



Estonian University of Life Sciences

Institute of Veterinary Medicine and Animal Sciences

SELF-EVALUATION REPORT

**Institute of Veterinary
Medicine and Animal
Sciences**

Estonian University of Life
Sciences

**EAEVE/ESEVT visitation
Tartu, October 2025**

We would like to thank all colleagues at the Institute of Veterinary Medicine and Animal Sciences who contributed actively and responsibly to the preparation of the Self-Evaluation Report and the organisation of the visit.

We look forward to welcoming the EAEVE visitation team in October to present the VEE and our Veterinary Medicine curriculum in real time, face-to-face. The visit will provide an opportunity to showcase our current status, share future perspectives, and receive valuable feedback from the evaluation expert committee.



Toomas Tiirats
Director
Institute of the Veterinary Medicine and
Animal Sciences



Kristel Peetsalu
Head of the Veterinary Medicine
Curricula

Version and date of the ESEVT SOP valid for the visitation: ESEVT SOP 2023, as amended 8 June 2023.

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INTRODUCTION

The first educational establishment in Estonia providing higher education was Tartu Veterinary School, founded in 1848 and reorganised as Tartu Veterinary Institute in 1873. In 1919, the Veterinary Institute was united with Tartu University and renamed the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine. In 1951, three University faculties – Forestry, Agronomy and Veterinary Medicine – formed the basis for establishing the Estonian Agricultural Academy, which in 1991 was renamed Estonian Agricultural University. In 2005, the University was reorganised as Estonian University of Life Sciences, in Estonian: Eesti Maaülikool (official abbreviation: EMÜ), and five institutes were established, currently consolidated into three: the Institute of Veterinary Medicine and Animal Sciences (**IVMAS; in this report IVMAS represents VEE**), the Institute of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences and the Institute of Forestry and Engineering. An institute is an academic structural unit, that determines its own structure and organisation of work in accordance with the [Estonian University of Life Sciences Act](#), [the Statutes](#), [the Statutes of IVMAS](#) and other relevant legal acts. The University and its institutes function as a research and development institution, aiming to advance science and academic practice, providing the high-level teaching and R&D services to the society. IVMAS excels in research, development, (R&D), and higher education in the fields of veterinary medicine, animal science, food technology and aquaculture.

The University promotes academic collaboration concentrated in six focal areas, officially declared at the ministry and government level: food and health, agriculture, environment, forestry, engineering and technology, and rural economy. IVMAS brings expertise in clinical veterinary medicine, veterinary bio- and population medicine, food science and technology, food hygiene and veterinary public health, animal breeding and biotechnology, and animal nutrition, which are the responsibility areas of academic activities at the University. The research encompasses a broad spectrum of the *farm-to-fork* value chain, including the production and processing of animal products. IVMAS actively promotes the One Health approach, recognising the interconnectedness of human, animal, and environmental health. Therefore, since 2024, IVMAS coordinates the university-wide bachelor's degree curriculum in circular bioeconomy. Alongside the two integrated bachelor's and master's studies curricula in veterinary medicine (taught in Estonian and English), IVMAS, based on its six chairs, manages three bachelor's, two master's and doctoral degree curriculum.

At the University and IVMAS level, the development and the implementation of biosecurity and quality management procedures have taken place. The food hygiene and safety chair has been transferred to the Chair of Veterinary Biomedicine and Food Hygiene. Infrastructure changes related to biosecurity have been made. Biosecurity procedures, as well as the storage and documentation of drugs, have been improved. In each unit of IVMAS, a contact person has been appointed who, together with the biosecurity specialist from IVMAS, forms a regularly meeting Biosecurity Work Group (WG). The [Biosecurity Handbook](#) updated regularly and was last revised and supplemented in March 2025.

At the University level a number of actions has been introduced to improve overall managements.

In 2016, the R&D Strategy until 2025, [Knowledge-Based Bioeconomy](#), was developed.

The regulation [Good Academic Practice and Implementation of Principles of Academic Ethics](#) came into force in 2020, establishing procedures for the Academic Ethics Committee.

A University quality manager was recruited in January 2020.

The Senate regulation [Academic Staff Positions](#) (2020) modernised requirements for academic staff positions, as well as the methods, and procedures for filling these positions and assessing performance.

In 2021, the University developed its [Quality Management System](#), enacted the Senate Regulation [Procedure for intellectual property](#), and launched a two-stage [internal assessment process of curricula](#) to ensure relevance and compliance with quality indicators.

The University successfully passed international [institutional accreditation in 2022](#), with a site visit conducted from 22 to 24 March 2022. The doctoral degree curriculum in Veterinary Medicine and Food Sciences was accredited during this process.

Updated [Work Organisation Rules](#) (2023) allow University staff for remote working where possible.

In 2025, the University and its institutes are renewing their Development Plans (2026–2035) and preparing five-year action plans alongside them.

The University passed in 2024 [Regular evaluation of Estonian Research and Development institutions](#) organised by Estonian Research Council on area of [Agricultural and Veterinary Sciences](#), and received a positive assessment in all three fields it submitted for evaluation: Natural Sciences, Engineering and Technology, Agricultural Sciences and Veterinary Medicine.

According to the recently updated University Territorial-Spatial Development Plan (2024, DP), the priorities are the modernisation and expansion of the teaching and research base of IVMAS. A detailed step by step plan was established for the IVMAS premises in 2023 and an architectural competition is launched now. The solution selected as a result of the competition will serve as the basis for design and construction, with the aim of ensuring the necessary conditions and space resources for research and teaching and the provision of related services, and creating conditions for the efficient and extended operation of the clinics. The [experimental dairy farm in Märja](#), located 5 km from the University campus, was renovated and officially reopened in July 2024. In 2025, the reconstruction of the Equine Clinic is underway to enhance its functionality, alongside the design of a new clinical building, which will include the Small Animal Clinic. The clinical skills lab was established in 2020, and an additional space designated for student use was completed in spring 2025.

Major concern lies in the fact that due to the geopolitical situation, external and internal priorities have changed, national defence capability is priority number one. This strongly affects nationally planned developments in a small country with limited resources, and there is a likelihood that the amount of educational service funds and national research funds available will not increase at the necessary pace. The extension and renovation plans for the IVMAS buildings have been delayed due to financial constraints and different bureaucratic requirements.

The vulnerability of small VEE is expressed in the shortage of highly qualified specialists, because they are not operationally replaceable. Furthermore, due to the geopolitical situation, there is now a situation where the long-term involvement and hiring of foreign specialists-researchers is problematic, as they may perceive the local living environment as unsafe. The perceived shortage of practicing veterinarians has created a disadvantageous position for the University in determining veterinarians' salaries.

Last ESEVT visitation took place in 2015, highlighting biosecurity-related shortcomings at VEE, which was approved conditionally. In the 2019 revisit, the shortcomings were considered rectified, and full approval was provided. Final report was issued by ECOVE on 11 December 2019.

The ESEVT SOP approved at the Leipzig General Assembly on 8 June 2023 is valid for the Full Visitation.

AREA 1. OBJECTIVES, ORGANISATION AND QUALITY ASSURANCE POLICY

Standard 1.1: The VEE must have as its main objective the provision, in agreement with the EU Directives and ESG-ENQA Standards, 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 the ESEVT Standards.

The Institute of Veterinary Medicine and Animal Sciences (IVMAS) is the only centre in Estonia that integrates academic and research activities in the fields of veterinary medicine, animal production, and food science. By managing the integrated bachelor's and master's studies curricula in Veterinary Medicine and bachelor's and master's curricula in Food Technology and Animal Sciences, as well as the PhD curricula in *Veterinary Medicine and Food Science* IVMAS follows the *farm-to-fork* principle, ensuring a comprehensive approach to the entire food chain in both education and research. Such interdisciplinarity enables the efficient use of human resources and supports the broad-based development of students.

The identical *Veterinary Medicine* (VM) curricula are registered with the Ministry of Education and Research of Estonia (MER): the curriculum in Estonian (Code No. 398) and the curriculum in English (Code No. 119877).

Aligned with the University's objective of promoting circular bioeconomy, the mission of IVMAS is to provide science-based education, conduct impactful research, and share knowledge with society. in the Clinical Veterinary Medicine, Veterinary Bio- and Population Medicine, Food Science and Technology, Food Hygiene and Veterinary Public Health, Animal Breeding and Biotechnology, and Animal Nutrition. In 2025, a new development plan for IVMAS for the period 2026–2030 will be prepared in parallel with the University's development plan.

The plan takes into account the strategic directions and goals of veterinary education, promoting sustainable management, ensuring effective professional communication, and fostering career readiness in roles such as veterinarian, educator, or researcher. Based on this strategic framework, IVMAS has defined its mission as: *Healthy animals, safe food – healthy future*. IVMAS's vision is to be an internationally recognised centre for education, research, and development that promotes animal welfare and food security, applies the principles of One Health for the benefit of people, animals, and the environment, contributes to the sustainable development of society in a changing world, and values its employees, students, and partners. The curriculum aims to prepare veterinarians with the competence to adopt and convey a modern approach to the field, aligning with [global sustainable development goals](#) and promoting the synergy between health, environment, education, and economic development.

The veterinary curriculum is designed and managed according to EU Directive 2005/36/EC (amended by Directive 2013/55/EU) and its Annex V.4.1. It aligns with the [Higher Education Act](#), the Standard of Higher Education; the Republic of Estonia Government Regulation on Requirements for Medical, Veterinary, Pharmacy, Dental, Midwifery, Nursing, Architectural, and Civil Engineering Education; the [Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area](#) (ESG); the Bologna Process; the [European System of Evaluation of Veterinary Training](#) (ESEVT) SOP Annex 2; as well as the [Estonian University of Life Sciences Act](#) and University regulations.

The learning outcomes (LOs) of the VM curriculum are aligned with the ESEVT Day One Competences. The core curriculum equips all new graduates with the competencies required to practice across various branches of the veterinary profession by defining the essential skills, knowledge, and attitudes necessary for entry-level veterinary practice across clinical, regulatory, veterinary public health, and research fields. Therefore, the Agriculture and Food Board of Estonia recognises the diploma of the curriculum without additional conditions, and the professional activity permit is entered in the national register. Those who have completed the English curriculum will receive confirmation from the Board that their education allows them to start working as veterinary professionals in Estonia. The EU regulatory directive ensures the free movement of labour, making it possible to work as a veterinarian internationally.

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.

According to the [Estonian University of Life Sciences Act](#), the mission of the University is to contribute to the sustainable development of the society and growth of the nation's welfare by international high-level research, education and development and by the innovative services based thereon. In order to achieve the mission, the University shall organise veterinary education, including clinical training.

Details of the VEE (see Figure 1.2.1. and Figure 1.2.2.)

Name: Institute of Veterinary Medicine and Animal Sciences (IVMAS)

Address: 62 F. R. Kreutzwaldi Str., Tartu 51014, Estonia

Telephone/fax: +372 7313 706

Website: <http://vl.emu.ee/en/>

E-Mail: vl@emu.ee

Title and name of head of IVMAS: Director **Toomas Tiirats** (DVM)

IVMAS is a structural unit of the **University**

Name of the University: Estonian University of Life Sciences / Eesti Maaülikool (EMÜ)

Address: 1 F. R. Kreutzwaldi Str., Tartu 51014, Estonia

Telephone: +372 7313 200

Website: www.emu.ee

E-Mail: rector@emu.ee

Title and name of head of the University: Rector **Ülle Jaakma**

The status, purpose, functions, bases of operation and management bodies of a public university are provided for in an Act governing the university. Under the [Estonian University of Life Sciences Act](#), the University Council is the highest governing body, steering strategic growth and key economic decisions. The Senate serves as the academic decision-making body, overseeing the University's research, development, creative, and educational activities, and ensuring their high quality. The Rector is the chairperson of the Senate.

The [Ministry of Education and Research](#) (MER) is responsible for the administration and development of the Estonian education system, as well as the allocation of funding. It finances higher education, including veterinary studies, and R&D activities at the national level.

The academic structure of the University comprises three Institutes. The Institutes of the University operate in accordance with their own statutes, with the Institute Council serving as the highest decision-making body. The IVMAS [Council](#), composed of 15 members, is led by a chairperson, operates under a defined election process and is responsible for policy formation and strategic planning. The Council includes the Director, who appoints 20% of the members to represent other University units and external related organisations. Students constitute 20% of the Council, elected annually to ensure representation from different levels of study. The Director is responsible for the development of IVMAS and the effective allocation of funds. Reporting to the IVMAS Council, the University Budget Committee, the Vice-Rectors, and the Rector, the Director ensures compliance with the statutes of both IVMAS and the University, as well as with other legal acts. Organisational matters are discussed at regular meetings of chairs and unit heads, while key decisions are made by the Director in collaboration with the Director of Academic Affairs and the Director of Research, who support the execution of executive functions.

Heads of Chairs are responsible for the development of their respective area in research, teaching, and development of academic activities and related disciplines within the VM curriculum, including the organisation and management of teaching in their subjects. Each Head of the Chair is also responsible for planning the teaching staff to ensure that all subjects within their area are covered by competent instructors. Academic staff members are generally elected by the IVMAS Council, after which a contract is issued by the Director. However, professors are elected by the University Senate based on recommendations from the IVMAS Council.

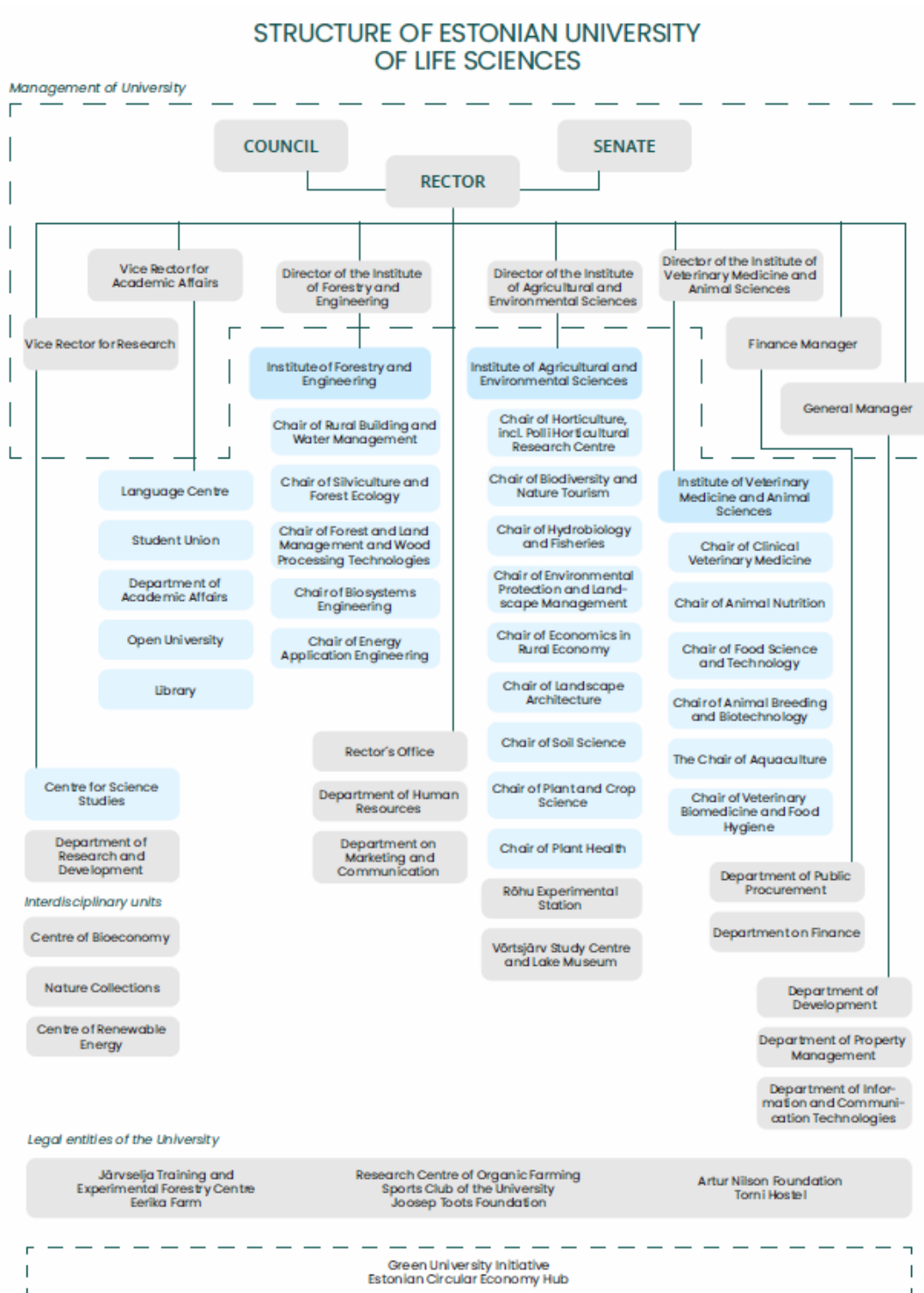


Figure 1.2.1. Organisational chart of the Estonian University on Life Sciences

The structure of IVMAS (see Figure 1.2.2.) is based on chairs led by a chair professor or chair holder, who is responsible for coordinating the work of the chair and its subunits (clinics, laboratories, divisions).

Institute Administration

The administration includes the director, the director of academic affairs, the director research, executive assistant, biosecurity specialist, communications and marketing specialists, and academic affairs officers.

Chair of Veterinary Clinical Medicine

Areas of responsibility: diagnostics, treatment and prevention of diseases.

Subunits of the Chair:

- the University Animal Clinic, comprising the Small Animal Clinic, the Production Animal Clinic, and the Equine Clinic;

- the Pharmacy supplies the clinic, and their clients with medicines and food supplements and pet food. It also sells prescription and over-the-counter medicines;
- the Joint Clinical Veterinary Laboratory conducts a range of analyses, including haematological and biochemical blood tests, as well as parasitological, and serological studies on bases at different labs in VEE.

