



VISITATION REPORT

To the Integrated Master of Veterinary Medicine of the University of Trás-os-Montes and Alto Douro, Vila Real, Portugal

On 10 – 14 October 2022

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Introduction

The University of Trás-os-Montes and Alto Douro (UTAD) was created in 1986. UTAD is structured into Teaching and Research Units (called Schools) in several disciplines, i.e. Agrarian and Veterinary Sciences (ECAV), Human and Social Sciences (ECHS), Sciences and Technology (ECT), Life and Environmental Sciences (ECVA), and Health Sciences (ESS).

The Integrated Master of Veterinary Medicine (called the Veterinary Education Establishment (VEE) in this Report) is allocated to the ECAV, with most of its teaching staff belonging to the Department of Veterinary Sciences (DCV). Created in 1987, the course of Veterinary Medicine was the second at the national level.

The VEE's last Full Visitation from EAEVE was completed in 2012, with the identification of two Major Deficiencies that were corrected, resulting in the improvement of the Veterinary Medicine programme quality and Approval status after the EAEVE Re-visitation in 2016.

The VEE was also fully accredited by the National Agency for Assessment and Accreditation of Higher Education (A3ES) in November 2021.

Since the last Visitation, the VEE has worked to enhance the acquisition of clinical and professional skills in a real-life context, responding to the opinion of both VEE alumni and stakeholders.

The ESEVT SOP 2019 as amended in September 2021 is valid for this Visitation.

Area 1. Objectives, Organisation and QA Policy

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

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

1.1.1. Findings

The VEE's mission is to generate veterinary knowledge and expertise in relation to social challenges. The vision is to lead veterinary medicine teaching and research with a focus on societal needs to advance the health of animals, people and the environment. These include e.g. wide understanding of healthy animals and animal disease, appreciation of the broader societal importance of animal health and welfare, development of an ethical approach, understanding of evidence-based medicine and the role of research, personal and professional development and professional decision making. These are necessary in order to be able to contribute e.g. animal welfare, sustainable animal production, safety of food of animal origin, public health, and preserving the environment.

Under the EU Directives, the main goal of the VEE is to provide adequate knowledge and professional skills to ensure animal and human health. In the Self-Evaluation Report (SER), the knowledge and competencies of a veterinary graduate were described on the intellectual plane, on the professional and academic plane, and in terms of practical activities. These include being able to communicate with different types of actors on relatively complex issues, apply scientific methods and perform structured lifelong learning; make scientifically justified professional decisions and take business initiatives. The aims have been made to be consistent with the highest quality standards for graduate students to perform as a veterinarian capable of entering all commonly recognised branches of the veterinary profession. Providing opportunities to develop skills, knowledge and attributes considered essential competencies by EAEVE for the graduating veterinary professional is mentioned explicitly.

The interdisciplinary approach of the curriculum plays a major role in preparing the graduates for professional life. The Curricular Units (CUs) included are essential to attain the official goals of the VEE's Regulation. The curriculum ensures that students gain clinical skills, skills to assist companies, skills to assess and promote animal welfare, skills in food technology, skills in food safety for the private and public sector (for specific tasks of an Officer Veterinarian), skills for carrying out national and international regulatory actions on animal health and public health, as well as skills for teaching and research. The VEE considers its geographic region a strength, offering specific opportunities for wild animal medicine. Additionally, the animal production area with a large number of autochthonous breeds enhances research in quality and safety on products of animal origin.

The contact between academic staff and students with former students is an important link with the labour market, and external stakeholders have a relevant participation in curricular or extracurricular events and the offer of traineeships. Alumni UTAD Association and Education, Training and Pedagogical Innovation Office (GEFIP) have an important role in fostering these connections. In collaboration with the Course Committees and external institutions, GEFIP

promotes curricular internships in work context.

Awareness of lifelong learning is enhanced through the provision of extracurricular training for students in various areas of competence of the veterinary profession. A variety of seminars, congresses and training courses are frequently co-organised with the Association of Veterinary Medicine Students of UTAD (AEMV) and with the support of the Ongoing and Executive Training Office for continuing education. The VEE is increasingly committed to Doctoral programmes including various branches of veterinary sciences.

1.1.2. Comments

The objectives and aims, described in various ways in the SER, Strategic Plan and the learning outcomes of the veterinary education are in line with the mission statement of the VEE and embrace all the ESEVT Standards. The ESG recommendations are not explicitly mentioned in the objectives, but they are embedded in the other requirements.

1.1.3. Suggestions for improvement

None.

1.1.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Standard 1.1.

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

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

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

1.2.1. Findings

The VEE is part of a university (UTAD), which has a background of Polytechnic Institute and University Institute. The Integrated Master of Veterinary Medicine programme (called the VEE in this Report) is allocated to the School of Agrarian and Veterinary Sciences (ECAV), which belongs to the group of schools, which are of a university nature within UTAD. UTAD is in the top 100 universities in the Times Higher Education Impact Ranking 2022 and recognised as an important point of reference in the Portuguese university system. UTAD obtained national institutional accreditation from the Portuguese Agency for Assessment and Accreditation of Higher Education (A3ES) in 2019. The VEE obtained accreditation from A3ES in 2021 for 6 years.

The person responsible for the veterinary curriculum and the person responsible for the professional, ethical and academic affairs of the VTH hold a veterinary degree.

Organisation and the management of the VEE

UTAD's management includes the General Council (CG); Rector and a team of Vice-Rectors and Pro-Rectors (= Rectory); Management Board (CGe); Student Ombudsman; non-teaching and non-research staff Ombudsman and Academic Council (CA). The VEE is currently represented in the

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CG (3 academic staff members), team of Vice- and Pro-Rectors (1 academic staff member), CA (2 academic staff members and 1 student). A School President is included in the CGe in a rotational way. The term of Rector and GC is 4 years. The CG is responsible for electing the Rector, evaluates and monitors the actions of the CGe and approves the medium term strategic and action plans. The Rector is the governing body, who leads UTAD. The CA promotes cooperation and coordination between the Scientific Councils (SC), Pedagogical Councils (PC) of Schools and Organic Research Units. The term of the CA is 4 years.

UTAD is internally structured into five Schools: 1) Agrarian and Veterinary Sciences (ECAV), 2) Human and Social Sciences (ECHS), 3) Science and Technology, 4) Life Sciences and Environment (ECVA), and 5) Health. Schools are the teaching and research units. Additionally, UTAD has 6 Research & Development Units, Specialised Structures and Services: the University Services and the Social Services, and Special Units (including the VTH). The Special Units depend on the Rectory and their role is to support teaching, research, and the provision of specialised services. As a Specialised Structure, the VTH is independent and separate from the ECAV. The governing bodies of the VTH are the Strategic Council and the Directive Board. UTAD also comprises the Doctoral College and advisory committees, such as the Ethics Committee, Biosafety Committee and Animal Welfare Committee.

The governance model of the Schools is defined in UTAD's Statutes. The VEE is based on the ECAV, although it cooperates with two other Schools, ECVA and ECHS. The School is headed by the President, supported by the Scientific Council (SC) and the Pedagogical Council (PC). The current President is an academic staff member of the VEE. Additionally, the VEE is represented in the SC (8 academic staff of VEE, including the President) and in the PC (4 academic staff members including the President, and 3 students). The term of the President, SC and PC is 4 years.

ECAV has four Departments, namely 1) Agronomy, 2) Veterinary Sciences (DCV), 3) Forest Sciences, and Landscape Architecture and 4) Animal Science. Each Department has a Director and a Department Council, with a term of 4 years. Most of the academic staff involved in the veterinary programme belong to the DCV, which currently includes 41 members, of which 36 of them are Doctors in Veterinary Medicine, four are Zootechnic Engineers and one is Biologist. Academic staff from other departments, such as the Department of Animal Science teach specific CUs, for example, of Basic Sciences subjects.

Implementation of the VEE's strategic plan

UTAD's Strategic Plan 2021-2025 includes Internationalisation, Greater proximity to business environment and Digital transition, with Sustainability as the most structuring Axes for change. Veterinary Sciences is one of the core strategic areas within the UTAD, and positioning of it as a leading teaching institution is highlighted in the institutional strategic objectives. The VEE's strategic objectives are presented in detail in the SER. The VEE's Strategic Plan is in line with that of ECAV, which is aligned with UTAD's Strategic Plan. The CC is in charge of preparation of the VEE's Strategic Plan and takes into account the Course Annual Report (RAC), surveys obtained from stakeholders, alumni, as well as information resulting from the DCV Council meetings and other relevant ones. The strategic plan implementation will be carried out by the CC, in close collaboration with the DCV Department Director, academic and non-academic staff, ECAV presidency and UTAD's rectory and services. The CC performs the monitoring of the planned activities in the regular meetings. The monitoring is recorded in an Excel file.

Implementation of a cohesive study programme, in compliance with the ESEVT Standards

The most important bodies for pedagogical management of the VEE are the Course Director (CD)

and the Course Committee (CC), with a term of 2 years. The CD is an academic staff member of the Department's dominant scientific area, i.e. having the highest number of ECTS credits. The CD presides over the CC, which also includes a Vice-Director and 3 professors who teach in the course (2 from DCV, 1 from the Department of Animal Sciences) and 2 students elected by their peers. The CC has one mandatory meeting at the end of the academic year, but it can hold extraordinary meetings or be called for meetings with the PC when necessary.

Additionally, the scientific and pedagogical management bodies of study cycles include a Course Analysis Committee (CAC), nominated by the PC. It consists of the President of the PC, 2 members of the PC (a teacher and a student), the CD and 2 students from the CC. The CAC meets at least once at the end of each semester.

Day One Competences (D1Cs) of each Course Unit (CU) are described in the Curricular Unit Form (FUC) online on the SIDE platform. The Course Directive Board (CBD) is responsible for supervision of alignment of the contents, adequateness of the assessment points, and the FUC contents. The FUC includes description of the objectives, learning outcomes and the evaluation system of the CU. FUC is reviewed every semester. The programme's D1Cs are in agreement with EAEVE SOP 2019 and with the EU legislation.

CU Regents prepare Curricular Unit Reports (RUC) at the end of each semester online. After this report and the analysis of the student survey, every year, the CU Regent has the opportunity to improve the contents, learning and evaluation of the FUC, with the contributions of the students.

Based on information gathered by students' pedagogical surveys (QP, each semester), annual progression and dropout reports, graduates and stakeholder surveys and other types of relevant information, the CC prepares the Course Annual Report (RAC), in which concerns experienced by students and teachers are identified. The RAC is analysed by the CAC. The CAC validates the actions for improvement proposed by the CC, identifies constraints, proposes changes and prepares and monitors the Course Improvement Plan (PMC) in aspects related to teaching and learning. The PMC is approved by the School President and validated by the Pro-Rector of Teaching and Quality (PREQ). The PMC implementation is monitored annually, and alterations proposed if necessary.

The SC and PC supervise the teaching, learning and assessment activities of the veterinary programme. Students have the opportunity to contribute to the improvement through the QPs and through student representatives in the different School committees. Teaching staff contribute to improving the functionality of the CU by participating in the formulation of schedules, organisation, SIDE and Moodle platforms.

1.2.2. Comments

The VEE is part of a university, which is recognised as an important point of reference within the Portuguese university system. The person responsible for the veterinary curriculum and the person responsible for VTH affairs holds a veterinary degree. The decision-making process, organisation and management include several levels (the university, school, department, VEE and the VTH) and several bodies and appear complicated, but the interviews revealed that these were clear to the staff. Currently there is a good representation of the VEE in the management bodies on all levels. The multifaceted curricular process is in line with the national and university level process. The VTH is a Special Structure of UTAD and is independent and separate from the ECAV. However, their activities appear to be intertwined regarding veterinary education, with close collaboration. Implementation of the VEE's Strategic Plan and the study programme is explained in detail in the SER.

1.2.3. Suggestions for improvement

None.

1.2.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Standard 1.2.

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

1.3.1. Findings

UTAD's Strategic Plan 2021-2025 includes the following as the most structuring Axes for change: Internationalisation, Greater proximity to business environment, Digital transition, and Sustainability. The definition of the VEE's Strategic Plan is explained in 1.2.1.

The VEE's Strategic Plan 2021-2025 was developed through a collaborative process that involved the consultation of external stakeholders, students, VEE and staff at all levels. The document includes a SWOT analysis, the strategic objectives, the action plan and the operating plan, with a timeframe for the implementation.

- Strengths identified are related e.g. to the geographical location, multidisciplinary, academic staff and students, facilities and equipment, research support by UTAD centres, student support services, existence of a Biosafety Commission and the Biosafety Unit, SiGQ-UTAD and the Work Committee for the Implementation of SiGQ-IMVM.
- Weaknesses identified are related to lack of management autonomy, teaching overload in some areas, time and resources spent on bureaucratic and teacher evaluation systems which are not relevant for clinical work.
- Opportunities include for instance recognition of teaching quality by stakeholders to allow students opportunities for integration into the labour market, partnerships to create a collaborative One Health network, teachers' participation in decision-making institutional bodies, collaborative scientific events, Residency programmes and mobility programmes
- Threats include dependence on public funding, budgetary reduction in research funding, economic dependence on private operators to carry out extramural practical classes and attractiveness of the VEE compared to other VEE's located on the coast.

The established metrics will be monitored in a scorecard of the VEE, which is a spreadsheet used to monitor the progress of the strategic goals and the overall strategy, using a colour scheme. Each goal is measured by two or more indicators, and each indicator has a yearly target. Performance scorecard metrics will help to understand and communicate where the plan has been implemented successfully and where difficulties remain, allowing acting upon them.

1.3.2. Comments

The VEE's strategic plan includes a SWOT analysis, objectives and an operating plan with a timeframe and indicators for its implementation. The progress is monitored using a scorecard.

1.3.3. Suggestions for improvement

None.

1.3.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Standard 1.3.

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

1.4.1. Findings

UTAD has a Quality Policy, which is aligned with the institutional strategy. It is published on the website and showcased within the campus. It encourages the involvement of the whole academic community and promotes the relationship with students and other stakeholders. Following an external audit in 2019, the A3ES certified the UTAD's Integrated Quality Management System (SiGQ-UTAD) for six years, the highest possible outcome, therefore certifying the institution's compliance with the reference framework for internal QA systems in Portuguese higher education institutions, in consonance with the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG 2015) and the applicable legal requirements.

The SiGQ-UTAD comprises teaching and learning, research, collaboration with society and internationalisation, covering schools, services and specialised structures of UTAD. It integrates the NP EN ISO 9000:2015 and NP EN ISO 9001:2015 Standards with the Standards for Agency for Assessment and Accreditation of Higher Education and with other standards adopted nationally and internationally. The SiGQ-UTAD ensures continuous improvement of all dimensions of the institutional mission, promoting and monitoring the implementation of quality management systems in its various forms, through participatory and monitored actions of all stakeholders, partners, and interested parties.

The principles of operation and organisation of SiGQ-UTAD, as well as the constitution and competencies of the Quality Monitoring Commission, which includes student representation, are based on the Regulation of the Integrated Quality Management System. SiGQ-UTAD is supported e.g. by the Strategic Plan, the Integrated Quality Management System Manual; Annual Activities Plan; Activities and Financial Reports; SiGQ-UTAD System Review Report and UTAD Processes map and list. The Manual is a guide for all UTAD workers. The planning, implementation, and evolution of SiGQ-UTAD are based on the Plan-Do-Check-Act cycle. The aim is to allow better control of the system's integration, ensuring effectiveness and efficiency in the development and monitoring of all UTAD's organisational activities.

To make the quality culture and QA closer to the academic community, each school has a School Quality Commission (CQE) to promote, coordinate and guarantee the implementation of the SiGQ-UTAD. The CQE competencies include monitoring and recording of the School's activities (based on defined indicators and targets), developing the Activity Plan and Activity Report, proposing improvement actions and monitoring their implementation. The CQE includes one student representative. External stakeholders may take part in the meetings or working groups by invitation, based on the needs identified by the CQE.

Students have a major role in the QA through completing the QPs after each semester for each

curricular unit (CU) they attend. In the QPs, students assess the CU itself, the quality of teaching, themselves and their colleagues, and the resources made available by the School/UTAD. The response rate of the QPs has consistently been relatively high (up to >70%). Surveys to graduates are done biannually; the last results based on students graduated in 2017/2018. The latest results for stakeholders are from 2021.

The VEE complies with the principles defined by the university, actively engaging with the established quality procedures. In October 2021, the Work Committee for the Implementation of SiGQ-IMVM was created, with representatives of the VEE, VTH, DCV, ECAV, the Agricultural Management and Exploration Centre (CEGA) and Department of Zootechnics. The Work Committee's mission is to establish Quality Procedures considered indispensable and/or specific to the VEE; in relation to the CQE, the Work Committee for the Implementation of SiGQ-IMVM is focused on the scope and more action-oriented to the VEE. This work is being carried out in collaboration with the Planning, Evaluation and Improvement Office (GPAM).

As part of the SIGQ-UTAD communication strategy, Quality Bulletins are periodically published on UTAD's website, which allows the academy to know about the various initiatives, documents, and reports carried out within the scope of this system.

The quality management system platform, UEBE.Q, is used in the management of the entire SiGQ-UTAD and is in active use in the VEE with targeted responsibilities. It includes the entire chain of produced documents, from elaboration to approval. The UEBE.Q platform was presented during the interview on site.

1.4.2. Comments

The VEE has to be commended for the extensive commitment of the staff in QA. The national accreditation system has a strong impact on the overall attitude towards QA, with a focus on processes, documentation and satisfaction of the stakeholders. ISO standardisation of laboratories and the VTH are mentioned as future aims.

UTAD has a formal policy on QA and a quality management system and the VEE's QA is a continuation of them. Academics and support staff members are well aware of the formal procedures. However, the processes are very detailed which occasionally may delay in their implementation. Students take their role in assessment of the quality of teaching in a responsible way. Both internal and external stakeholders have a specified role in the VEE's QA.

1.4.3. Suggestions for improvement

Detailed procedures with process descriptions and documents are an important part of QA, but there is a risk that the big picture or everyday activities may be obscured behind them. Consider finding ways to decrease the workload of QA on key responsible individuals and including non-academic staff more visibly in these activities. Consider also including representatives of students, postgraduate students and support staff in the Work Committee for the Implementation of SiGQ-IMVM.

1.4.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Standard 1.4.

Standard 1.5: The VEE must provide evidence that it interacts with its stakeholders and the wider society. Such public information must be clear, objective and readily accessible; the information must include up-to-date information about the study programme, views and

employment destinations of past students as well as the profile of the current student population.

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

1.5.1. Findings

UTAD's Strategic Plan 2021-2025 includes areas such as internationalisation and greater proximity to the business environment. The VEE's strategic objectives include e.g. enhancement of outreach activities, promoting an in-depth connection and improving external communication to strengthen the image of veterinary education.

UTAD has inter-institutional and community collaboration with various regional, national and international organisations and networks. UTAD participates in regional events, in order to consolidate its involvement with the community and the development of the territory. A specialised services and skills catalogue is available online.

UTAD's vision, objectives and Strategic Plan as well as the veterinary program, its entry requirements and acquired skills are available on the UTAD webpage. Other communication tools include e.g. the News page, the Events page, social networks and printed material. External communication includes dissemination of press releases made by the Communication and Image Office (GCI). The GCI develops initiatives to approach and attract new audiences, including the presence of VEE in Secondary Schools and vocational fairs, the Open Day, UTAD Júnior, the Science and Technology Week and guided tours on the UTAD campus.

The VEE has collaboration and shared events with different organisations, such as the Portuguese Veterinarians Order, the Veterinarians Syndicate and the Portuguese Society of Veterinary Sciences. Some members of the VEE's staff are part of the governing bodies of these professional organisations, such as the Portuguese Association of Veterinarians Specialists in Companion Animals, the Portuguese Buiatrics Association and the World Small Animal Veterinary Association (WSAVA).

