/2010 the results were published on the University's intranet as a ranking (see above). Results of the evaluation process are indicators for the calculation of the performance incentive, which means that improvements increase the amount of incentive.

The system of course evaluation has been in place since 2001 and students have participated in recruitment and appointment committee since 1975.

Once a year, a jury consisting of the former year's teachers of the year, students and the Vice-Rector, awards the "Teacher of the Year" honour. Both junior and senior teaching staff, and recently also instructors are awarded.

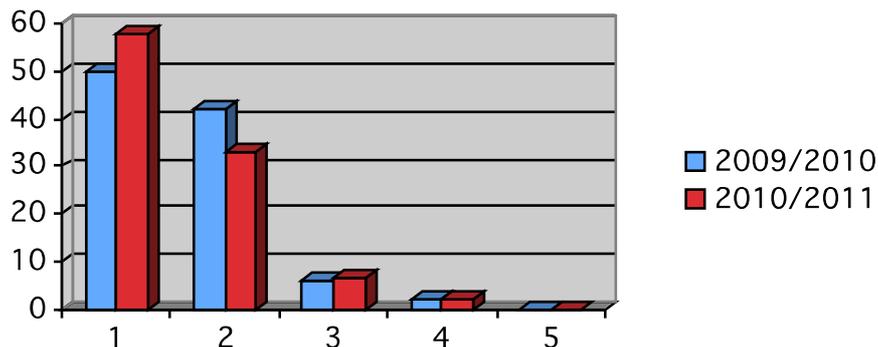
An additional jury also including students present an award for ambitious e-learning projects.

Annually, the Student's Union awards two prizes to teaching and/or technical staff.

Additionally, students can give anonymous feedback on teachers.

Evaluation of scientific merit is performed at an individual level as an integral part of individual annual performance reviews. Since 2002, full professors are also evaluated each 5-year by means of a self-evaluation that is assessed by two independent external and two internal reviewers, the results of which is discussed with the Rector and further becomes a part of each professor's employment contract.

Since 2009, about 300 teachers have been involved in evaluations that have been summarized into a single grade (1-5, 1 being the best). It is evident, that the majority of teachers are rated good/very good:



Comments

It is evident that the University is focussed on the continuous improvement of teaching and teaching staff, e.g. by offering training opportunities in didactic methods.

Suggestions

None

Chapter 4. Assessment of learning opportunities

Findings

Several systems (e.g. the VetmedOnline and Vetucation) are in place to assess, assure and promote the quality of the learning environment, and the students are introduced to the systems already from the beginning of their study.

IT and library facilities are provided at a University level. Dedicated staff is employed for developing and maintaining these systems. IT learning opportunities are constantly being expanded; many projects are running to implement the learning opportunity for students by new media.

A new skills lab has been set up for facilitating student learning.

Microscopes are available to the students even in the library.

Comments

It is evident that the University puts a lot of efforts and resources into developing and maintaining a diversity of learning opportunities to the students.

Suggestions

None

Chapter 5. Assessment of training programmes and the award of the title of Veterinary Surgeon

Findings

Development and maintenance of the veterinary curriculum is handled by the Curricular Committee, which consists of six members, among them two professors and two University lecturers appointed by the Senate as well as two students appointed by the Students' Union. The Vice-Rector for Study Affairs and Clinical Veterinary Medicine is an associate member.

The curriculum committee is meeting on a monthly basis to discuss questions and problems around the diploma program in Veterinary Medicine. Decrees of the committee are brought in the senate. Changes until June 30th are effective for the next academic year.

In 2010, it was decided to start a process of changing the curriculum in order to strengthen horizontal and vertical integration an intensive dialogue between all teachers involved in the curriculum is necessary. Currently about 100 members of the academic staff are working on planning and on defining learning outcomes and concepts for the new curriculum.

Essential competencies required at graduation are described in the "*Studienplan-Diplomstudium Veterinärmedizin*". Learning outcomes for each course are described in the course description for each course.

The study guide is published electronically. The study guide and the brochure on veterinary studies, together with information provided by all the departments and the Animal Hospital, are available on the University's web page.

Proposals concerning minor and major changes to the curriculum can be sent by each teacher. Proposals are discussed and evaluated by the Curricular Committee.

The new course evaluation system "Evaluation New/GEKO", where both students and teachers participate, focuses on different types of competencies (e.g. professional, methodological, social, personal and media competence) and it is likely to form the basis for continuous curricular improvement.

The University as a main area for development has identified formal, regular input from stakeholders and graduates. Informal input for stakeholders and graduates is present and active, mainly because of the close connection between people in the veterinary profession.

The University routinely performs a SWOT analysis of the curriculum each 3-5 years by asking alumni and other external stakeholders.

The ECTS system was adopted in 2002 and courses are also by now assigned an ECTS-value.