THE INSTITUTE OF VETERINARY MEDICINE AND ANIMAL SCIENCES

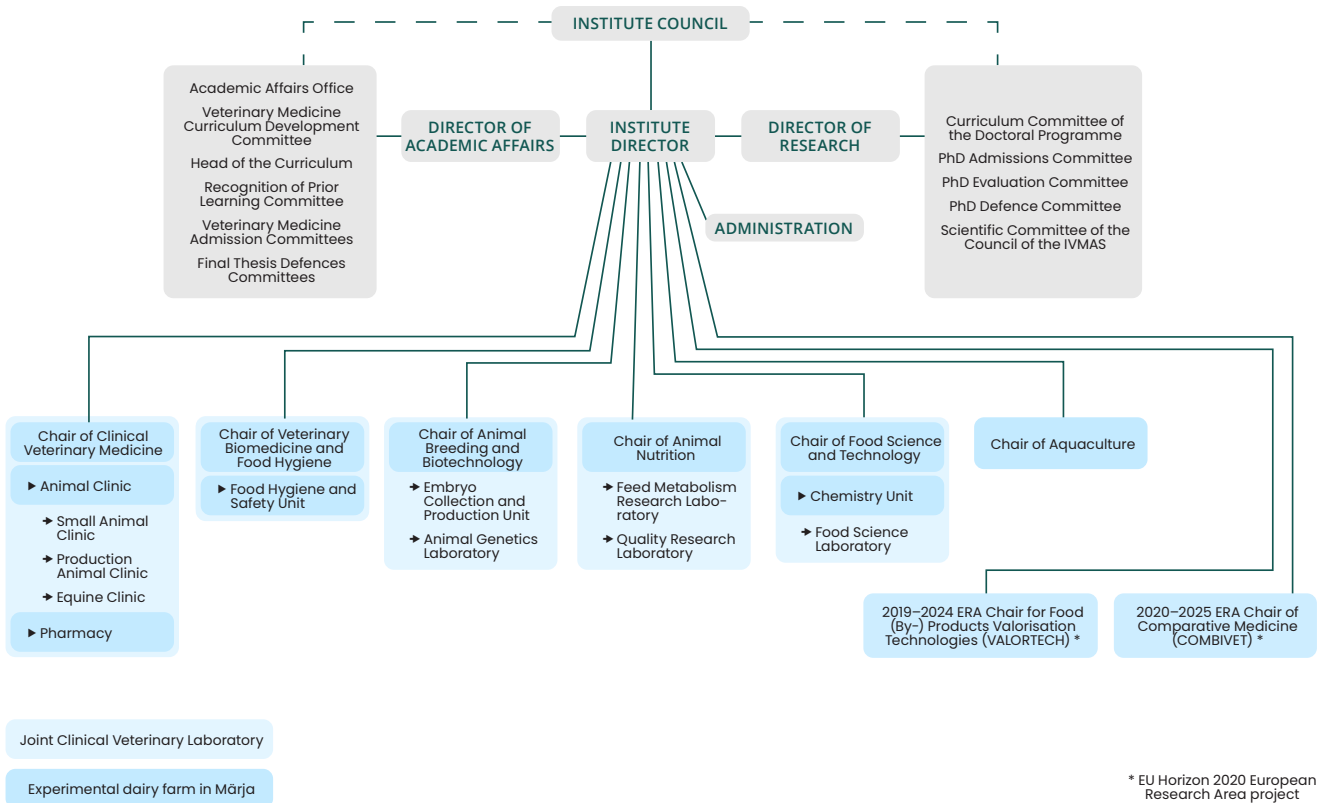


Figure 1.2.2. Structure of the Institute of Veterinary Medicine and Animal Sciences (IVMAS) providing the Veterinary Medicine curriculum

Chair of Veterinary Biomedicine and Food Hygiene

Areas of responsibility: physiology, immunology, pathology, microbiology, virology, parasitology, epidemiology, animal hygiene and herd health, meat inspection, food safety management systems, food and environmental toxicology as well as population medicine.

Subunit of the Chair: the Food Hygiene and Safety Unit, which focuses on food hygiene ERA and public health.

Chair of Animal Breeding and Biotechnology

Areas of Responsibility: Animal breeding, animal genetics, animal reproduction and reproductive disorders, and reproductive biotechnology.

Subunits of the Chair: the Embryo Collection and Production Unit, the Animal Genetics Laboratory.

Chair of Animal Nutrition

Areas of Responsibility: Livestock feeds and feeding technologies, nutritional physiology, metabolism and biomarkers, animal production and product quality, animal behaviour, welfare and housing, effect and the environmental impact of animal production.

Subunits of the Chair: the Feed and Metabolism Research Laboratory and the Raw Milk Quality Research Laboratory.

Chair of Food Science and Technology

Areas of Responsibility: Food chemistry, physics, and microbiology, food processing technologies, food (by-)products valorisation technologies, sensory assessment, and quality management.

Subunit of the Chair: the Food Science Laboratory, including the micro-dairy, a modern teaching and research facility.

Chair of Aquaculture

Areas of Responsibility: Biology, genetics, genomics, biotechnology and selective breeding of aquaculture species; feeding and rearing technologies; biosecurity in aquaculture; diseases, healthcare and welfare of aquatic organisms.

The European Research Area (ERA) Chairs initiative, launched by the European Commission, aims to strengthen research capacity and enhance institutional performance in specific scientific fields. Two ERA Chairs funded under the EU Horizon 2020 programme were established as regular chairs.

ERA Chair COMBIVET (2019–2024)

The aim of this project was to establish an ERA Chair of Comparative Medicine under IVMAS. It focused on developed competencies and capacity in the research field for academic staff and doctoral studies. Combivet is now incorporated into the Chair of Veterinary Biomedicine and Food Hygiene.

ERA Chair VALORTECH (2019–2023)

The Chair for Food (By-)Products Valorisation Technologies was established to consolidate relevant expertise within IVMAS and the Institute of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences. Valortech is now incorporated in the Chair of Food Science and Technology.

IVMAS Academic Staff Participation in University Management Bodies

University Council

IVMAS is represented by: Kerli Mõtus

University Senate

IVMAS is represented by: Haldja Viinalass, Arvo Viltrop, Helena Andreson, Katrin Kaldre. Veterinary students appointed by Student Union: Anette Aavekukk (fourth academic year) and Magnus Mänd (fourth academic year).

Committees of the Senate

- Committee of Academic Affairs

IVMAS is represented by: Helena Andreson, Meelis Ots

- Research and Development Committee

IVMAS is represented by: Arvo Viltrop, Haldja Viinalass, Katrin Kaldre.

- Academic Committee

IVMAS is represented by: Andres Valdmann.

The staff members of IVMAS participate in various University-level committees such as the **Work Environment Council** (Silva Tedrema), the **Green University Work Group** (Allan Kaasik, Piret Raudsepp), the **Crisis Committee** (Toomas Tiirats), the **Council of the Renewable Energy** (Allan Kaasik), the **Council of Nature Collections** (Esta Nahkur), among others.

IVMAS Committees:

Scientific Committee of the Board of the IVMAS

This is an advisory board chaired by the Research Director and comprising eight members, established by a decision of the IVMAS Council.

Veterinary Medicine Curriculum Development Committee (CDC), regulated by University Senate regulation No. 1-28/3 of 27.02.2020 *Curriculum Statute*.

The CDC, chaired by the Head of Curriculum, comprises 16 members, including students, academic staff from various disciplines, and a professional representative to ensure external stakeholder input. It plays a key role in curriculum development and review, coordinating feedback and proposing changes. Meetings are held monthly, with decisions made by consensus or majority vote.

RPL Committee (Recognition of Prior Learning), regulated by University Senate regulation No. 1-28/2 of 27.02.2020 *Study Regulations* and by regulation No. 1-28/5 of 27.02.2020 *Conditions and procedure for the recognition of prior learning and work experience and the transfer of learning outcomes*. The regulation, adopted by the Senate of the University enforced from March 1, 2020, outlines the [RPL terms and procedures](#) and transferring study results. The RPL Committee at IVMAS consists of the Head of curriculum, the Director of Academic Affairs, and the RPL advisor.

Veterinary Medicine Admissions Committee, regulated by University Senate regulation *Admissions Rules*, established for each specific academic year.

There are two Admissions Committees: one for national students, comprising the Chairperson and six members, and another for international students, comprising the Chairperson and three members. The

Chairperson is the same for both committees.

Final Thesis Defence Committee

Under the regulation of the Director of Academic affairs, three (five from 2025) defence committees are established to evaluate students' final theses and their presentations. Each committee consists of a chairperson and four members.

Committees for PhD curriculum [Veterinary Medicine and Food Science](#)

- Curriculum Committee of the Doctoral Programme (PhD CDC), regulated by University Senate regulation No. 1-28/3 of 27.02.2020 *Curriculum Statute*.

The Committee is responsible for developing the PhD curriculum "Veterinary Medicine and Food Science", ensuring its compliance with national and international standards.

- PhD Admissions Committee, regulated by University Senate regulation Admissions Rules, established for each specific academic year. The Committee reviews applications, evaluates the academic records, research experience, and potential of applicants to succeed in the PhD curriculum, conducts interviews with shortlisted candidates, and makes the final decisions.

- PhD Evaluation Committee (Attestation), regulated by University Senate regulation No. 1-28/2 of 27.02.2020 Study Regulations.

The evaluation of doctoral students is conducted annually to assess their progress in study and research according to their individual plans. The Committee, appointed by the Vice-Rector for Academic Affairs, consists of at least five members with PhD degrees and a non-voting secretary. The committee evaluates progress based on specific criteria for each academic year.

- PhD Defence Committee, regulated by University Senate regulation No. 1-28/9 of 09.04.2020 *Conditions and procedure for applying for and defending a Doctoral degree*.

The Committee ensures that the defence process complies with institutional and regulatory standards, assesses the quality and originality of PhD theses and offers constructive feedback to PhD candidates. The Committee consists of at least three members with doctoral degrees or equivalent qualifications, incl. at least one member from outside the University. The Vice Rector for Academic Affairs proposes the Committee's composition to the University Senate.

The **Biosecurity Work Group** is coordinated by IVMAS biosecurity specialist, in collaboration with the biosecurity contact persons from IVMAS chairs.

IVMAS maintains close cooperation with the EAEVE Region 6 universities. Formal cooperation includes student and staff exchanges within [Erasmus+ mobility](#), Erasmus+ International Credit Mobility outside the EU, [NOVA-BOVA](#) network, [NORDPLUS programme](#), [Euroleague for Life Sciences \(ELLS\) network](#), [Asia Exchange](#), student exchange with West Virginia University (USA), etc. In Estonia, the University has agreements with the University of Tartu, Tallinn University of Technology, Estonian Academy of Arts, Estonian Academy of Music and Theatre, Tallinn University, Estonian Aviation Academy, and Tartu Art College. These agreements allow students to take courses at these institutions as a [visiting student](#).

The persons responsible for the VM curriculum and for the professional, ethical, and academic affairs of the IVMAS VTH are as follows:

Director of IVMAS: Toomas Tiirats

Director of Academic Affairs: Einar Orgmets

Director of Research: vacant

Head of Curriculum: Kristel Peetsalu

Chief Clinical Officer: Aleksander Semjonov

- Head Veterinarian of the Small Animal Clinic: Valentina Oborina
- Head Veterinarian of the Production Animal Clinic: Alar Onoper
- Head Veterinarian of the Equine Clinic: Luis Felipe Corrêa Letelier

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

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.

The University's development directions and goals are defined and documented in the [University Development Plan \(DP\)](#). This plan serves as the foundation for the DP, five-years action plans, and annual operational plans of the institutes and chairs (see Figure 1.3.1.).

Each chair is responsible for the development of its responsibility area of academic activities. The IVMAS is responsible for research, development, and teaching in the fields of veterinary medicine, animal science, aquaculture, and food technology.

Both the university-wide and subunits development plans follow the same structure, focusing on the following areas: R&D, Education, Membership, Society, Organisation. The preparation of the DP is preceded by a SWOT analysis, which provides input for setting long-term goals. To achieve these goals, an action plan is created and target levels are determined.

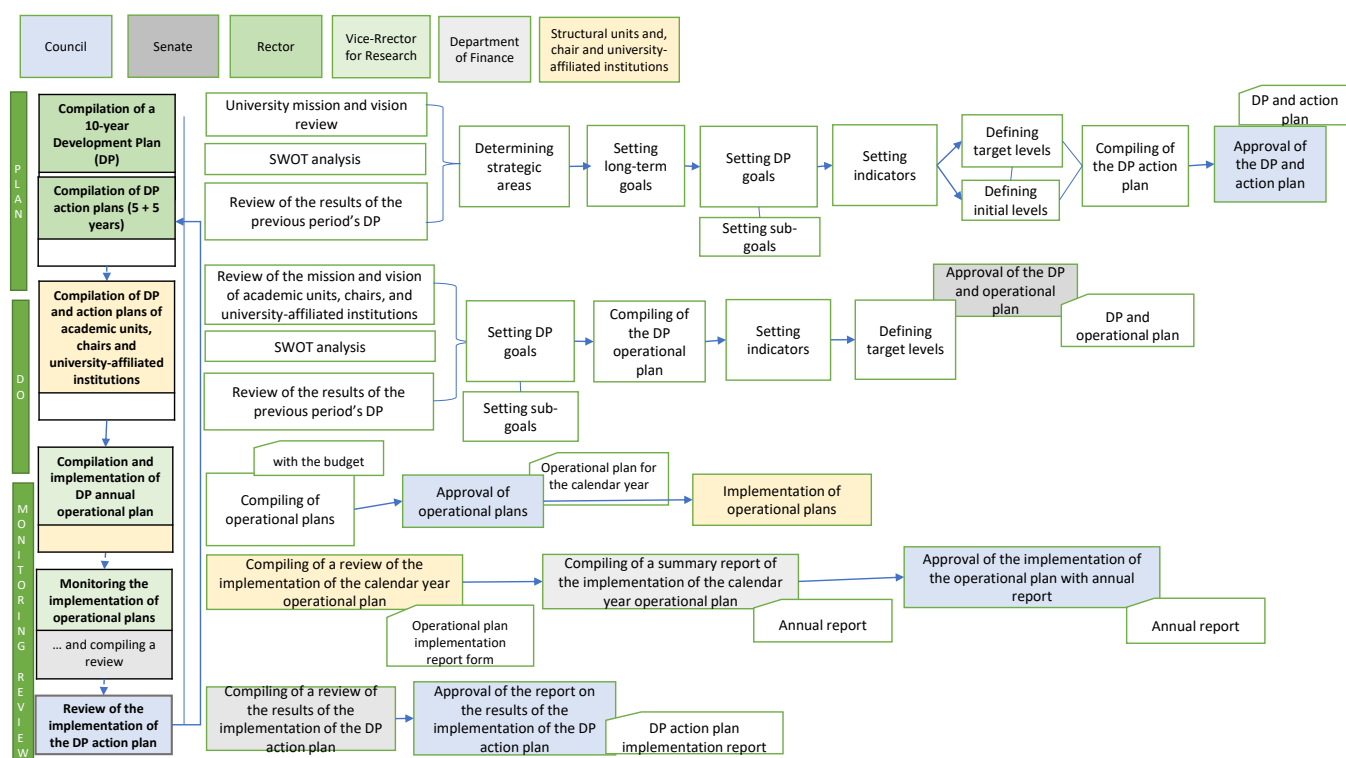


Figure 1.3.1. Compilation and monitoring of DP of the University, including its chairs, and other academic structural units.

The strategic development plan of IVMAS for the period 2018–2025 has been prepared in alignment with the [University's DP](#), and is based on the University's strategic targets and objectives. It focuses on enhancing the quality of research and education in four core areas – veterinary medicine, animal science, aquaculture, and food technology – with goals and actions closely linked to the University's bioeconomy focus and efforts to strengthen international competitiveness.

The DP of IVMAS ensures the coherence of education and research with practical needs by strengthening interdisciplinary applied research in public health, animal welfare, and food safety. The preparation of the DP (2026–2030). was preceded by a SWOT analysis, presented in Table 1.3.1. To achieve the set goals and objectives, IVMAS and its areas of responsibility prepare annual operating plans, which form part of the University's overall development plan. The implementation of strategic targets and objectives is monitored annually at the level of the University Senate and the Council. The development plan of the IVMAS, including the action plan with timeframe and indicators of achievement, is presented in [IVMAS DP 2018–2025](#).

In 2025, all staff members of IVMAS have been actively involved in preparing the DP for 2026–2035. The planning process is currently ongoing.

The DP emphasises bioeconomy areas which are in alignment with the mission of the University, including the farm-to-fork food supply chain, the One Health concept, zoonoses, food safety, and the bioeconomy. Strategic goals include enhancing international collaboration, securing sustainable funding, supporting

early-career researchers, and promoting the commercialisation of research outcomes of the University and IVMAS.

Table 1.3.1. IVMAS SWOT, 2024/25

	Strengths	Weaknesses
Internal	<p>Close cooperation with other universities and research institutions in Estonia and internationally in applying for and participating in joint projects, both as a leader and as a partner</p> <p>Leader of the One Health concept in Estonia.</p> <p>International-level teaching staff and researchers, bilingual education, and qualified personnel.</p> <p>Student-friendliness and curricula that value practical training.</p> <p>Modern practice bases.</p> <p>Alumni are in demand in the labour market and internationally recognised.</p>	<p>The small size of the University and IVMAS threatens the continuity of competence.</p> <p>Lack of Estonian-speaking academic staff, incl. full professors, and clinical personnel with doctoral degrees.</p> <p>Insufficient support staff at the University and Institute level, incl. a lack of project managers.</p> <p>Low student involvement in research projects.</p> <p>Employee salaries lag behind the average wages in the veterinary field.</p> <p>The infrastructure is fragmented and in need of renovation.</p>
	Opportunities	Threats
External	<p>Strengthen the position of the University and IVMAS in shaping and developing sectoral political strategies aligned with the farm-to-fork principle.</p> <p>Improve communication and marketing to attract motivated student candidates.</p> <p>Offer continuing education and micro-degree programmes.</p> <p>Increase the number and scale of international education and research projects.</p> <p>The relevance and growing importance of the One Health concept in society, incl. in legislation.</p> <p>Growing demand for services in the field.</p> <p>Challenges arising from global climate change.</p>	<p>Unstable geopolitical situation, leading to changes in the economic and demographic conditions of countries.</p> <p>Public opposition to animal-based food and large-scale production, along with the negative image of intensive animal farming.</p> <p>Increasing competition in the international academic and research landscape.</p> <p>National policies that are unfavourable to higher education, research, and internationalisation (e.g., funding, visas).</p>

The University Council approves the University’s annual budget and its implementation report, as well as the annual report, which includes indicators reflecting the achievement of the objectives set out in the annual operating plan. IVMAS contributes to the University’s annual operating plan based on the [IVMAS DP](#), the outcomes of which are reviewed at the end of each year.

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 QA within the VEE. To achieve this, the VEE must develop and implement a strategy for the continuous enhancement of quality.

The VEE must have a policy for academic integrity, i.e. the expectation that all staff and students act with honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility.

The University has established a [quality management system](#) to support its development and achieve its objectives, ensuring compliance with legal requirements ([Higher Education Act](#)). Based on the [ISO 9001:2015 Quality Assurance Standard](#), it outlines quality objectives, management principles, and processes, including risk assessment and feedback. The Quality Manager oversees the system's operation, improvement, and performance.

The goal of the [Quality Management System](#) (see also Quality Management Model at the University Figure 1.4.1.) is to meet the needs and expectations of society, including employers, students, and other stakeholders identified by the University, and to comply with the quality criteria of the DP goals, and internal and external evaluations. To achieve this, the University follows quality management principles: leadership, process-based management, continuous improvement, people orientation, results orientation, development, and partnership. These principles support the University quality culture, demonstrated by the commitment of the University community, adherence to shared values, good academic practices, continuous improvement, and cooperation.