Frequent contacts with alumni and stakeholders, including events organised by the academic staff and the AEVM for employers and practitioners, are important ways of disseminating information and receiving feedback on the veterinary program.

Information about the occupational situation of the graduates and profile of the current student population is available online at UTAD and DGES website. The current veterinary student population consists mostly of Portuguese (97%) and female (77%) students, with 84% of the students attending the course aged between 18 and 24 years old. Most students come from the North region of Portugal. In 2021, the VEE surveyed the employment and field of activity of its Alumni. Employer's surveys include their opinion on the VEE's graduates (namely knowledge and competences, teamwork capacity, soft skills), and on the training offered by the VEE. In addition, employers can also suggest improvements for future curricular plan alterations.

Arising from the Erasmus program, the VEE has agreements with 26 VEEs from 14 countries. It also has agreements with 17 Brazilian VEEs, standing out is the collaboration with the University of São Paulo and University of Brasília, and Faculty of Veterinary Medicine of Kagoshima University in Japan. Through the Almeida Garrett student mobility program, exchanges with other public Portuguese VEEs, such as Lisbon and Porto, have been carried out.

UTAD's website allows downloading all the information about the VEE's national accreditation status and EAEVE status.

1.5.2. Comments

The VEE has diverse interactions with its stakeholders. Public information on various aspects of veterinary education is available online.

The SER will also be considered as public information on the VEE and its activities, as it will be accessible through the VEE's website. Thus, it has to be noted that the SER was unclearly written at certain key points and clarifications to data had to be requested both before the Visitation and on site.

1.5.3. Suggestions for improvement

None.

1.5.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Standard 1.5.

Standard 1.6: The VEE must monitor and periodically review its activities, both quantitative and qualitative, to ensure that they achieve the objectives set for them and respond to the needs of students and society. The VEE must make public how this analysis of information has been utilised in the further development of its activities and provide evidence as to the involvement of both students and staff in the provision, analysis and implementation of such data.

Any action planned or taken as a result of this data analysis must be communicated to all those concerned.

1.6.1. Findings

The VEE's governance and commitment to actions to improve the quality are aligned with the University's strategy and Quality Policy. The preparation of the Strategic Plan takes into account the RAC, surveys obtained from stakeholders, alumni, as well as information resulting from reflections from the DCV Council meetings and other relevant ones.

The PC is responsible for the analysis and disclosure of survey results on the pedagogical performance of academic staff addressed to students. The CD ensures e.g. the normal functioning of the course and its quality, prepares proposals for alteration of the course, and listens regularly to the teachers and students of the course. The CC e.g. promotes curriculum coordination and comments on proposals for alteration of study plans or on the teaching service needs. The CAC is responsible for validating the improvement actions by the CC. It proposes changes, prepares and monitors the PMC in aspects related to teaching and learning.

Feedback is collected from students using the QPs and surveys to graduates, alumni and/or employees are performed on a regular basis.

Specific course management bodies such as the CC and the DCV Council are responsible for reflecting on aspects of interest to the course (for example, Biosafety, Quality aspects, Curriculum plan, among others) and also for developing and updating strategic recommendations. The Course and Department Director receive the result of these reflections with priority, as well students and staff.

Following data analysis, the CC may propose specific actions. For example, for the organisation of seminars or workshops, the CC involves teachers and students, through the Veterinary Students Association (AEMV), to organise and promote such actions, frequently involving Alumni or external stakeholders.

Actions are communicated to all those concerned by e-mail and published on the Teaching Support Information System (SIDE) platform. The Progress Report for EAEVE revisit, which took place in 2016 is also available on the VEE's webpage.

1.6.2. Comments

The monitoring and reviewing of the activities of the VEE is embedded in the multifaceted strategic and curricular processes. Information is published and actions communicated using established channels.

1.6.3. Suggestions for improvement

None.

1.6.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Standard 1.6.

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

1.7.1. Findings

The last ESEVT's Full Visitation took place in 2012, with the identification of two Major Deficiencies. These were found corrected in the Re-visitation in 2016, and the VEE was granted an Approval status. The SER provided a description of how the deficiencies noted during the previous evaluation have been corrected. These include e.g. increase in the representation of the VEE in the management bodies, changes in students' practical and hands-on training, interventions to the farms and opening new vacancies.

1.7.2. Comments

The VEE has undergone ESEVT reviews according to the required schedule and provided evidence on the progress made since the evaluation in 2016.

1.7.3. Suggestions for improvement

None.

1.7.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Standard 1.7.

Area 2. Finances

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

2.1.1. Findings

UTAD depends mainly on funding from the State Budget, representing about 2/3 of UTAD's budget. While revenues from the State Budget guarantee payment of salaries, operating costs, maintenance costs and equipment are covered by other sources.

The five schools, including the Veterinary Teaching Hospital (VTH) manage a budget allocated to them for current expenses. Each school has an operating fund of 50,000 € for current expenditures, with possible reinforcements. In 2021, this latter represented an additional budget of 30,000 € in ECAV, the school where the VEE is based. Funds are distributed to the four departments, considering the number of students enrolled (16%), the number of curricular units (34%) and the number of FTE teaching staff (50%). In 2021, UTAD an additional amount of 125,000 € was assigned to ECAV for the acquisition of equipment and improvement of facilities. Hence equipment expenditures have risen during the last year, although most of the expenditures are personnel costs.

National Tuition Fees are set by the Portuguese government. Tuition fees have been reduced annually, with the universities being compensated through funds from the state budget.

2.1.2. Comments

The annual balance of expenditures and revenues is positive, despite the recent investments in equipment and improvement of the facilities. There are sufficient resources to sustain the activities of the VEE, and they clearly demonstrate that the University supports its development.

2.1.3. Suggestions for improvement

None.

2.1.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Standard 2.1.

Standard 2.2: Clinical and field services must function as instructional resources. Instructional integrity of these resources must take priority over financial self-sufficiency of clinical services operations.

The VEE must have sufficient autonomy in order to use the resources to implement its strategic plan and to meet the ESEVT Standards.

2.2.1. Findings

Each year, the VTH budget for the following calendar year is established, based on expected expenses and income. The budget proposal is drawn up at a meeting of the VTH's clinical board after hearing the VTH's strategic council. In a meeting between the UTAD's Administrator and the VTH's director and manager, the final budget for the following calendar year is negotiated.

The foreseen decrease of the funding by the government (from 570,013.37 € in 2021 to 443,851.19 € in 2022) is expected to be compensated by the increase of revenues from the VTH.

2.2.2. Comments

The recent improvements both in equipment and facilities of the VTH, together with a strong commitment by the University, provide sufficient guarantee that the revenues from the VTH will compensate for the reduced budget transfer from the government. This will increase the resources for the development of the activities in the future.

2.2.3. Suggestions for improvement

None.

2.2.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Standard 2.2.

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

2.3.1. Findings

A report on the course's needs is conducted annually, taking in consideration the following parameters: the students' answers in Pedagogical Surveys (QP), the teachers' analysis in the Curricular Unit Reports (RUC) and the Course Direction in the Annual Course Annual Reports (RAC).

UTAD's accounts are public and subject to verification by Internal and External Auditors. The overall financial process is audited on a regular basis by several public entities.

2.3.2. Comments

The finances of the VEE are strongly dependent on UTAD. However, the resources allocation is reviewed yearly and there is sufficient autonomy to put forward some change.

2.3.3. Suggestions for improvement

None.

2.3.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Standard 2.3.

Area 3. Curriculum

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

3.1.1. General findings

3.1.1.1. Findings

In Portugal, all Portuguese curricula were adapted to a 5.5-year programme with 330 ECTS. The first major revision of the curriculum to adapt to the Bologna process took place in 2008/2009. A

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second revision took place in the academic years 2015/16 through 2021/22. A modified curricular plan will be implemented in 2022/2023 as outlined in SER Appendix 6.3.2.

Higher Education in Portugal is supervised by the Ministry of Science, Technology and Higher Education and as an executive service the General Directorate of Higher Education. By law, higher education courses have to be accredited by a private law foundation, the Agency for Assessment and Accreditation of Higher Education, a full member of ENQA. The VEE course has been accredited in September 2021 for the period of six years.

The aim of the curriculum is to train students in this 5.5-year program, which is compliant with Directives 2005/36/EC as amended by Directive 2013/55/EU to acquire Day One Competences as defined in SOP.

There are several committees to supervise the VEE course. The regents of each curricular unit write curricular reports, which together with annual teachers reports, the data obtained by surveys, by administration and the students' pedagogical surveys are reported to the course committee. This committee writes the course annual report and proposes actions that are validated and monitored by the pedagogical council and the scientific council. There are two students in the course committee and three in the pedagogical council. The Course Directive Board is responsible for adjustments of the programme following proposals of the committees.

Major changes of the programme can be directly registered by the General Directorate of Higher Education if less than 15 % of the total course is affected, otherwise it has to be resubmitted for accreditation by the Agency for Assessment and Accreditation of Higher Education.

3.1.1.2. Comments

The curriculum is comprehensive and well-structured and thus is designed to ensure full compliance with EU Directive 2005/36/EC. The expected learning outcomes and the corresponding Day One Competences for each course are clearly published in the Core Veterinary Programme.

Self-directed learning only takes up a very small part of the curriculum.

3.1.1.3. Suggestions for improvement

None.

3.1.1.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Standard 3.1.1.

3.1.2. Basic Sciences

3.1.2.1. Findings

The basic subjects including medical physics, chemistry, zoology, botanics and biomedical statistics as listed in Annex V.4.1 of the EU Directive 2005/36/EC are covered in the first year with a total of 123 curricular hours. The veterinary basic sciences including anatomy, histology and embryology, physiology, biochemistry, genetics, pharmacology, pharmacy toxicology, microbiology, parasitology, immunology epidemiology and professional ethics are all covered

extensively with a total amount of 1311 hours including 487.5 hours laboratory work (37 %), thus making up approximately a third of the total curricular hours. In addition to the mandatory curriculum, students have to take a total of eight ECTS from a variety of electives. There are six different electives covering different special aspects of basic sciences such as clinical anatomy, laboratory animal science or nutrition and feeding of exotic animals.

3.1.2.2. Comments

There is a good balance between different subjects with an emphasis on anatomy. There are only a few hours dedicated to animal welfare and ethology, but it is compensated by the pre-clinical training.

Supervised self-learning is only moderately represented.

Professional ethics and communication are also included in the basic sciences.

3.1.2.3. Suggestions for improvement

None.

3.1.2.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Standard 3.1.2.

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

3.1.3.1. Findings

The curriculum in clinical sciences includes the subjects listed in the EU Directive 2005/36/EC (as amended by directive 2013/55/EU) and its Annex V.4.1: obstetrics, reproduction and reproductive disorders, diagnostic pathology, medicine, surgery, anaesthesiology, clinical practical training in common animal species, preventive medicine, diagnostic imaging, therapy in common animal species, and propaedeutics of common animal species.

Every student receives a total of 1623.5 hours of teaching in clinical sciences, distributed as follows: 589 hours of lectures, 21 hours of seminars, 92 hours of supervised self-learning, 142.5 hours of laboratory and desk-based work, 49 hours of non-clinical animal work, 723 hours of clinical animal work, and 7 hours of other learning methodology.

Students are prepared for clinical rotations in different subjects included in the syllabus, starting from the first year.

Clinical courses start to be introduced to students during the 5th and 6th semesters, and include Anaesthesia, Medical Semiology I and II, Imagiology, Anatomic Pathology I and Veterinary Forensic Medicine, Pharmacology II and Therapeutics, Animal Reproduction, and Introduction to Surgery.

During the 4th year, the syllabus includes Anatomic Pathology II, Small Animal Surgery I and II, Infectious Diseases I and II, Parasitic Diseases I and II, Internal Medicine of Small Animals I and II, Medicine and Surgery of Ruminants, Equine Medicine and Surgery, Reproductive Medicine I, and Traineeship II and III. Students perform a 6-week intramural rotation in the VTH during traineeships in 4th year and they also have practical classes of clinical disciplines, completing a minimum of 91 hours per semester and including one week on duty 24/7 per semester. In the remaining 24 weeks (12 weeks per semester), students attend to regular practical clinical classes.

During the 5th year, the syllabus includes Preventive Veterinary Medicine and Hygiene, Introduction to Small Animal Specialities I and II, Poultry, Rabbit and Swine Medicine,

Reproductive Medicine II, and Traineeship IV and V. Students perform a 6-week extramural rotation during the traineeships in 5th year and other practices relative to the clinical disciplines, completing a minimum of 77 hours per semester. Students have the option to choose between five different tracks with different scopes: Companion Animals, Farm Animals and Equine Medicine, Preventive and Reproductive Medicine, Preventive Medicine, and Shelter Medicine. Since the academic year 2020/2021, all the students have to perform mandatory extramural clinical rotations in all tracks.

During the 11th semester, after finishing the rotations, students must write a master thesis/report which must be publicly defended.

3.1.3.2. Comments

The curriculum of the VEE is well balanced and includes all relevant subjects listed in the chapter of Clinical Sciences in the Annex V of EU Directive 2005/36/EC as amended by directive 2013/55/EU. The expected learning outcomes and the corresponding Day One Competences for each course are clearly defined and published in the core veterinary programme.

The programme includes teaching in most common animal species.

Until 2021/2022, Medicine and Surgery of Exotic and Wild Animals was an elective subject. However, the curriculum implemented during the course 2022/2023 includes this subject as compulsory during the 10th semester.

Most clinical subjects are given in a logical order once the basic related sciences have been learned. “Anaesthesia” is given at the same time as other related subjects, such as “Pharmacology I and Pharmacy”, and before “Pharmacology II and Therapeutics”. However, coordination between these curricular units gives rise to a coherent learning of its contents.

Students are freed up of all practical classes during rotations, but coincidences with theoretical classes during the intramural and extramural rotations do exist. These coincidences are assumed by the VEE, which prioritises the practical clinical training in the programme structure.

Intramural hands-on training in small animals is sufficient, and in exotic pets is remarkable. Training in equines is limited based on the insufficient number of clinical cases available for teaching intramurally. Intramural equine surgical cases are very limited and based specially on orchiectomies. However, it is partly compensated by the number of equines attended during the 6-week extramural clinical rotations in 4th and 5th year for all students. Because of the amendments due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it was difficult for the Visitation Team to get accurate information regarding the extramural clinical rotations in 5th year. Summarising, until the academic year 2020/2021, the VEE offered five different tracks for extramural traineeships (Companion Animals, Farm Animal and Equine Medicine, Preventive and Reproductive Medicine, Preventive Medicine, and Shelter Medicine), students chose the scope of extramural rotations in the 5th year depending on their preferences. They had to choose at least two of the five possibilities, and they were not rotating by all the places. Therefore, these rotations followed a track system, and the teaching provided to all enrolled students was not the same. However, since the academic year 2020/2021, the number of Invited Teachers contracted by UTAD for extramural training has increased during the time, from 5 to 10 (current number). This improvement has allowed all students to perform mandatory extramural clinical rotations in all tracks, including equines.

The students also receive extramural training related to different 5th year curricular units that can also partially compensate for this deficiency, in addition to the training provided during EPT.

3.1.3.3. Suggestions for improvement

It is suggested to improve the clinical training in the equine species provided to all undergraduate students, specially in surgery.

3.1.3.4 Decision

The VEE is partially compliant with Standard 3.1.3 because of suboptimal clinical training in the equine species provided to all undergraduate students.

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

3.1.4.1. Findings

The outline of the clinical teaching has been described in Section 3.1.3.1. As mentioned, preparation for the clinical sciences begins in the pre-clinical years with ‘hands on’ training early in the course. Specific clinical skill development begins in the third year when courses include Anaesthesia, Medical Semiology I and II, Imagiology, Anatomic Pathology I and Veterinary Forensic Medicine, Pharmacology II and Therapeutics, Animal Reproduction, and Introduction to Surgery. Visits to farms and stables in some paraclinical courses, such as infectious and parasitic diseases also occur.

The theoretical course content covers the core veterinary curriculum requirements. The nature of the course structure (with 5 weeks of teaching and one week of clinics) in the fourth and fifth year means that some theoretical courses for some students can be sub-optimally timed. Although the structure provided is to allow for maximal use of the clinical caseload the VEE has at its disposal.

Broadly speaking, in the fourth year clinical training is intramural and students are required to rotate through one week of farm animals and equids in the VTH. A second compulsory week in the fourth year is Herd Health Management which is both intra- and extra- mural. A final large animals’ week is an extra-mural ambulatory practice. This is listed in the SER as a farm animal rotation. However, both equine and farm animals are treated in this rotation.

Prior to the academic year 2020/21 student rotations in the fifth year the practical rotations were chosen by the students. Each semester consisted of three practical weeks of which the students had to choose at least two of Companion Animal Medicine, Farm Animals and Equine Medicine, Preventive and Reproductive Medicine, Preventive Medicine, and Shelter Medicine. Students did not need to take all rotations. In the 5th year, students have practical education in food producing animals under the scope of the CU Reproductive Medicine II and Medicine of Poultry, Rabbits and Swine.

In the academic year 2020-21, the VEE hired extra clinicians as extramural teachers. This increased the capacity of the clinical rotations so that all students have now to follow all five tracks in the fifth year, in addition to the clinical training provided during the 4th year.

In the 11th semester students have to find their own EPT. This can be within the field of food producing animals - but need not be.

3.1.4.2. Comments

The curriculum content is adequate and compliant with the relevant EU Directives.

Prior to the academic year 2020-21, the full clinical training in farm animals during the 5th year was not compulsory for all students in the extramural rotations.

However, since the academic year 2020-21, all students have to participate in all five of the rotations listed, meaning their exposure to food-producing animals after the fourth year is ensured and therefore the clinical exposure they receive is regarded as adequate, and therefore compliant with Standard 3.1.4.

3.1.4.3. Suggestions for improvement

It is suggested to:

-) increase the degree of specialisation amongst the staff members of the VEE such that the teaching offered is food-producing animal orientated not large animal orientated;
-) increase the complexity of the caseload, for example laparotomies in food-producing species are not seen by the students very often (see also Standard 5.1).

3.1.4.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Standard 3.1.4.

3.1.5. Food Safety and Quality

3.1.5.1. Findings

Every student receives a total of 217 hours of teaching in clinical sciences, distributed as follows: 48 hours of lectures, 8 hours of seminars, 21 hours of supervised self-learning, 78 hours of laboratory and desk-based work, 48 hours of non-clinical animal work, 6 hours of clinical animal work, and 8 hours of other learning methodology. Courses are taught to students during the 5th year and include Food Hygiene and Inspection (I and II) and Veterinary Public Health.

2 weeks of practical rotations under academic staff supervision are provided during the 5th year. The subjects are also included in the EPT (16 total hours) in the 11th semester.

Intramural practical activities include also sensory evaluation of food products and an excellent training on food processing in a small, but efficient food processing pilot plant.

As an extramural part of Food Safety, a substantial number of visits to slaughterhouses and related premises is conducted under the supervision of academic and external staff. The visits are well organised in small groups that guarantee the possibility for each student to take part in the practical activity.

3.1.5.2. Comments

The VEE provides a broad training in FSQ with the notable inclusion of training related to game meat. Stakeholders in the field of FSQ are actively involved in the extramural activities and the teachers in this field demonstrate a good connection with them.

The VEE has to be commended for the implementation of the Food processing pilot plant which provides an excellent opportunity for the intramural training in some aspects of FSQ.

3.1.5.3. Suggestions for improvement

None.

3.1.5.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Standard 3.1.5.

