

**European Association
of Establishments for Veterinary Education**



RE-VISITATION REPORT

**To the Veterinary Education Establishment (VEE) of the University of Zaragoza,
Zaragoza, Spain**

On 02 – 04 November 2020

By the Re-visitation Team:

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Introduction

The Faculty of Veterinary Science of the University of Zaragoza (called the Veterinary Education Establishment (VEE) in this Report) was evaluated by ESEVT between 17th and 21st February 2020 under SOP 2016.

During the Visitation, the ESEVT Visitation Team identified a number of deficiencies. Based on these observations, ECOVE concluded on the 17th June 2020 that two deficiencies were considered to be Major Deficiencies, leading to a Non-Accreditation status for the VEE. The Major Deficiencies identified from the Evaluation were:

1. Non-compliance with Substandards 4.6, 4.7 and 4.15 because of inadequate definition and implementation of biosecurity rules.
2. Non-compliance with Substandard 4.13 because isolation facilities for equine were not fully operational.

Furthermore, one Minor Deficiency was recognised by ECOVE:

1. Partial compliance with Sub-standard 5.6 was found because the medical records of equine and ruminants seen extramurally were not effectively retrievable.

The VEE started rectification of the deficiencies immediately after receiving the decision of ECOVE and applied for a Re-visitation on 8th July 2020. The Re-visitation SER (R-SER) was sent on 2nd October to the Re-visitation team. The R-SER is well-written and informative.

The Re-visitation was carried out in a hybrid form. The Chairperson could not travel to the VEE due to the travel restrictions implemented because of the Covid-19 outbreak but the Re-visitation could be completed using online connection. The Coordinator visited the VEE in person following strict prevention rules. Information, documents and photos were shared and a webinar was held between the Chairperson and the Coordinator before the Exit Presentation.

The Re-visitation was well organised and completed in an excellent atmosphere. Preventive measures linked to the Covid-19 outbreak were well implemented for staff, students and visitors.

1. Correction of the Major Deficiencies

1.1. Non-compliance with Substandards 4.6, 4.7 and 4.15 because of inadequate definition and implementation of biosecurity rules.

1.1.1. Findings

The VEE has reliable safety regulation including biosafety. Its safety rules, accident plan, evacuation plan and other documents are available on the homepage. Description of procedures

and rules in laboratories are placed in the laboratories and different parts of the buildings. New students are regularly trained at the beginning of the academic year.

Despite the correct regulation and safety rules, some deviations and deficiencies were identified during the Visitation.

1.1.1.1. Revision and maintenance of first aid kits installed at the VEE were implemented (documentation, filling, replacing expired items).

1.1.1.2. Additional posters indicating the rules of security and biosecurity were placed in different parts of the clinics. The VEE signalled restricted and controlled access into certain parts of the clinic. In order to limit the risk of infection with SARS-CoV-2, special biosafety rules were implemented (regular disinfection, use of thermographic camera, face mask, screen, social distancing, gel dispensers, increased ventilation, etc.).

1.1.1.3. Emergency and biosecurity procedures were published on the homepage of the VEE and in all buildings via a QR code. Specific biosafety protocols were prepared for the necropsy room, dissection room and teaching units.

1.1.1.4. Most taps were changed in the VTH and laboratories of the VEE and now they can be opened and closed with elbow or arm and they do not need to be touched by hand. The other taps have been ordered (a copy of the formal ordering has been provided) and will be changed in the near future.

1.1.1.5. The hall of the equine clinic was reorganised with less cupboards and biosecurity rules were adequately posted.

1.1.1.6. The freezers with stored pieces of dead horses and entire dogs that used to be placed in the corridor of the equine clinic were removed, and their content was moved to a freezing cell provided by the Animal Experimentation Service (SEA).

1.1.1.7. New biosafety rules were introduced in the necropsy room. Access to the necropsy room is recorded using a system of QR codes, and students must wear disposable protection equipment (i.e. plastic coverall, plastic cover boots, gloves and facemask), which was observed during the Re-visitation.