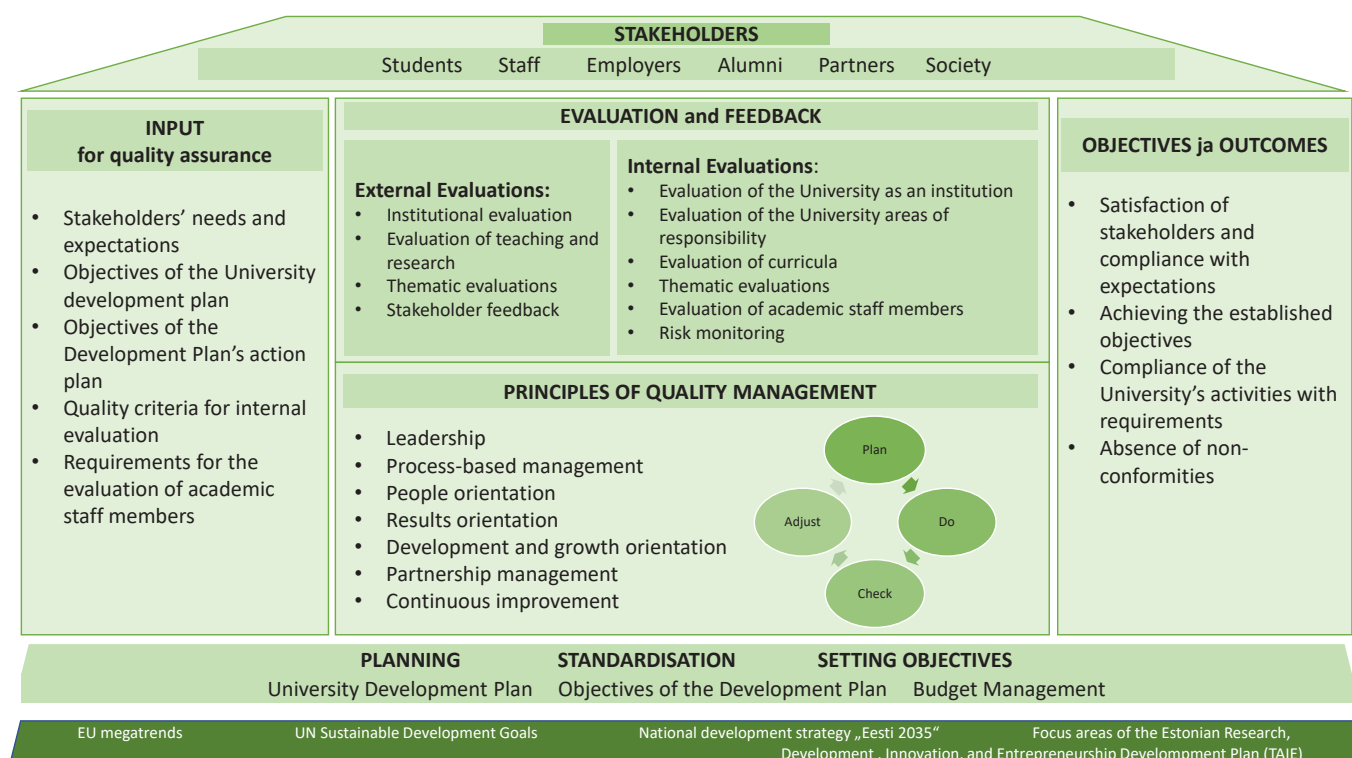


Figure 1.4.1. Quality Management Model at the University

The quality management system at the University is based on process-oriented management, which includes regular monitoring, measurement, analysis, and evaluation of processes and outcomes, as well as continuous improvement driven by stakeholder needs and expectations.

Since 2021, regular internal audits have been conducted to evaluate curriculum objectives, quality, and effectiveness, thereby supporting evidence-based development. The evaluation process follows the principles outlined in the rector's directive [Curriculum Quality Assessment](#) and is administered through the University document management system. Curriculum evaluations take place every three years, followed by the preparation and implementation of curriculum improvement activities (see Figure 1.4.2.).

The VM curriculum passed the internal audit on 31 December, 2024. The Head of Curriculum and the CDC compiled in 2025 an improvement action plan based on the feedback for curriculum development.

At IVMAS, QA management of the curriculum involves the Director of Academic Affairs, Head of Chair, Head of Curriculum, the CDC, and the Department for Academic Affairs (DAA). [Responsibilities](#) are defined and regulated by the following documents:

Responsibility areas of the University academic activities and Chairs (2017), [Academic staff positions at Estonian University of Life Sciences](#) (2020, amended 2024), [Statutes of Curriculum](#) (2020, amended in 2023), [Internal assessment principles for Estonian University of Life Sciences](#) (2021), Curriculum Internal Evaluation Procedure (2021), Job Description Form for the Head of Curriculum (2015).

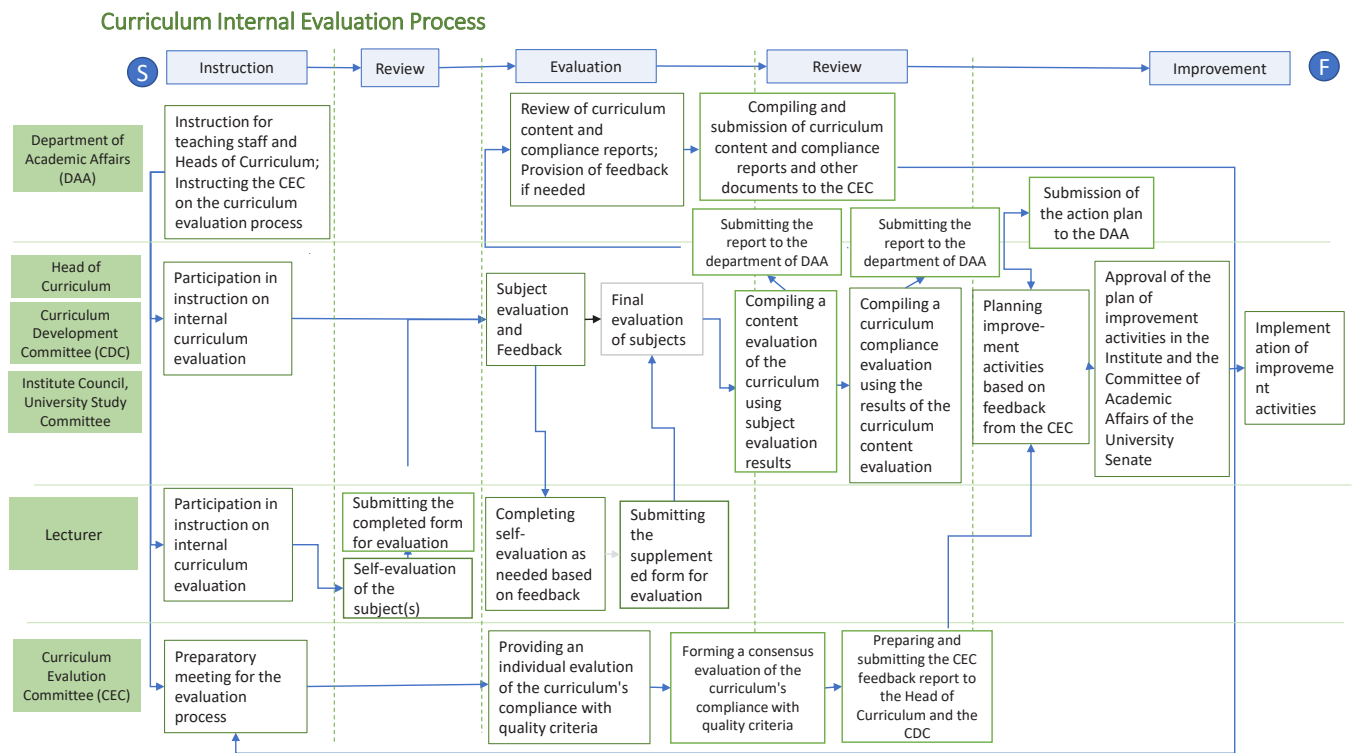


Figure 1.4.2. Internal curriculum evaluation procedure

The responsibility for ensuring and improving the quality of the curriculum is distributed among the following roles. At the University level the DAA supports and supervises curriculum development and the organisation of teaching; coordinates and monitors the implementation of the quality assurance system; and organises the evaluation of curricula and learning activities. (Regulated by: Rector's directive No. 1-8/29 of 15.03.2021 "Description of the Office of Academic Affairs"). Curriculum development includes annual monitoring of the curriculum, and internal evaluation of the curriculum every three years.

At IVMAS:

- Director of Academic Affairs is responsible for curriculum management, including development, organisation of teaching, and support services. The Director is responsible for conducting internal evaluations. (Regulated by: Estonian University of Life Sciences Senate regulation No. 1-28/3 of 27.02.2020 "Curriculum Statute" and the Director of Academic Affairs' job description);
- Director of IVMAS is responsible for institutional development and the lawful and purposeful use of financial resources. (Regulated by: the IVMAS statutes and the Director's job description);
- Head of Curriculum is responsible for managing and developing the curriculum: Leading the Annual Monitoring and Development, and leading the internal evaluation of the curriculum. (Regulated by: Senate regulation No. 1-28/3 of 27.02.2020 "Curriculum Statute" and the job description confirmed by the Vice-Rector for Studies on 09.03.2015);
- Curriculum Development Committee (CDC) develops the curriculum, including analysing the curriculum content and performance indicators; identifying areas for improvement and making recommendations for enhancement; incorporating the perspectives and input of various stakeholders into the curriculum development process. (Regulated by: Senate regulation No. 1-28/3 of 27.02.2020 "Curriculum Statute").

At Chair level:

- Head of Chair is responsible for guiding research and development activities, organising teaching, ensuring doctoral studies, and supporting academic succession in their field. (Regulated by: University Council regulation No. 1-5/19 of 22.12.2016 "Academic Responsibility Areas and Chairs of the Estonian University of Life Sciences");
- Lecturers ensure the timeliness and relevance of course content and materials, monitor and consider student feedback, and engage in professional development related to teaching. (Regulated by: Senate regulation No. 1-28/7 of 27.02.2020 and its annexes).

The University's QA management system is based on the regular monitoring, measurement, analysis, and evaluation of processes and achieved results, as well as continuous improvement in accordance with the needs and expectations of stakeholders (see Figure 1.4.3.).

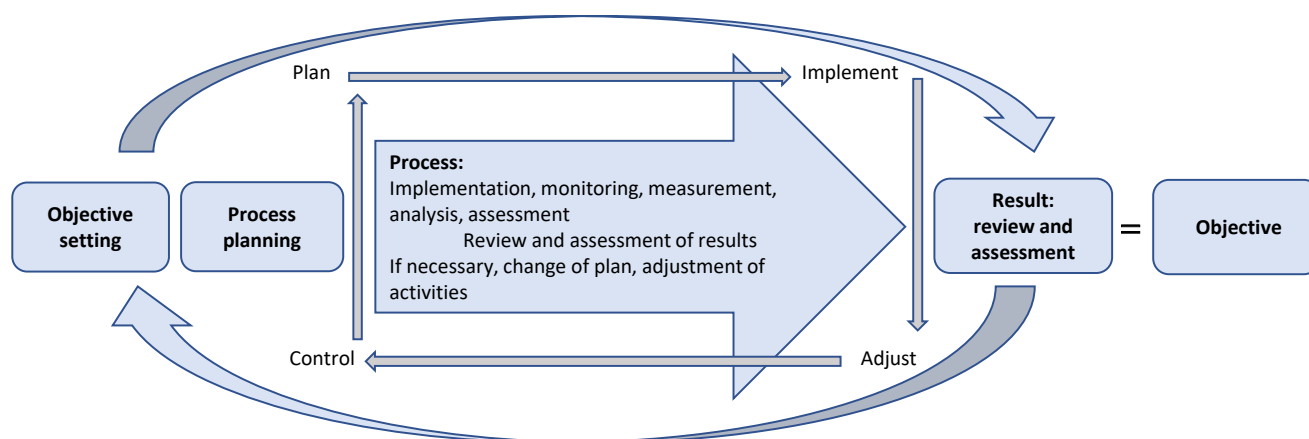


Figure 1.4.3. QA system at the University

The foundation of quality understanding underpins all stages of QA work, following the Plan-Do-Check-Adjust (PDCA) loop.

IVMAS collects, analyses, and utilises relevant information to effectively manage teaching. The University conducts several feedback surveys to support continuous improvement. These include: an admissions survey in Semester 1 to understand applicants' decision-making processes; student feedback on lecturers and courses via the SIS each semester; a curriculum feedback survey for final-year students each spring; an exit survey for all students upon withdrawal; a survey on awareness and satisfaction with support services every three years; doctoral study feedback every three years; an alumni survey every three years; employer satisfaction with graduates, conducted alongside the alumni survey every three years; employer feedback on interns after each placement; staff satisfaction surveys every three years; and an annual the University reputation survey. The results of these surveys are made available to relevant target groups via the university intranet.

The goal of the Animal Clinic is to function as a VTH that meets the needs of the curriculum and adheres to good clinical practice.

Laboratory activities follow the requirements of the international standard ISO/IEC 17025, which outlines general criteria for the competence, impartiality, and consistent operation of laboratories. The Joint Clinical Veterinary Laboratory operates under a Quality Manual based on this standard. The pathology laboratory performs pathohistological examinations and necropsies, and prepares necropsy reports. IVMAS provides expert assessments related to treatment errors and animal welfare issues requested by the national veterinary authority Agricultural and Food Board.

The University has several guidelines to ensure that everyone is treated fairly, with trust, respect, and honesty. The [Regulation of Studies](#) of the University addresses academic integrity. [Estonian code on academic integrity](#) and the University Senate regulation [on Good Academic Practice and Implementation of Principles of Academic Ethics in Estonian University of Life Sciences](#) are available on the University website. [The Guidelines for Equal Treatment](#) ensure a working environment where staff members are valued and treated with respect. The [Gender Equality Plan](#) outlines activities to reduce gender inequality and supports the implementation of the University's core values, ensuring an equal working environment for all staff members. The document [Good Academic Practice and Implementation of Principles of Academic Ethics](#) describes the expected behaviour of staff members and the University's responsibility in ensuring academic integrity. Any violations are addressed through established procedures to maintain the integrity and fairness of the academic environment.

IVMAS has developed [Good practice guidelines](#) for veterinary students, available on the website.

The Estonian Quality Agency for Education ([HAKA](#)), a member of ENQA, evaluated the University in 2022, and it remains accredited until 2029. The veterinary curriculum was nationally accredited in 2015,

following EAEVE, ENQA, and ESG-2015 procedures. According to national legislation, HAKA recognises the ESEVT accreditation assessment, and no duplicate evaluation is conducted.

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 VEE's ESEVT status and its last Self-Evaluation Report and Visitation Reports must be easily available to the public.

On its [website](#), the University provides comprehensive information about their objectives and activities for stakeholders and the public. It organises meetings with societal groups and invites stakeholders to decision-making bodies and Career Days to foster cooperation.

The University [website](#) maintains integrity and transparency by offering current, accurate, and accessible information about curricula, research, and services.

IVMAS actively collaborates with the Estonian Veterinary Chamber organising joint events and conferences, such as the Veterinary Medicine Conference, to address challenges within the veterinary profession. Together, they have arranged workshops at the [Opinion Festival](#), which brings together individuals from government and non-governmental organisations, universities, entrepreneurs, journalists, and the general public. All veterinarians participate in the Educational Day during the Veterinarians' Summer Days. Additionally, academic staff contribute to the publication of the Estonian Veterinary Review, thereby supporting veterinary practice.

To encourage open dialogue, IVMAS holds meetings with stakeholders. Career Day provides a platform for students to meet potential employers. Events like Open Doors and [Researchers' Nights](#) also facilitate interaction. Community outreach is a priority, with students sharing veterinary knowledge in schools and at public events. On social media platforms, veterinary students share their study activities, while the [Equine Clinic](#) posts its own video reels. IVMAS cooperates with upper secondary schools providing workshops and modules.

In 2021, a comprehensive survey was conducted across the University to account for graduate destinations. However, the University-wide survey had a low response rate, making the results inconclusive. The next survey is planned for 2026. Additionally, a preliminary survey conducted in 2023 by the Estonian Veterinary Chamber highlighted a recognised shortage across all areas of the profession. The Estonian [Agriculture and Food Board](#) maintains a register of licensed veterinarians. The Estonian labour force and skills studies [OSKA](#) (2023) provide students and universities with data on market needs and emerging trends.

As of 1 June 2025, 387 veterinary students are enrolled at the University, 11% of whom are male. Of these, 183 students are from Estonia, 182 from Finland, and 22 from other countries – with France being the most represented among the latter group.

Data on the student body and the University membership is accessible on the University [database](#) available on Intranet. In addition, key figures on student numbers and graduates are available in Annual reports that are publicly available on the University [website](#).

Information about the ESEVT status of IVMAS, the latest ESEVT Self-Evaluation Report, and Visitation Reports is available on the [website](#) and on the [Intranet](#).

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. Evidence must be provided that the QA loops are fully closed (Plan Do Check Adjust cycles) to efficiently enhance the quality of education. Any action planned or taken as a result of this data analysis must be communicated to all those concerned.

The University QA management is described in Standard 1.1. The University's QA management documents are available on its Intranet. Each January, the University organises a seminar focused on strategic development and QA topics. These insights are later discussed in administrative meetings, where decisions are made regarding improvements or adjustments for the following year. The University QA principles

are regularly discussed each January during educational development seminars and at the development seminar for Heads of Curricula, organised by the DAA.

The University is a member of the EAEVE Region 6 (Nordic-Baltic) network and receives input from this network to enhance its QA processes. First-year students are introduced to QA principles during orientation weeks and in the course [VL1268 Introduction to veterinary studies](#).

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.

Date of the last ESEVT visitation and description of how the deficiencies have been corrected and how it has been used to enhance quality

IVMAS has regularly participated in EAEVE evaluations. These evaluations took place in 2005 (and 2009) with the most recent one held from 16 to 20 November 2015, followed by a re-visitation in 2019. After reviewing the changes, the Committee found that the major issues had been adequately addressed, and status of IVMAS was upgraded to “Approval”. The [interim report](#) from spring 2023 outlines improvements and ongoing initiatives, including the procurement of clinical equipment, curriculum updates, and measures related to mental health.

Comments on Area 1

The Estonian University of Life Sciences was among the first universities in Estonia to have its comprehensive quality management system (as outlined in Area 1), including a systematic internal evaluation process, assessed through international institutional accreditation in 2022. The University’s two-level internal evaluation of curricula, at both the subjects and curriculum levels, with the involvement of all teaching staff, represents a distinctive practice among Estonian universities.

Suggestions for improvement in Area 1

To enhance efficiency at IVMAS, it is necessary to extend specific QA management tasks to designated staff members.

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).

The University's accounting and reporting procedures comply with the [Accounting Act](#) and guidelines from the [Estonian Accounting Standards Board](#). The internal accounting rules of the Estonian University of Life Sciences establish principles for accounting and financial reporting principles adhered to in the University, approved by the Rector. Organising accounting is the responsibility of the Financial Manager. The accounting is managed by the Head of the Department of Finance.

The financial and investment policy at the University is grounded in the [University DP](#), annual operational plans, Territorial-Spatial DP, and the [IVMAS DP](#). The University Council has adopted budgetary rules that outline the principles for preparing, adopting, and executing the University budget. The University budget, which ensures the long-term and stable development of the University's areas of responsibility and enables adaptation to changes in public funding for education and research, is prepared in cooperation with the University management and the Budget Committee. The [University Council](#) and the [Senate](#) both provide guidance for the preparation of the budget. The Budget Committee operates under the University Council. The University budget comprises a main budget and a capital budget. The budget is based on the input of structural units supplemented by the University management sub-budget. The main budget revenues come from educational activities, research, and the sale of goods and services. Expenditures within the main budget are categorised into sub-budgets for academic units (institutes, incl. chairs) and support units. The budget is managed and approved by the Budget Committee and Senate, and confirmed by the Council.

The budgetary year runs from 1 January to 31 December, aligning with the financial year. At the close of each financial year, the Council approves the budget for the upcoming financial year along with a four-year financial plan. The capital budget supports the development of academic and research infrastructure, guided by long-term needs identified in the Territorial-Spatial DP. The University management monitors annually the long-term investment needs of the capital budget, extending up to the year 2040.

The budgets of academic structural units (institutes, including chairs) are prepared based on their specific needs. These budgets consider various factors, including the financial contributions generated by the units themselves. Academic units have the autonomy to make decisions within their allocated budgets and are fully accountable for ensuring the effective implementation of their respective budgets.

The revenues of IVMAS educational activity (Table 2.1.2.) consist of operational support provided by public budget, tuition and continuing education fees, and project funding (a total of 6.3 million euros in 2024). Research and development activities are mainly financed through project funding, which include both basic and applied research contracts as well as business agreements, in addition to public funding (a total of 5.1 million euros in 2024; public 38%, other funding 62%). Revenues from the sale of goods and services include those from the veterinary clinic, veterinary pharmacy, laboratories, and other services based on the competence of IVMAS (a total of 3.7 million euros in 2024).