3.1.6. Professional Knowledge

3.1.6.1. Findings

Professional knowledge is taught as an integral part of the VEE education and is part of many subjects during the curriculum. Students are aware of ethics, trained in communication and have to present a business-plan to discuss the economics of running a veterinary business.

Veterinary legislation is taught both on a separate course as well as during different subjects in the curriculum. The special subject of veterinary scientific investigation where students are taught how to prepare evidence for legal investigation and prosecution, is specific for the VEE.

Specifically, this knowledge is taught:

- In the extramural week and clinical rotation students the professional knowledge is experienced as part of the education.
- In the new curriculum (2015/2016) training in communication of knowledge (oral, written) and Veterinary Legislation with a total of 189,5 hours (2 ECTS) is taught in the 5th year
- Introduction to scientific investigation (2 ECTS) and Economics, Administration and Marketing in Animal (2 ECTS) are taught in the 3rd year.

3.1.6.2. Comments

Both students and staff seem to be well aware of the need to be taught professional knowledge. The education of veterinary scientific education is an extra field not normally taught, but gives students extra opportunities.

3.1.6.3. Suggestions for improvement

None.

3.1.6.4 Decision

The VEE is compliant with Standard 3.1.6.

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

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

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

3.2.1. Findings

A curricular change was applied in 2015/2016, and since that, monitoring and revision of the programme has been an ongoing and permanent process. The adoption of a competency-based approach ensures that veterinary graduates acquire the knowledge, skills and attributes required for a self-confident and successful professional. The curriculum aims to deliver independent, resourceful professionals, who can critically think of different and new ways to solve a problem. The curriculum has been designed to encourage critical thinking and independent learning, enabling students to pursue an autonomous lifelong learning career. Lifelong learning is understood to be a deliberate and voluntary action; however, the VEE motivates students to self-learning and to continue their learning as professionals. Throughout the programme, students are encouraged to use technology, to further reading on the subjects, as well as to participate in seminars, workshops and events that may increase their learning.

Academic Services is responsible for the administrative and academic management of the processes that affect the student's education from their enrolment and registration to the completion of their graduation, as well as the management of the processes, the provision of information, guidance and advice on issues related to academic activities. All the academic regulations including the Pedagogical Regulation are published on the academic services webpage.

The Pedagogical Regulation establishes a set of norms and general guidelines on the pedagogical process and the relations between the members of the school community, applicable to all degree awarding courses taught at UTAD to promote pedagogical quality. The pedagogical process includes the relationship between teaching and learning, student assessment, general rules of conduct, and the relationship between students and teachers, in addition to other specific aspects of functioning, with an impact on the quality of teaching and learning.

The QA process monitors the learning process, the consequences of curricular changes as well as the necessity of implementing improvements or adjustments, ensuring a dynamic curriculum, able to answer to a modern and demanding society. Qualitative and quantitative data for curriculum monitoring is obtained from evaluation results (performance data), QPs performed at the end of each semester, feedback to student representatives or CDB; recent graduate surveys, and Student's Ombudsman (anonymous student feedback). Feedback from external stakeholders, such as employers, alumni and placement providers for extramural training is also gathered.

Student feedback, received at various levels of the QA process, is analysed by the CDB and PC, and consequent actions are considered in a 'you said, we did' approach.

End-point data is a summative indicator of how well the whole programme is achieving its goals. These data are considered for the course improvement to ensure that changes in specific CU are aligned with the programme goals. The assessment of programme outcomes is achieved by several instruments, in which the students have a pivotal role, gathered at multiple times/levels, all engaged in the internal QA system.

Updated, clear, accurate and objective information on the programme is accessible online to prospective and current students as well as for other stakeholders and the public. This information includes selection criteria for the enrolment in the programme, the intended learning outcomes, the teaching/learning and assessment procedures, the pass rates and the learning opportunities available to students as well as graduate employment information. The qualification awarded is also clearly specified and communicated. The level of qualification is Master in Veterinary Medicine (ISCED 7).

The VEE promotes the presence of an academic environment conducive to learning in several ways. The learning culture is safe, supportive, promoting the integration and connection of students e.g. through the Tutoring and Mentoring Program. Students can address their needs by direct

student-teacher/student-CDB contact or indirectly through their representatives or the AEMV. Learning processes are interactive. Feedback, motivation and focus on individual students facilitate the learning and teaching process.

3.2.2. Comments

The study programme provided by the VEE is competency based and designed to meet the set objectives. The VEE actively aims to prepare students for life-long learning. The level of the qualification is specified. The QA system of the academic learning environment is established, with student participation.

3.2.3. Suggestions for improvement

None.

3.2.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Standard 3.2.

Standard 3.3: Programme learning outcomes must:

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

3.3.1. Findings

The D1Cs of the curriculum are in agreement with ESEVT SOP 2019, the EU legislation and Portuguese standards. All CU contents are built with this final objective. The primary educational goals of the programme include preparing students for a productive and successful career within the veterinary medical profession, by providing students with entry-level knowledge and skills. The newly graduated veterinarian should be able to apply relevant knowledge and have the confidence and ability to transfer what has been learned to a variety of different contexts. Veterinary training will ensure that the graduate has acquired competences through basic sciences, veterinary basic sciences, clinical and sanitary skills, food technology, hygiene and safety, and training in oral and written communication of knowledge.

The VEE has defined the intended learning outcomes in several main areas: Basic science and clinical knowledge, Communication skills, Clinical skills, Ethics, Problem solving, Critical thinking and life-long learning skills, Professionalism and Public, environmental and animal population health. Specific veterinary competencies were established for the entry-level graduate with the input from academic staff. Throughout the programme, students are provided multiple learning and assessment opportunities to acquire these competencies.

The teaching, learning and assessment activities are supervised by the SC and PC. Students have the opportunity to contribute to this improvement through the QPs and through student representatives in the different School committees.

The D1Cs of each CU are described in FUCs and explained to students in the first class of the

semester. The FUC includes the objectives, learning outcomes and the evaluation system. Further information such as student work hours, programmatic content, teaching and learning strategies, assessment, and learning resources are also published in the FUC and discussed with the students. The FUCs are reviewed every semester. At the end of each semester, the CU Regent prepares a CU report, aiming to include a SWOT analysis of the unit. Based on the CU report and QPs, the CU Regent has the opportunity to improve the contents, learning and evaluation of the FUC annually. Other staff involved in teaching may contribute to improving the functionality of the CU regarding the schedules, organisation, SIDE and Moodle platforms. The CBD supervises the alignment of the contents and assessment points of the CUs, as well as the FUC contents.

The Skills Book is used to guarantee that students acquire clinical competencies under supervision at the VTH and in their EPT. These practical skills are validated and evaluated by the academic staff of the Small Animal Clinic, Farm Animal Clinic and Equine Clinic CUs and by the veterinarians of the VTH.

The programme learning outcomes have been mapped to ESEVT competences and are reviewed regularly by the CDB.

Each CU Regent sets the intended learning outcomes for that specific course unit and publishes it online each academic year through SIDE, in agreement with the programme course learning outcomes.

Before the beginning of each academic year, curricular information is updated. Each CU Regent sets the intended learning outcomes for that specific CU and publishes it online through SIDE. The outcomes assessment data, QP feedback at the end of the semester and RUC data provided by the teacher in charge provide data on the instructional quality and effectiveness of the curriculum. This data is gathered in the RAC and analysed by the CAC. This process, coordinated by SiGQ and PC, supports curriculum monitoring and ensuring that programme learning outcomes are being met.

3.3.2. Comments

The programme learning outcomes are adequately defined and communicated. The established pedagogical QA process ensures the cohesiveness of the curriculum as well as its continuous review and updating.

3.3.3. Suggestions for improvement

None.

3.3.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Standard 3.3.

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

- **determine the pedagogical basis, design, delivery methods and assessment methods of the curriculum**
- **oversee QA of the curriculum, particularly gathering, evaluating, making change and responding to feedback from stakeholders, peer reviewers and external assessors, and data from examination/assessment outcomes**
- **perform ongoing and periodic review of the curriculum at least every seven years by involving staff, students and stakeholders; these reviews must lead to continuous**

improvement. Any action taken or planned as a result of such a review must be communicated to all those concerned

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

3.4.1. Findings

The formal committee structure for managing the curriculum includes the SC, PC, the CC and the CAC. The SC approves ECAV's all course study plans. The PC and CC include student representatives, and the two CC's student representatives sit also on the CAC. The PC is responsible for the decision of pedagogical guidelines as well as teaching and evaluation methods. The CD ensures e.g. the normal functioning of the course and its quality and prepares proposals for alteration of it. The CC's responsibilities include promoting curriculum coordination and commenting on proposals for alteration of study plans or on the teaching service needs. The CAC is responsible for validating the improvement actions by the CC. It proposes changes, prepares and monitors the Course Improvement Plan (PMC) in aspects related to teaching and learning.

The involvement of internal and external stakeholders in the curriculum monitoring and development is described in 3.2.2. The training needs of staff are identified through GEFIP and relevant training opportunities will be organised.

Minor modifications and improvements to the curriculum are discussed through meetings of the CDB and have to be approved by the DCV. The proposed alterations are then submitted to the PC and SC for approval. The proposal must then be approved by the CA and finally by the Rector. In case less than 15% of the course programme is affected by changes, the proposed alterations can be directly registered by the General Directorate of Higher Education (DGES) and subsequently published in the official government journal, otherwise the course has to be resubmitted for accreditation by the Agency for Assessment and Accreditation of Higher Education. The alterations are communicated to teachers and students through meetings and are publicly available on the official website. Alterations in the CUs only are proposed by the Course Regent to the CDB and are more easily applied.

The production of Annual Monitoring Reports (at CU and course level) are essential monitoring elements of the QA process. A flowchart outlining the monitoring process indicates the Diagnosis and evaluation phase is performed by students, teachers and collection of various data; Analysis and planning phase by CC; Validation and monitoring phase by PC and the CAC nominated by it; and the Control and monitoring phase thorough analysis by CAC.

3.4.2. Comments

The VEE has a formally constituted committee structure to oversee and manage the curriculum and its delivery. The responsibilities of the committees and other bodies are relevant to oversee the QA of the curriculum and ensure the continuous development. The processes for making modifications to the curriculum are formal and regulated at the national level.

3.4.3. Suggestions for improvement

None.

3.4.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Standard 3.4.

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

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

3.5.1. Findings

During the 11th semester the student has to take EPT with a successive masters' thesis for at least 480hrs (30 ECTS). The student is free to choose his own EPT. The EPT can be followed in production and companion animal practices (both preclinical as clinical), FSQ/VHP, or any other approved field. Submissions for placements are by the student presented to the Academic Services (AS) through a supervisor selected by the student. This supervisor has to hold a PhD degree or a specialist whose merit in the scientific area of the curricular traineeship is recognised by the Scientific Council (SC). Placement applications are initially verified by the AS and submitted for further verification by the Course Directive Board (CDB) and subsequent SC approval. Help is available if a student cannot find a placement on his own accord.

The Teaching, Formation and Pedagogical Innovation Office (GEFIP), in coordination with the CBD, manages all placement agreements for the EPT before the student begins. Most EPT placements already have an agreement with the university; and when students select a new placement, an agreement must be established through GEFIP, after evaluation of the proposed placement. At the end of the EPT, students have to prepare a master thesis/report which has to be presented and discussed.

3.5.2. Comments

Students have the liberty of a wide range of veterinary fields where they can do their EPT. Placements can be in Production Animals (pre-clinical), Companion Animals (pre-clinical), Production Animals (clinical), Companion Animals (clinical), Food Safety Quality and Veterinary Public Health, or another (specified) activity.

3.5.3. Suggestions for improvement

Since the student's thesis is mainly linked to their EPT, the content and form of their thesis can vary widely. Minimum requirements for the thesis would ensure that all students deliver more standardised format and content.

3.5.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Standard 3.5.

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

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

3.6.1. Findings

The GEFIP is in charge of managing the agreements of the EPT-providers before the beginning of the EPT and health insurance is guaranteed to the students by the university. A list of the external entities with an active agreement with the university is available on the SIDE platform.

At the end of the placement, feedback is provided by the EPT provider, evaluating the student's performance during the placement.

3.6.2. Comments

During EPT students get the chance and actively use this opportunity to gain more knowledge and experience in their field of interest.

3.6.3. Suggestions for improvement

The EPT in the students' field of interest should be recorded and evaluated against the post-academic working opportunities. It is suggested to advise students to follow their EPT in an entity that would increase their chances to archive a successful career.

3.6.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Standard 3.6.

Standard 3.7: Students must take responsibility for their own learning during EPT. This includes preparing properly before each placement, keeping a proper record of their experience during EPT by using a logbook provided by the VEE and evaluating the EPT. Students must be allowed to complain officially and/or anonymously about issues occurring during EPT. The VEE must have a system of QA to monitor the implementation, progress and then feedback within the EPT activities.

3.7.1. Findings

During EPT, students are recording their experiences, and prepare a final thesis on their experiences. Problems during the EPT placement, can be communicated by students (officially and/or anonymously) to the VEE directly to the CDB or indirectly through the student's academic supervisor. Through mediation the CBD tries to solve conflicts.

3.7.2. Comments

The good and open relationship between academic staff, students and EPT providers has prevented any formal complaints from students and most grievances are easily resolved with help of their academic EPT supervisor. EPT is highly valued by students to gain experience.

3.7.3. Suggestions for improvement

None.

3.7.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Standard 3.7.

Area 4. Facilities and equipment

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

4.1.1. Findings

UTAD is located in the extreme south of the city of Vila Real, in the region of Trás-os-Montes and Alto Douro, in the interior North of Portugal. The VEE is located in an Eco Campus with a large Botanical Garden and with different facilities.

Most teaching is developed in seven main areas of the UTAD campus, very close to each other:

- the VTH, that also includes the Wildlife Rehabilitation Centre (CRAS).
- the Agricultural Management and Exploration Centre, in charge of the housing of UTAD's livestock. It includes facilities for horses, dairy cattle, sheep and goats, poultry, rabbits and pigs.
- four teaching complexes (ECAV Pole 1, ECAV Pole II, ECVA Pole 1, and Laboratory Complex). These complexes include different auditoriums, classrooms for theoretical and practical classes, laboratories, administrative and research offices, and two canteens.
- the University Centre of AAUTAD, which includes an auditorium.

Furthermore, teaching is also developed in different extramural facilities, including slaughterhouses, food processing units, eggs classification centres, docks, local markets, meat distribution establishments, farms and private veterinary hospitals.

Internet access is available throughout the entire facilities campus, being the Eduroam wireless network reinforced in the classrooms during the COVID 19 pandemic.

The strategy and programme for maintaining and upgrading its buildings and equipment is managed by the Rector, following proposals from the ECAV's president or the VTH's director. Routine maintenance is periodically performed by the Infrastructure Maintenance and Sustainability Unit. The VTH's Director has autonomy for the acquisition of minor equipment. A company contracted by the University (currently, Opertec) is in charge of the VTH equipment maintenance.

Compliance for the facilities in terms of health, safety and environmental aspects is managed by University Units, such as the Infrastructure Maintenance and Sustainability Unit. It includes different ISO certifications. All buildings on the campus are prepared with access for people with reduced mobility as well as accessible parking. The compliance of facilities with EU animal welfare and care standards is regulated by the General Directorate for Food and Veterinary Medicine. A National Network from Animal Welfare Committees promotes periodic visits to the VEE facilities.

The VTH and CRAS are credited by the correspondent national bodies.

4.1.2. Comments

The VEE has to be commended for the large campus placed in a beautiful green area, in the middle of a botanic garden. Similarly, there is a high level of maintenance and cleaning in intramural facilities. Physical facilities provide a global environment conducive to learning.

The presence of the Wildlife Rehabilitation Centre in the VEE is praiseworthy. This facility is exceptional and excellent for the student training in the field of wildlife rehabilitation.

Internet access is available in the campus, with a wide capacity of the wireless network in most areas. The VEE has a strategy and programme for maintaining and upgrading its buildings and equipment. The flowchart for the acquisition of goods, services or contracts is taken after listening to the different bodies of the institution. Autonomy for the purchase of large equipment is not always guaranteed but is based on a joint decision with the Rector. Facilities are compliant with relevant legislation.

4.1.3. Suggestions for improvement

None.

4.1.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Standard 4.1.

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

4.2.1. Findings

The VEE has 14 classrooms (including 3 auditoriums) equipped with multimedia projectors, with a capacity varying from 21 to 250 places. Three classrooms are available for hybrid teaching. There are 18 teaching laboratories, most of them with 10-20 places, except two with 54 places for Toxicology/Public Health and Veterinary Legislation.

The VEE also has several self-learning or tutorial rooms, namely 3 large study rooms and 4 offices for small groups located in the UTAD Central Library, one room in the Veterinary Hospital and two rooms in the Student Area of the Academic Association.

Most intramural clinical training is developed at the VTH, with 24 premises for clinical work and student training and 2 additional rooms for wild animals at the CRAS.

Other facilities are a Skills Lab and a Museum of Animal Anatomy.

With regard to recreation, the VEE has a canteen and a restaurant on campus, and another canteen at walking distance. There is a dormitory available at the VTH, and showers in the CRAS and VTH.

The UTAD also has a large botanical garden, and different sports and recreational facilities.

There are staff offices distributed by the VEE buildings, and different research laboratories. The main labs are: laboratory of clinical pathology, laboratory of medical microbiology, laboratory of parasitology, laboratory of histology and anatomical pathology, a food processing unit, and a bioterium.

4.2.2. Comments

The VEE has an adequate number of classrooms, laboratories for teaching and for research, clinical facilities, a teaching farm, and facilities for recreation, lockers, sanitary and food service facilities. Regarding the size, there are many small and medium-size classrooms. Only 3 premises for lecturing have a capacity higher than the number of admitted students per year, but the VEE

organises the teaching properly based on their resources. In fact, two of the large auditoriums are used to give theoretical classes to students of four different courses. More space is needed for teaching, but the VEE is in charge of that, and three new classrooms have been built at the VTH in 2022.

A global ambitious process of VTH remodelling is planned to be performed in the medium term. Some specific technologies of high standard such as MRI or new arthroscopy systems are not available in the VTH at present, but the VEE considers acquiring these technologies amongst the next investments. Similarly, a new X-ray digital equipment for horses is also planned to be acquired.

4.2.3. Suggestions for improvement

None.

4.2.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Standard 4.2.

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

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

4.3.1. Findings

Healthy dogs and equines are housed in the VTH, while farm animals and equines are located in the CEGA (Agricultural Management and Exploration Centre). It includes premises with a maximum capacity of 8 dogs, 11 horses and 4 foals, 120 small ruminants, 31 pigs, 50 bovines, 400 poultry, and 60 rabbits.

Research animals are housed in the Bioterium and in the Department of Animal Science. Premises in the Bioterium have a maximum capacity of 18 rabbits, 1,500 mice, 600 rats, 250 trout and 2,000 salmon fry. In the Department of Animal Science there is a multivalent unit for small ruminants, rabbits and broilers (carcass), and 35 hives.

The VTH is organised into four clinical areas (Companion Animals, Equine, Production Animals, and Exotic and Wild Animals) and the units of Pharmacy and Medicines Storage, the Clinical Pathology Laboratory, and the Necropsy Service. The Companion Animal Area is subdivided into two sectors, Surgery and Hospitalisation, and Internal Medicine. Most activities are undertaken at the VTH, with the exception of the wild species housing at the CRAS, and the ambulatory service for equine and farm animals.

The VTH facilities available for clinical activities include a multispecies reception and waiting room. The small animal area includes 3 consultation rooms, a vaccination room, an emergency room, a radiology room, an ultrasound and ophthalmology room, a CT room, a surgery preparation room, and 3 operation rooms. The small animal hospitalisation includes 38 boxes for dogs, 14 of them for intensive care, 10 for cats and 27 for exotic pets. There is an isolation room with 12 boxes for dogs, 6 for cats, and 4 for exotic animals.