The inclusion and active use of learning outcomes form one element in a structure promoting life-long learning. In the 1st Semester, the students are also offered a course on learning strategies (*Studiendidaktik*). Further to this, the University also offers postgraduate training (both academic and professional track).

Comments

The University has established procedures for programme and course development and improvement. Inputs from students and teachers on curriculum and are actively absorbed by relevant committees and boards who can amend and optimise the program, its modules and courses if necessary. Students are actively involved in relevant committees.

Suggestions

The University is encouraged to pursue further means for formal, regular input from stakeholders and graduates.

Chapter 6. Assessment of quality assurance for clinics, laboratories and farm

Quality assurance in the clinical area:

Quality assurance relies on:

- The overall quality policies, the goals of which are also broken down to goals for the clinical area
- Standard operating procedures (some posted and accessible on the Intranet, but all are available on special quality management drives and periodically reviewed)
- An audit system for monitoring performance against the standards
- Reporting and investigation systems for incidents and complaints
- Regular morbidity and mortality reports and meetings to review how improvements can be made
- An Animal Hospital Information System (operated since 2001) serving as a means to e.g. store and retrieve medical records, billing, work flow planning. The system is continuously monitored, supported and developed by a special team
- The Clinic for Avian, Reptile and Fish Medicine has been accredited as a reference lab according to IEC/ISO 17520
- The clinical units of internal medicine of both the Clinic for Small Animals and the Equine Clinic have been certified according to ISO 9001

- The Insemination and Embryo Transfer Platform has been accredited according to 92/65/EEC

Quality assurance in laboratory diagnostic services:

The diagnostic laboratories provide a comprehensive service supported by Board Certified Specialists, e.g. in Haematology, Clinical biochemistry, Cytology, Histology, Immunohistochemistry, Microbiology, Parasitology, Endocrinology, Serology, Post-mortem examination.

Quality assurance in this area relies on:

- The overall quality policies, the goals of which are also broken down to goals for the diagnostic laboratories
- Standard operating procedures (some posted but all are accessible on the Intranet and periodically reviewed)
- An audit system for monitoring performance against the standards
- Reporting and investigation systems for incidents and complaints
- Certification according to ISO 9001 (overall or in part)
 - Institute of Pathology and Forensic Veterinary Medicine
 - Laboratory Diagnostics Platform
 - Institute of Virology
 - Institute of Parasitology
- Accreditation as reference laboratory according to I/IEC/ISO 17025
 - Clinic for Avian, Reptile and Fish medicine
- Positive evaluation by the European Mouse Mutant Archive (EMMA)
 - Institute of Laboratory Animal Science

Appropriate quality control measures are applied in the laboratory diagnostic services, e.g. inclusion of systematic (each run/daily/periodically) quality control procedures. The laboratories also participate in external quality assurance schemes:

- Biochemistry
- Endocrine
- Haematology
- Histology
- Laboratory Animal Diagnostic Services
- Microbiology and Parasitology
- Pharmacy

There is close cooperation between personnel in the laboratory diagnostic areas and the clinical areas. A number of clinical specialties (e.g. critical care) have patient-near haematology, biochemical, and blood-gas analysers and quality control of these analysers is also done in cooperation with personnel in the laboratory diagnostic services.

Quality assurance in the farm facilities:

The Teaching and Research Farm adheres to the quality assurance systems that have been developed within the University's core processes and complies with central regulations valid for the Animal Hospital:

- The Animal Hospital Guidelines (*Anstaltsordnung*)
- Epidemic and Pandemic Alert and Response Plan (*Seuchenplan*)
- The Hygiene Instructions (*Hygieneanweisungen*)

Furthermore, the Teaching and Research Farm contributes to the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna's quality assurance systems by continuously monitoring and analysing processes, collecting, compiling and reporting key data at least annually in the framework of its annual report and developing appropriate tools for quality improvement. For example, a checklist has been designed to assure that studies and research projects performed at the Teaching and Research Farm comply with standard procedures.

Further to this, the Teaching and Research Farm is subject to regular national and/or local inspections such as:

- The State Inspection Association (*Landeskontrollverband*) for dairy cattle, which regularly inspects the quality of the milk produced by the TRF's dairy herd and has rated the TRF a high-quality milk supplier (Class S)
- The Quality Assurance Program for Milk of the Agrarmarkt Austria Marketing Ltd. (AMA), which holds animal husbandry to the highest standard and supervises compliance with the regulations of the Udder Hygiene Programme
- Animal Health Services and its prevention programs
- The Cattle Breeders Association, which oversees the Teaching and Research Farm's cattle breeding and breeding registries

Comments

A comprehensive quality assurance process with a clear focus on patient safety and quality of service is operating in the clinical area, laboratory diagnostic services and farm facilities. The University has made a significant effort in pursuing ISO-certification in several key areas.