Furthermore, the University's central funds support various activities of the institutes, such as doctoral graduation bonuses (performance-based grants for doctoral completion), doctoral school, student performance-based scholarships and emeritus fees.

At the University, operational support from public budget for teaching activities (a total of 17.2 million euros in 2024) is distributed among institutes based on principles similar to those used by the MER for distributing support among universities: 70% of the allocation to academic structural units is based on the average support over the last three years, and 30% on performance indicators like graduate-to-entrant ratios (35%), employment rates (20%), ECTS earned by exchange and visiting students (10%), income ratios (20%), and student intake (15%) in focus areas. In 2024, operational support in the IVMAS budget amounted to 3,136,974 euros, representing 18% of the IVMAS total budget.

The Department of Finance oversees accounting operations, with internal control over financial resources performed at multiple levels. Heads of the University units regularly monitor their budgets and sub-unit

spending via the Intranet, while the University Audit Committee oversees the targeted use of funds. The annual financial report is audited by an internationally recognised auditing firm.

The University's central general cost fee (13%) and IVMAS general cost fee (10%) ensure high-quality support services and cover administrative costs. Research and applied research project contracts not always allow for the application of overheads at these rates, which is why the burden of overheads is predominantly on the income of educational activities.

Table 2.1.1 shows the proportion of the University's overhead costs included in the total costs of IVMAS.

Table 2.1.1. Annual expenditures of IVMAS during the last 3 financial years (in euros)

Area of expenditure	2022	2023	2024	Mean
Personnel	7 130 200	8 445 416	9 701 555	8 425 724
Operating costs	2 973 854	3 869 068	3 903 692	3 582 205
Utilities*	656 458	773 902	782 402	737 587
Maintenance costs**	77 060	104 420	100 112	93 864
Equipment***	443 244	400 295	444 478	429 339
Overhead****	466 238	605 125	754 581	608 648
Total expenditure	11 747 054	14 198 226	15 686 820	13 877 367

* Utilities expenses include building-related utility and ancillary costs, such as electricity, water, heating, waste management services and other costs.

** Maintenance costs include expenses related to the upkeep, repair, and servicing of buildings, equipment, and infrastructure.

*** Equipment does not include investments in buildings (mentioned in Standard 2.3.).

**** Overhead includes the management costs of the University management and other support units, incl. the maintenance costs of the premises used by these units.

Table 2.1.2. Annual revenues of IVMAS during the last 3 financial years (in euros)

Revenues source	2022	2023	2024	Mean
Public authorities	3 149 697	3 550 241	4 297 719	3 665 886
Tuition fee (standard students)	9 800	3 930	4 340	6 023
Tuition fee (full fee students)	1 774 500	1 781 620	1 800 140	1 785 420
Clinical and diagnostics services*	2 916 276	3 296 751	3 477 716	3 230 248
Other services	310 897	199 482	208 324	239 568
Research grants	4 662 160	4 626 211	5 149 166	4 812 512
Continuing Education	12 170	43 776	52 402	36 116
Education contracts and grants	35 943	226 716	154 072	138 910
Total revenues	12 871 443	13 728 727	15 143 879	13 914 683

* The VTH information system Provet Cloud does not allow a separated output.

According to the [Higher Education Act](#), no tuition for pursuing an Estonian study programme is charged from a full-time student who cumulatively obtains the required level of credits of the curriculum every semester. However, some specific conditions students reimburse the tuition costs in accordance with the Higher Education Act:

- to the extent of the number of credits of the selected subjects not passed in the semester, if the student discontinues their studies after 70 calendar days from the beginning of the semester;
- to the extent of the unfulfilled study load, if the student has not cumulatively completed the required study load by the end of the semester.

The standard study load is 30 ECTS per semester (60 ECTS per academic year), with credit points calculated cumulatively across semesters. If a student falls short by more than 8 ECTS from the prescribed study load

in previous semester(s), they must pay tuition fees (50 euros per ECTS). No reimbursement of tuition costs is required for credit points earned through RPL or for additional courses exceeding the compulsory volume of the curriculum, provided that the student fulfils the required workload of the curriculum.

The VM curriculum taught in English is a tuition-based curriculum. For the 2024/2025 academic year, the tuition fee in veterinary medicine is 4,700 euros per semester (9,400 euros per academic year). If first-year students in the English-taught Veterinary Medicine curriculum interrupt their studies before 15 October, the University may charge a 200 euros tuition service fee. Tuition fees can be increased by 10% per year for students who have signed a contract with the University.

The financial data of IVMAS presented in the tables below are prepared on an accrual basis and are based on the University's approved annual financial report.

Table 2.1.3. Annual balance between expenditures and revenues (in euros)

IVMAS			
Academic year	Total expenditures	Total revenues	Balance***
2022	11 747 054	12 871 443	1 124 389
2023	14 198 226	13 728 727	-469 499
2024	15 686 820	15 143 879	-542 941
Chair of Clinical Veterinary Medicine of IVMAS			
Academic year	Total expenditures	Total revenues	Balance***
2022	4 903 156	5 123 050	219 894
2023	5 400 400	5 235 463	-164 937
2024	6 097 450	5 684 735	-412 715

*** Total revenues minus Total expenditures.

Standard 2.2: Clinical and field services must function as instructional resources. The instructional integrity of these resources must take priority over the 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.

The IVMAS Chair of Clinical Veterinary Medicine encompasses the Animal Clinic, which includes the Small Animal, Production Animal and Equine Clinics, as well as the veterinary pharmacy. These form the sub-units of the Chair.

The Chair has its own budget, and each sub-unit operates under a sub-budget. Budget funds are managed by the head of the unit or an appointed representative – such as the Head of the Chair, Chief Clinical Officer, administrative manager of the clinic, or head of the pharmacy. The head of the unit is responsible for budget execution. The Department of Finance also monitors the implementation of each unit's budget. Units plan their activities, salaries, equipment purchases, and other expenses within the limits of allocated support and projected revenues for each financial year. The Chair of Clinical Veterinary Medicine budget (a total of 5.7 million euros in 2024) includes revenues from medical services and pharmacy sales (3.48 million euros), public education support (1.13 million euros), tuition fees (0.62 million euros), continuing education, and research grants field services. Services provided to customers account for 24 percent of the IVMAS budget.

Educational activities are funded by the MER (0.78 million euros in 2024), while the Ministry of Regional Affairs and Agriculture directly finances clinical training (0.35 million euros in 2024). In recent years, the clinics have increased its revenues from clinical services annually, allowing for additional expenditures such as purchasing necessary equipment.

One of the University's field bases is the experimental dairy farm in Märja, which operates as a separate legal entity. The farm houses 120–130 dairy cows and a similar number of young animals. As a private limited company, it has its own budget and conducts independent economic activities, with a turnover of 0.6 million euros in 2024. Major investments in the farm's infrastructure are made by the University, which is the legal owner of the property.

According to the University's budget regulations, the heads of structural units are responsible for preparing and implementing their unit's budget proposal. The research project manager (responsible professor) and the head of the unit jointly prepare and implement the project agreement budget. The head of the unit is also responsible for ensuring that revenues are received into the budget. Expenses can only be incurred if sufficient revenues are available to cover them, and project expenses must align with the project agreement and its approved budget.

The Director of IVMAS is responsible for the overall activities, including budget preparation and implementation, staff recruitment, and purchases.

The University approves the IVMAS budget, and within its limits, IVMAS independently decides on the use of financial resources and makes strategic decisions.

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

The University's budgeting process is coordinated and transparent, involving several levels of management. The Department of Finance prepares the draft budget in coordination with the University management, including the directors of the institutes. The draft is reviewed by the Budget Committee and the [Senate](#). The Budget Committee operates under the University Council and includes three Council members, the Vice-Rector for Research, the Vice-Rector for Academic Affairs, and the Finance Manager. The Senate includes representatives from the institutes as well as students appointed by the [Student Union](#). The Rector submits the consolidated draft budget, along with the Senate's opinion, to the University Council for formal approval. The Senate and the University Council decisions are available internally through the Intranet.

Academic and support units of the University prepare their own sub-budgets based on their specific needs, projected income, and strategic goals. Academic units, including institutes and chairs, have the autonomy to make financial decisions within their allocated budgets and are responsible for their proper implementation. Budget-related matters and strategic decisions within the scope of the IVMAS budget are made by the IVMAS Council, which comprises representatives from the chairs and student representatives.

The University budget is prepared on the basis of both short-term and long-term financial planning. Long-term planning is guided by the [University DP](#) (2021–2025), and the multi-year financial strategy is approved by the University Council together with the annual budget.

The University budget consists of two parts: the main budget, which includes revenues from teaching, research, and the sale of goods and services, and the capital budget, which supports investments in academic and research infrastructure based on long-term needs outlined in the Territorial-Spatial DP. The main investment projects of IVMAS include:

- Interior renovation of the Equine and Production Animal Clinics at Zoomeedikum, 62 F. R. Kreutzwaldi Str. (0.4 million euros);
- Renovation of the food technology and aquaculture building, 56/3 and 56/5 F. R. Kreutzwaldi Str. (4.5 million euros);
- Design and construction of clinical facilities, incl. Small Animal Clinic at Zoomeedikum, 62 F. R. Kreutzwaldi Str. (8.8 million euros);
- Design of an extension for Zoomeedikum study facilities, 62 F. R. Kreutzwaldi Str. (second phase, amount to be determined).

According to the University's capital budget and financial plan, the first three projects listed above are the top priorities for the next three years. These investments will be financed through a loan and various co-funding options, including EU programmes.

The planned capital budget for the next three years is as follows:

2025: 16.9 million euros, with 3,5 million euros allocated to IVMAS projects;

2026: 12.4 million euros, with 8.3 million euros allocated to related projects;

2027: 6.8 million euros, with 2,8 million euros allocated to related projects.

Once the budget has been approved, adjustments may be made during the financial year as necessary. At the end of the financial year, a financial report on the implementation of the budget – reflecting both the initial allocation and any approved adjustments – is prepared and submitted for approval by the University Council. This ensures that the budgeting process remains responsive, goal-oriented, and accountable. [The financial reports](#) are publicly available on the University website.

Comments on Area 2

The University has strategic plans for the development of VEE and the modernisation of its infrastructure. However, due to various consultancy and confirmation rounds, the process has unfortunately been delayed.

It is essential to meet the national demand for specialists. However, under limited budgetary conditions, it is very difficult to defend a cost-based budget – the needs exceed the available resources.

The University has sent a public letter to the Prime Minister on the matter. University representatives have met with the Rural Affairs Committee of the Estonian Parliament (Riigikogu) on three occasions, and discussions have also taken place with the Minister of Agriculture, the Minister of Education and Research, and Deputy Chancellors of the respective ministries. Negotiations are currently underway at the Ministry of Education and Research on a new administrative agreement between the State and the University, with the financing of veterinary education **included** on the agenda.

Suggestions for improvement in Area 2

Financing of higher education in Estonia requires complete modernisation, and during this process, a new appreciation of veterinary medicine education is necessary, which is expressed in adequate cost-based financing.

To ensure adequate funding, the University must engage more actively with the relevant ministries to identify opportunities for additional financing. This would help provide high-quality education in the region and ensure the sustainability of the field.

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 the ESEVT SOP 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)
- Veterinary Public Health (including Food Safety and Quality)
- Professional Knowledge including soft skills (e.g. communication, team working skills, management skills).

When part of the study programme cannot be organised because of imposed regulations or constraints, convincing compensations must be developed and implemented. If a VEE offers more than one study programme to become a veterinarian, e.g. in different languages or in collaboration with other VEEs, all study programmes and respective curricula must be described separately in the SER. For each Standard, the VEE must explain if there are differences or not with the basic programme and all this information must be provided as a formal annex to the SER. Similarly, if a VEE implements a tracking (elective) system in its study programme, it must provide a clear explanation of the tracking system in the SER.

The veterinary medicine curriculum is designed and managed according to EU Directive 2005/36/EC (amended by Directive 2013/55/EU) and its Annex V.4.1. It aligns with, the [Higher Education Act](#), Standard of Higher Education, the Republic of Estonia Government Regulation Requirements for Medical Education, Veterinary Education, Pharmacy Education, Dental Education, Midwifery Education, Nursing Education, Architectural Education, and Civil Engineering Education, [Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area](#) (ESG), the Bologna Process and the [European System of Evaluation of Veterinary Training](#) (ESEVT) SOP Annex 2, as well as the [Estonian University of Life Sciences Act](#), University regulations, and the [University DP](#) and the [IVMAS DP](#) regulations.

The integrated studies in Veterinary Medicine span six years, totalling 360 ECTS credits. Each credit point corresponds to 26 hours of student work, with an academic year comprising 60 ECTS. Graduates receive a Degree of Veterinary Medicine (DVM), a master's level qualification that provides eligibility for PhD programmes. This degree aligns with Qualification Level 7 of the CQF Descriptor and is consistent with EQF standards.

The curriculum follows a modular structure (see Appendix 6).

Students begin with a general module (18 ECTS) in their first academic year, including subjects such as [VL.1218 Basics of evidence-based veterinary medicine](#), [VL.0567 Cell and molecular biology](#), and [VL.0413 Informatics and biometry](#), etc.. This module provides the foundation for academic studies and the acquisition of basic subject knowledge in veterinary medicine. The speciality module (309 ECTS), is further divided into submodules: *Preclinical sciences* (83 ECTS), *Basics of animal production* (32 ECTS), *Food hygiene and public health* (33 ECTS), *Clinical sciences* (125 ECTS), and elective speciality submodules E1-E4, each comprising 58 ECTS. The majority of subjects of the *Preclinical sciences* and *Basics of animal production* submodules are taught during the first two academic years. Most of the third, fourth, and fifth academic years are dedicated to the *Clinical sciences* submodule. Subjects related to food hygiene, food safety, veterinary legislation, and supervision are taught in the fifth year.

From the 2002/2003 academic year onwards, the curriculum has included elective speciality submodules (also known as tracks) within the speciality module during the sixth (final) year of study: *Production animal and equine medicine* and *Small animal medicine*. From the 2023/2024 academic year onwards, students in their final year may choose between the following elective speciality submodules: *Production animal medicine*, *Equine medicine*, *Small animal medicine*, *Food safety*.

These elective submodules allow students to focus on their areas of interest and gain more in-depth knowledge and hands-on experience in a specific field of veterinary medicine. This targeted approach fosters comprehensive competence development and more effectively prepares graduates for their future careers. The curriculum also includes speciality electives and optional subjects (11 ECTS), as well as a [VL.1355 Final thesis in veterinary medicine](#) (22 ECTS).

To create a cohesive and logically structured study experience, IVMAS has implemented a system of prerequisite subjects, whereby each subject builds on the knowledge and skills acquired in earlier courses. Enrolment in clinical modules requires successful completion of relevant preclinical modules, ensuring that students are adequately prepared for clinical studies. Practical skills are developed through subjects such as [VL.1340 Veterinary clinical skills](#) (1 ECTS), which provide students with hands-on experience in a controlled and safe learning environment.

The curriculum is designed as an outcome-based programme, and its LOs are aligned with the D1C as well as with the LOs set forth in the Standard of Higher Education.

To obtain the Degree of Veterinary Medicine, students must complete a six-year, 360-ECTS curriculum that includes professional development and clinical training. Professional development is supported by specific subjects such as [VL.0142 Veterinary mental health and self-care](#) (2 ECTS) and [VL.0796 Professional ethics](#) (1 ECTS), however, it is also integrated throughout the entire curriculum, taking place within the framework of various other subjects.

IVMAS offers two veterinary medicine curricula: one taught in Estonian (curriculum code 398) and another in English (curriculum code 118977), which was launched in 2013.

Despite being registered as two separate curricula, all subjects are coded, titled, and structured identically. The LOs, scope of studies, contact hours, practical training, and self-study requirements are the same in both curricula, with the only differences being the language of instruction and the foreign language component. International students (curriculum code 118977) take [KE.0069 Estonian for foreigners](#) (3 ECTS) and, as a speciality elective subject [KE.0080 Estonian. Intermediate](#) (3 ECTS). National students (curriculum code 398) take [KE.0093 English/Estonian mediation for academic and professional purposes](#) (3 ECTS).

The curriculum is designed to equip veterinarians with the necessary theoretical knowledge, clinical skills, and practical experience for diverse veterinary fields.

According to [Statutes of Curriculum](#), subjects are organised into targeted modules based on their LOs. These outcomes are aligned with ESEVT SOP Annex 2, future skills, and the Standard of Higher Education. The [LOs of the VM curriculum](#) are available in SIS.

Appendix 2 outlines the contribution of each subject to achieving D1C-s.

The curriculum is managed by the Head of Curriculum and the CDC, under the supervision of the Director of Academic Affairs. Curriculum development is ongoing, adapting to evolving demands with input from students, staff, alumni, and employers. The DAA of the University advises on development and organises supervision. Regular reviews and updates ensure the curriculum's relevance, focusing on practical, clinical, and research-based teaching. Changes are proposed by the CDC, approved by the Senate Committee of Academic Affairs. Feedback data from the study process and stakeholders' needs are used for evidence-based planning. Improvement plans address resources (infrastructure and staff), curriculum, and the study process.

The Chairs in collaboration with the Director of Academic Affairs and the Head of Curriculum are responsible for ensuring the consistency and quality of the subjects under their supervision, including securing the necessary human and financial resources. The Chair of Clinical Veterinary Medicine and the Chair of Veterinary Biomedicine and Food Hygiene are responsible for delivering the majority of the subjects, with additional expertise from other Chairs integrated into various modules. The Heads of the Chairs are responsible for everyday oversee teaching staff and work towards maintaining educational quality and continuity.

Description of the legal constraints imposed on curriculum by national/regional legislations and the degree of autonomy that the VEE has to change the curriculum

In Estonia, the [Higher Education Act](#) and the Standard of Higher Education, based on the [Republic of Estonia Education Act](#), are the main legal frameworks for licensing and accrediting curricula in higher education institutions.

The Estonian University of Life Sciences operates under the [Estonian University of Life Sciences Act](#), which sets the legal framework for its management and activities. The University's integrated bachelor's and master's studies in veterinary medicine align with Level 7 of the [Estonian Qualifications Framework \(EstQF\)](#), meeting both national and European standards. Graduates can apply for a [professional activity veterinary license](#) through the Agriculture and Food Board of Estonia, allowing them to practice veterinary medicine. The [Veterinary Act](#) further governs the responsibilities and ethical standards for licensed veterinarians. The VM curriculum is accredited by the [Estonian Quality Agency for Higher and Vocational Education \(EKKA, known as HAKA since 12 June 2022\)](#), with evaluations based on EAEVE accreditation.

The University is the owner of the curriculum, but IVMAS manages it and has autonomy in its development in accordance with national and university regulations. Regular quality assessments are required by both the University (internal audit every three years) and the EAEVE (every seven years), in accordance with the ESEVT standards.

Description of how curricular overlaps, redundancies, omissions, and lack of consistency, transversality and/or integration of the curriculum are identified and corrected

Issues with curricula, such as overlaps, omissions, and lack of coherence and consistency, are resolved through curriculum reviews conducted and regular evaluations involving lecturers, students, Chairs, and Institute management. The Head of Curriculum presents these issues to the CDC based on student feedback, collected proposals, and feedback from academic staff members. Student feedback is gathered through surveys and direct discussions, and is used to improve the curriculum. The curriculum is also evaluated through an internal quality evaluation process at the University level, examining its relevance to the labour market and the study process. Modification proposals are reviewed by the CDC and the DAA, and approved by the University Senate Committee for Academic Affairs, which includes elected student representatives. Corrective measures are taken in line with the recommendations of the University's Curriculum Evaluation Committee.