The large animal area includes an induction and anaesthesia room, an operation room, an ambulatory surgery room, a radiology room, and an equine arena. The large animal hospitalisation includes 20 boxes, 4 for isolation.

There are other multispecies facilities such as the sterilisation room and material storage, the radiology and CT command and interpretation rooms, the clinical pathology laboratory and the necropsy room.

The equipment for clinical training includes tonometer, X-ray, ultrasound, CT, anaesthesia machines and monitors, central surgical suction, surgical drills, surgical microscope, C-arc, anaesthesia tower for horses, internal video system in two operating rooms, video-endoscopes, electrocardiographs, oxygen concentrator, infusion and perfusion bombs, incubation chambers, and vaporizer. The Laboratories of Clinical Pathology, Parasitology, Microbiology and Histology and Anatomical Pathology have different equipment needed for their purposes, including blood analysers, spectrophotometers, microscopes, electrophoresis systems, incubators, Vitek®, sonicator, microtomes, automatic staining machine, slide mounter and automatic vacuum tissue processor for pathology, safety cabinets, centrifuges and other routine equipment.

4.3.2. Comments

The VEE has to be commended for the well-developed teaching farm with a full cycle of breeding and production in cattle, sheep, goats, pigs, rabbits and poultry. Some animal production facilities need a renovation, which is currently planned. It is the case of the housing facilities for pigs, with small, old and rustic cages that need some renovation.

The facilities and equipment used by the VEE, including the VTH, are within the standards used in veterinary training. Both the VTH and the livestock facilities are in the same area as the classrooms, favouring the change of activity by students.

4.3.3. Suggestions for improvement

It is suggested to update the facilities for swine housing in the teaching farm to comply with the present animal welfare requirements.

4.3.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Standard 4.3.

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

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

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

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

4.4.1. Findings

The VTH is open 24/7 for emergency services in small animals and horses, with students rotating in this service. Horse emergencies are also attended on an on-call basis.

Farm animals (ruminants, swine and poultry) in Portugal cannot circulate freely, unless between farms or to a slaughterhouse. The clinical training in farm animals and horses is conducted on an ambulatory basis as part of the on-call service. The only exception are the farm animals from the Centre for Exploration and Agrarian Management (CEGA) within the UTAD Campus.

Each clinical service has an official mobile phone which is with the clinician on duty. Students participate in practical training under the supervision of a teacher or a VTH practitioner. Both teachers and VTH practitioners are members of the Portuguese Veterinary College (*Ordem dos Médicos Veterinários*), in charge of the professional and ethical regulation, and members of different professional associations.

4.4.2. Comments

The VTH offers 24/7 emergency services for small animals and horses, but not for extramural farm animals due to legal restrictions. However, on-call service is available for horses and farm animals. It is guaranteed that students actively participate both in the 24/7 emergency service and in the on-call service, as part of their clinical rotations. Academic staff attend clinical cases, preferentially during practical classes.

4.4.3. Suggestions for improvement

None.

4.4.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Standard 4.4.

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

4.5.1. Findings

Students have access, during their rotations, to different diagnostic and therapeutic facilities, including intensive care, diagnostic imaging, surgery, clinical pathology, necropsy facilities, diagnostic imaging, and other diagnostic and therapeutic facilities. In the area of small animals, students receive clinical training in different specialties such as internal medicine, dermatology, reproduction, cardiology, neurology, surgery, and dentistry.

Students also have access to the medical records in QVET™ in different ways: during the clinical training through the veterinarian responsible for the case, with a written permission of the teacher or by intranet, using computer terminals at the VTH. Students can access the records of cases through a cloud (free4vet™) without owner data, in order to keep the confidentiality of personal data.

4.5.2. Comments

The students learn during their studies, and more specifically, during their clinical rotations, about the main diagnostic and therapeutic facilities needed for a complete professional training. The VTH

offers a wide variety of procedures, equipment, and facilities, with qualified and trained staff.

The organisation of some clinical services is not usual in most VTH and is not always based on the current process of clinical specialisations. The current veterinary specialisation means that, within large animals, specialists and facilities in horses and farm animals are usually differentiated in professional practice, since the practical approach in these species includes numerous differences. The VTH Service of Equine and Farm Animals has, however, the same staff and facilities due to the limited academic staff working in this area.

Organisation of services sometimes depends on the available staff. The Anaesthesia Service is included in the Companion Animal Area. Ophthalmology is present at the VTH, but it is not considered a service because there is no academic teacher as service director. The organisation of the services does not imply that students are not properly trained, considering that they are exposed to the different diagnostic and therapeutic facilities, regardless of this organisational issue.

4.5.3. Suggestions for improvement

None.

4.5.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Standard 4.5.

Standard 4.6: Appropriate isolation facilities must be provided to meet the need for the isolation and containment of animals with communicable diseases. Such isolation facilities must be properly constructed, ventilated, maintained and operated to provide for animal care and for prevention of spread of infectious agents. They must be adapted to all animal species commonly handled in the VTH.

4.6.1. Findings

The VTH has two different isolation facilities. One is for small animals and includes 2 rooms for dogs, one for cats, and another one for exotic pets. The second facility is for large animal isolation, with 4 boxes for hospitalisation.

The facilities have a ventilation independent system with a controlled filter system. There are circuits specific for animals and staff entering the isolation areas. In the case of the facility for large animals, there is a side door that allows a specific entrance into the isolation area. All personnel entering the area must wear personal protective equipment, which is subsequently scrapped. The facilities have specific containers for destruction of general material and biological material through a specialised company.

4.6.2. Comments

The design of the isolation facilities is appropriate, and the existence of specific circuits for animals with communicable diseases allows the containment of animals with these potential diagnoses. Biosecurity rules are appropriately taught and posted.

The isolation facility for large animals was renovated.

4.6.3. Suggestions for improvement

None.

4.6.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Standard 4.6.

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

4.7.1. Findings

The VEE has an ambulatory clinic working on-call. This service visits different centres such as farms, herds, equestrian centres, and livestock associations. This clinic is also in charge of the veterinary medical management of the university's herd. Students are trained participating in the ambulatory clinic, accompanying the veterinarians in their daily work.

For that purpose, the ambulatory clinic has two vehicles for training: one of them for 5 students and the other one for 9 people.

4.7.2. Comments

Considering the geographical area of influence, the VEE has an extraordinary potential for training in production animals. The Ambulatory clinic is working with the staff available in the large animals clinic; 3 members of the academic staff and 4 contracted practitioners at the VTH work as veterinarians in the large animal area. The VEE is waiting for the potential hiring of a new veterinarian for ambulatory clinics that can help with that.

4.7.3. Suggestions for improvement

None.

4.7.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Standard 4.7.

Standard 4.8: The transport of students, live animals, cadavers, materials from animal origin and other teaching materials must be done in agreement with national and EU standards, to ensure the safety of students and staff and to prevent the spread of infectious agents.

4.8.1. Findings

The VEE has two vehicles used for ambulatory clinics. One of the vehicles has capacity for 5 students, a teacher, and equipment needed for the practice. The second vehicle used in ambulatory clinics is a minibus for 9 people.

Furthermore, there are two minibuses (one for 8 people and the other one for 16) used to transport students and academic staff to the practical training in food inspection.

Regarding live animals, the VTH has a horse trailer, used when the owner does not have their own transportation system.

Small animal cadavers and organs are transported to the VEE using appropriated vehicles with licensed containers. This transport is licensed by the corresponding national organisation. Cadavers from zoos are transported by zoo's vehicles, and wild animals found dead are transported by a specialised police body or by the national authorities (ICNF).

Small animal cadavers are removed by a specialised company, and ruminant cadavers follow a

national system specific for that purpose.

4.8.2. Comments

Considering that many facilities for extramural training are around 100 km away from the VEE, the number of VEE-owned vehicles for student transport is limited. However, students manage themselves properly to attend most practices, and their training is not affected by this situation.

It is not common that the property of some vehicles is not from the VEE, but from a student's academic association, but it is the most viable solution for all parties involved due to administrative reasons.

The VEE does not have their own vehicles to transport organs and cadavers, specially due to legal national restrictions.

4.8.3. Suggestions for improvement

Although the numbers of necropsies are above the minimal values, it is suggested to implement a legal system to transport large animal cadavers to the VEE.

4.8.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Standard 4.8.

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

4.9.1. Findings

UTAD established a Biosafety Committee (BC-UTAD) in November 2013 and the Biosafety Unit of the Integrated Master of Veterinary Medicine (BU-VEE) in February 2014. Both bodies, with other participants, created the Manual of General Procedures for Safety, Hygiene and Health in the Workplace available to the UTAD community. The BU-VEE also created a Code for Good Biosafety Practices.

There are currently two representatives of the VEE in the BC-UTAD, one of them its president.

The Biosafety Unit of the VEE is composed of a chairman and other four members, being its activity regulated by the Biosafety Committee of the University. Among other activities, this Unit created and recently revised the Biosafety Best Practices VEE Code. This document is available online to all the academic community. Academic staff responsible for teaching explain in their first practical class the principles of good practice, referring to this webpage.

The Biosafety Unit also gives free training on biosafety/biosecurity for students and staff. They also maintain at least two meetings a year with laboratory directors and biosafety supervisors to monitor the feedback from students and staff. This Unit also develops some safety checklists to assess potential biosafety/biosecurity issues in Biosafety level 2 laboratories and animal facilities and visits these facilities upon request for technical assessment.

The Biosafety Unit is also responsible for posting warning signs in different VEE facilities. Suggestions or complaints can be done through QR-Codes available in visible places of the VEE.

Regarding the VTH, most drugs at the different clinics were properly stored and locked, but few

expired drugs and few open multi-vial unlabelled drugs (labelled on the missed cartoon box, but not on the bottle) were found in one unit.

4.9.2. Comments

The VEE has a specific committee structure that promotes and encourages a biosafety and biosecurity environment for students and staff. Specific documents about biosafety best practices are available online, and efforts to transmit the significance of the biosafety and biosecurity culture are significant.

All members of the Biosafety Unit of the VEE are academic staff, without presence of support staff or students in this committee. However, communication with the Committee is easy and promoted. QR-codes available for suggestions or complaints are a modern way of communication, especially for students. The link leads to a general University website for suggestions or complaints, not specific for the VEE Biosafety Unit, but a specific email address is also available on the UTAD webpage.

4.9.3. Suggestions for improvement

It is suggested to implement Good Pharmacy Practices in all VTH units in order to avoid the presence of expired or unlabelled drugs in a teaching environment.

4.9.4. Decision

The VEE is partially compliant with Standard 4.9 because of suboptimal pharmacy practices observed in some units.

Area 5. Animal resources and teaching material of animal origin

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

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

5.1.1. Findings

In the three academic years prior to 2021/22 an average of 107 students were educated in Year 1 and 90 students in Year 2. In total an average of 72 cadavers or materials of animal origin (MOA) were used to train these 197 students in three courses of practical anatomy. The exact distribution between whole cadavers and MOA is not specified in the VEE's SER. However, on further questioning the VEE stated that 8 complete cadavers were used for companion animal anatomy classes, 16 complete small ruminant cadavers and 10 poultry cadavers in the academic year 2020/21. In the same year half cadavers (cranial to and including the thorax) were used from 10 companion animals and 10 small ruminants. Smaller portions, e.g. fore- and hind-limbs and head) of 3 equine, 3 cattle, 3 small ruminants and 5 companion animal cadavers were used. Each year three specimens of the following (lungs, heart, liver, spleen, kidney, genital organs and digestive tract) are used in teaching from each of the following species: small ruminants, cattle, equines, pigs and companion animals. Practical anatomy classes generally contain 12 students who are divided

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into 6 groups of two so that each pair has the opportunity to work practically. The use of the material is structured in such a way that students and staff are both very happy with their learning outcomes from this course, despite a small number of specimens being used.

The VEE states in the SER that an average of 566 animals were used in preclinical teaching. The vast majority of these were poultry and rabbits (344) which does not reflect the balance of these animals in veterinary practice, or later teaching. An average of 175 ruminants and pigs were used in the preclinical teaching. However, in 2018-19 it is noted no pigs were used and the number of sheep used was considerably higher (122) than in 2020-21 (55). The VEE reports that no pigs were used in 2018-19 because of technical problems with the on-site pig farm. The fall in small ruminants used in 2020-21 was the result of the COVID-19 pandemic and technicians not being available to facilitate teaching. Only 5 dogs and 12 horses were used on average to educate veterinary students in these years.

The large available number of poultry and rabbits are used in the preclinical years to teach a wide array of skills, including assessing welfare, checking housing, calculating food intake, handling, palpation, pregnancy diagnosis and AI. Many of these skills are directly transferable to other species which are more widely represented in veterinary practice.

The number of animals used in the teaching of clinical sciences has been provided for four academic years 2017-18 and 2018-19 in the appendices and indicators and 2018-19, 2019-20 and 2020-21 in the SER Area 5. It is noted that the VTH was closed in the final semester of 2019-20. However, whilst the case load in 2019-20 was lower than the previous years (1442 vs. 3170, 2965, and 1825) for companion animals the caseload in the other species was in line with the average for other years. In 2020-21 only 1885 cases were reported to be seen in the VTH around 60% of the pre-pandemic numbers. It is worth noting that the actual number of individual animals seen is estimated.

As for patients seen extramurally the numbers in 2019-20 were slightly higher than in the other years as they totalled 719. By contrast in 2017-18, 2018-19, and 2020-21 the number of animals seen extramurally was 679, 708, and 325, respectively.

Ignoring the pandemic year, the number of animals seen are generally low. For example, a typical non-pandemic year only 155 cattle will be used in clinical teaching intramurally (50) and extramurally (105). Transrectal palpation is also taught in the preclinical years (third year second semester). However, only around 65 bovines are listed in the SER as having been used in the whole of the preclinical teaching. It should be noted that in the teaching of Reproduction II the students visit a large farm (500 cows) to be exposed to modern breeding technologies. The number of animals used in the External Practical Training in the 11th semester are not recorded.

The number of equines seen intramurally averages just 67 in the two years listed in the ESEVT indicators. Although this is higher in the more recent years (SER Table 5.1.3) where the average is 78 patients. Extramurally 72 animals were seen on average in the two years listed in the ESEVT indicators. However, the numbers for the past three years (SER Table 5.1.4) were marginally higher, 88 per year. Considering the teaching occurs over two semesters of 15 weeks annually the number of cattle and horses seen each week intramurally and extramurally on average is estimated to be 10.3. This number assumes 155 cattle and 155 horses seen over a 30-week teaching period.

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Across the same time period an estimate of 12.5 small ruminants and 2 pigs are seen both intramurally and extramurally.

The fall in numbers of cases seen intramurally and extramurally is concerning, particularly given that in 2018-19 the total number of students in the fourth and fifth year was 162, with 80 more in their final traineeship. However, in 2020-21 the total number of fourth- and fifth-year students had risen to 197, with an additional 93 students in their final traineeship. An increase in student numbers of 48, or 20%, and a fall in cases of from 4477 cases (3769 intramural and 708 extramural) in 2018-19 to 3041 cases (2716 intramural and 325 extramural) in 2020-21, a fall of 1436 cases, or 32%. The VEE has explained that this is a result of COVID-19.

The number of animals seen at the CRAS is significant, an average approximately 350 a year around 10% of the intramural cases seen. The exposure to 'exotic' animals and native wildlife is high. Working with these animals undoubtedly provides the students with problem solving abilities and comparative knowledge which is useful in more conventional veterinary practice.

Nearly all the clinical teaching is performed in first opinion animals. Referrals represent 25%, 20% and 15% of the caseload for exotics, companion animals and equines, respectively. There are no referral cases in the field of production animals, although this is at least in part due to regulations preventing admission of farm animals to the VTH.

The SER makes clear that the students participate in out of hours cases at the VTH (small animals), upon questioning they also participate in the large animal on call at the VTH. The VEE is not permitted to bring farm animals (ruminants and pigs) to the VTH meaning that these cases are limited. Upon questioning it was estimated that the farm animal on call team was called out once a week out of hours.

The number of cadavers used in necropsy teaching shows a similar trend to that seen with clinical cases, i.e. the numbers used have fallen significantly from 2017-18/2018-19 to 2019-20 and 2020-21. Ignoring the year the pandemic closed the VTH (2019-20), there were 321 cadavers used for necropsies in 2020-21 compared to 592 in 2018-19. Ruminant necropsies have fallen from 85 to 40, companion animals from 134 to 84 and poultry and rabbits from 310 to 140. The VEE explains this as a result of COVID-19. Farmers are prohibited by law to deliver cadavers to the VEE for necropsy. However, the transport of the cadavers may be ensured by the producers, upon request by the veterinarian and authorization approved by the DGAV (National authority). On occasion VEE pathologists have performed on-farm necropsies to establish a diagnosis.

The number of visits to herds/flocks for animal training has remained fairly stable over the past four years. The distribution of these visits is unclear with certain visits being earmarked for elective courses (traineeships).

The number of visits to slaughterhouses is high and stable. The FSQ programme also includes visits to meat processing plants, fish docks and places whereby food is sold directly to the public - supermarkets, restaurants, and fish markets.

5.1.2. Comments

The access to wildlife rehabilitation and meat processing unit are commendable and stand out

features of the IMVM programme at the VEE. The access to many species in both anatomy training and through the use of the University Farm also allows students great opportunities to follow the production cycles of many species.

The exposure to horses in the preclinical years is suboptimal, which is combined with the relatively low caseload intra-murally. The large animal surgical caseload is low. This is partly compensated by the extra-mural caseload (see Indicators).

Almost all teaching is performed in first opinion cases. Whilst this does not necessarily pose a problem as it conveys 'real-life', it does limit the opportunities to develop critical thinking with more complex problems. Also, the value to a reported extramural case is often lower than a referred case for teaching as - for example the former includes many simple calls such as vaccination which present limited learning opportunities. It is also concerning that almost half of all reported bovine and porcine cases are seen in the university farm - which by the very nature of its size can only have limited problems.

Exposure to referral cases is important to develop clinical thinking skills - which facilitate lifelong performance as a veterinarian, not just Day One Competences. Increasing staff specialisation and providing equipment to increase the appeal of the clinics is important here - an example could be a portable radiography equipment for equine practice.

5.1.3. Suggestions for improvement

It is suggested to:

-) increase exposure to horses in the pre-clinical years;
-) increase the caseload for ruminant and equine medicine and surgery. Specific attention should be paid to laparotomies. This could perhaps be facilitated by the planned increase in teaching staff to allow for species specific specialisation as well as investing in equipment.

5.1.4. Decision

The VEE is partially compliant with Standard 5.1 because of suboptimal caseload in equine and ruminant surgery.

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

5.2.1. Findings

The students participate in extramural studies in the fifth year of the course (Traineeship IV and V). In Traineeship IV and V the students choose what field they would like to work in from the major practice areas. These are listed - with the annual number of students average 2017-18 and 2018-19 taking some of Traineeship in each of the areas in brackets: Companion Animal medicine (67.5), Farm Animal and Equine Medicine (27.5), Preventative and Reproductive Medicine (15.5), Preventative Medicine (40.5), Shelter Medicine (24). Since the academic year 2020/2021, all the students have to perform mandatory extramural clinical rotations in all areas. Students have to choose at least two electives per semester. The number of students in the 5th year in 2018-19 was 68, from the SER it can be estimated that the number of students in the fifth year in 2017-18 was

around 70.

The VEE employs staff at the extramural sites directly, but in part time roles, so that the teaching that is given is under the control of the VEE. The VEE states that the teaching given follows the same standards as those applied to teaching at the VEE. Students are responsible for their own travel and accommodation costs to attend their Traineeship IV and V. This is also the case for Traineeship VI which is mentioned below. Student groups when questioned about this found it unproblematic.