There is a strong commitment to and progress in monitoring and improving quality, and this is reflected in the way that incidents are handled where the focus is more directed towards learning from incidents rather than finding someone to blame for an incident.

All employees are assessed in annual appraisal interviews. Besides being active within research and teaching, a significant number of veterinarians are also Diplomates of a European or American College.

All animal technicians are qualified, some with advanced qualifications. Personnel in reception and other support areas are also having their relevant competences and qualifications sustained and improved.

The University aims at proactively identifying potential risks and dangers (physical and psychological) by performing workplace and workplace safety evaluations. For this purpose, it has a central security officer as well as a security representative in each organizational unit.

All employees and students are informed about correct conduct in different cases of emergency; information is readily available on the University's internal pages and it is prominently posted (e.g.) in labs and stables. In addition, employees receive regular training in (e.g.) correct behaviour in case of fire.

Students are instructed in safety and hygiene measures prior to every course in which these issues are relevant. In cooperation with the police and the fire department test alerts – including pandemic alarms - are carried out regularly.

There is a publicly available Pandemic Alert and Response Plan, regulating conduct in case of emergency. A formal general emergency plan is currently being prepared.

Suggestions

The University is encouraged to maintain or even further increase the ISO certifications.

Chapter 7. Assessment of continuing education

Findings

By law, Continuing Professional Education (CPE) is mandatory for all practitioners (this also includes veterinarians working at the University clinics), state veterinarians, specialists, production animal/herd health veterinarians, small animal veterinarians and veterinarians responsible for food and meat inspection.

The legal foundation further encompasses the guidelines for continuing education, as laid down by the Austrian Veterinary Chamber, regulating the documentary proof of CPE and the accumulation of at least 20 continuing education credits per year.

The Veterinary Act defines that additional mandatory CPE is needed for specialist certification; the bylaw of the Federal Ministry of Health, defining the extent of CPE needed for specialist certification.

The Food Safety and Consumer Protection Act defines the extent of CPE needed for assignment of veterinarians for food and meat inspection.

The Veterinary Health Service Bylaw defines the mandatory CPE of its members, and the University Act regulates university courses.

The University offers a number of CPE courses. The Curricular Committee is the main responsible for the courses. Participant questionnaires are the main method of evaluation and an extract/summary from the feedback is presented to the teacher and also stored centrally. Courses offered cover a wide range of topics relevant to practitioners (farm animals, horses, small animal, exotics).

Teachers from the University also participate as teachers in CPE courses organized by others, e.g. by the Austrian Veterinary Chamber.

Participation in teaching in Continuing education courses is not mandatory for employees but is noted as positive in the annual appraisal review.

Comments

Continuing education is integrated in the activities of the University. All activities are subjected to appropriate quality assurance procedures. The CPE activity is also a significant component of the University's outreach initiatives.

Suggestions

None

Chapter 8. Assessment of research

Findings

The University's Development Plan forms the basis for the triennially negotiated – legally binding Performance Agreement between the University and the Federal Ministry for Science and Research.

The Rectorate and the heads of departments and units in the framework of the Target Agreements agree upon research quality management deliverables with measurable objectives. These deliverables are monitored continuously, reported and published at least annually by the Research Profile Area Board and the International Scientific Advisory Board. Objectives are defined for e.g. promotion of junior researchers, PhD Programme / graduation rate of PhD students, Doctoral Programme, postdoctoral programmes, research infrastructure, and research output.

Key performance indicators for research include number of publications in refereed-journals, amount of third-party funding, number of cooperation activities with industry, patents and start-up initiatives.

Assessment of research performance is included in the annual appraisal review of academics and it is a key element in hiring and promotion of academic staff. In addition to the annual appraisal review, full professors have to be evaluated every five years.

Postgraduate research quality is also evaluated both internally and externally on a regular basis both within the PhD and the PostDoctoral programmes.

Research at the University is of international quality. Bibliometric indicators have been used since 2003 to assist in individual and organisational assessments, awarding, evaluation and ranking but they are not used as the only means of ranking.

The list of publications from 2010 and 2011 shows that the research output from the University is of a high quality (e.g. publications in Nature, Blood etc.).

Grant application is an important activity for the academic research staff. A system is in place to assist researchers in grant writing (eg. Unit for Research Support and Innovation (FFI)). The quality of previous research performance constitutes a significant element in obtaining research grants, and the quality is reflected in both a steadily high success rate for grant applications and in a steady increase in the total grant income.

Research methods and results are conveyed into basic veterinary training through a variety of routes:

- Mandatory participation in research activities
- 20 credit points in the curriculum are used for a research project done in connection with a Diploma thesis
- Specific lectures on scientific practice
- Journal clubs for students

Comments

Quality assurance procedures of research activities and research performance are active, in place and appropriate. Research methods and results are adequately conveyed into basic veterinary training.