As a complement to Tables 3.1.1 to 3.1.5, a VM curriculum digest/diagram covering theoretical, practical and clinical training for each academic year is provided as the Appendix 7.

Table 3.1.1. Curriculum hours in each academic year taken by each student (excl. elective and optional subjects)

Academic year	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	J
Year 1	302	118	524	216	92	0	0	308	1560
Year 2	304	118	417	149	101	0	0	349	1508
Year 3	331	171	392	64	95	10	74	384	1521
Year 4	347	180	318	27	34	169	78	394	1547
Year 5	182	93	333	175	26	521	0	100	1430
Year 6 ¹	60	177	413	24	0	82	390	362	1508
Year 6 ²	91	45	528	0	42	105	390	307	1508
Year 6 ³	13	143	331	140	10	0	390	481	1508
Year 6 ⁴	149	150	692	210	0	0	0	307	1508

¹ Elective submodule of the speciality module *Production animal medicine*

² Elective submodule of the speciality module *Equine medicine*

³ Elective submodule of the speciality module *Small animal medicine*

⁴ Elective submodule of the speciality module *Food safety*

A: lectures; B: seminars; C: supervised self-learning; D: laboratory and desk-based work, E: non-clinical animal work; F: clinical animal work; G: EPT; H: others: individual work; J: total

Table 3.1.2. Curriculum hours taken by each student (the first to fifth academic years)

Subjects	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Basic subjects								
Medical physics	6							6
Chemistry (inorganic and organic sections)	18			24				42
Animal biology, zoology and cell biology	40		80	10				130
Feed plants and toxic plants	14			12				26
Biomedical statistics	16	32	52					100
Specific veterinary subjects								
Basic Science								
Anatomy, histology and embryology	74		238	60	132			504
Physiology	53	24	80	24				181
Biochemistry	45	4	26	56				131
General and molecular genetics	45		30		20			95
Pharmacology, pharmacy and pharmacotherapy	38	60	88					186
Pathology	78	21	60	67	2			228
Toxicology	4	5	4					13
Parasitology	24	18	10	22				84
Microbiology	31	81	20	22				154
Immunology	14	19	50	4				87
Epidemiology	1		73	30				104
Information literacy and data management	22	27	320					369
Professional ethics and communication	13	51	14	2				80
Animal health economics and practice management		39	5					44
Animal ethology	26		4	22				52
Animal welfare	26		6	20				52
Animal nutrition	50	20	12	16				98
Clinical Sciences in companion animals (including equine and exotic pets)								
Obstetrics, reproduction and reproductive disorders	34	20	5		3	6		68
Diagnostic pathology	11	11	17	2	26			67
Medicine	135	73	59	4		23		294
Surgery	98	3		16		12		129
Anaesthesiology and analgesia	20	4	6	6				36
Clinical practical training in common companion animals			30			386		416
Infectious diseases	20	5	5					30

Preventive medicine	7	5	4					16
Diagnostic imaging	24			11		13		48
Therapy in common companion animals	26	16	8					50
Clinical Sciences in food-producing animals (including Animal Production and Herd Health Management)								
Obstetrics, reproduction and reproductive disorders	42	6	63	16	27	54		208
Diagnostic pathology		6	6		29			41
Medicine	43	8	107	7		11		176
Surgery	4					3		7
Anaesthesiology and analgesia						6		6
Clinical practical training in common food-producing animals						156		156
Infectious diseases	40	16	16					72
Preventive medicine	4	19	17					40
Diagnostic imaging						6		6
Therapy in common food-producing animals	10	19	45			15		89
Animal Production, including breeding, husbandry and economics	68		60	10	39	10		187
Herd health management	44	23	65		18	5		155
Veterinary Public Health (including Food Safety and Quality)								
Veterinary legislation including official controls and regulatory veterinary services, forensic veterinary medicine and certification	37	18	103	15	2	26		201
Control of food, feed and animal by-products	44	29	91	39	20			223
Zoonoses and their prevention	41	9	63	21	2			136
Food hygiene and environmental health	59	9	95	34	2			199
Basic food technology	9		64	40				113

A: lectures; B: seminars; C: supervised self-learning; D: laboratory and desk-based work, E: non-clinical animal work; F: clinical animal work; G: others (specify); H: total Note: Subjects linked to Professional Knowledge (including soft skills, e.g. communication, team working skills, management skills) are incorporated within the subcategories and include inter alia Information literacy and data management, Professional ethics and communication, Animal health economics and practice management, Clinical practical training in common animal species, Herd health management and Veterinary legislation.

Note: Table 3.1.2 does not reflect the classification of hours of elective submodules of the speciality module, as the distribution and classification of hours depend on the structure of each four elective submodules of the speciality module.

The four elective submodules of the speciality module include [VL.1355 Final thesis in veterinary medicine](#) (22 ECTS) and the course [VL.0113 Client communication and practise management](#) (2 ECTS). Each submodule comprises a total of 58 ECTS.

The elective submodule *Production animal medicine* within the speciality module: During Semester 11, students undertake four subjects, all focusing on herd health and management across various animal species, as follows: [VL.0266 Cattle health management](#) (10 ECTS); [VL.1348 Pig health management](#) (5 ECTS); [VL.1273 Health management of small ruminants](#) (4 ECTS). The main objective of these courses is

the develop advanced skills in herd health management. Students participate in farm visits, attend seminars and prepare herd health reports for farmers. In Semester 12 students engage in extramural practical training [VL.0468 Clinical training in production animal medicine](#) (15 ECTS).

The elective submodule *Equine medicine* within the speciality module: During Semester 11, students earn 19 ECTS in [VL.0532 Advanced course in equine medicine](#). In this course, students acquire systematic and in-depth knowledge across multidisciplinary areas of equine veterinary medicine, such as orthopaedics and surgery, reproduction, ophthalmology, neurology and internal medicine. During Semester 12, students participate in extramural practical training [VL.0697 Clinical training in equine medicine](#) (15 ECTS). The aim of this training is to provide comprehensive preparation for independent practice in equine medicine. It integrates previously acquired theoretical knowledge and practical skills.

The elective submodule *Small animal medicine* within the speciality module: During semester 11, students deepen their knowledge in various fields of small animal medicine in [VL.0045 Small animal medicine](#) (19 ECTS), primarily through seminars and case-based discussions. Topics covered include internal medicine, intensive care, exotic animal medicine, dentistry, ophthalmology, and others. During Semester 12, students undertake [VL.0178 Clinical training in small animal medicine](#) (15 ECTS). The aim of this training is to provide comprehensive preparation for clinical work in small animal medicine by integrating previously acquired theoretical knowledge with practical skills.

The elective submodule *Food safety* within the speciality module include the following subjects across Semesters 11 and 12. In Semester 11, students take [VL.1354 Case studies in food safety](#) (4 ECTS), [VL.0074 Quality and safety of organic food](#) (2 ECTS), [VL.1344 Food microbiota](#) (6 ECTS), [VL.0336 Human nutrition](#) (4 ECTS) and [VL.0317 Food legislation](#) (3 ECTS). In Semester 12, they continue with [VL.0287 Principles and methods of risk assessment in food safety](#) (6 ECTS), [VL.0538 Animal welfare assessment in food surveillance](#) (3 ECTS), and [VL.1351 Food technology in food surveillance](#) (6 ECTS). These subjects focus on food safety and quality, as well as on food microbiota and human health, and cover key areas such as food safety legislation, risk assessment, and veterinary supervision. The primary objective of *Food safety* submodule is acquiring advanced knowledge in assessing food safety and the quality of food production through surveillance procedures.

Table 3.1.3. Practical rotations under teaching staff supervision (excluding EPT)

Types	List of practical rotations (Disciplines/ Species)	Duration (weeks)	Year of programme
Intra-mural clinics (VTH)	Small animal emergency medicine (VL.0426)	1.2	4
	Small animal medicine (VL.0737)*	7	5
	Equine medicine (VL.1270)**	3	5
Ambulatory clinics	Production animal medicine (VL.1269)	4	5
Herd Health Management	–	–	–
VPH (including FSQ)	Veterinary surveillance (VL.0828)	2	5
	Practical training in meat inspection (VL.0833)	2	5
Electives	–	–	–
Other (specify)	–	–	–

* From the 2025/2026 academic year and onwards: [VL.1371 Practical training in small animal medicine](#), duration 5 weeks.

** For students admitted from the 2021/2022 academic year and onwards: [VL.1370 Practical training in equine medicine](#), duration 4 weeks.

Table 3.1.4. Curriculum hours taken as electives for each student

Electives	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Basic subjects	42		62					104
Basic Sciences	157	13	72	15	18			275
Clinical Sciences in companion animals (incl. equine and exotic pets)	136	157	335	142	58	981		1809
Clinical Sciences in food-producing animals (incl. Animal Production and Herd Health Management)	47	154	132	24	78	472		917
Veterinary Public Health (incl. Food Safety and Quality)	143	127	411	210				882

A: lectures; B: seminars; C: supervised self-learning; D: laboratory and desk-based work, E: non-clinical animal work; F: clinical animal work; G: others (specify); H: hours to be taken by each student per subject group

Note: Both the speciality elective subjects and the subjects within the elective speciality submodules for the sixth academic year have been taken into account.

Table 3.1.5. Optional courses proposed to students (not compulsory)

Subjects	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
<i>VL.0057 Practical training in equine emergency care and night shifts</i>						52		
<i>VL.1362 Practical training in zoo medicine*</i>						39–390		

* The minimum training period is one week, which is equivalent to 1.5 ECTS credits, and the maximum is 15 ECTS credits.

A: lectures; B: seminars; C: supervised self-learning; D: laboratory and desk-based work, E: non-clinical animal work; F: clinical animal work; G: others (specify); H: total

For optional courses, students can choose from those offered by the University or other national or international universities.

Core clinical exercises/practicals/seminars prior to the start of the clinical rotations.

Before starting clinical rotations, students must complete the general module and the speciality submodules *Basics of Animal Production* and *Preclinical Sciences*, successfully complete veterinary clinical skills training in the clinical skills lab and pass the OSCE in the Semester 6. The subjects [*VL.1340 Veterinary clinical skills*](#), [*VL.1300 Clinical-laboratory diagnostics of small animals*](#), [*VL.1276 Clinical-laboratory diagnostics of production animals*](#), [*VL.1277 Clinical-laboratory diagnostics of equine*](#) cover topics such as taking anamnesis, animal restraint, clinical examination, and basic diagnostics, for example taking and analysing blood samples. During the practical training in [*VL.0491 Anaesthesiology*](#), students familiarise themselves with the organisational structure of anaesthesiology at the University's veterinary clinic.

The subjects [*VL.1274*](#) and [*VL.1275 Artificial insemination and reproduction II*](#), [*VL.1282*](#) and [*VL.1283 Obstetrics and gynaecology II*](#), [*VL.1165 Swine clinical medicine*](#), [*VL.1161 Herd health and environment*](#), [*VL.1163 Ruminant clinical medicine*](#), [*VL.1285*](#) and [*VL.1286 Small animal internal medicine II*](#), [*VL.0831 Equine clinical medicine*](#), among others, introduce students to reproduction and health issues across various animal species. Productive animal practical trainings take place on farms and is organised in groups of 12–15 students to ensure an efficient learning experience, except for pig farms, where group size is limited to 6–8 students.

In clinical rotations, the prerequisite subjects for [*VL.0426 Practical training in small animal emergency medicine*](#) in the fourth academic year include [*VL.1340 Veterinary clinical skills*](#), [*VL.1300 Clinical-laboratory diagnostics for small animals*](#) (including exotic animals), [*VL.1287 Surgery I*](#), [*VL.1164 Anaesthesiology and intensive care*](#), [*VL.1281 Animal infectious diseases II*](#), and [*VL.0411 Clinical pharmacology*](#). For clinical practical rotations such as [*VL.1371 Practical training in small animal medicine*](#), the prerequisite subjects are: [*VL.0426 Practical training in small animal emergency medicine*](#), [*VL.1281 Animal infectious diseases*](#)

[II, VL. 1286 Small animal internal medicine II](#), [VL.1289 Surgery III](#), [VL.0836 Ophthalmology](#), [VL.0586 Neurology](#), [VL.1282 Obstetrics and gynaecology I](#).

Prerequisite subjects for [VL.1269 practical training in production animal medicine](#) include [VL.1281 Animal infectious diseases II](#), [VL.1283 Obstetrics and gynaecology II](#), [VL.1163 Ruminant clinical medicine](#), [VL.1289 Surgery III](#), [VL.1165 Swine clinical medicine](#), [VL.1340 Veterinary clinical skills](#).

For [VL.1370 Practical training in equine medicine](#), the prerequisites are [VL.1281 Animal infectious diseases II](#), [VL.0831 Equine clinical medicine](#), [VL.1283 Obstetrics and gynaecology II](#), [VL.1289 Surgery III](#), [VL.1340 Veterinary clinical skills](#).

Core clinical rotations and emergency services (both intra-mural VTH and ambulatory clinics) and the direct involvement of undergraduate students in it

In Semesters 7 and 8, students engage in small animal emergency medicine rotations at the Small Animal Clinic as part of the subject [VL.0426 Practical training in small animal emergency medicine](#). The clinical rotations reinforce the concepts taught in [VL.1349 Emergency medicine and critical care](#). Supervised by veterinarians and veterinary assistants, the rotation offers students the opportunity to attend and examine both emergency and inpatient cases, select appropriate diagnostic methods, perform treatment, and provide patient care and monitoring. Each student completes five evening shifts (16:00–00:00) and one weekend shift (08:00–20:00), with a maximum of two students per shift, ensuring close supervision and active participation.

In Semester 10, students rotate through the Small Animal, the Equine, and the Production Animal Clinics. The rotation durations are detailed in Table 3.1.3. All rotations begin with orientation in biosecurity.

Small Animal Clinic: [VL.0737 Practical training in small animal medicine](#) (10 ECTS) and [VL.1371 Practical training in small animal medicine](#) (since 2025/26 academic year, 8 ECTS). During clinical training, students complete 33 clinical shifts, each lasting 8 hours, rotating between various clinical specialists. The training emphasises hands-on experience in examination, diagnostics, treatment, and client communication, all under the direct supervision of clinical staff. From Monday to Friday, three daily rounds are held to discuss patient conditions, treatment plans, and progress, with active student participation. Throughout the day, students collaborate with supervising veterinarians to discuss cases and assist in diagnostic procedures. Journal clubs and diagnostic imaging meetings are also open to students, offering opportunities for discussions and the development of clinical guideline.

Production Animal Clinic: During [VL.1269 Practical training in production animal medicine](#) (6 ECTS), the rotation primarily involves ambulatory farm visits, focusing on dairy and beef cattle, with occasional exposure to small ruminants, camelids, and poultry. Students are integrated into the daily clinical workflow and participate in all stages of veterinary care, including clinical examinations, procedures, surgeries, and treatments and herd health management, always under supervision. Group size varies depending on the number of patients and the type of cases, typically ranging from 2 to 4 students, although it may occasionally range from 1 to 7 students per group.

The **Equine Clinic**. [VL.1270 Practical training in equine medicine](#) (4 ECTS), since 2025/26 [VL.1370 Practical training in equine medicine](#) (6 ECTS) provides students with a comprehensive, hands-on learning experience through a structured clinical rotation in groups of three to four. Students are assigned to either internal medicine or orthopaedics/surgery, typically at a supervision ratio of one to two students per veterinarian. Students are involved in taking patient histories, conducting clinical examinations, and assisting with diagnostic and therapeutic procedures. They participate in morning rounds, interpret diagnostic results, and contribute to treatment planning. A weekly journal club is held, where clinical cases are reviewed alongside current veterinary literature, fostering critical thinking and evidence-based practice. Training is delivered in small groups of 3–4 students, typically with a supervision ratio of one to two students per veterinarian.

Across all clinics students have access to veterinary textbooks and online research articles to support their learning and case management.

Teaching in slaughterhouses and in premises for the production, processing, distribution/sale or consumption of food of animal origin

The mandatory module *Food Hygiene and Veterinary Public Health* (33 ECTS) covers environmental and food toxicology, and basics of veterinary public health and food hygiene. The bulk of the subjects, including [VL.1168 Food production hygiene](#), [VL.1162 Technology, safety and quality of meat products](#) and

[VL.1025 Quality and safety of milk and dairy products](#), are taught in Semester 9. For the training at the University, students are divided into groups of 12–14.

Laboratory practical training for milk and dairy products quality and safety occurs at the Food Hygiene and Safety Unit of the Chair of Veterinary Biomedicine and Food Hygiene and the Chair of Food Science and Technology. This training introduces key dairy production technologies and quality assessment methods, using advanced tools like milk analysers, homogenizers, separators, and pasteurizers.

Before slaughterhouse training ([VL.0833](#)), students undergo practical meat inspection training under subject [VL.0434 Meat inspection](#), learning animal stunning techniques and post-mortem inspections. Training in meat products technology, safety, and quality is conducted in the Meat Technology Laboratory, where students become familiar with industry-standard equipment and its operating principles. Under subject [VL.1168 Food production hygiene](#) the laboratory practical training in food hygiene and -safety is given with main emphasis to food and water microbiological safety analyses.

In Semester 10, core rotations include one week of meat inspection at a slaughterhouse. Students must maintain a logbook, obtain supervisor confirmations, and present a case study at the University. Students have two supervisors: one at the University and one at the slaughterhouse. The training at the slaughterhouse is supervised by veterinary officials. On the first day, students receive safety instructions and a tour of the facilities. They learn ante- and post-mortem inspection, examining carcasses and internal organs for pathological findings, and understanding related documentation and decision-making for meat fitness. During the second week, students collect material for a case study, gather relevant information and pictures, and prepare a report with at least ten scientific articles referred. They present their findings in seminars, receiving feedback and engaging in discussions. Assessment is based on supervisor feedback, case study reports, and continuous evaluation during training. Each student is guided by several veterinarians and can choose their practice times. Typically, two students (one from the Estonian group and one from the English group) attend training simultaneously, though exceptions allow for individual or group attendance.

Selection procedures of the Electives by the students and the degree of freedom in their choice (e.g. what happens when too many students select one specific track)

The Veterinary Medicine curriculum includes speciality elective subjects module. To complete the curriculum, students are required to earn at least 11 ECTS credits from elective or optional courses. Students have the freedom to choose these courses from either specialty elective subjects or from the university's offered optional courses (including those from other Estonian or foreign universities). The curriculum provides 15 speciality elective subjects, scheduled to help students gradually develop their knowledge. These electives have prerequisites that must be passed. To have optional courses from other universities recognised, students must submit a visiting student application form and obtain approval from the Director of Academic Affairs. There is no upper limit on the number of elective credits students can earn. From the academic year 2025/2026, two elective practical trainings were added to the curriculum: [VL.0057 Practical training in equine emergency care and night shifts](#) (2 ECTS) and [VL.1374 Practical training in small animals emergency care and night shifts](#) (3 ECTS). In addition, it is possible to take the optional subject [VL.1362 Practical training in zoo medicine](#) and, until the academic year 2025/26, also [VL.0057 Practical training in equine emergency care and night shifts](#), which will become an elective subject from the 2025/26 academic year onwards.

In their final academic year, students can choose between four elective submodules of the speciality module (tracks): *Production Animal Medicine*, *Equine Medicine*, *Small Animal Medicine*, and *Food Safety*, by filling out an online form. No numerical limits have been set for the tracks. The CDC has considered setting limits but has seen no need as long as facilities can accommodate the students. The *Small Animal track* consistently attracts the highest number of students.