In addition to Traineeship IV and V students participate in 'off site' visits to, for example slaughterhouses and farms. These off-site visits occur from the VEE and the teachers accompanying the students are based at the VEE.

According to the SER (Table 5.1.7) 50 external visits are made to teach Animal Production and Herd Health Management. The annual average for these visits to animal holdings was; cattle (14), small ruminants (24), Pigs (6), Equine (3), Poultry and Rabbits (3). Group size for swine, poultry and pigs visits is reported to be 40 students with 2 teachers. Visits for reproductive medicine II involve nine students and one teacher.

The number of 'off site' Food Safety Quality visits annually average 83, Table 5.1.8 in the SER. The average of 83 is taken over three years and therefore is lower than expected due to COVID-19. This includes visits to slaughterhouses, related meat processing premises, canning factories, fishing docks, fish markets, supermarkets and canteens/restaurants. Group size varies in ruminant slaughterhouse groups of 5-7 students are taken from the lairage through the slaughter line to include post-mortem inspection. In industrial pig and poultry slaughterhouses the visiting group is larger (up to 18 students) but two teachers attend. Visits to premises selling directly to the public group size is no larger than 7 students per teacher.

5.2.2. Comments

The staff involved in extra-mural clinical education in 4th and 5th years are staff members of the VEE. The exception is the EPT in the final (6th) year.

The VEE staff based extra-murally are encouraged to participate in teacher training and genuine efforts are made to include them in planning and summary meetings. These staff are very enthusiastic about their roles as teachers, which is a real strength.

One teacher and nine students are challenging to achieve safe and student active reproduction visits.

5.2.3. Suggestions for improvement

None.

5.2.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Standard 5.2.

Standard 5.3: The VTH must provide nursing care skills and instruction in nursing procedures. Under all situations students must be active participants in the clinical workup

of patients, including problem-oriented diagnostic approach together with diagnostic decision-making.

5.3.1. Findings

Student teaching of clinical skills starts early in the course. Initially in animal husbandry, welfare and ethology in the first year. In the second- and third-year practical handling of animals and history taking is taught with evaluation of animal welfare. In the fourth- and fifth-year learning is more hands-on although it is unclear how much of the student's time is devoted to nursing and how much to the actions of a veterinary surgeon.

Veterinary nursing is a recognised profession in Portugal. Veterinary nurses do not act as primary teachers although they often act as assistants when teaching is performed, i.e. demonstrating or explaining a practical skill whilst designated teachers are in the room, except out of hours. Inter-professional relationships are good.

The VEE tries to ensure active participation of the students by requiring a certain number of cases to be written up and presented. The students report that in the Extramural placements they often feel they are not able to perform as much 'hands-on' training as they might like to because the owners are present.

Several sources – students and educators, report that the approach taken is problem based. A problem list is first developed, then potential causes of the problem are listed before lists being merged and a diagnosis reached, and a treatment plan prepared.

5.3.2. Comments

Veterinary nursing is integrated into the veterinary education provided by the VEE.

Case report writing and the structure of learning encourages students to be active and methodical using a problem-based approach.

5.3.3. Suggestions for improvement

None.

5.3.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Standard 5.3.

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

5.4.1. Findings

The VEE has computerised records available for those companion animals treated intramurally at the VTH using QVET software. The QVET software is not fully being utilised as certain elements, e.g. PCAS image recordings, have not been integrated into the software. Students have access to case records, without owner information (Free4Vets), to facilitate further study of the cases and production of case reports. These records can also be searched and used for research. Students are

actively involved in writing journals, although these are checked by staff.

PCAS software is used to record images and store these in both small and large animal departments of the VTH.

Extramural cases are not recorded on the QVET software. These are recorded in separate computer programmes. Although the detail and ability to search these records is more limited. Student's extramural experiences should be recorded in their own case logs.

5.4.2. Comments

Large animal cases (both equine and food-producing animals) are recorded on papers but not in the digital recording software at the VTH. This limits the ease of study, research and evaluation.

The digital software QVET has not been used to its full capacity. Standardised diagnosis codes should be used to ease search facilities and test results, diagnostic images, etc can and should be stored in this software.

Extramural cases need to be recorded.

5.4.3. Suggestions for improvement

It is suggested to:

-) expand the use of QVET for all species in the VTH;
-) use QVET effectively – have standardised diagnosis keywords;
-) integrate all clinical records, laboratory reports, etc. into QVET;
-) properly record both intra-mural and extra-mural clinical cases seen by students at the level of the individual animal.

5.4.4. Decision

The VEE is partially compliant with Standard 5.4 because of suboptimal implementation of the electronic patient recording system.

Area 6. Learning resources

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

6.1.1. Findings

The Library and Documentation Service manages the VEE's Library and provides all central IT applications and hosts the e-learning environment.

The webpage of Library and Documentation Service is regularly updated by a dedicated

webmaster. Students and staff can get all the information about the library. This webpage contains the necessary information to consult VEE's library system catalogue to access the available resources and services, such as loan of books etc.

Requests for new books or journals from both staff and students, are evaluated by the CBD and authorises the library to purchase such.

6.1.2. Comments

Both staff and students are able to find all requested materials both online or as hard copy. Textbooks and study material are regularly updated to ensure access to the latest versions. An exchange system with other Portuguese academic libraries is in place and makes it possible to request books from other libraries as well.

6.1.3. Suggestions for improvement

None.

6.1.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Standard 6.1.

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

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

6.2.1. Findings

A Central Library was established in 2000 through the merger of the different departmental libraries and unifies the bibliographic collection of these departments. This facility comprises 700 seats, 3 large reading rooms, 31 individual offices and 8 group rooms. To support the bibliographic research, study and educational activities, UTAD provides its users with 15 workstations with computers and wired internet connection. Beside daily opening hours students and staff can access the platforms dedicated to distance learning and e-learning. Authorised users (all students included) can have access from any computer in the university or from home through VPN to the electronic resources of VEE's Library System. This includes databases, free journals, e-magazines, e-books and theses. Allocated annual funds are sufficient to cover the need for new journals/books/subscriptions.

A librarian is available during opening hours to assist students to access all required information and to help guide students through the different physical and electronic sources and other platforms dedicated to academic content.

Different platforms, such as Skype and MS-Teams for videoconferencing are available, beside teaching support platforms such as Moodle, Office 365 and Educast. The platforms can be accessed locally through workstations with internet connection or wirelessly through various laptop computers, tablets or smartphones. Externally to the VEE, the platforms are accessed through the

internet, and some of them need the use VPN.

Online exams can also be created with the help of the library IT facilities and online test through the Moodle platform. For the creation of interactive pedagogical activities different software is available to assist (Urkund, MatLab tool, Perusall tool and H5P).

The VEE has an internal platform for sharing institutional information and documents.

The VTH has available 24 hours a day, specific books and magazines for clinical subjects, for real time access during hospital practice.

6.2.2. Comments

During the COVID-19 pandemic the teaching staff entered a steep learning curve to ensure that all students had access to all teaching content. Students noticed since then a strongly improved content with more interactive possibilities. At this moment this quality of the online content is continued to be appreciated by the students.

6.2.3. Suggestions for improvement

The bandwidth of the internet (Wi-Fi) needs to be updated throughout the VEE campus to ensure uninterrupted access for all students and staff when a lot of people are online.

6.2.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Standard 6.2.

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

6.3.1. Findings

The Central Library's resources contain 1384 books and periodical resources related to Veterinary Sciences.

The VEE also has a set of protocols with organisations and repositories that allows to offer students and academics a vast set of e-periodicals, e-books, e-theses, as well as several research resources, such as On-line Knowledge Library, Web of Science, Association of European Research Libraries, and Scientific Open Access Repository of Portugal.

The students have access to a Skills Lab (LabCC), a teaching structure of the Department of Veterinary Sciences. LabCC aims to promote learning and training of practical skills prior to contact with animals. Stations are available to train restraint techniques in companion animals, intravenous administration or fluid therapy, blood collection, monitoring in intensive care and anaesthesia, suturing, laparotomy in bovine, and electrocardiograms in companion animals. In the LabCC, three large simulation models are available, an Equine palpation/colic simulator (with neck venipuncture and i.m. injection), a Bovine model to train transrectal palpation, and a simulator for artificial insemination and transrectal examination.

Outside the practicals in the skills lab students can request access to practice and help with the different techniques available on request.

6.3.2. Comments

The skills lab is beside training in the basic skills also used to compensate for suboptimal number of clinical cases in equines and ruminants. This gives students the chance to practise skills like rumenotomy and liver biopsies.

6.3.3. Suggestions for improvement

More mannequins and teaching material would benefit the skills lab and more room for the skills lab would ensure that more students could use the skills lab at the same time.

6.3.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Standard 6.3.

Area 7. Student admission, progression and welfare

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

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

Formal cooperations with other VEEs must also be clearly advertised.

7.1.1. Findings

Academic Services is responsible for the administrative and academic management of the processes that affect the student's education from their enrolment and registration to the completion of their Graduation, as well as the management/organisation of the processes, the provision of information or guidance, and advice on issues related to academic activities. All academic regulations including the Pedagogical Regulation are published on the academic services webpage. The contents of this regulation and the pedagogical process are described in more detail in 3.2.1.

UTAD advertises the veterinary educational programme, the admission procedures and requirements for national and international students on the website of the university.

The Office of Communication and Image (GCI) coordinates relationships between UTAD and society. ‘The Open Day’ offers an opportunity for future students to learn about the educational programmes, research, cultural and social life, career opportunities and the Eco Campus. During the past few years, academics of the DCV have actively participated in this activity. ‘UTAD Junior’ takes place in July and for one-week young people have the opportunity to participate in a wide range of pedagogical, scientific, technological, recreational and cultural activities that make them aware of characteristics of the veterinary education and UTAD’s facilities. Additionally, the GCI ensures presentation of UTAD (including veterinary education) in public and private secondary schools, and schools can request visits to UTAD.

UTAD participates in various national and international education, training and innovation fairs and forums to inform about its educational opportunities. These include fairs aimed at students in Latin America and Japan. Social networks are used to promote the image of the institution and its educational opportunities, as well as pedagogical and scientific events and to advertise the achievements and prizes of its teachers, researchers and students. Each year, a special issue about

the offer of Graduation Courses is published in the major national newspapers.

The International Relations and Mobility Office (GRIM) offers information, support and guidance for incoming and outgoing students. This office is responsible for managing bilateral agreements with other institutions, related to the Erasmus programme or the national Almeida Garret mobility program, and manages mobility programmes with Brazilian universities. These are explained in more detail in 1.5.1.

7.1.2. Comments

The VEE consistently applies pre-defined and published regulations, which cover the whole student 'life cycle'. The Academic Services is responsible for management of the related processes. UTAD and the VEE are active in providing information and organising events for prospective students.

7.1.3. Suggestions for improvement

None.

7.1.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Standard 7.1.

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

7.2.1. Findings

The decision on the number of students admitted is made according to Portuguese law and UTAD's internal regulations. The Rector defines the number of students admitted to the VEE, after hearing the Vice-Rector for Education and after consulting the ECAV's President.

In the period under evaluation, an average of 92 new students per year were admitted. For the next three years, the Rector stipulated the opening of 87 vacancies for the admission of new students. To adapt the number of admitted students to the available educational resources, students from the 4th and 5th years are divided into five groups and each one of these groups are subdivided into three smaller groups, for clinical practical classes to have an adequate ratio of students per clinical case and facilitate the "hands-on" clinical training. Each one of these small groups of students is accompanied by a teacher (permanent or a hired temporary academic). The distribution of students per class described above is also applied in several preclinical CU's of the 3rd year.

Some clinical CU's of the 4th and 5th years have clinical work on livestock farms. To optimise the use of the VTH facilities and the management of clinical cases, schedules between intramural and extramural work are made in order to avoid the presence of many students at the same time in the VTH.

UTAD has also been strengthening the teaching staff. The number of Veterinary FTEs of the VEE increased from 47.2 in 2018/2019 to 49.5 in 2020/2021.

The VTH has established protocols with livestock farms and associations of autochthonous breeds, that permit the students not only to go to their facilities to have practical classes, but in some cases send their animals for treatment at the VTH, allowing for the increase in the number of clinical cases observed by students.

7.2.2. Comments

The VEE takes into account the available resources and has made efforts to increase the number of teaching staff. Small-group teaching is considered important. Part of clinical training is performed extramurally, with a low number of students per teacher. The animal resources, including the suboptimal exposure to horses and low caseload for large animal surgeries are discussed in detail in 5.1.

7.2.3. Suggestions for improvement

None.

7.2.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Standard 7.2.

Standard 7.3: The selection and progression criteria must be clearly defined, consistent, and defensible, be free of discrimination or bias, and take into account the fact that students are admitted with a view to their entry to the veterinary profession in due course.

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

7.3.1. Findings

The application procedure is fully controlled by the General Directorate of Higher Education (DGES), directly dependent on the Ministry of Science, Technology and Higher Education. The VEE does not have a specific Selection Committee. The national call to enrol in a public higher education institution is made annually at the end of the school year. There are special quotas for applicants that are from the Portuguese islands of Azores and Madeira, Portuguese emigrants or relatives residing with them and applicants with a disability.

In Portugal, students are eligible to apply for a higher education programme if they 1) hold a secondary education course (minimum 12-year educational track) or legally equivalent qualification; 2) take or have taken in the last two years, the national exams corresponding to the entrance exams required to be admitted in the specific course the student wishes to attend, with a classification equal to or higher than the minimum set for that programme by the higher education institution; 3) comply with the prerequisites required by the institution for the course the student wishes to attend.

National exams are prepared and graded by the National Evaluation Office and approved by the Ministry of Science, Technology and Higher Education. UTAD participates in the selection process by defining:

- *Numerus clausus*/year (82/82/87, respectively in the years under evaluation);
- National entrance exams that candidates must accomplish (Biology/Geology and Physics/Chemistry);
- The weighting applied to the final classification of secondary education (65%) and to the grades obtained on national exams (35%);
- Minimum grades in national exams (10 in 20) and final result (10 in 20) are obtained through the application of the formula used to determine the final admission grade;

- Prerequisite to access the veterinary education (Group B - Interpersonal Communication means the absence of psychic, sensory or motor deficiencies that seriously interfere with the functional capacity and interpersonal communication to the point of preventing one's own or someone else's learning). This prerequisite is required for the admission to the veterinary course by all National public VEEs. To prove this requirement, the student must present a medical certificate.

The classification of the last veterinary student enrolled has varied between 159.4/200 (2018-2019) and 175.1/200 (2020-2021), revealing the high level of the enrolled students.

All information about the admission procedures is advertised on UTAD and the General Directorate of Higher Education websites.

In addition to the admission procedures for Standard students, there are UTAD's Regulations for extra vacancies to special application regimes that are decided by the Rector, annually up to a maximum of 20% of *numerus clausus*. For veterinary education, UTAD opens extra vacancies for 1) Institution/course transfer, i.e. students who have been previously enrolled in another Higher Education Institution or in a different course at UTAD. Candidates will be selected based on their average on the entrance exams required to be admitted and on the curricular units they have accomplished on the course where they come from (8/8/2 vacancies in the years under evaluation); 2) Holders of a higher education degree. Candidates will be selected based on their final grade of the higher education course (6/0/1 vacancies under the years under evaluation); 3) Other special regimes for several defined national and international groups. These students are selected by the DGES (0/3/1 vacancies in the years under evaluation).

Candidates will be admitted to the VEE on the proposal of the CD (that is responsible for the evaluation and selection of the candidates, according to the criteria referred to in the aforementioned regulations) and under the favourable opinion of the SC of ECAV. Once the process has been completed it must be approved by the ECAV's President.

In admission processes under the responsibility of UTAD, candidates may submit a complaint duly substantiated to the Academic Office whenever they disagree with the results. Complaints are analysed by the CDB, which must answer the questions presented, referring to whether the initial decision is maintained or if the candidate who presented the complaint is right. Decisions on complaints, after being validated by the ECAV's SC and President, are communicated by the Academic Office to claimants via email. During the past 3 years, there has been one complaint regarding the special application regimes. The complaint was not successful.

Complaints addressed directly to the DGES do not go through the VEE. In case there had been any complaint that had been granted, the VEE would have been informed and the student enrolled.

The progression criteria are described in detail in 7.5.1.

7.3.2. Comments

The application procedure is fully controlled by the DGES, directly dependent on the Ministry of Science, Technology and Higher Education. Criteria for being eligible to apply are defined at the national level. National exams are prepared and graded by the National Evaluation Office and approved by the Ministry of Science, Technology and Higher Education. The VEE's opportunities to give feedback and suggestions on these procedures is very limited. In addition to the admission procedures for Standard students, there are UTAD's Regulations for extra vacancies to special application regimes that are decided by the Rector.

7.3.3. Suggestions for improvement

None.

Suggestions for improvement regarding student progression are given in 7.5.3.

7.3.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Standard 7.3.

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

7.4.1. Findings

UTAD enshrines several special frequency regimes, where students with Special Educational Needs (SEN) are included and has a Regulation of Special Attendance Regimes. According to this regulation, a student with special educational needs is “any student who, for reasons of motor, sensory, cognitive, communicative, socio-emotional nature, or any combination of these, presents specific difficulties susceptible to, in conjunction with environmental factors, limit the learning process and activity and participation in the academic context in equity with other colleagues”. However, the selection process of students for veterinary education requires a prerequisite (Group B – Interpersonal Communication), which is described in 7.3.1. Thus, in the last few years only few students have required special arrangements due to disabilities or illnesses. These arrangements have included individual modifications in evaluation tests.

This regulation refers to the specific conditions for students, according to their needs, which are fulfilled by the entire Academy. Students with SEN have special rights, such as an exemption from the obligation to register in a minimum number of CU, exemption from prescription, priority in choosing classes or places of internship, clinical teaching or equivalent. They may be entitled e.g. to a special examination period or be evaluated under the conditions appropriate to their situation, namely having extra time to take the tests.

Relevant buildings on the campus are prepared with access for people with reduced mobility as well as accessible parking. UTAD’s Social Services have rooms adapted for students with SEN and special support in their residences and they have priority in the allocation of places in University Residences.

The Academic Office must inform the CD whenever there are students with SEN and arrange a meeting with the student and the respective CD, in which an individual support plan must be defined. The support plan must include e.g. assessment of the required needs and support and the measures to be implemented, such as adaptations to the teaching and learning process. The support needs also have to be monitored and revised during the studies when appropriate.

UTAD has a Support Unit for Students with SEN, Rehabilitation and Accessibility Engineering Centre (CERTIC), that supports all students with SEN. It has its resources and its mission related to application of science and technology, in areas such as access to information technologies, communication and mobility. UTAD’s Documentation and Library Services have a unit with resources to support SEN, namely the Special Reading Support Room. The UTAD’s Social Services maintains a Health Unit for all students, including students with SEN.

UTAD has to respond annually to the General Directorate for Education and Science Statistics’ survey on SEN in Higher Education Institutions, and our SEN students also have to respond to a questionnaire about the conditions that UTAD offers for their attendance at courses and welfare.

7.4.2. Comments

UTAD has clear policies, procedures and support services for applicants with disabilities or illnesses. However, as the selection process of students for veterinary education in national public VEEs includes a prerequisite (Group B – Interpersonal Communication, i.e. the absence of psychic, sensory or motor deficiencies that seriously interfere with the functional capacity and interpersonal communication), these are seldom needed in the VEE. The VEE has provided evidence how these individual cases have been supported.

7.4.3. Suggestions for improvement

None.

7.4.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Standard 7.4.