1.1.1.8. In case of introduction of an eventually contagious animal in the necropsy room, the competent authorities must be informed and students are informed by mails and the relevant information is available via a QR code which is posted in all rooms.

1.1.1.9. Since the vehicle used for transportation of dead animals had permanent holes in its floor, stoppers were put in these holes, so there is no leakage anymore when transporting dead animals. Furthermore, cadavers are now put in a waterproof plastic container.

1.1.1.10. The vehicle disinfection platform was completed and is now fully functional. It was inspected and accepted by local competent authorities.

1.1.2. Comments

The deficiencies identified by the Visiting Team were corrected. The QR code system implemented in the VEE for informing staff and students about biosecurity rules is effective, efficient, and well adapted to the Covid-19 outbreak situation.

1.1.3. Suggestions

None.

1.1.4. Decision

The Major Deficiency has been fully corrected.

1.2. Non-compliance with Substandard 4.13 because isolation facilities for equine are not fully operational.

1.2.1. Findings

The two isolation boxes for large animals including horses located in the Animal Experimentation Service about 200 m from the VTH, which were not operational at the time of the Visitation, were fully completed at the moment of the Re-visitation.

There is an animal housing and a clean area in each one. The boxes meet the animal welfare requirements and can be easily cleaned and disinfected.

The protocols for the use of the units are placed on the room's wall and the traffic of personnel is recorded.

The waste generated in the isolation unit is collected in special containers and carried away by a specialized private company, in accordance with the local regulations.

1.2.2. Comments

The isolation facilities for large animals including horses are fully operational and meet the minimum requirements.

1.2.3. Suggestions

None.

1.2.4. Decision

The Major Deficiency has been fully corrected.

2. Correction of the Minor Deficiency

2.1. Partial compliance with Sub-standard 5.6 was found because the medical records of equine and ruminants seen extramurally are not effectively retrievable

2.1.1. Findings

The Visiting Team identified different patient record systems and methods during the Visitation. An electronic patient record system was used in the companion animal clinic, a Google-based database was used at the small ruminant medical service (SCRUM) and a register book was used in the equine clinic. A structured medical record system with an effective retrieval scheme was missing at the time of the Visitation in the case of extramural activity related to food-producing animals and horses.

The VEE installed in the meantime a clinical case management programme on the servers of the University of Zaragoza. There are twelve licences for each one of the VTH's computers, which only allow local access by authorised persons. The VTH is changing its IT support so that the information will be hosted on an online server and can be customized to meet the current and future needs that come across in the management, control and monitoring of cases of both small animals, equids and ruminants.

This new software will allow other services and clinical laboratories of the VEE to include their results and reports directly in the VTH database so that they can be integrated into the patient's record system. Students will also have access to this clinical information.

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This new electronic patient record system is being implemented, will be fully effective during the next academic year, will include all patients, i.e. both intramural and extramural ones, and will be available to students for retrospective studies.

2.1.2. Comments

Since extramural teaching is an important part of the clinical training of the VEE, medical records of extramural horse and ruminant patients should contain more clinical information and be made available for students for retrospective studies.

2.1.3. Suggestions

In-depth integration of extramural equine and ruminant cases into the new patient record system is recommended. It would also be important for students to be able to reach this database from outside the VEE.

3. ESEVT Indicators

3.1. Findings

All indicators are above the minimum value.

3.2. Comments

None.

3.3. Suggestions

None.

4. Conclusions

The two Major Deficiencies identified after the full Visitation on 17 – 21 February 2021 have been fully corrected and that an ongoing process is in place to correct the Minor Deficiency.

Decision of ECOVE

The Committee concluded that the Major Deficiencies identified after the full Visitation on 17 – 21 February 2020 had been corrected.

The Veterinary Education Establishment (VEE) of the University of Zaragoza is therefore classified as holding the status of: **ACCREDITATION**.