Speciality elective and optional subjects, along with the tracking system in the final year, and the [VL.1355 Final thesis in veterinary medicine](#) (22 ECTS), provide students with the opportunity to tailor their education to their interests and career goals, enhancing their learning experience and better preparing them for their future careers.

Procedures used to ascertain the achievement of each core practical/clinical activity (pre-clinical, clinical, ambulatory clinics, EPT) by all students

As outlined in the [Regulation of studies](#), a syllabus is prepared for each subject. The objectives of the subject established by the curriculum are the basis for preparing the syllabus. The syllabus includes the following information: subject load and schedule of contact learning (including e-learning); the quota of participants, if necessary; the list of topics to be covered, topics for independent work; list of required and recommended study material/literature, and assessment requirements of the achieved learning outcomes (e.g. an oral or written examination or pass/fail evaluations (prelims), test, summary essay, report, course paper, course project etc.), the names of the teaching staff. The syllabus includes the requirements that need to be met before the final assessment of the learning outcomes (prerequisite subjects, participation in seminars, written papers etc.); the principles of grading (incl. the weight of continuous assessment) and the possibilities for retake examinations. The course syllabus is prepared for each semester and uploaded to the SIS by the teaching staff member in charge of the subject. It is obligatory for the teaching staff member to follow the syllabus. The teaching staff member introduces the syllabus to the students at the opening lecture.

For example, in the [VL.0822 Practical training on livestock farm](#), students are assessed based on a record-book of their activities, a detailed 10–15-page report about the farm and its operations, and a short presentation summarising their experiences. For [VL.0821 Artificial insemination and veterinary nurse training](#), students must complete the required training hours and submit a practice report detailing the procedures they performed, signed by the local supervisor and evaluated by the responsible lecturer. In [VL.0426 Practical training in small animal emergency medicine](#), students must attend all practical training shifts, complete a learning diary, logbook, or similar, and submit it in Moodle.

[VL.1371 Practical training in small animal medicine](#). During this training, students document their activities in a Practical Training Diary and Drug Table, select a representative case from each shift, and obtain a signature from the supervising veterinarian at the end of each shift.

In [VL.1269 Practical training in production animal medicine](#), students fill weekly logbook and prepare an academic case report based on a clinical case encountered during practice. The logbooks and medication records are continuously reviewed by veterinarians during farm visits, and a university-appointed tutor oversees the process. [VL.1270 Practical training in equine medicine](#) involves maintaining weekly logbooks, with clinical activities supported by feedback from supervising clinicians.

During [VL.0178 Clinical training in small animal medicine](#), students complete Moodle logbooks, receive feedback from University Clinic supervisors, and are evaluated based on logbook submission and positive assessments from both their practical training supervisor and University tutor. These procedures collectively ensure consistent monitoring, comprehensive assessment, and strong support throughout students' clinical education. During [VL.0468 Clinical training in production animal medicine](#) each student will be assigned a tutor at the University. The academic discussion between the student and the tutor will take place virtually during the final week of the practical training or in the week following its completion. The student may proceed to the academic discussion once the logbooks have been submitted on time, the practical training supervisor's assessment at the practice location is positive, and the University tutor's evaluation is also favourable.

In [VL.0697 Clinical training in equine medicine](#) the lecturer responsible for the training assigns a clinical practice supervisor (tutor) to each student participating in the training. During the final week of the training or up to one week after its completion, an academic discussion takes place between the supervisor and the student to review progress and discuss any challenges. The student can participate in the academic discussion if the signed logbook has been submitted to the university-appointed supervisor by the given deadline, the evaluation from the supervisor at the practice location as well from the university-appointed supervisor is positive.

It is also possible to complete the practical training abroad within the framework of the ERASMUS programme. In that case, the requirements of both the home and host institutions apply.

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 a teaching 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 lifelong learning.

Description of how the VEE ensures that the study programmes meet the objectives

The VM curriculum is designed to provide students with the knowledge and skills needed for D1C through evidence-based medicine, building on advances in veterinary medicine. The curriculum and each subject have LOs, which are regularly updated and aligned through internal evaluation. The structured, course-based system ensures that all components of the curriculum support the achievement of its objectives and intended LOs.

To ensure curricula meet their objectives, the University has implemented a [quality management system](#). The [Statutes of the Curriculum](#) ensure that curricula conform to the University's goals, meet the expectations of target groups, undergo regular quality assessments, incorporate trends and research in veterinary medicine, and have the necessary academic and material resources. This system guarantees compliance with VM curriculum requirements and supports continuous development.

Internal evaluation of the curriculum, conducted every three years, play a key role in assessing and improving its quality. The Head of Curriculum oversees and advances the curriculum, working closely with the CDC to ensure its timeliness and relevance. The Chair is responsible for specific subjects within the curriculum, ensuring the provision of appropriate educational and research infrastructure, qualified teaching staff, and the necessary materials within their area of responsibility.

Course organisation is managed by the responsible lecturer, while the Head of Curriculum monitors quality based on student feedback from the SIS, employer alumni and feedback.

Description of how the VEE promotes a teaching environment conducive to learning

IVMAS promotes a learning environment conducive to academic development and student engagement by ensuring the quality and qualifications of its academic staff. The University and IVMAS organise instructional days and seminars for lecturers. According to [the Estonian Higher Education Act](#) and [Job descriptions of teaching and research staff members](#), teaching and research staff members are required to hold a doctoral degree, ensuring a strong research-based approach to their teaching. Over 85% of the academic staff members of IVMAS are veterinarians. PhD students who complete a pedagogical course may also participate in teaching under supervision.

Veterinarians primarily engage in clinical work while also supervising students. The University provides various pedagogical courses for teaching staff members, including supervision. The junior researcher position is designed for doctoral students, and approximately 50% of veterinary medicine PhD candidates participate in student instruction.

The DAA monitors the quality of education annually and provides an overview during annual seminars, where trends and developments in higher education are discussed. Meetings on feedback-related topics are also held with IVMAS Broad. These measures contribute to a supportive and engaging learning environment, where students benefit from evidence-based instruction, close clinical supervision, and motivated teaching staff who are actively involved in both education and professional practice.

Description of how the VEE encourages and prepares students for self-learning and lifelong learning.

One ECTS credit includes 50% independent work, which may involve preparing presentations, literature reviews, case reports, written essays, data analysis, or participation in e-learning activities via Moodle. Moodle is widely used for online self-learning and self-assessment, with course materials, including lecture slides and videos, readily accessible. To ensure students gain experience in independent research, all graduates are required to complete a FT. IVMAS is committed to enhancing the teaching skills of its academic staff members through training sessions, as part of a continuous development process. This is supported by training sessions and seminars exploring various teaching approaches. Co-vision meetings for academic staff members have become a growing trend, enabling them to learn from one another and share experiences.

Currently, students' personal learning progress is assessed through self-tests in Moodle, self-reflection, self-assessment, personal feedback, and practical verification of skills. Students are also prompted to think

critically, express their opinions, and reflect on their learning process to identify areas for improvement. This takes place in small groups in a seminar format, which supports their learning progress.

The University provides resources and tools that encourage self-learning, such as access to online databases, and libraries. Participation in research projects and the preparation of a FT play a significant role in connecting with the scientific community and motivating students to pursue PhD studies. Students are encouraged by academic staff to engage in research projects. Extracurricular activities contribute to a sense of community and foster motivation to learn, as well as the development of independent learning and critical thinking skills.

Students are involved in veterinary students' associations ([International Veterinary Students' Association \(IVSA\)](#)), [Estonian Veterinary Students' Association \(EVÜS\)](#), [Association of Students Interested in Equine Medicine Hyraco](#), [Finnish Veterinary Students' Association Suolet](#)) that organise events, workshops, seminars, surgery, and journal clubs, and participate ERASMUS+ student exchanges. Additionally, students are encouraged to take courses from other universities and get them recognised through the RPL procedure.

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.**

The VM curriculum is regularly reviewed, managed, and updated to ensure it remains relevant, adequate, and effectively achieved. The last changes in the LOs were made in 2023. New LOs outlined in the Standard of Higher Education were adopted in 2024 and are set to be introduced by 2028, indicating upcoming changes that aim to integrate soft skills more intensive into the learning outcomes.

Educational goals and strategies are set according to EU Directives 2005/36 and 2013/55 as well as national requirements. All graduates acquire the DIC and are awarded the Degree of Veterinary Medicine (DVM), a master's level qualification that provides eligibility for PhD curricula. This degree corresponds to Level 7 of both the Estonian and European Qualifications Frameworks (EQF).

As the LOs of subjects, modules, curriculum, are aligned to DIC, therefore passing all compulsory courses demonstrates that the student has acquired all necessary knowledge and skills. Feedback from graduating students in SIS, the University surveys among alumni, and the involvement of employer representatives from the Estonian Veterinary Chamber all contribute to this alignment.

The creation of new subjects or the replacement of existing ones requires approval from the CDC. Changes to the curriculum, such as modifying the title and workload of a subject, replacing, closing, or adding a subject, must be approved by the Senate Committee of Academic Affairs based on a curriculum modification request submitted by the Director of Academic Affairs of IVMAS.

The curriculum LOs are developed, defined, evaluated, decided upon and approved of by the Director of Academic Affairs, the Head of Curriculum, the IVMAS Council, the DAA and the Senate Committee on Academic Affairs. Substantial changes to the curriculum's LOs also require approval from the Senate Committee on Academic Affairs and must be submitted to the Estonian Education Information System.

The LOs are available in the SIS. In the course [VL.1268 Introduction to veterinary studies](#) (2 ECTS), the first-year students are introduced to the LOs.

The LOs are assessed through regular feedback from students and academic staff, course evaluations, and internal evaluation. Revisions are made based on this feedback and reviewed by the CDC to ensure they meet required standards.

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 reviews and periodic in-depth reviews of the curriculum at least every seven years by involving staff, students and stakeholders; these reviews must lead to continuous improvement of the curriculum. 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.

Adequate financial and non-financial resources, including infrastructure and personnel, are secured by the University to support the operation and long-term viability of the curriculum.

The curriculum is managed by IVMAS, overseen by the Director of Academic Affairs and the Director of IVMAS, with the Head of Curriculum responsible for development and ensuring the curriculum's effective functioning and quality. The CDC, established by the Director of Academic Affairs, ensures alignment with scientific advancements and stakeholder feedback.

The CDC comprises representatives of the Chairs, students, and stakeholders. The CDC oversees quality assurance, gathering and evaluating feedback from stakeholders, peer reviewers, and external assessors, and making necessary changes. The CDC also advises on the design, delivery, and assessment methods of the curriculum. At the University level, proposals for curriculum changes (see Standard 3.3.) are reviewed by the Senate Committee of Academic Affairs and approved by the Senate if needed. The CDC performs periodic reviews and provides input for internal evaluation and various external assessments (e.g. institutional and research evaluations of the University).

The purpose of [internal curriculum evaluation](#) is to identify areas in need of improvement or development to better allocate resources and activities aimed at curriculum enhancement and sustainability. It is a two-stage process, involving both curriculum-level and subject-level assessments. Subject evaluation is carried out by the Head of Curriculum and their team, based on analyses and evaluation results provided by lecturers.

Proposals for curriculum changes are reviewed by the University's Committee of Academic Affairs. Significant changes, applicable to new entrants, must be approved by the Senate or Committee of Academic Affairs at least eight months before implementation and entered into the SIS by 1 February.

The CDC monitors and analyses subject content and LOs, focusing on integration between subjects, avoiding overlaps, and addressing teaching quality issues.

Veterinary medicine curricula passed the internal evaluation in 2023–2024. The University is currently developing updated procedures and criteria for the next evaluation phase starting in 2026.

Standard 3.5: Elective Practical Training (EPT) includes compulsory training activities that each student must achieve before graduation to complement and strengthen their core theoretical and practical academic education, inter alia by enhancing their experience, professional knowledge and soft skills. Like all elective activities, its contents may vary from one undergraduate student to another.

EPT is organised either extramurally with the student being under the direct supervision of a qualified person (e.g. a veterinary practitioner) or intramurally, with the student being under the supervision of a teaching staff or a qualified person.

EPT itself cannot replace the Core Clinical Training (CCT) under the close supervision of teaching staff (e.g. ambulatory clinics, herd health management, practical training in VPH (including Food Safety and Quality (FSQ))). A comparison between CCT and EPT is provided in Annex 6, Standard 3.5.

Description of the organisation of the EPT and how it complements (but not replaces) the Core Clinical Training (CCT)

During Semester 5, students undertake practical training on a livestock farm, [VL.0822 Practical training on the livestock farm](#) (3 ECTS), to gain insight into the daily realities of animal husbandry. This training

introduces them to the rules, practices, strategies, and trends in animal production, and highlights the veterinarian's role within that context.

At the Semester 8, students can choose between practical training in artificial insemination or veterinary nurse training [VL.0821 Artificial insemination and veterinary nurse training](#) (3 ECTS), allowing them to tailor their experience to their interests and career goals, whether in small animal or production animal field.

In the sixth year, students can choose between four submodules of the speciality module (tracks) and according to the track choice they will take: [VL.0468 Clinical training in production animal medicine](#) (15 ECTS); [VL.0697 Clinical training in equine medicine](#) (15 ECTS); or [VL.0178 Clinical training in small animal medicine](#) (15 ECTS). These tracks are structured to offer in-depth practical training in the chosen area.

The lecturer responsible for the practical training coordinates the aspects related to practical placements. Students may choose from the placements offered by the University or propose their own subject to approval by the University supervisor. The supervisor assures that the selected organisation qualifies as a suitable training site for achieving the required competencies. The decision to approve a placement is based on several key criteria. These include the number and diversity of animals available at the site, the range and quality of veterinary activities offered, the qualifications and experience of the staff, and the ability of the host organisation to provide meaningful student involvement. Additionally, feedback from previous students is taken into account to assess the site's educational value. All placements must align with the LOs defined in the curriculum and provide adequate support for student learning.

Students formalise their placements through a tripartite agreement between the student, the University, and the host institution, maintain a logbook, and submit reports or academic case summaries as required. All students receive safety training, including workplace safety and biosecurity instructions.

The University maintains strong links with various companies and organisations, many of which actively express interest in hosting students. The requirements for specific training, templates of the tripartite agreement, safety instructions, related regulations, and logbook templates are available in Moodle and/or SIS.

Table 3.5.1. Curriculum days of Elective Practical Training (EPT) for each student

Fields of Practice	Minimum duration (weeks)	Year of programme
Production animals (pre-clinical)	2	3
Companion animals (pre-clinical)	NA	NA
Production animals (clinical)	2*; 10**	4*; 6**
Companion animals (clinical)	2*; 10**	4*; 6**
VPH (including FSQ)	NA	NA
Others (Equine)	10**	6**

* [VL.0821 Artificial insemination and veterinary nurse training](#). Students can choose whether to complete an artificial insemination training or a companion animal nurse training.

** Elective submodule of the speciality module in the sixth year.

Standard 3.6: The EPT providers must meet the relevant national Veterinary Practice Standards, have an agreement with the VEE and the student (stating 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 teaching staff responsible for the overall supervision of the EPT, including liaison with EPT providers.

Description of how the EPT providers are linked to the VEE, assess the students and provide feedback to the VEE

In Estonia, all practicing veterinarians are required to hold a [professional activity licence](#), which is monitored by the national veterinary authority Agricultural and Food Board. All animal production units and slaughterhouses must comply with EU regulations and are regularly inspected by the same authority.

These requirements ensure that all elective practical training (EPT) providers are formally recognised and operating under veterinary legislation. Before any EPT begins, a tripartite agreement is signed by the Director of Academic Affairs, the student, and the representative of the host institution. The agreement outlines responsibilities, learning objectives, and supervision arrangements. Each practice site is informed of the designated contact person at the University, whom they can contact in case of questions or problems during the training period. Students may select their EPT location based on personal interests and career plans. The site must be approved by the University supervisor, who evaluates its suitability based on criteria such as species exposure, case load, staff qualifications, and prior student feedback. To successfully complete the EPT, students must fulfil all training requirements, receive a positive evaluation from both the host and the University supervisor, and submit feedback about the training site through a standardised feedback form. Overall supervision is ensured through active coordination between the designated University supervisor and the on-site EPT provider. Students may complete part of their EPT abroad, provided the selected institution meets the same quality standards as national placements. The University supervisor must approve the international placement in advance, based on the same criteria used for EPT providers in Estonia. The student signs the same tripartite [agreement](#), and the host institution agrees to supervise and evaluate the student using the University's standard evaluation forms. Students returning from international EPT must submit the same reports and feedback as those completing their training in Estonia.

List of IVMAS teaching staff members responsible for the supervision of the EPT activities.

Ragnar Leming	Practical training on livestock farm
Ants Kavak	Artificial insemination and veterinary nurse training
Luis Felipe Correa Letelier	Clinical training in equine medicine
Piret Kalmus	Clinical training in production animal medicine
Kristel Peetsalu	Clinical training in small animal medicine

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.

Description of the implications of students in the preparation, recording and assessment of their EPT

Students are involved in the preparation, documentation, and assessment of their EPT, ensuring they are engaged in their study and develop key professional skills such as responsibility, organisation, and self-assessment. Before starting, students are introduced to the objective, content, LOs, and assessment of the practical training. A formal tripartite agreement is signed between the student, the host institution, and the University, outlining the responsibilities and expectations of all parties. The organisation of EPT is explained to students by the University lecturer responsible for the training. During the EPT, students maintain a logbook or write case reports. At the end of the EPT, the host institution supervisor provides formal feedback, which is an essential part of the assessment process, offering insights into the student's performance, development and areas for improvement. During the EPT, students receive support from the IVMAS a supervisor, who also monitors the student's progress through logbooks, communication, and submitted reports and gives feedback. The supervisor evaluates the student's performance based on the quality and completeness of the documentation, the level of clinical or practical engagement, and the final report or case summary. If needed, direct communication with the host institution is used to clarify any issues or confirm outcomes. At the end of the EPT, the student receives a formal evaluation from the host institution supervisor. This feedback is an integral part of the assessment process, as it provides insights into the student's strengths, weaknesses, and areas for further development. This feedback includes aspects such as the quality of supervision, access to relevant cases or procedures, staff engagement, and overall educational value. The information is used internally by IVMAS to monitor host institutions quality and make informed decisions about future use or improvement needs.

Description of the complaint process in place concerning EPT

Complaints related to the EPT on site (supervisor at the host institution, incompatibility of characters, tasks, etc.) are directly addressed to the University supervisor responsible for the EPT. If the problem is not

solved, the students may submit a written complaint to the Director of Academic Affairs. Complaints about EPT related to studies are handled using the same procedures as for other courses described in [Regulation of studies](#).

In addition, students give anonymous feedback in SIS. In the case of personalised complaints, the University ensures anonymity if necessary and possible. The CDC and the DAA review student feedback on EPT. The IVMAS supervisor contacts the host institution if any changes are required based on the feedback results.

Comments on Area 3

The structure of the veterinary medicine curriculum, which is based on a sequence of prerequisite subjects has been effective and has long served the needs of both the veterinary profession and society. As the curriculum is now in need of updating, a comprehensive revision of the curriculum will be undertaken during the development of the next period's DP for IVMAS. As the curriculum is divided into individual subjects, it is important to consider how the structure might be revised to more effectively integrate these subjects in line with the intended LOs. Partial restructuring of the curriculum to increase flexibility, would support better integration of clinical training and enable more personalized learning paths.

Suggestions for improvement in Area 3

Strengthening the development and support of self-directed learning is essential, including the promotion of reflection, effective learning strategies, and time management skills. The professional knowledge component must be continuously enhanced. At the same time, students' learning abilities, interdisciplinary collaboration, and cooperation among academic staff must be further developed to enhance the overall impact on the learning process.