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

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

7.5.1. Findings

According to the Pedagogical Regulation of UTAD, students may enrol in compulsory and/or optional CUs up to a maximum of 78 ECTS per year (not exceeding 42 ECTS per semester) except for the year in which they join a course for the first time when the maximum is 60 ECTS and the minimum is 30 ECTS credits. Students regularly enrolled in the last curricular year of the course may be allowed to exceed these limits, provided that they are enrolled in all the CU that integrate the course. The enrolment in these cases is subject to fees that will be set for that purpose. Students are obliged to enrol in all the CU they have overdue, giving them preference over the CU of the most advanced year in which they enrol.

A student is considered enrolled in a specific curricular year of the course as long as he or she does not have an overdue number of CU corresponding to more than 18 ECTS, considering what is foreseen in the study plan adopted for that curricular year.

Students to be approved in a CU must meet the specific requirements of that CU, which have to be in accordance with the UTAD's Pedagogical Regulation and obtain a final classification equal or greater than 10 (on a 20-point scale) in a continuous evaluation or final exam.

Numbers of veterinary students registered at the VEE for each year between 2018/2019 and 2020/2021 are shown in Table 7.2.2 in the SER and the number of students graduating annually between during the same time in Table 7.2.3. Additional information regarding the previous years was gained on site on request.

In compliance with national legislation, UTAD has a Regulation of Prescriptions, which establishes the maximum number of enrolments that can be made by a student in a study cycle. Students whose academic record in the study cycles does not exceed the pre-defined number of ECTS credits are prevented from enrolling for two consecutive semesters. The required number of ECTS credits vs.

the maximum number of enrolments varies from ≤ 59 credits - 3 enrolments to 360 credits - 9 enrolments.

In order to support students who have difficulties in their learning process, the curriculum includes hours of tutorial guidance in each CU, including individual or group sessions with the teacher. Each student is assigned a tutor and a mentor at the beginning of the first year of the course, whose mission is to guide and help students in solving their problems. This programme supports the academic integration of students in higher education and identifies and intervenes early in situations of academic failure and, in this way, aims to reduce academic dropout and/or failure. Tutors are teachers whose main responsibility is to provide academic/pedagogical support and the mentors are 2nd or 3rd-year veterinary students, who help the student in a full integration into academic and social life.

Based on the data obtained from the academic services, the GPAM prepares the Annual Report of School Success of the UTAD courses. According to annual reports covering the past three academic years, 95-98 % of the students enrolled in veterinary education had attended the CU. Of those, 90-94% were assessed and 94-96% were approved. Regarding the CU, 82-90% had an approval rate greater than 90%.

The regulations and reports produced are available on the ECAV and UTAD websites.

The PRIP coordinates the Permanent Observatory of Dropouts and Promotion of Academic Success (OPAPSE), whose mission is the monitoring of academic dropouts and the implementation of actions to improve dropout indicators and academic success at UTAD, and the Academic Dropout Report is published annually. In veterinary education, the dropout rate has been around 3% during the past three academic years. The main reasons given for this dropout rate were non-adaptation to the course, change of Higher Education institution and financial reasons. These cessations occur mainly in the 1st and 2nd years; some students decide to repeat the national entrance exams to try to enter the Medicine course and others, during the 1st year, realise that the course is not what they actually wanted.

In the academic year 2020/2021 there was a sharp decrease in the number of graduates (46), not only due to the difficulties inherent to COVID-19 pandemic (confinements, mobility restrictions and difficulty in finding places that would accept students), but also because in that year the deadline for submitting Master theses was extended. The VEE intends to propose adjustments to the regulations so that thesis delivery deadlines are shortened and thus support completion of the studies in due time.

The admission procedures and criteria are defined by national legislation and accomplished by the DGES, and UTAD has no direct intervention in these definitions. The number of students admitted to veterinary education is defined annually by the Rector, which from the overall number of students that UTAD can admit to the 1st Cycle Courses defined by the Ministry, determines the number of students that each course will receive in each academic year. This information is communicated using rectoral dispatches sent to the academy via email and advertised on the UTAD website.

UTAD has a system for evaluating the performance of the teaching-learning process, which allows the evaluation of the system as a whole, proposing improvement actions and monitoring.

7.5.2. Comments

The number of graduated students has consistently been markedly lower than the number of students admitted six years earlier, in spite of the fact that the official dropout rate has been only approximately 3%. For example, the annual number of admitted students between 2012/2013 and 2014/2015 varied between 85 and 101, and the number of graduated students in 2018/2019 was 69,

2019/2020 it was 65, and in 2020/2021 it was only 46. The main reasons given for the dropout rate were non-adaptation to the course, change of Higher Education institution and financial reasons, mainly in the 1st and 2nd years of study. The sharp decrease in the number of graduates in 2020/2021 was partly due to the difficulties inherent to COVID-19 pandemic (confinements, mobility restrictions and difficulty in finding places that would accept students), but also due to the extended deadline for submitting Master theses. The VEE intends to propose adjustments to the regulations so that thesis delivery deadlines are shortened and thus support completion of the studies in due time. This is likely to cause increased workload for the academics supervising the theses.

7.5.3. Suggestions for improvement

The VEE is suggested to clarify what are all the reasons for the low number of graduating students and target appropriate measures accordingly. Students should be admitted with a view to their entry to the veterinary profession in due course.

7.5.4. Decision

The VEE is partially compliant with Standard 7.5 because of suboptimal monitoring of student's progression.

Standard 7.6: Mechanisms for the exclusion of students from the programme for any reason must be explicit.

The VEE's policies for managing appeals against decisions, including admissions, academic and progression decisions and exclusion, must be transparent and publicly available.

7.6.1. Findings

Students automatically become non-registered if they do not renew their registration within the period established for this purpose and published on UTAD's Academic Services webpage. However, this non-registration is not permanent and a student can make a formal request for re-registration at the Academic Office upon the payment of a supplementary fee.

In compliance with national legislation, UTAD has a Regulation of Prescriptions, which establishes the maximum number of enrolments that can be made by a student in a study cycle. Students whose academic record in the study cycles does not exceed the pre-defined number of ECTS credits are prevented from enrolling for two consecutive semesters. The required number of ECTS credits vs. the maximum number of enrolments varies from ≤ 59 credits - 3 enrolments to 360 credits - 9 enrolments. During the past 3 academic years, a total of three students have been in the situation of prescription. When a student is at risk of prescribing, the Course Director is alerted, in order to be able to verify the reasons for the failure and to look for solutions. During the prescription period, the student can enrol in isolated CUs, as long as they are not from the course she/he was attending. UTAD has a Disciplinary Regulation, which defines the sanctions based on the seriousness of the situation. Sanctions applicable can range from a warning or a fine to a suspension of attendance at UTAD for varying periods. An appeal can be made to this decision by submitting a request in an appropriate form to the Academic Office, addressed to the Rector of UTAD.

The regulations governing academic life, namely student's admission and pedagogical activity in general are published and updated on the Academic Services webpage. In the different regulations, at least one of the articles explains the procedure for making an appeal (e.g. in the Pedagogical Regulation, Regulation n° 419/2021, article 26, students have the information on how to appeal when they want to request the revision of a written assessment and the official form to request the

revision is also on the webpage).

The policies for managing complaints against admissions are described in 7.3.1.

7.6.2. Comments

Mechanisms for the exclusion of students from the programme are explicit. The VEE has publicly available policies for managing appeals and complaints and has provided evidence on their use.

7.6.3. Suggestions for improvement

None.

7.6.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Standard 7.6.

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

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

7.7.1. Findings

UTAD is committed to provide a wide range of support to students. UTAD's Student Centre supports students regarding academic subjects, international relations and mobility, access to scholarships and other social support, accommodation, food, as well as sports, health and welfare services. ECAV's Support Office provides closer and more targeted support to veterinary students. The PT-UTAD programme promotes students' integration and academic success in the transition from Secondary School to Higher Education and throughout their university studies. During COVID-19 pandemic, *UTAD+Contigo* programme was implemented to support students.

New students carry out their registration on a defined day, with special support of academic office staff, UTAD's Social Services (SAS-UTAD) and ECAV staff, the VEE's Directive Board and teachers. Students are specially introduced e.g. to the Tutoring/Mentoring programme, the services provided by SAS-UTAD, the cultural and sports offer, the volunteer student programmes, and get to know the Student's Ombudsman. The VEE has currently 32 tutors and 17 mentors, trained by the Management and Support Group (GGA) of the Tutoring/ Mentoring programme (PT-UTAD) The GGA also helps students in problems, which may not be solved by their tutors or mentors and refers them to specialised services. The PT-UTAD is also prepared to support students with special educational needs as the training programme for tutors and mentors includes awareness and support for people with disabilities.

In order to support students with difficulties in their learning process, the curriculum includes hours of tutorial guidance in each CU where students in individual or group sessions with the teacher can prepare a work or present questions and doubts about the topics related with the subject. Furthermore, all teachers are required to publish at the FUC, at SIDE, opening hours for students who need individualised support.

UTAD has a Regulation of Special Attendance Regimens for students with special educational

needs (SEN). Individual support is defined according to the needs of the student. UTAD has a Support Unit for Students with SEN, Rehabilitation and Accessibility Engineering Centre (CERTIC), and UTAD's Documentation and Library Services have a unit with resources to support SEN, namely the Special Reading Support Room.

The SAS-UTAD has a Policy of Well-Being for Students and supports them in various aspects, including food, accommodation, medical services, scholarships and other economic support. The SAS-UTAD maintains a Health Unit which all students can use. This Health Unit has available two types of consultations (by appointment and urgent) in Clinical Psychology, Nutrition, Gynaecology and Nursing. Schedules are available on the SAS-UTAD webpage and requests for an appointment can be made online. For example, the Psychology consultation has an average waiting time of 10 days. Currently, the academic community has access to General and Family Medicine and Nursing consultations at the Health Care Centre Vila Real II (ACES Douro I) by appointment. Schedules are available on the SAS-UTAD webpage and appointments can be made by phone. Students can also use the "Open" consultation to respond to urgent cases, available for one hour (14:30-15:30) from Monday to Thursday.

The Student Ombudsman is an independent body that in conjunction with the Academic association, the PC and the President of ECAV has the aim to defend and promote the legitimate rights and interests of students within the scope of their relationship with the University. The Ombudsman e.g. collects and appreciates the complaints presented to her, arbitrates situations of conflict, prepares recommendations to official bodies and competent authorities, and also proposes and/or participates in initiatives that contribute to the improvement of the academic environment quality. Students can seek the Ombudsman's help to solve their problems whenever they find it necessary.

UTAD contributes to the transition of students to the labour market. The 'UTAD Soft-Skills Plan' has been organised for several years to offer students contact and experience with a set of interpersonal skills. The advertising of job offers, internships, or fellowships, the undertaking of initiatives aimed at promoting the greater employability of young graduates and the development of students for better employability, and participation in studies identifying new professions and new labour markets are all concerns of UTAD.

The Academic Association of the University of Trás-os-Montes and Alto Douro (AAUTAD) is the link between the university and its students. It is a recreational, cultural, and sports association and works to defend the interests of the academy, having a serious and priority commitment to the students it represents, accompanying them in an attentive, careful and concerned way.

UTAD awards merit scholarships to students who, in each curricular year, have demonstrated exceptional academic performance, as established in a regulation.

The SAS-UTAD and the Pro-Rectorate for Health and Welfare (PRSBE), together with the AAUTAD, the Schools and external institutions, organise awareness-raising actions and sporting events, encouraging a healthy environment in the academy. Throughout the academic year, various sporting and cultural events are organised, including the UTAD Cup, the Popular Games, the UTAD Summer Sports, the UTAD Run and Walk and the 24h Futsal Tournament. The PRSBE "UTAD Sports" project also provides a set of facilities, equipment and activities for students and staff to practise sports, which can be pre-booked through the SAS website. Among the set of facilities offered are a sports Centre, an indoor and an outdoor athletics track, a natural grass field, synthetic turf fields for football, a rugby turf field and two tennis courts.

The Arts and Culture Group organises activities, which often involve links with local, regional and national entities. At UTAD there are e.g. conference cycles, social gatherings, music, theatre and dance performances, initiatives that cross arts and science, cultural trips, creative workshops and

campus tours.

The University Volunteering Initiative is a non-profit project that aims to create a volunteering group of university students, intending to raise awareness of social responsibility and integrate volunteers in projects or other activities of the university or other institutions, in different areas of intervention.

Students are represented in various management bodies at UTAD, namely, the CC, PC and CA.

All veterinary students are inherently members of the AEMV, and their participation in its activities is free and encouraged. AEMV supports students, organises sporting and social events as well as technical and scientific events with the collaboration of teachers, highlighting international conferences.

At the moment, students can use the aforementioned bodies and platforms or report anonymously via email to the Rectorry or to the Students' Ombudsman.

The Rector created a working group for the elaboration of a code of conduct for the prevention of harassment at UTAD, which is under public consultation. This group was asked to endeavour to create specific channels for the presentation of complaints directly related to harassment situations.

7.7.2. Comments

The VEE is to be commended for the dedicated support for the physical, emotional and welfare needs of students. Additionally, there is exceptionally close interaction between students and staff.

7.7.3. Suggestions for improvement

None.

7.7.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Standard 7.7.

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

7.8.1. Findings

Students can convey their needs and wants to the VEE through the CD, members of the VEE's Directive Board, Student's Ombudsman, the AEMV, or by email (dcmimv@utad.pt). The CD and Vice Director are responsible for managing the email account. QPs are also anonymous, allowing students to provide suggestions, comments and complaints at the end of every semester.

Students can also report compliments, suggestions or complaints through an online Communication system, which allows the option of anonymity. It can be accessed using a link or a QR code which are advertised at several relevant places in the VEE. The contacts are handled by the Integrated Quality Management System (SiGQ). The GPAM, coordinated by the Pro-Rectorry for Teaching and Quality (PREQ), is responsible for giving a response within stipulated deadlines. Anonymous complaints, even if they do not allow the complainant to be answered, are always analysed by the GPAM and, if relevant, they may lead to changes in the procedures to improve the services provided.

Situations reported via a legally established citizenship tool (the Complaints Book) are treated in

the same way as complaints on the UTAD webpage.

7.8.2. Comments

Students have various ways to convey their needs and wants to the VEE, also anonymously if they wish.

7.8.3. Suggestions for improvement

None.

7.8.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Standard 7.8.

Area 8. Student assessment

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

8.1.1. Findings

The student assessment is ruled by the pedagogical regulations no 419/2021. There are two different evaluation forms: continuous examinations taking place during the semester at two different time points and exams. There are normal exams, appeal exams and a special exam period. The latter, taking place in the last two weeks of July is dedicated for students under special status such as parental students, athletes, working students. The final exam schedule is debated between students and course directors, proposed to the pedagogical council that has to approve the schedule.

Theoretical knowledge is assessed in written form with a variety of different question types. Direct observation procedures are used to assess pre-clinical and clinical practical skills. In clinical rotations and extramural training students are assessed by their teachers and performance is also validated by the logbooks. Soft skills are monitored throughout classes with direct feedback.

8.1.2. Comments

The VEE provides a well-structured assessment scheme with clear regulation concerning student examinations. Small group assessments provide a valuable method to assess theoretical and practical skills as well as various soft skills. The constant monitoring of soft skills including communication skills during practical classes allows a direct formative assessment of the students and helps them to further develop.

8.1.3. Suggestions for improvement

None.

8.1.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Standard 8.1.

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

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

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

8.2.1. Findings

All information regarding assessment is included in the curricular unit forms. Students have to register for assessments via the student platform SIDE where the date and time of examinations are posted.

Written exams are supervised by at least one teacher and cannot exceed two hours and thirty minutes, whereas oral exams are supervised by at least two teachers and cannot exceed 45 minutes.

The grading system is expressed from 0 to 20, where 9.5 is the minimum passing grade. There are four types of results: non-admitted if students do not accomplish minimum standards of the curricular unit; absent; non-approved with a grade lower than 9.5 and approved.

All grades are published in the student platform SIDE.

An appeal process is started by students who may request a review of written tests by a request for revision. This request is subject to fee payment. In this case an evaluation panel re-examines the assessment test and the final classification results from this re-examination, however, it cannot imply students' failure if the former grade allowed the approval.

8.2.2. Comments

Paying a fee for the appeal process could prevent students from choosing this process, however, this happens only in very few incidences, since the direct communication between teachers and students is a direct and efficient way to solve questions. Both students and staff confirmed a good and constructive relationship to resolve queries.

8.2.3. Suggestions for improvement

None.

8.2.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Standard 8.2.

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

8.3.1. Findings

There are learning objectives available to provide all students with sufficient information regarding requested knowledge and basic skills. The course director annually validates the programmes of all curricular units. Pedagogical surveys filled by students give valuable information for each curricular unit.

8.3.2. Comments

The syllabus clearly defines the assessment strategies and provides a link between learning outcomes and assessment strategies.

8.3.3. Suggestions for improvement

None.

8.3.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Standard 8.3.

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

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

8.4.1. Findings

Students have to complete the pedagogical surveys at the end of each semester which are anonymous, and the results are communicated to the teachers and course director. The pedagogical surveys include questions regarding available resources, functioning of the curricular units, quality of teaching and student involvement.

Teachers have to fill out the curricular unit report at the end of each semester which summarises the outcomes of the pedagogical surveys and evaluates the teaching. If necessary, action plans are proposed if the results are not satisfactory.

All grades are summarised in the academic record covering a total of 330 ECTS, which include 30 ECTS devoted to the thesis, which is orally presented to an evaluation panel.

8.4.2. Comments

The strategies proposed by the VEE are in agreement with the requirements of the Standard.

8.4.3. Suggestions for improvement

None.

8.4.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Standard 8.4.

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

8.5.1. Findings

Each curricular unit through the curricular unit form defines learning objectives and Day One Competences, thus providing concise information for students. There are sufficient methods and offers for self-assessment. Day One Competences are assessed throughout the clinical rotations by the teachers in charge, by the practitioners and the external tutors. There are formative and summative assessments.

Students must keep a logbook, which has an online format and all clinical activities undertaken by students have to be recorded. The clinical skills book used by students comprises 14 chapters, such as animal management and handling, animal assessment, clinical reasoning and decision, diagnostic investigations, treatment, anaesthesia, surgery, preventive medicine among others and is to be filled within the six years of study. Each chapter summarises the most important strategies. These in turn cover the day one competencies. Should the procedures not be performed within the present course the student can compensate by e.g., doing volunteer shifts at the VTH.

The VEE had to adapt to novel assessment methods due to the pandemic situation including remote oral examinations, evaluations through Moodle platform and interactive case discussions.

8.5.2. Comments

The student's logbook and the clinical skills book are well suited to check the state of training and Day One Competences in a formative assessment.

8.5.3. Suggestions for improvement

It is suggested to:

-) establish a system of formal and content review for exam questions, including a post exam statistical evaluation (reliability, validity, efficiency of questions);
-) clarify in the logbook whether procedures are performed on live animals, models or cadavers; discriminate in the logbook in separate columns between performed procedures and those assessed by a teacher.

8.5.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Standard 8.5.

Area 9. Academic and support staff

Standard 9.1: The VEE normal training (including good teaching and evaluation practices, learning and e-learning resources, biosecurity and QA procedures) ensure that all staff are appropriately qualified and prepared for their roles, in agreement with national and EU regulations and must apply fair and transparent processes for the recruitment and

development of staff.

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

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

9.1.1. Findings

The VEE's SER places great value on a national evaluation programme A3ES for quality assurance. Unfortunately, whilst the report for the VEE (at the level of the university not the veterinary education programme *per se*) appears to be available on the internet, it is only available in Portuguese.