Suggestions

None

Chapter 9. Assessment of internationalisation of education and research

Findings

Internationalization and mobility are part of the responsibilities of the Vice-Rectorate for Research and International Relations and the Vice-Rector for Study Affairs and Clinical Veterinary Medicine.

The Office for Research Promotion and Innovation (FFI) provides support, e.g. funding opportunities and maintenance of contacts with other institutions, for researchers and project managers.

The International Relations Office (IRO) together with the International Study Affairs Office (ISAO) of the Vice-Rectorate for Study Affairs and Clinical Veterinary Medicine cover all aspects of mobility for students and staff.

International recruiting of young academics for the PhD and doctoral, postdoctoral and residency programmes are based primarily on formal, standardized, qualitative criteria. For PhD students, for

example, admission requirements are regulated in the PhD Curriculum and criteria for applicant selection encompass:

- i. Standardized peer review by the PhD curricular committee, external reviewers and/or by the FWF Austrian Science Fund
- ii. Standardized research profile descriptors in line with euraxess
- iii. Code of Conduct for Recruitment of Researchers

The University also has staff participating in national science platforms, e.g. BIOS Science Austria, as well as in international scientific committees, e.g. within EU task forces and within professional networks such as Vétérinaires Sans Frontières.

The University also participates in formal networks focussed on internationalisation and mobility, e.g. VetNEST, ASEA-UNINET.

The University has partnership agreements with Szent István University in Budapest and the University of Veterinary and Pharmaceutical Sciences in Brno, and the University also has cooperation agreements with several institutions around the world.

Since 1995, the University has participated in Erasmus Mundus programme. The University actively supports and accredits mobility actions for staff members.

For students, the University tries to increase mobility; the ECTS system is one means to support student mobility and has been in use since 2003 within the SOCRATES/ERASMUS framework, and since 2007 within the follow-up LLP/ERASMUS programme. The University seeks to obtain the official ECTS-label as soon as the availability of budgetary funds permits..

The University in addition to the ERASMUS-programmes also offer its own scholarships for student mobility.

Overall the ratio of ingoing versus outgoing student is approx. 1:1.

The University's academic staff originates from 43 different countries (18 EU countries (including Austria) and 25 non-EU countries). In terms of relative headcount this amounts to:

Austria: 63%

EU (excluding Austria): 28%

Non-EU: 9%

Comments

The University actively prioritises internationalisation and the participation in the Erasmus programmes is highly appreciated.

Suggestions

None

Chapter 10. Assessment of cooperation with stakeholders and society

Findings

The University regularly publishes up-to-date, objective and appropriate information, both about the study programme. The information is readily accessible on the official website.

The University also publishes its Developmental plan, its Performance Agreement, financial balance, an annual Intellectual Capital Report (*Wissensbilanz*) and an annual review, all of which are accessible on the University's website and includes the University's description to which extent it meets its own expectations.

The University is involved in several outreach initiatives targeted at potential students (pupils), Alumni, Veterinarians, Animal owners, the General public, Research organisations and Policy makers. Communication formats include events, Campus tours, "Open-day arrangement", media relations (targeted press releases), brochures and folders.

The University also has several official bodies such as Scientific Advisory Boards and the University Council for inputs and discussions with external stakeholders.

An Alumni association is also present and active.

Comments

The University highly prioritise and participate in cooperation with stakeholders and society through a number of means. Feedback from society and stakeholders is readily absorbed into the University and used for improving the activities of the College.

The University also actively supports the concept of equal opportunities through a diversity of methods, e.g. educating selection boards on the concept of equal opportunities, appeal procedures in cases of perceived violations of equal opportunities, two child-care centres for students and employees, and the university even has been awarded two certificates ("career and family" and "university and family") in recognition of the fact that the University successfully has completed an independent audit to assess the possibility of balancing studies or a university career with having a family.

Suggestions

None

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The evaluation conducted identified no deficiencies.

All procedures are adequately subjected to Quality Assurance and Quality Management.

It is evident that the University has a very strong focus on Quality, Quality control, Quality assurance and Quality management of all of its actions and initiatives.

It is suggested:

- The Quality Policy and the Quality Manual (as well as the Development Plan and Annual Report) are available in English. To facilitate internationalisation and international mobility, it is suggested that even more key documents relating to quality assurance are presented in English on the University's websites.
- To further develop the system for monitoring the grade (or pass/fail) distribution of each course on a regular basis as an additional means for the University's focus on constructive alignment
- To pursue further means for formal, regular input from stakeholders and graduates
- To maintain or even further increase the ISO certifications

All together, it is the opinion of the Stage II evaluator that the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna fulfils all the standards listed in the Stage 2 accreditation system.

DECISION BY ECOVE: FULL ACCREDITATION