In autumn 2025, the CDC continue analysis of the current curriculum's strengths and areas for improvement as part of the strategic development in line with the evolving needs of society

AREA 4. FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT

Standard 4.1: All aspects of the physical facilities must provide an environment conducive to learning, including internet access at all relevant sites where theoretical, practical and clinical education takes place. The 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 including students with a disability, and EU animal welfare and care standards.

Location and organisation of the facilities used for the veterinary curriculum

All veterinary study facilities, with the exception of the experimental dairy farm in Märja, are located on the University campus on F. R. Kreutzwaldi Str. in Tartu. All buildings are within walking distance of one another. The main building of IVMAS, Zoomeedikum (located at 62 F. R. Kreutzwaldi Str.), spans 10,593 m² and accommodates the Animal Clinic and the pharmacy.

Originally built in 1992 and expanded in 2005, the building has undergone partial renovations to meet current biosecurity standards. In 2023, a spatial audit was conducted to inform the development of a new clinical building, and an architectural competition followed by planning is currently underway. At present, all clinics and the pharmacy are located on the ground floor of Zoomeedikum, ensuring accessibility for individuals with reduced mobility. Designated parking spaces are available near all buildings, and an elevator in Zoomeedikum provides access to laboratories and classrooms.

The IVMAS units involved in the VM curriculum are located across the campus as follows.

The Food Hygiene and Safety Unit and the Chair of Food Science and Technology are located at 56/3 and 56/5 F. R. Kreutzwaldi Str. The Chair of Animal Breeding and Biotechnology, the Chair of Animal Nutrition, the Chair of Aquaculture, the Laboratory of Genetics, the Milk Quality Research Laboratory, and the Nutrition and Metabolism Research Laboratory are situated at 46 F. R. Kreutzwaldi Str. Nearby amenities include cafés located in the Forestry Building (300 m) and the Main Building (700 m). Student dormitories – Torn and Betton – are situated on the [Rohemu campus](#) at 52 F. R. Kreutzwaldi Str. and 7 Tuglase Str., respectively.

General studies are conducted in lecture rooms across several campus buildings, including Zoomeedikum, the Main Building, the Forestry Building, and the Technology Building.

The extension of Zoomeedikum is part of the [University DP](#) (2016–2025). Although various challenges have delayed the architectural competition, the city government has approved the extension plan. Construction will take place several in phases, starting with the Clinical Education Centre. The Territorial-Spatial DP has been revised, and funding for the project has been allocated in the University's budget. The first phase of construction will focus on new Small Animal Clinical facilities, followed by the development of modern teaching and research spaces.

The University's long-term vision includes a comprehensive clinical block that incorporates energy-efficient and environmentally sustainable design. Additional infrastructure will include car and covered bicycle parking, as well as electric vehicle charging stations (see Appendix 3: Map of the University campus).

The University property in Märja, located 5 km from Tartu, is home to an experimental dairy farm operated by the University's subsidiary, Eerika Farm OÜ. Established in collaboration with the [Estonian Animal Breeding Association](#), the farm supports educational and research activities. It encompasses around 200 hectares of grassland and serves as a practical training and research base for veterinary and agricultural students. The facility underwent a complete renovation, and new farming equipment, including precision farming tools, was installed during 2023–2024.

Strategy and programme for maintaining and upgrading, or acquiring facilities and equipment

The University owns and maintains its campus buildings, with infrastructure development guided by the Territorial-Spatial DP, which is reviewed and updated annually during the capital budget planning process. Capital budget resources are allocated to enhance educational and research infrastructure.

The Senate submits the budget to the University Council for approval. The capital budget is primarily funded through the University's own revenues, supplemented by public support measures for facilities and equipment from the [Agricultural Registers and Information Board](#) and the [Ministry of Regional Affairs and Agriculture](#). However, opportunities for national or EU-level investment funding for both the University

and IVMAS remain limited. The University Council authorises applying for a bank loan secured by real estate for capital investment purposes.

The IVMAS infrastructure complies with all operational, legislative, and safety standards. Building maintenance and minor upgrades are performed based on identified needs and scheduled preventive inspections. Equipment procurement is managed independently by Institute units. Regular mandatory inspections are conducted for all relevant equipment, including lifting devices, compressors, X-ray machines, MRI and CT scanners, hoists, and fire extinguishers, ensuring compliance with required inspection intervals. Larger investments, including major equipment purchases, are prioritised, scheduled over multiple years, and discussed by the IVMAS Board.

Description of how the VEE ensures that all physical facilities comply with all relevant legislation

IVMAS adheres to national legislation regarding [health](#), [occupational safety](#), biosecurity, [radiation safety](#) accessibility, [animal welfare](#), and care standards, as well as EAEVE recommendations. Within each unit, designated fire protection, health first aid, safety, and biosecurity contacts report to specialists at the University or IVMAS level.

The University is guided by the [Occupational Health and Safety Act](#). Rector's Directive [Procedure for occupational health and safety](#) regulates the compliance of the working environment with all relevant legislation. In addition, there are [General safety instructions for working in research and teaching laboratories](#), and safety instructions for different devices and machines in Intranet.

Each chair has a working environment risk analysis in [the self-service environment of the Labour Inspectorate](#), which is accessible to working environment representatives.

The University has a Chief Specialist of Working Environment and there are working environment representatives and a Working Environment Council, who follow the University's [occupational](#) health and safety rules. A new staff member familiarises her/himself with the working environment and safety instructions in the online environment, completes tests and then confirms that she/he has familiarised her/himself with the instructions. Occupational safety instructions, which include, for example, equipment and machines, are given on-site in the unit. In the unit, a new staff member is instructed by a working environment representative or a designated person. Occupational safety guidance will henceforth take place in the online working environment platform VITS which allows to manage health and safety processes in one digital space.

In the event of a problem in the working environment, the working environment representative will inform the direct organiser of the work or the Head of the Chair or the Director, the Chief Specialist of the Working Environment, and staff members immediately in accordance with the [Occupational Health and Safety Procedures](#). The procedure for reporting accidents is on the Intranet (see the [form](#)).

In animal clinics the radiation expert checks compliance with radiation safety, guided by the [Radiation Act](#), regulations and instructions. The [Environmental Board of Estonia](#) has established the duties of the [radiation expert](#) and checks with the Labour Inspectorate compliance with radiation safety at IVMAS. The radiation expert of IVMAS works according to his job description. All new staff members with radiation tasks receive radiation safety instructions.

First aid kits are available on all sites and there are AED resuscitation devices available in all buildings. Named staff have passed the obligatory training to give first aid in case of accidents.

Regular audits and inspections are conducted by authorities with appointed persons to ensure ongoing compliance with all such relevant legislative acts as [Veterinary Act](#) and [Animal Protection Act](#). Annex of [Procedure for occupational health and safety](#) describes the [procedure for action in the event of occupational accident](#) at the University.

Standard 4.2: Lecture theatres, teaching laboratories, tutorial rooms, clinical facilities and other teaching spaces must be adequate in number and size, equipped for instructional purposes and 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 teaching and support staff to support their teaching and research efforts.

The University lecture halls are equipped with a computer, projector, screen, whiteboard, speakers, video camera for remote connections, and both cable and Wi-Fi internet connections. These facilities support

hybrid teaching, accommodating both lectures and seminars. Wi-Fi is also available in the halls and corridors outside the lecture halls. Students and staff have access to free wireless internet across the entire campus and can use iCloud printing services. Laboratories are clearly marked with biosecurity and hygiene regulation signs, as well as site-specific hygiene and safety operating instructions.

Sufficient clinical facilities are available and well equipped. According to the [University DP](#) and the Spatial DP, IVMAS envisions extending its current facilities. This includes integrating the Chair of Animal Nutrition and the Chair of Animal Breeding and Biotechnology into the campus, as part of ongoing improvements to the learning and research environment. Ventilation and routine improvements (such as sanitary repairs and minor renovations) are carried out on a regular basis.

University lecture halls are equipped with audio-visual equipment and Wifi. In campus buildings there are 7 large lecture rooms: Zoomeedikum (1 room, 100 seats), Main Building (1 room, 90 seats), Forestry Building (3 rooms, 90, 80 and 80 seats), Technology Building (2 rooms, 247 and 80 seats).

The number of seminar and group work rooms, equipped with audio-visual equipment and Wifi: Zoomeedikum 11 (331 seats), Main Building 5 (170 seats), Forestry Building 27 (955 seats), Technology Building 4 (132 seats). Veterinary teaching laboratories in Zoomeedikum: 15.

Preclinical practical work is conducted in dedicated teaching laboratories. At Zoomeedikum, these include specialised labs for chemistry, biochemistry, histology, anatomy, physiology and microbiology. Additionally, a classroom equipped with microscopes supports instruction in parasitology and microbiology.

Zoomeedikum features a necropsy hall equipped with student changing rooms and shower facilities. Within the hall, there are three height-adjustable tables for small animals and one larger mobile table for larger specimens. The facility is outfitted with handwashing and disinfection stations, eye wash units, first aid kits, and fire extinguishers to ensure safety and hygiene. Additional rooms are designated for storing protective clothing, disinfection supplies, and instruments. A classroom is available for discussions related to necropsy findings and special preparations. Cadavers and related materials are stored in a refrigerated room.

IVMAS has a dedicated Clinical Skills Laboratory located on the ground floor of Zoomeedikum. The room spans approximately 40 m² and accommodates up to 10 students per session. Students participate in scheduled workshops under the supervision of a veterinary nurse. The lab is equipped with a range of species-specific training models and simulators designed to support the development of essential clinical skills. Key equipment includes a full-size horse model and horse vein simulators; bovine training aids such as udders, a tail model, and a dystocia simulator; various stuffed dog and cat models for practicing injections, intravenous catheter placement, and fluid therapy; canine-specific tools including intubation and ophthalmology heads, limb bandaging models, a spay simulator, and a jugular venipuncture model; feline limbs for catheter placement and blood glucose measurement. Additional training aids are silicone injection pads, fine needle aspiration pads, a canine CPR manikin, and a thoracocentesis trainer. This facility provides a controlled, low-risk environment where students can safely practice clinical techniques, serving as a vital bridge between theoretical learning and hands-on experience with live animals.

Currently, Zoomeedikum lacks dedicated self-study rooms. However, students make use of alternative spaces such as the galleries (174.2 m²), seating areas, the Anatomy Museum (135.4 m²), and rooms provided by the Veterinary Students' Association (24.5 m², 18.2 m², and 15.0 m²). Vacant classrooms are also available for use when not in session. In the Main Building, students have access to a library with 54 seats, two individual study rooms, and two small group study rooms. Students can book study rooms in the library, other university buildings.

In 2025, a student area in Zoomeedikum was renovated and furnished to provide spaces for studying, resting, and eating. Lockers for daily use are also available. Outdoor rest areas are also located around Zoomeedikum.

There are two cafés on campus – one in the Main Building (700 m away) and another in the Forestry Building (300 m away). Additionally, the public restaurant Muru is located approximately 300 m from Zoomeedikum. Within Zoomeedikum, three vending machines offer snacks, drinks, and sandwiches. All student association rooms are equipped with electric kettles, refrigerators, coffee makers, and microwaves for meal preparation.

Lockers are provided in areas where changing clothes is required, such as at the entrances to the chemistry labs, anatomy wet lab, and microbiology lab. The clinics are equipped with changing rooms that include

lockers and shower facilities for both students and staff. Additional changing rooms are available in the necropsy unit. University buildings are equipped with restrooms and shower facilities. The staff and students' rooms of the Equine Clinic and the Production Animal Clinic are currently being renovated.

For students on night shifts in the clinics, appropriate sanitary and rest facilities are provided, including beds and kitchen amenities. Dormitories are located approximately 800 m from Zoomeedikum. A small recreational area adjacent to the building is available for both students and staff. The [University Sports Club](#) primarily serves as a venue for both instructional and recreational physical education. Just 500 metres from Zoomeedikum is a leisure park with a riverside beach and an arboretum.

University buildings feature standard offices, typically designed to accommodate two workstations. At IVMAS, PhD students and junior staff members usually share offices with three to four occupants. As part of the renovation, the Equine Clinic will gain access to additional office space. The Director, the Director of Academic Affairs, and the Heads of Chairs have individual offices. Each workstation is equipped with a spacious desk, an ergonomic chair, and access to iCloud printing services. A shared coffee room is also available for staff use.

IVMAS research laboratories are distributed across various chairs. While IVMAS does not maintain facilities for handling high-level or particularly hazardous pathogens, it collaborates with the [National Centre for Laboratory Research and Risk Assessment](#) for such specialised work.

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**
- **take into account environmental sustainability**
- **be designed to enhance learning.**

Premises for housing: -) healthy animals

There are currently no healthy animals permanently housed in the Small Animal Clinic. Students may bring their own pets to selected practical classes (e.g., for practising non-invasive techniques), but this is voluntary and occurs under the supervision of lecturers. All procedures must follow internal biosecurity, safety, and animal welfare standards.

The University experimental dairy farm in Märja houses between 120 and 130 dairy cows and a similar number of youngstock (calves and heifers), with a total capacity of up to 250 animals. These animals are primarily kept for teaching, especially in the fields of animal husbandry, reproduction, and internal medicine.

The Equine Clinic maintains four teaching horses. These horses are housed on-site and have access to paddocks and shelter. They are used for handling, clinical examination, and demonstration purposes, always under the supervision of academic staff.

-) premises for research animals

Production animal research is typically conducted on farms using regular animals under standard farm and stable conditions. However, small-scale research can be carried out at the University's Production Animal Clinic, which is equipped to accommodate up to 10 sheep, 20 piglets, or 10 pigs. These studies are conducted in compliance with regulations and require approval from veterinary authorities for recognized animal experiments.

Additionally, research activities can be conducted at the University's experimental dairy farm in Märja. The Small Animal Clinic does not have designated facilities for housing experimental animals.

-) premises for hospitalised animals

The Equine Clinic can accommodate inpatients in 13 stalls, including two suitable for mares with foals. Patients with infectious diseases are housed in a dedicated isolation unit comprising three stalls, each with a separate entrance to ensure biosecurity. Additionally, the clinic includes a designated room for euthanasia procedures and a refrigerated unit for the temporary storage of animal carcasses, pending collection by rendering plant [Vireen](#), a licensed animal by-product disposal service or for necropsy.

The Production Animal Clinic features a multi-purpose barn suitable for housing various animal species. It can accommodate both small and large ruminants, as well as camelids and poultry when necessary. The clinic is well-equipped for fieldwork, with two nine-seater buses and a mobile trailer outfitted with an operating table, hoof trimming equipment, ultrasound, surgical instruments, and a tranquilizer gun.

The Small Animal Clinic is divided into two main areas: the ambulatory clinic and a restricted general area.

The ambulatory clinic includes the reception and general examination rooms. While there is a single entrance for both dogs and cats, the waiting area is designed to keep them separated to reduce stress. After completing paperwork, owners and their pets are guided directly to an examination room.

The clinic has seven examination rooms, including dedicated spaces for cats, exotic animals, and dermatological cases, as well as separate emergency consultation rooms for feline and canine patients. The remaining rooms are used for general consultations and for other specialties.

The closed general area, which is not accessible to owners, includes two procedure rooms where further diagnostics and clinical procedures are performed.

Emergency patients are treated in the Emergency Department/Intensive Care Unit (ICU), equipped with examination tables connected to oxygen and anaesthesia machines, cages, ultrasound machines, a defibrillator, and monitoring equipment. Advanced ventilatory support and oxygen supply are available, when needed.

The clinic features purpose-built rooms for diagnostic imaging, the clinic uses digital x-ray, ultrasound, endoscopy, CT, and MRI. The surgical unit, located centrally, consists of four surgical theatres (one with x-ray capability), an anaesthesia room, a clean procedure room with four preoperative cages, a sterilisation room, a storage room for sterile instruments, and a recovery room with nine cages. The clinic has cats and dogs wards with 5 cat cages and 10 dog cages. In the post-operative room, there are 9 cages, and the emergency department/ICU is equipped with 8 cages. For exotic animals, it is possible to set up 2 mobile enclosures, and they also have access to one incubator. Patients with infectious diseases are admitted through a separate entrance and housed in an isolation unit with four cages.

The equipment used for clinical services

The [University Animal Clinic](#) provides services in diagnostic imaging, surgery, treatment, and prevention.

The **Small Animal Clinic** is equipped with following apparatus: MRI, two endoscopic (video) units, an arthroscopy unit, laparoscopes, two autoclaves, and a surgical instrument washer. The Clinic also has a CT, one mobile and one stationary X-ray unit, one stationary and one mobile dental x-ray unit, ultrasound machines, anaesthesia workstations with ventilators, anaesthesia machines, a neurostimulator for local blocks, a video-endoscope, a video otoscope, two broncho fibroscopes and a defibrillator.

For diagnostic imaging, the **Equine Clinic** is equipped with one stationary and one mobile X-ray unit. The clinic also uses two stationary ultrasound machines and a portable ultrasound unit. A video endoscopic unit with a 3-metre endoscope is available. As the endoscopic unit is compatible with those used in the Small Animal Clinic, other endoscopes can be used when needed. Artificial Intelligence (AI) Motion Analysis with SLEIP is used as part of lameness evaluation. The surgical theatre is equipped with a surgical table, an anaesthesia machine, and a patient monitor. An arthroscopic/laparoscopic tower with arthroscopes and laparoscopes is available. Two autoclaves and one surgical instrument washer are shared with other clinics. Additionally, the clinic has two motorised rasp sets, a Platelet-Rich Plasma (PRP) centrifuge, a blood pressure monitor and a thermograph. A farrier room is also available, equipped with various tools for orthopaedic and therapeutic shoeing.

The **Production Animal Clinic** utilises mobile equipment to provide services in the field. The clinic is equipped with two ultrasound machines, a stationary X-ray device, a mobile X-ray unit, an anaesthesia machine, a video-endoscope, patient monitors and a hoof trimming chute. Additionally, the University's experimental dairy farm in Märja includes a veterinary teaching room to support clinical instruction and hands-on learning.

Zoomeedikum features a necropsy hall equipped with student changing rooms and shower facilities. Within the hall, there are three height-adjustable tables for small animals and one larger mobile table for larger specimens. The facility is outfitted with handwashing and disinfection stations, eye wash units, first

aid kits, and fire extinguishers to ensure safety and hygiene. Additional rooms are designated for storing protective clothing, disinfection supplies, and instruments. A classroom is available for discussions related to necropsy findings and special preparations. Cadavers and related materials are stored in a refrigerated room. A forklift and/or a special trolley is used to take the cadavers from the cooler to the necropsy room. Necropsy room is equipped with a cadaver lift.

The University's Embryo Laboratory specialises in work with bovine and equine embryos, including *in vitro* embryo production, intracytoplasmic sperm injection (ICSI), cloning, and epididymal sperm extraction. The laboratory also offers semen freezing services for canine, equine, and bovine species. The facility is equipped with different tools, including a laminar flow hood, microscopes, incubators, and a micromanipulation station featuring an inverted microscope, supporting a wide range of reproductive technologies and research activities.

Premises for the practical teaching of VPH

The laboratory training sessions for the quality and safety of milk and dairy products take place in the laboratories of the Food Hygiene and Safety Unit (56/3 F. R. Kreutzwaldi Str.) and the Chair of Food Science and Technology (56/5 F. R. Kreutzwaldi Str.). The practical training component focuses on essential technologies used in dairy production, along with analytical methods for assessing the quality and safety of milk and dairy products.

In [VL.0828 Practical training in veterinary surveillance](#) students carry out inspection activities. During these visits, students become familiar with food handling establishments and the documentation used in inspection.