Questioning of the staff revealed that formal training in pedagogy was not compulsory for all staff that are involved in teaching. The majority of the permanent academic staff are reported to have undertaken pedagogy training and training is available for all teaching staff and the VEE encourages all staff to participate. This includes staff that are temporarily appointed and those who are working to provide extramural clinical training. Genuine attempts are made to update extramural teachers with courses being held before each semester starts. Each external teacher also has a contact member of staff at the faculty to consult if necessary. The extramural teachers spoken to by the Visitation Team were enthusiastic and very positive about teaching veterinary students.

Beyond the basic pedagogy training the staff of the VEE report the University provides them with good support regarding the use of e-learning, they were very positive about the support available during the pandemic and the transition to digital teaching and assessment. The QA procedures are well established, and staff have an appropriate awareness of them and the evaluations processes of themselves

The VEE has biosecurity procedures in place and training in these procedures is provided. This is provided to all staff on starting in a new position.

Of the 63 full time equivalent (FTE) faculty staff 49 FTEs are veterinarians according to the SER. However, no distribution as to the number of teaching hours performed by veterinarian vs. non-veterinarians is made in the SER. Upon further questioning the VEE estimated that each FTE taught 9 hours a week for 30 weeks of the year meaning that the 49 FTE staff that were veterinarians taught 13,230 hours, or 80% of the curriculum. However, the SER reports that permanent staff teach 6 - 9 hours a week, and temporary staff up in questioning teach 3 to 9 hours a week so the average of nine hours a week cannot be entirely accurate.

9.1.2. Comments

The VEE should be commended for the staff's enthusiasm and commitment to teaching generally.

The Visitation Team has decided to accept the national A3ES programme as a sign of quality in procedures and practice. Staff undergo appropriate training including but not limited to biosecurity, health and safety, and QA procedures.

Formal training is available for all staff involved in teaching and opportunities for development do exist at the start of each academic year. However, continuing education on pedagogical training is not a formal requirement.

The exact details of who taught each hour of the curriculum are unavailable meaning the exact said the balance of teaching the veterinary and non-veterinary staff cannot be calculated. However, the distribution of contracts between veterinarians and non-veterinarians means that whilst an exact percentage of hours taught by veterinary surgeons has not been provided the visiting experts feel confident that on balance of probabilities the threshold of 66% teaching by qualified veterinarians is exceeded by a distance.

9.1.3. Suggestions for improvement

Continuing education on teaching and assessment methods could be made compulsory for teaching staff, although most of them follow it regularly.

9.1.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Standard 9.1.

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

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

9.2.1. Findings

The VEE has a relatively low number of academic staff per student, below the minimum provided of FTE/undergraduate provided in the indicator section in the SER. The VEE employs a lot of people in part-time positions. Many of these part-time positions have a higher teaching percentage than that which would be allowed under national regulations for university staff. Therefore, it is likely that there are adequate staff available for teaching. The full-time staff feel their administrative workload is excessively high and that it is not recognised fully when their performance is reviewed.

The support staff are competent and well trained which may account for the lack of complaints mentioned previously.

Some key positions in the clinical sciences are not necessarily filled with dedicated experts, for example large animal anaesthesiology.

The SER does not (in section 9.2) document how staff are appropriately qualified. It simply states they have training rather than how, where and to what standard. Teacher training is heavily promoted but not compulsory. There are a number of teaching initiatives and workshops/meetings available to staff every year to facilitate professional development in the field of education.

Legislation in Portugal means that evaluation of performance is compulsory after six months of employment for non-academic staff. The regulations regarding the evaluation of academic staff are complex - but are flexible and allow the staff member to determine their own weighting between research, teaching and administration. However, in practice the staff report that expertise in teaching and the clinical disciplines are those which carry less weight when promotions are available. The staff's perception of this was unanimous. Detailed evaluations of academic staff occur every three years. However, successful evaluation over a prolonged period will not necessarily lead to promotion unless the university opens positions for staff to be promoted into.

The lack of clear and predictable career pathways for the academic staff significantly impacts the staff's sense of worth. This effect is demonstrated by staff members who have worked at the VEE for over 20 years and for PhD students but are employed as assistant professors. The constraints here appear to be in the legislative manner in which new positions have to be formed to allow for 'promotion'.

The SER raises some questions regarding the openness of recruitment - some positions seem to be advertised. Others seem to be offered to people directly. However, all permanent positions are advertised publicly, and processes are in balance to make sure recruitment is in line with the relevant legislation. The positions which are offered are done so on a temporary basis, often to fill specific teaching requirements.

9.2.2. Comments

In a relatively small VEE, specialists in all fields are very difficult to achieve. Particularly as recruitment and retention of EBVS specialists is difficult within the veterinary education section in Portugal. However, if the VEE is to fulfil its mission, some consideration must be given to the training and recruitment of clinical specialists. The current structure of the VTH would make the training of clinical residents challenging - particularly without a partner institution but thought should be given to this. Discussion revealed that there are 4 EBVS residents being trained by the VEE via alternative residency programmes. Several new positions have been advertised or are reported to be 'in the pipeline' to increase the number of clinical staff. It is hoped that these positions will, for example, facilitate the separation of large animal teaching allowing staff to concentrate on equine or farm animals rather than having to teach both as they do today. Increasing staff clinical specialisation will likely also improve caseload challenges mentioned in Area 5.

A low number of full-time staff probably means the burden of administrative and other tasks falls disproportionately on a few staff members. This problem is highlighted as the management structure of the University to which the VEE belongs requires considerable time. The academic staff seem motivated to represent the VEE on committees and find it very important - but feel some processes could be simplified and that their contributions are not always fully appreciated.

Teacher training is heavily promoted but not compulsory. There are a number of teaching initiatives and workshops/meetings available to staff every year to facilitate professional development in the field of education. On balance though staff seem competent and well informed, with the exception of certain specific clinical skills mentioned above.

Despite limited availability of formal progression for the academic staff, in both terms of pay and titles the staff seem motivated to stay and loyal to the VEE. This loyalty should not be taken for

granted.

The key appointments to permanent positions are open and transparent.

9.2.3. Suggestions for improvement

The employment, or training, of staff in the clinical specialities is important and resources should be made available to do this - firstly by creating/filling positions to allow for specific individuals to focus on certain areas. Once this is in place, resources should be made available to develop the clinical specialities, and hopefully training of clinical specialists.

It is also suggested to:

-) consider the balance of full-time staff to temporary staff members in the light of the administrative challenges;
-) consider streamlining some administrative work to free up staff time.

9.2.4. Decision

The VEE is partially compliant with Standard 9.2 because of a suboptimal number of specialists in clinical sciences.

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

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

9.3.1. Findings

In 2017 the VEE set up a group for the improvement of teaching and learning. This group is open to all members of staff and has had a prolific number of courses and seminars. Providing all staff have the opportunity to attend it would appear that there are very good opportunities for training and specialisation in pedagogy available at the VEE.

In Section 9.4 of the SER it is stated that an award is made for excellent teaching.

Permanent academic staff appear to have good opportunities for improvement. Assistant professors are employed on 5-year tenure track style contracts in the first instance which offers security to develop competence in clinics and research. However, good performance once in a tenured position does not always lead to career and salary progression, as noted above.

The SER makes it clear that staff get to balance teaching, research, and administration. This finding was broadly supported when talking to staff. However, it was made clear that a successful research career would lead to advancement sooner than a teaching or clinical career. Further concerns were raised as to the possibility of working as a clinical specialist in the VTH whilst managing to fulfil the evaluation requirements.

9.3.2. Comments

The VEE offers staff good opportunities to participate in unstructured pedagogical training beyond the basic training.

Faculty staff have security to perform their role, although are sometimes burdened with administrative tasks.

9.3.3. Suggestions for improvement

It is suggested to evaluate the number of administrative tasks performed by academic staff and make sure all are strictly necessary and cannot be streamlined or passed to administrative and technical staff.

9.3.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Standard 9.3.

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

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

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

9.4.1. Findings

The VEE has a system of three yearly reviews in place. The criteria are described as flexible according to the position. The criteria for evaluation were not made available in the SER. Promotion can occur through this process if performance is good and there are vacancies. High performance is necessary for two consecutive assessment periods to achieve promotion. The criteria became more transparent in 2021 with the introduction of QUAR - an assessment and accountability framework at the level of the VEE which has to be submitted to the University. Unfortunately, whilst the criteria of assessment are explicit promotion does not necessarily follow excellent assessment as it is dependent on the opening of a position at the next level. The opening of these positions is dependent on the management, and this means many talented and positively evaluated academic staff still have junior titles, e.g. assistant professor.

Direct promotion is not the only way in which salary can be increased for academic staff. A further method of salary progression is made through the title of Aggregate. This can be requested by academic staff and examination is performed according to national guidelines.

The academic staff clearly stated that a research career would be weighted greater than a teaching, clinical or managerial career when salary and career progression was evaluated. Despite the regulations allowing for many different career pathways.

The staff representation on various councils and bodies from the VEE is good. All staff that were

spoken to felt they had the possibility to introduce changes and input into the life of the VEE. One frustration was that often the university procedures to effect change were lengthy and bureaucratic. However, the staff seemed to accept this as a downside of working in a public institution. One thing to note was that administrative staff, technicians, nursing staff and academic staff all spoke very positively about one another indicating a high degree of mutual respect and an interprofessionalism.

9.4.2. Comments

The Visitation Team is happy that staff have defined career pathways. Although there is a feeling more could be done to promote these amongst the non-academic staff.

Problems of promotion have been noted previously, not necessarily because the pathway is not clear or not achievable but because the appropriate positions are not made available by the university management.

9.4.3. Suggestions for improvement

It is suggested to:

-) regularly make sure all staff are aware of all their training possibilities within the VEE and wider University;
-) make sure staff, both academic and support staff, have real possibilities for promoting to maintain loyalty.

9.4.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Standard 9.4.

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

9.5.1. Findings

Students evaluate their educators every semester. These reports are made available to the individual staff members concerned to allow them to improve their teaching. Students commented that the participation levels in these surveys was low and it could be improved by reducing the length of the evaluation forms and timing the time they were sent out a little better, sometimes they appeared in examination time and frequently took over 20 minutes to complete. Students reported that changes in teaching were affected through these teaching assessment reports. Examples of specific student evaluations were made available to the Visitation Team.

If a particular member of staff scores negatively, their result is followed up and actions taken to improve their teaching score with support for the VEE. If the student evaluations are neutral or positive, no further action is taken regarding the teaching performance. There is no structured peer to peer assessment of educational techniques formally in place in the VEE.

Student evaluations of teaching also are a component of the review of academic staff that occur every three years. This means, at least in theory, staff have a direct incentive to become better teachers. In practice there are very few opportunities for promotion, so the incentive is lost.

9.5.2. Comments

The implementation of teaching prizes is positive, and the VEE should be praised for their implementation.

The mandatory pedagogical surveys completed by each student for each curricular unit creates a solid basis for improvement of individual teachers and the entire program. However, the focus of this programme is mostly on student satisfaction and on mentoring those with negative evaluations.

9.5.3. Suggestions for improvement

None.

9.5.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Standard 9.5.

Area 10. Research programmes, continuing and postgraduate education

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

10.1.1. Findings

The VEE's teaching is based on the principles and methods of scientific research, encouraging students since the 1st year to have contact with interdisciplinary research activities and showing them how knowledge is built. The research activity involving teachers and students of the VEE is mainly carried out in two research centres, the Animal and Veterinary Research Centre (CECAV) and the Centre for the Research and Technology of Agro-Environmental and Biological Sciences (CITAB). They are regularly submitted to evaluation, Within the scope of the Portuguese Foundation for Science and Technology (FCT) and are currently classified as "Very Good". Research is mainly funded through national and international projects (FCT; FEDER; VII EU Framework programme, Horizon 2020), accounting for more than 75,000€/year in the last three years.

10.1.2. Comments

All fields of veterinary sciences are covered in research activities of faculty members. The number of funded scientific projects and the collaborative works with national and foreign researchers provide evidence for the research activity of the VEE. Moreover, research achievements of academic staff are important for promotion and judged in an evaluation process every three years.

10.1.3. Suggestions for improvement

None.

10.1.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Standard 10.1.

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

10.2.1. Findings

Throughout the curriculum, students are trained to think critically and make decisions based on the best scientific evidence. Different courses introduce and train the students in data analysis, interpretation and efficient representation, research lexicon, scientific methods and research techniques, searching literature in various databases, understanding the value of supporting statements with appropriate citations, writing reports and/or presenting scientific data in front of their peers. The students' interaction with the advisor during the correction of their thesis is considered a key moment not only for critical thinking, but also for refining report writing and literature search skills. Assessment of undergraduate Thesis work includes explicit assessment of the above-mentioned skills.

10.2.2. Comments

Courses and research activities carried out during the curriculum demonstrate that the undergraduates are integrated actively into the research activities of the VEE.

10.2.3. Suggestions for improvement

None.

10.2.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Standard 10.2.

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

10.3.1. Findings

In the period under analysis and in the various sectors/services of the VTH, 112 graduates completed their internship period. The members of the European Board of Veterinary Specialisation active in the VEE supervise one EBVS trainee in Parasitology. UTAD has several Master's programmes where students with a Veterinary Medicine degree are accepted, as Master Sciences in Food Engineering, Zootechnical Engineering, Biomedical Engineering, Biotechnology for Health Sciences and Clinical and Laboratorial Biology. The VEE also offers several PhD courses as the Veterinary Sciences PhD course, with four branches namely Clinical, Food Quality and Safety, Animal Health and Biomedical Sciences. In the last three years 30 students on average were enrolled in these PhD courses. However, the number of PhD students graduating annually is considerably low (2.5 on average).

The VEE is active in organising scientific events open to students, PhDs, and private practitioners. The postgraduate programme is organised taking into account suggestions or external requests from professional or scientific organisations, suggestions from colleagues or Alumni and the initiative of teachers. A variety of seminars, congresses and training courses are frequently co-

organised with the Association of Veterinary Medicine Students of UTAD (AEMV) and with the support of the Ongoing and Executive Training Office for continuing education.

10.3.2. Comments

The number of postgraduate programmes at the VEE prove the commitment of the VEE to lifelong veterinary education. The majority of PhD positions are without financial support. This fact explains the low rate of graduating students in these courses. Some possible increase in the number of financed PhD positions might come from a recently submitted international PhD programme in “One Health”.

The VEE proposes a substantial number of continuing education programmes for practitioners.

10.3.3. Suggestions for improvement

It is suggested to identify funding for postgraduate students, in order to boost the number of residents and PhD students.

10.3.4. Decision

The VEE is partially compliant with Standard 10.3 because of suboptimal number of students completing post-graduate studies.

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

10.4.1. Findings

Scientific production is an important parameter of the institutional evaluation of teachers' performance, which takes place every three years. Based on this evaluation academics can progress with a corresponding salary increase. Assessment is carried out at an institutional level and the ECAV's assessment committee appoints two rapporteurs with an academic degree higher than the person being assessed, who certify the self-assessment previously carried out by each teacher on a platform made available for this purpose.

Research policy, including the assessment of its quality, is the responsibility of the Research Vice-Rector, whose mission is to encourage, support, promote, evaluate and communicate research, innovation and impact within and outside the university.

10.4.2. Comments

The main research areas and strategies are regularly discussed, decided, assessed, and revised by the VEE.

For staff promotion, research is the main criterion taken in account, being clinical work, teaching quality and administrative work secondary.

10.4.3. Suggestions for improvement

It is suggested to better formalise the QA system for evaluating the impact of research activities on teaching.

10.4.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Standard 10.4.

11. ESEVT Indicators

Raw data from the 2 full academic years preceding AY 2019-2020		2018/19	2017/18	Mean
1	n° of FTE academic staff involved in veterinary training	59.95	59.84	59.90
2	n° of undergraduate students	481	453	467.00
3	n° of FTE veterinarians involved in veterinary training	47.22	48.1	47.48
4	n° of students graduating annually	69	62	65.5
5	n° of FTE support staff involved in veterinary training	56.02	55.1	55.56
6	n° of hours of practical (non-clinical) training	1260	1239.5	1249.75
7	n° of hours of clinical training	789	764.5	776.75
8	n° of hours of FSQ & VPH training	322	324	323
9	n° of hours of extramural practical training in FSQ & VPH	56	54	55
10	n° of companion animal patients seen intramurally	2965	3170	3067.5
11	n° of ruminant and pig patients seen intramurally	88	35	61.5
12	n° of equine patients seen intramurally	82	52	67
13	n° of rabbit, rodent, bird and exotic patients seen intramurally	324	219	271.5
14	n° of companion animal patients seen extramurally	0	0	0.0
15	n° of individual ruminants and pig patients seen extramurally	639	605	622.0
16	n° of equine patients seen extramurally	69	74	71.5
17	n° of visits to ruminant and pig herds	46	39	42.5
18	n° of visits of poultry and farmed rabbit units	4	4	4.0
19	n° of companion animal necropsies	134	120	127.0
20	n° of ruminant and pig necropsies	99	65	82.0

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21	n° of equine necropsies	8	6	7.0
22	n° of rabbit, rodent, bird and exotic pet necropsies	324	337	330.5
23	n° of FTE specialised veterinarians involved in veterinary training	4	4	4.0
24	n° of PhD graduating annually	2	3	2.5

Calculated Indicators from raw data		VEE values	Median values ¹	Minimal values ²	Balance ³
I1	n° of FTE academic staff involved in veterinary training / n° of undergraduate students	0.128	0.15	0.13	-0.002
I2	n° of FTE veterinarians involved in veterinary training / n° of students graduating annually	0.728	0.84	0.63	0.098
I3	n° of FTE support staff involved in veterinary training / n° of students graduating annually	0.848	0.88	0.54	0.308
I4	n° of hours of practical (non-clinical) training	1249.750	953.50	700.59	549.160
I5	n° of hours of clinical training	776.750	941.58	704.80	71.950
I6	n° of hours of FSQ & VPH training	323.000	293.50	191.80	131.200
I7	n° of hours of extramural practical training in FSQ & VPH	55.000	75.00	31.80	23.200
I8	n° of companion animal patients seen intramurally / n° of students graduating annually	46.832	62.31	43.58	3.252
I9	n° of ruminant and pig patients seen intramurally / n° of students graduating annually	0.939	2.49	0.89	0.049
I10	n° of equine patients seen intramurally / n° of students graduating annually	1.023	4.16	1.53	-0.507
I11	n° of rabbit, rodent, bird and exotic seen intramurally / n° of students graduating annually	4.145	3.11	1.16	2.985
I12	n° of companion animal patients seen extramurally / n° of students graduating annually	0.000	5.06	0.43	-0.430
I13	n° of individual ruminants and pig patients seen extramurally / n° of students graduating annually	9.496	16.26	8.85	0.646

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I14	n° of equine patients seen extramurally / n° of students graduating annually	1.092	1.80	0.62	0.472
I15	n° of visits to ruminant and pig herds / n° of students graduating annually	0.649	1.29	0.54	0.109
I16	n° of visits of poultry and farmed rabbit units / n° of students graduating annually	0.061	0.11	0.04	0.016
I17	n° of companion animal necropsies / n° of students graduating annually	1.939	2.11	1.40	0.539
I18	n° of ruminant and pig necropsies / n° of students graduating annually	1.252	1.36	0.90	0.352
I19	n° of equine necropsies / n° of students graduating annually	0.107	0.18	0.10	0.007
I20	n° of rabbit, rodent, bird and exotic pet necropsies / n° of students graduating annually	5.046	2.65	0.88	4.166
I21*	n° of FTE specialised veterinarians involved in veterinary training / n° of students graduating annually	0.061	0.27	0.06	0.001
I22*	n° of PhD graduating annually / n° of students graduating annually	0.038	0.15	0.07	-0.032

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

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

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3.1.2. Basic sciences	X		
3.1.3. Clinical Sciences in companion animals (including equine and exotic pets)		X	
3.1.4. Clinical Sciences in food-producing animals (including Animal Production and Herd Health Management)	X		
3.1.5. Food Safety and Quality	X		
3.1.6. Professional Knowledge	X		
<p>Standard 3.2: Each study programme provided by the VEE must be competency-based and designed so that it meets the objectives set for it, including the intended learning outcomes. The qualification resulting from a programme must be clearly specified and communicated and must refer to the correct level of the national qualifications framework for higher education and, consequently, to the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area.</p> <p>The VEE must provide proof of a QA system that promotes and monitors the presence of an academic environment highly conducive to learning including self-learning. Details of the type, provision and updating of appropriate learning opportunities for the students must be clearly described, as well as the involvement of students.</p> <p>The VEE must also describe how it encourages and prepares students for self-learning and lifelong learning.</p>	X		
<p>Standard 3.3: Programme learning outcomes must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● ensure the effective alignment of all content, teaching, learning and assessment activities of the degree programme to form a cohesive framework ● include a description of Day One Competences ● form the basis for explicit statements of the objectives and learning outcomes of individual units of study ● be communicated to staff and students ● be regularly reviewed, managed and updated to ensure they remain relevant, adequate and are effectively achieved. 	X		
<p>Standard 3.4: The VEE must have a formally constituted committee structure (which includes effective student representation), with clear and empowered reporting lines, to oversee and manage the curriculum and its delivery. The committee(s) must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● determine the pedagogical basis, design, delivery methods and assessment methods of the curriculum ● oversee QA of the curriculum, particularly gathering, evaluating, making change and responding to feedback from stakeholders, peer reviewers and external assessors, and data from examination/assessment outcomes ● perform ongoing and periodic review of the curriculum at least every seven years by involving staff, students and stakeholders; these reviews must lead to continuous improvement. Any action taken or planned as a result of such a review must be communicated to all those concerned ● identify and meet training needs for all types of staff, maintaining and enhancing their competence for the ongoing curriculum development. 	X		
<p>Standard 3.5: External Practical Training (EPT) is compulsory training activities organised outside the VEE, the student being under the direct supervision of a non-academic person (e.g. a practitioner). EPT cannot replace the core intramural training nor the extramural training under the close supervision of academic staff (e.g. ambulatory clinics, herd health management, practical training in FSQ and VPH).</p> <p>Since the veterinary degree is a professional qualification with Day One Competences, EPT must complement and strengthen the academic education inter alia by enhancing student's professional knowledge.</p>	X		
<p>Standard 3.6: The EPT providers must have an agreement with the VEE and the student (in order to state their respective rights and duties, including insurance matters), provide a standardised evaluation of the performance of the student during their EPT and be allowed to provide feedback to the VEE on the EPT programme.</p> <p>There must be a member of the academic staff responsible for the overall supervision of the EPT, including liaison with EPT providers.</p>	X		
<p>Standard 3.7: Students must take responsibility for their own learning during EPT. This includes preparing properly before each placement, keeping a proper record of their experience during EPT by using a logbook provided by the VEE and evaluating the EPT. Students must be allowed to complain officially and/or anonymously about issues occurring during EPT. The VEE must have a system of QA to monitor the implementation, progress and then feedback within the EPT activities.</p>	X		
Area 4. Facilities and equipment			
<p>Standard 4.1: All aspects of the physical facilities must provide an environment conducive to learning, including internet access. The veterinary VEE must have a clear strategy and programme for maintaining and upgrading its buildings and equipment. Facilities must comply with all relevant legislation including health, safety, biosecurity, accessibility to people with reduced mobility, and EU animal welfare and care standards.</p>	X		

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<p>Standard 4.2: Lecture theatres, teaching laboratories, tutorial rooms, clinical facilities and other teaching spaces must be adequate in number, size and equipped for the instructional purposes and must be well maintained. The facilities must be adapted for the number of students enrolled. Students must have ready access to adequate and sufficient study, self-learning, recreation, locker, sanitary and food service facilities. Offices, teaching preparation and research laboratories must be sufficient for the needs of the academic and support staff.</p>	X		
<p>Standard 4.3: The livestock facilities, animal housing, core clinical teaching facilities and equipment used by the VEE for teaching purposes must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be sufficient in capacity and adapted for the number of students enrolled in order to allow safe hands-on training for all students • be of a high standard, well maintained and fit for the purpose • promote best husbandry, welfare and management practices • ensure relevant biosecurity and bio-containment • be designed to enhance learning. 	X		
<p>Standard 4.4: Core clinical teaching facilities must be provided in a veterinary teaching hospital (VTH) with 24/7 emergency services at least for companion animals and equines. Within the VTH, the VEE must unequivocally demonstrate that Standard of education and clinical research are compliant with all ESEVT Standards, e.g. research-based and evidence-based clinical training supervised by academic staff trained to teach and to assess, availability for staff and students of facilities and patients for performing clinical research and relevant QA procedures.</p> <p>For ruminants, on-call service must be available if emergency services do not exist for those species in a VTH. The VEE must ensure state-of-the-art standards of teaching clinics which remain comparable with or exceeding the best available in the private sector.</p> <p>The VTH and any hospitals, practices and facilities (including EPT) which are involved with the curriculum must meet the relevant national Practice Standards.</p>	X		
<p>Standard 4.5: The VEE must ensure that students have access to a broad range of diagnostic and therapeutic facilities, including but not limited to: diagnostic imaging, anaesthesia, clinical pathology, intensive/critical care, surgeries and treatment facilities, ambulatory services, pharmacy and necropsy facilities.</p>	X		
<p>Standard 4.6: Appropriate isolation facilities must be provided to meet the need for the isolation and containment of animals with communicable diseases. Such isolation facilities must be properly constructed, ventilated, maintained and operated to provide for animal care and for prevention of spread of infectious agents. They must be adapted to all animal species commonly handled in the VTH.</p>	X		
<p>Standard 4.7: The VEE must have an ambulatory clinic for production animals or equivalent facilities so that students can practise field veterinary medicine and Herd Health Management under academic supervision.</p>	X		
<p>Standard 4.8: The transport of students, live animals, cadavers, materials from animal origin and other teaching materials must be done in agreement with national and EU standards, to ensure the safety of students and staff and to prevent the spread of infectious agents.</p>	X		
<p>Standard 4.9: Operational policies and procedures (including e.g. biosecurity, good laboratory practice and good clinical practice) must be taught and posted for students, staff and visitors and a Biosafety manual must be available. The VEE must demonstrate a clear commitment for the delivery of biosafety and biosecurity, e.g. by a specific committee structure. The VEE must have a system of QA to monitor and assure clinical, laboratory and farm services, including a regular monitoring of the feedback from students, staff and clients.</p>		X	
Area 5. Animal resources and teaching material of animal origin			
<p>Standard 5.1: The number and variety of healthy and diseased animals, cadavers, and material of animal origin must be adequate for providing the practical and safe hands-on training (in the areas of Basic Sciences, Clinical Sciences, Pathology, Animal Production, Food Safety and Quality) and adapted to the number of students enrolled.</p> <p>Evidence must be provided that these data are regularly recorded and that procedures are in place for correcting any deficiencies.</p>		X	
<p>Standard 5.2: In addition to the training provided in the VEE, experience can include practical training at external sites, provided this training is organised under direct academic supervision and following the same standards as those applied in the VEE.</p>	X		
<p>Standard 5.3: The VTH must provide nursing care skills and instruction in nursing procedures. Under all situations students must be active participants in the clinical workup of patients, including problem-oriented diagnostic approach together with diagnostic decision-making.</p>	X		
<p>Standard 5.4: Medical records must be comprehensive and maintained in an effective retrieval system (preferably an electronic patient record system) to efficiently support the teaching, research, and service programmes of the VEE.</p>		X	
Area 6. Learning resources			
<p>Standard 6.1: State-of-the-art learning resources must be adequate and available to support veterinary education, research, services and continuing education. When the study programme is provided in several tracks/languages, the learning resources must be available in all used languages. Timely access to learning resources, whether through print, electronic media or other means, must be available to students and staff</p>	X		

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and, when appropriate, to stakeholders. State-of-the-art procedures for bibliographical search and for access to databases and learning resources must be taught to undergraduate students.			
<p>Standard 6.2: Staff and students must have full access on site to an academic library administered by a qualified librarian, an Information Technology (IT) unit managed by an IT expert, an e-learning platform, and all the relevant human and physical resources necessary for the development of instructional materials by the staff and their use by the students.</p> <p>The relevant electronic information, database and other intranet resources must be easily available for students and staff both in the VEE's core facilities via wireless connection (Wi-Fi) and from outside the VEE through a hosted secured connection, e.g. Virtual Private Network (VPN).</p>	X		
<p>Standard 6.3: The VEE must provide students with unimpeded access to learning resources, internet and internal study resources, and equipment for the development of procedural skills (e.g. models). The use of these resources must be aligned with the pedagogical environment and learning outcomes within the programme and have mechanisms in place to evaluate the teaching value of changes in learning resources.</p>	X		
Area 7. Student admission, progression and welfare			
<p>Standard 7.1: The VEE must consistently apply pre-defined and published regulations covering all phases of the student "life cycle", e.g. student admission, progression and certification.</p> <p>In relation to enrolment, the VEE must provide accurate and complete information regarding all aspects of the educational programme in all advertisements for prospective national and international students. Formal cooperations with other VEEs must also be clearly advertised.</p>	X		
<p>Standard 7.2: The number of students admitted must be consistent with the resources available at the VEE for staff, buildings, equipment, healthy and diseased animals, and materials of animal origin.</p>	X		
<p>Standard 7.3: The selection and progression criteria must be clearly defined, consistent, and defensible, be free of discrimination or bias, and take into account the fact that students are admitted with a view to their entry to the veterinary profession in due course.</p> <p>The VEE must regularly review and reflect on the selection processes to ensure they are appropriate for students to complete the programme successfully. If the selection processes are decided by another authority, the latter must regularly receive feedback from the VEE.</p> <p>Adequate training (including periodic refresher training) must be provided for those involved in the selection process to ensure applicants are evaluated fairly and consistently.</p>	X		
<p>Standard 7.4: There must be clear policies and procedures on how applicants with disabilities or illnesses are considered and, if appropriate, accommodated in the programme, taking into account the requirement that all students must be capable of meeting the ESEVT Day One Competences by the time they graduate.</p>	X		
<p>Standard 7.5: The basis for decisions on progression (including academic progression and professional fitness to practise) must be explicit and readily available to the students. The VEE must provide evidence that it has mechanisms in place to identify and provide remediation and appropriate support (including termination) for students who are not performing adequately.</p> <p>The VEE must have mechanisms in place to monitor attrition and progression and be able to respond and amend admission selection criteria (if permitted by national or university law) and student support if required.</p>		X	
<p>Standard 7.6: Mechanisms for the exclusion of students from the programme for any reason must be explicit. The VEE's policies for managing appeals against decisions, including admissions, academic and progression decisions and exclusion, must be transparent and publicly available.</p>	X		
<p>Standard 7.7: Provisions must be made by the VEE to support the physical, emotional and welfare needs of students. This includes, but is not limited to, learning support and counselling services, career advice, and fair and transparent mechanisms for dealing with student illness, impairment and disability during the programme. This shall include provision of reasonable adjustments for disabled students, consistent with all relevant equality and/or human rights legislation.</p> <p>There must be effective mechanisms for resolution of student grievances (e.g. interpersonal conflict or harassment).</p>	X		
<p>Standard 7.8: Mechanisms must be in place by which students can convey their needs and wants to the VEE. The VEE must provide students with a mechanism, anonymously if they wish, to offer suggestions, comments and complaints regarding compliance of the VEE with national and international legislation and the ESEVT Standards.</p>	X		
Area 8. Student assessment			
<p>Standard 8.1: The VEE must ensure that there is a clearly identified structure within the VEE showing lines of responsibility for the assessment strategy to ensure coherence of the overall assessment regime and to allow the demonstration of progressive development across the programme towards entry-level competence.</p>	X		
<p>Standard 8.2: The assessment tasks and grading criteria for each unit of study in the programme must be published, applied consistently, clearly identified and available to students in a timely manner well in advance of the assessment. Requirements to pass must be explicit.</p> <p>The VEE must properly document the results of assessment and provide the students with timely feedback on their assessments.</p> <p>Mechanisms for students to appeal against assessment outcomes must be explicit.</p>	X		

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Standard 8.3: The VEE must have a process in place to review assessment outcomes, to change assessment strategies and to ensure the accuracy of the procedures when required. Programme learning outcomes covering the full range of professional knowledge, skills, competences and attributes must form the basis for assessment design and underpin decisions on progression.	X		
Standard 8.4: Assessment strategies must allow the VEE to certify student achievement of learning objectives at the level of the programme and individual units of study. The VEE must ensure that the programmes are delivered in a way that encourages students to take an active role in creating the learning process, and that the assessment of students reflects this approach.	X		
Standard 8.5: Methods of formative and summative assessment must be valid and reliable and comprise a variety of approaches. Direct assessment of clinical skills and Day One Competences (some of which may be on simulated patients), must form a significant component of the overall process of assessment. It must also include the quality control of the student logbooks in order to ensure that all clinical procedures, practical and hands-on training planned in the study programme have been fully completed by each individual student.	X		
Area 9. Academic and support staff			
Standard 9.1: The VEE must ensure that all staff are appropriately qualified and prepared for their roles, in agreement with national and EU regulations and must apply fair and transparent processes for the recruitment and development of staff. A formal training (including good teaching and evaluation practices, learning and e-learning resources, biosecurity and QA procedures) must be in place for all staff involved with teaching. Most academic staff (calculated as FTE) involved in veterinary training must be veterinarians. It is expected that more than 2/3 of the instruction that the students receive, as determined by student teaching hours, is delivered by qualified veterinarians.	X		
Standard 9.2: The total number, qualifications and skills of all staff involved with the programme, including teaching staff, 'adjunct' staff, technical, administrative and support staff, must be sufficient and appropriate to deliver the educational programme and fulfil the VEE's mission. A procedure must be in place to assess if they display competence and effective teaching skills in all relevant aspects of the curriculum that they teach, regardless of whether they are full or part time, residents, interns or other postgraduate students, adjuncts or off-campus contracted teachers.		X	
Standard 9.3: Staff must be given opportunities to develop and extend their teaching and assessment knowledge and must be encouraged to improve their skills. Opportunities for didactic and pedagogic training and specialisation must be available. The VEE must clearly define systems of reward for teaching excellence in operation. Academic positions must offer the security and benefits necessary to maintain stability, continuity, and competence of the academic staff. Academic staff must have a balanced workload of teaching, research and service depending on their role. They must have reasonable opportunities and resources for participation in scholarly activities.	X		
Standard 9.4: The VEE must provide evidence that it utilises a well-defined, comprehensive and publicised programme for the professional growth and development of academic and support staff, including formal appraisal and informal mentoring procedures. Staff must have the opportunity to contribute to the VEE's direction and decision-making processes. Promotion criteria for academic and support staff must be clear and explicit. Promotions for teaching staff must recognise excellence in, and (if permitted by the national or university law) place equal emphasis on all aspects of teaching (including clinical teaching), research, service and other scholarly activities.	X		
Standard 9.5: A system for assessment of teaching staff must be in operation and must include student participation. Results must be available to those undertaking external reviews and commented upon in reports.	X		
Area 10. Research programmes, continuing and postgraduate education			
Standard 10.1: The VEE must demonstrate significant and broad research activities of staff that integrate with and strengthen the veterinary degree programme through research-based teaching.	X		
Standard 10.2: All students must be trained in scientific method and research techniques relevant to evidence-based veterinary medicine and must have opportunities to participate in research programmes.	X		
Standard 10.3: The VEE must provide advanced postgraduate degree programmes, e.g. PhD, internships, residencies and continuing education programmes that complement and strengthen the veterinary degree programme and are relevant to the needs of the profession and society.		X	
Standard 10.4: The VEE must have a system of QA to evaluate how research activities provide opportunities for student training and staff promotion, and how research approaches, methods and results are integrated into the veterinary teaching programmes.	X		
<i>C: (total or substantial) compliance; PC: partial compliance (Minor Deficiency); NC: non-compliance (Major Deficiency)</i>			

Executive Summary

The University of Trás-os-Montes and Alto Douro (UTAD), its School of Agrarian and Veterinary Sciences (ECAV), and its Integrated Master of Veterinary Medicine (called the Veterinary Education Establishment (VEE) in this Report) were created in 1987.

The VEE's last ESEVT Visitation was completed in 2012, with the identification of two Major Deficiencies that were eventually corrected, resulting in Approval status after the Re-visitation in 2016. The VEE was also fully accredited by the National Agency for Assessment and Accreditation of Higher Education (A3ES) in November 2021.

The SER was provided on time and written in agreement with the SOP 2019 as amended in September 2021. Replies to the pre-Visitation questions from the experts were provided before the start of the Visitation. An addendum was also provided on time for explaining how the COVID-19 outbreak has affected the VEE and what actions have been taken to alleviate the impact of the lockdown.

In agreement with the Exceptional Rules for ESEVT Visitations linked to the COVID-19 outbreak, a hybrid Visitation was completed, since three experts were tested COVID-positive before the start of it and had to participate in a remote way. The Visitation was very well organised with implementation of the relevant preventive measures.

The Liaison Officer did an excellent job to adapt the schedule of the Visitation, to search for the requested information, to organise the relevant meetings and to ensure the health and safety of the visitors.

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

-) Highly committed staff
-) Excellent interaction between students and staff
-) A green campus providing an excellent working environment
-) Excellent facilities for students
-) Excellent IT support for staff and students
-) Low number of students per teacher during extramural clinical training
-) Dedicated support for the physical, emotional and welfare needs of students
-) Strong commitment of staff to QA procedures
-) The presence of a pilot plant for meat products in the food-processing unit
-) Excellent facilities and clinical training in the rehabilitation of wildlife
-) Well-developed teaching farm showing the breeding and production of cattle, sheep, goats, pigs, rabbits and poultry.

Additional commendations are described in the Visitation Report.

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

-) Partial compliance with Standard 3.1.3. because of suboptimal clinical training in the equine species provided to all undergraduate students

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-) Partial compliance with Standard 4.9. because of suboptimal pharmacy practices observed in some units
-) Partial compliance with Standard 5.1. because of suboptimal caseload in equine and ruminant surgery
-) Partial compliance with Standard 5.4. because of suboptimal implementation of the electronic patient recording system
-) Partial compliance with Standard 7.5. because of suboptimal monitoring of student's progression
-) Partial compliance with Standard 9.2. because of suboptimal number of specialists in clinical sciences
-) Partial compliance with Standard 10.3. because of suboptimal number of students completing post-graduate studies.

Additional suggestions for improvement are described in the Visitation Report.

Items of non-compliance with the ESEVT Standards:

None.

Glossary

EAEVE: European Association of Establishments for Veterinary Education
EBVS: European Board of Veterinary Specialisation
ECAV: School of Agrarian and Veterinary Sciences
ECOVE: European Committee of Veterinary Education
EPT: External Practical Training
ESEVT: European System of Evaluation of Veterinary Training
ESG: Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area
FSQ: Food Safety and Quality
FTE: Full-Time Equivalent
IT: Information Technology
OSCE: Objective Structured Clinical Examination
PDCA: Plan Do Check Adjust
QA: Quality Assurance
SER: Self-Evaluation Report
SOP: Standard Operating Procedure
UTAD: University of Trás-os-Montes and Alto Douro
VEE: Veterinary Education Establishment (i.e., Integrated Master of Veterinary Medicine)
VPH: Veterinary Public Health
VTH: Veterinary Teaching Hospital

Decision of ECOVE

The Committee concluded that no Major Deficiencies had been identified.

The Veterinary Education Establishment (VEE) of the University of Trás-os-Montes and Alto Douro is therefore classified as holding the status of: **ACCREDITATION**.