In [VL.1168 Food production hygiene](#) fifth-year students complete a group work assignment based on written instructions provided by the lecturer. The aim of this task is to inspect retail outlets and catering establishments. Each group selects an establishment to visit and conducts an inspection. Following the inspection, all groups present their findings in a seminar.

Before doing their slaughterhouse training, students undergo practical training in meat inspection. They learn animal stunning techniques using models of sow, boar, sheep, cow, and piglet heads, and can test the destruction rod for euthanising animals during disease outbreaks.

Post-mortem inspection training takes place in the pathology and necropsy room. Various animal carcasses, internal organs, and hides, including those of pigs, sheep, cattle, chickens, and rabbits, are used for training.

Practical training in meat product production and evaluation is conducted in the Meat Technology Laboratory at 56/5 F. R. Kreutzwaldi Str. Students familiarise themselves with industry equipment and its operating principles, using essential mini-equipment commonly found in meat production facilities. Practical training in food and drinking water safety and quality is performed in Food Hygiene Laboratory at 56/3 F. R. Kreutzwaldi Str. This practical training is focusing mainly to microbiological analyses incl. foodborne pathogens detection and enumeration from different food matrices.

Veterinary students complete practical training in two large-scale slaughterhouses in Estonia. [AS Maag Eesti Rakvere](#) slaughterhouse (135 km from Tartu) processes approximately 580 cattle and 23,000 pigs per month. Food company [Atria Eesti](#) (85 km from Tartu) processes around 280 cattle and 8,400 pigs per month. Both facilities are approved by the Estonian [Agriculture and Food Board](#) and operate as comprehensive centres for slaughtering, meat processing, and product manufacturing, with a focus on pork and beef production. Students may choose their preferred facility for practical training, with schedules tailored to individual needs. IVMAS provides accommodation and reimburses travel expenses to support participation.

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 the standard of education and clinical research is compliant with all ESEVT Standards, e.g. research-based and evidence-based clinical training supervised by teaching 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 exceed the best available clinics in the private sector.

The VTH and any hospitals, practices and facilities which are involved with the core curriculum must be compliant with the ESEVT Standards and meet the relevant national Veterinary Practice Standards.

The VTH of IVMAS is organised by species into three main units: the Small Animal Clinic, the Equine Clinic, and the Production Animal Clinic, and primarily serves patients from across Estonia, with services fully integrated into clinical education.

The Small Animal and Equine Clinics provide 24/7 medical and surgical care, including emergency services. Patients are accepted for scheduled appointments – with or without referrals – as well as for emergency cases. The Production Animal Clinic operates as a mobile unit, taking students to the University's [experimental dairy farm in Märja](#) or to private farms according to a prearranged schedule. On-call services are also available for private enterprises.

Organisation and management of the VTH and ambulatory clinics

Each of the three clinics is managed by a Head of Clinic, who is responsible for organising daily clinical operations. They are supported by an Operational Manager, who oversees technical and logistical matters. The overall executive oversight is provided by the Chief Clinical Officer.

In-house laboratory services are available 24/7 across all clinics, offering blood and urine sample analysis to support diagnostics and patient care.

The Small Animal Clinic operates in two shifts: the day shift runs from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m., and the night shift from 8:00 p.m. to 8:00 a.m. Shift changes occur twice daily: from 8:00 to 8:30 a.m. and from 20.00 to 20.30 p.m. The clinic is open 24/7 for emergency cases.

One veterinarian is always on duty to attend to emergency patients and all veterinarians are trained and qualified to provide first aid. Emergency patients are managed and stabilised in the Emergency Department/ICU. Those requiring continuous intensive care are housed in ICU cages, where veterinarian and veterinary assistant are present at all times. Patients requiring hospitalisation for other conditions are placed in the general inpatient ward stationary and they are treated through the 24 hours.

Patient admissions on weekdays typically occur between 9:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m., and again from 2:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m., although times may vary depending on the specialist.

Specialist consultations that are available on designated weekdays and include cardiology, neurology, orthopaedics, stomatology, anaesthesiology, surgery (soft tissue, orthopaedic, neurologic), exotic animals, internal medicine, reproduction, ophthalmology, dermatology, oncology, and diagnostic imaging. In emergency situations, specialists are available for telephone consultation, and an on-call surgeon is available during nights and weekends. General consultations such as vaccination, health check-ups, and nail clipping are carried out during weekdays and daily shift hours mentioned before.

The Equine Clinic is opened from Monday to Friday, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Emergency services are available 24/7, including nights, weekends and public holidays.

The clinic is staffed by a multidisciplinary team, including veterinarians, veterinary nurses, and support personnel. Veterinarians work during opening hours and are scheduled for on-call. Some nurses work during opening hours and participate in after-hours rotations if needed. Other nurses – primary veterinary medicine students – cover after-hour shifts, including nights, weekends, and holidays. Their responsibilities encompass assisting during procedures, administering treatments, and providing routine care for hospitalised patients. Equine Clinic provides general consultations as well as specialised consultations in: surgery, anaesthesia, internal medicine, dentistry, ophthalmology, sports medicine, orthopaedics, pre-purchase examinations. Ambulatory service is provided upon request, mainly for follow up appointments, dental evaluations, vaccinations. Emergency visits can also be arranged if needed, depending on staff availability. Equine clinic is equipped to provide hospitalisation and comprehensive inpatient care.

Production Animal Clinic (Mobile Clinic)

In Estonia, large dairy farms do not transport cattle to clinics. Instead, IVMAS mobile clinic delivers on-farm veterinary care, including surgical procedures. The clinic provides services for cattle, small ruminants, pigs, camelids, and poultry, operating on weekdays from 8:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. It also offers herd health consultations and provides 24/7 care to the University's experimental dairy farm in Märja. For stationary treatment, the Production Animal Clinic includes two stalls for large ruminants and three cages for small

ruminants. Separate rooms are designated for housing experimental small ruminants. To prevent the spread of infectious diseases before and after farm visits, the clinic is equipped with a hygiene station for students and staff. The clinic employs three full-time and two part-time veterinarians. These professionals also serve as appointed veterinarians, performing delegated tasks on behalf of the Estonian [Agriculture and Food Board](#), often in collaboration with students. Their responsibilities include collecting blood samples from pigs, goats, sheep, and beef cattle; milk sampling from dairy cows; and conducting tuberculosis testing in cattle.

Strict biosecurity measures are in place, including use of disinfectants and sealed containers for used medicines, leak-proof boxes for contaminated clothing, mandatory clean outerwear and disinfected boots, daily vehicle cleaning, disinfection of the mobile trailer after each visit.

These protocols are rigorously enforced both at the experimental dairy farm in Märja and within the clinic to ensure high standards of animal and public health.

Description of how the VTH and ambulatory clinics are organised in order to maximise the hands-on training of all students

The **Small Animal Clinic** integrates veterinary students into its daily work, offering structured practical training. Students work in shifts alongside veterinarians and assistants, with 1-2 students per shift, enabling direct case discussions and hands-on opportunities based on caseload. During their rotations, students also participate in emergency and critical care cases under supervision, gaining experience in high-pressure settings. Students engage in owner communication, patient management, diagnostic procedures (e.g., blood/urine analysis, imaging, laboratory work), and administrative tasks like home treatment plans and prescriptions. Students are encouraged to do hands-on activities under supervision. Based on the case and students study year they are enabled to carry out physical examination, carry out diagnostic procedures (e.g. gather blood/urine analysis), provide first aid, intubation and surgical field preparation, assist at operations. Daily rounds facilitate discussions on patient conditions and treatment plans, with active student involvement. Specialised consultations in cardiology, neurology, orthopedics, stomatology, anesthesiology, surgery, exotic animals, internal medicine, reproduction, ophthalmology, dermatology, and diagnostic imaging enable students to rotate across disciplines for comprehensive clinical exposure. Logbooks track progress are reviewed by supervising veterinarians, and direct feedback is provided to students.

The **Equine Clinic** is organised to maximise hands-on training for students by structuring workflows and facilities to integrate learning opportunities into daily operations. All patients are approached in a team-based situation, in which a team involves a senior veterinarian, an intern, a nurse and a student. The clinic is divided into specialized areas of internal medicine and surgery where students rotate under the supervision of experienced veterinarians. Case-based learning is emphasized, with students directly involved in patient care, assisting with procedures such as physical exams, diagnostic imaging, wound management, and surgical preparation. Small group rotations ensure personalised guidance, while scheduled rounds and debriefs allow for discussion of cases and reflection on clinical decision-making. Students are encouraged to perform hands-on tasks within their competency level, progressing to more advanced skills under close supervision. This structured yet immersive environment fosters skill development, clinical reasoning, and confidence in handling equine patients.

In the **Production Animal Clinic** students participate in the daily work of veterinarians, both during field visits and in the treatment of inpatients. Under the supervision of a veterinarian, students perform approximately 90% of procedures independently. They conduct clinical examinations, and participate in various procedures. During field visits students are involved in various stages, including clinical examination, procedures, surgeries and treatments. During the herd visits by the production animal veterinarian, the herd health management are taught. Herd health visits are independent visits, where problem-solving principles at the herd level are discussed and used. The number of students per group depends on the nature of the work, the number of field visits, and the number of patients. Typically, there are 2–4 students per group, and they are assigned to field visits random. During the practical training, students complete a logbook, a medication sheet, and compile a case report. The logbook and medication sheet are continuously reviewed and assessed by the veterinarians involved in the field visits. Clarifications, explanations, and responses to students' questions are provided as needed. All veterinarians at the Production Animal Clinic are involved in supervising students.

Statement that the VEE meets the national Veterinary Practice Standards

The [Veterinary Act](#) outlines the principles of veterinary activities, including regulating veterinarians' professional conduct, ensuring compliance with EU animal health regulations, organising veterinary supervision, and establishing measures to prevent and control animal diseases. The [Agriculture and Food Board](#) oversees food safety, veterinary activities, feed safety, farm animal breeding, market regulation, organic farming, animal protection, professional fishing, and monitoring animal housing conditions. The [Agricultural Registers and Information Board](#) maintains national agricultural registers and databases, including the animal register. Therefore, the Board monitors the conditions of animal housing and animal welfare at IVMAS clinical facilities. In Estonia, [Medicinal Products Act](#) regulates the handling, prescription, marketing authorisation, clinical trials, advertising, and supervision of medicines to ensure their safety, quality, and efficacy.

The Estonian Veterinary Chamber has developed the Code of Good Veterinary Practice, which outlines the principles of professional ethics in the veterinary profession.

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 clinical skills laboratory, diagnostic imaging, clinical pathology, anaesthesia, surgeries and treatment facilities, intensive/critical care, ambulatory services, pharmacy and necropsy facilities. Procedures and facilities should also be available for soft skills training, e.g. communication skills training through role-play.

All students have access to relevant facilities, including clinics, laboratories, and the necropsy room, through a structured schedule and clear guidelines. Before each practical session, students are familiarised with the facilities and safety protocols. Access is granted based on their academic schedule and research needs, ensuring effective use of resources. Certain rooms, such as the histology class, clinical skills lab, osteology lab, and [Anatomy Museum](#) are open during working hours for individual work. In addition to the official timetable, students can also use the wet anatomy lab, necropsy room, and clinical skills labs for extracurricular activities, e.g. surgery club, organised student organisations of IVMAS. To do this, they need to arrange it in advance with the instructor and book the room through the Academic Affairs Office. Students scheduled for clinical rotation have access to all rooms in the clinic, except for MRI and CT and the medication room.

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 the prevention of the spread of infectious agents, animal care and student training. They must be adapted to all animal species commonly handled in the VTH. When permanent isolation facilities are not available in any of the facilities used for clinical training, the ability to provide such facilities and the procedures to use them appropriately in an emergency must be demonstrated during the visitation.

To align the isolation areas with EAEVE recommendations, they were redesigned and constructed following the last full EAEVE visitation in 2015 and subsequently approved in 2019 during revisitation.

The equine isolation unit is a specialized unit with three stalls, each separated from the rest of the equine clinic by door, intermediate corridor and ante-rooms. These isolation stalls are equipped with negative pressure systems to prevent the spread of airborne pathogens. Each stall is completely isolated from the others. Horses can only enter and exit the isolation stalls through external doors. Access to the isolator is restricted to horse clinic staff and students on practical training, under the supervision of the responsible person. Unauthorised entry is strictly prohibited. The isolator is managed by the senior veterinarian of the equine clinic. The responsible person must be informed of each patient's admission to and discharge from the isolation unit. For further details, please refer to the [Biosecurity Handbook](#).

The small animal isolation unit is designed to house and contain infectious patients. It includes an ante-room with the relevant equipment, supplies, and personal protective equipment (PPE) for donning and doffing to maintain biosecurity. The inpatient ward has four large cages, not species-specific, with a procedure table. Small dogs and cats are housed in a large cage with a smaller cage inside. To minimise cross-contamination, at least one cage is kept empty between multiple hospitalised animals when possible. Equipment is disinfected after use, and infection levels are marked on the inpatient sheet and cage. An intermediate room stores blankets and walking equipment, and provides access to an outdoor area.

Waste, including used PPE and animal waste, is disposed of following strict [biosecurity protocols](#). All staff members are trained for handling infectious patients. Antiseptic procedures are followed, and PPE is changed between patients. After each patient leaves, the room and equipment are thoroughly cleaned to maintain hygiene and biosecurity.

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 the supervision of teaching staff.

Herd health management is integrated into the curriculum across various semesters, beginning with pre-clinical training. In Semester 3, students take the subject [VL.0651 Animal welfare and protection](#) which covers the fundamentals of ethics and animal welfare. By the Semester 4, students enrol in [VL.0135 Animal hygiene](#), where they study and analyse the effects of housing-related environmental factors and the microclimate on animal health and welfare. Practical training in the University experimental dairy farm in Märja but also in loose housing dairy and beef cattle farms, pig farms, horse stables, sheep and goat farms, poultry and quail farms near Tartu are organised. In Semester 4, students take the subject [VL.0193 Animal nutrition](#) to understand the impact of feeds and feed rations on animal health from disease prevention point of view. The submodule *Basics of animal production*, includes [VL.0822 Practical training on the livestock farm](#). These prerequisite subjects prepare students for subjects such as [VL.1163 Ruminant clinical medicine](#), [VL.1161 Herd health and environment](#) and [VL.0266 Cattle health management](#), [VL.1348 Pig health management](#), and [VL.1273 Health management of small ruminants](#) in Semester 11 in the elective speciality submodule *Production animal medicine*. Field veterinary medicine and herd health management are further taught through practical training at the Production Animal Clinic.

Herd health is taught by:

Piret Kalmus, Coordinator for the Farm Animal Medicine Module, large animal internal medicine

Julia Jeremejeva, pig medicine, infectious diseases

Kerli Mõtus, Herd Health; Ragnar Leming, pig production, organic animal production;

Alar Onoper, Head Veterinarian of Production Animal Clinic

Meelis Ots, ruminant nutrition and physiology; Kalle Kask, veterinary obstetrics;

Els Rusi, production animal medicine; Katrin Tähepõld, sheep farming consultant;

James Patrick Crilly, Guest Lecturer, Assistant Veterinary Surgeon at Larkmead Veterinary Group, Cholsey, UK.

Vehicles and equipment used for the ambulatory clinic

The ambulatory clinic, functioning also as a mobile clinic, is well-equipped for field trips. It operates with two nine-seater buses, equipped with ultrasound, surgical instruments, and a tranquilizer gun etc. Trailers, including a portable surgery table, equipment for hoof trimming, and a separate trailer for transporting large animals, are available.

Biosecurity is stringent, including the use of disinfectants, containers for used medicines, and a leak-proof box for dirty clothes. See 4.8. Appendix 8. Vehicles used for transportation of students available at Institute and the University.

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 animal welfare, and to prevent the spread of infectious agents.

The regulation of products and materials of animal origin in Estonia is governed by the Estonian [Food Act](#) and [EU Regulation 178/2002/EEC](#), which establish the principles and procedures for food safety.

Governmental supervision is carried out by the [Agriculture and Food Board](#), Health Board, Consumer Protection and Technical Regulatory Authority, and Tax and Customs Board. The Agriculture and Food Board performs official controls generally in accordance with the regulations of the European Parliament and the Council.

In case of infectious disease threats, the Board enforces control measures according to Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) [2018/1882](#) of 3 December 2018 on the application of certain disease prevention and control rules to categories of listed diseases and establishing a list of species and groups of species posing a considerable risk for the spread of those listed diseases.

In Estonia and the EU, student transport for the purpose of conducting academic activities is not specifically regulated at the legislative level. Therefore, student transport is carried out in accordance with the [Traffic Act](#), which includes general rules and requirements for transporting groups of people. To ensure biosecurity during student transport, IVMAS [Biosecurity Handbook](#) provides guidelines to avoid cross-contamination between farms.

IVMAS does not organise the transport of live animals. The responsibility for arranging transport of animals to the University Clinic lies with the animal owner. If deficiencies are observed, the owner is informed, and in the case of serious violations, the competent authority is notified. To ensure animal welfare during animal transport to the clinic, general rules established by the [Animal Protection Act](#) are followed.

IVMAS has a dedicated vehicle for transporting animal carcasses and anatomical specimens. Carcasses are brought in for the purpose of anatomy and necropsy teaching or for diagnostic necropsies. Transport is carried out in accordance with general biosecurity rules as outlined in the [EU Animal Health Law](#). Additional information is provided in IVMAS [Biosecurity Handbook](#).

The cadavers are stored in the cool room or frozen. A forklift and/or a special trolley is used to take the cadavers from the cooler to the necropsy room. Necropsy room is equipped with a cadaver lift.

IVMAS has a cooperation agreement with the rendering plant [Vireen](#), a state cooperation service for the transport and disposal of animal carcasses. Vireen collects the carcasses twice a week and disposes of them at their facility in Väike-Maarja parish, Lääne-Virumaa. Until collection, euthanised or dead horses are stored in a cold room.

IVMAS facilitates a pet cremation service for clients through Linnutee Cremo OÜ (located in Vanaküla village, Lääne county), which collects the carcasses directly. Small animal cadavers donated for teaching or awaiting transport are stored in marked plastic bags in deep freezers.

Vehicles used for transportation of students, live animals, cadavers/organs

Students are transported to off-site teaching facilities using University or Institute buses and minibuses (see Appendix 8). If these are unavailable, buses can be ordered from local companies.

The Production Animal Clinic also has a trailer equipped with operation and hoof stand. IVMAS has a two-seater horse trailer available for emergencies allowing the transport of a client's horse or other large animals to the clinic. The Equine Clinic uses a Toyota Hilux for transportation.

As a rule, farmers use their own transport to take cadavers from the field to IVMAS for necropsies. In exceptional cases, the special custom-made Volkswagen flatbed truck is used for cadaver transport.

IVMAS uses a Toyota Auris to collect organs from farms or meat factories / slaughterhouses for educational purposes. Organs are transported in plastic bags or containers and stored in freezers or used in anatomy or surgery classes.

Sperm for biotechnology courses is transported in nitrogen within plastic containers. IVMAS also has a small incineration unit that can be used in crisis.

Standard 4.9: Operational policies and procedures (including biosecurity, good laboratory practice and good clinical practice) must be taught and posted (in different languages if the curriculum is taught in them) for students, staff and visitors and a biosecurity manual must be developed and made easily available for all relevant persons. The VEE must demonstrate a clear commitment for the delivery and the implementation of 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 regular monitoring of the feedback from students, staff and clients.

IVMAS adheres to safety procedures and regulations mandated by national and international legislation. For safety and educational purposes, all relevant guidelines are available in the respective units. [Biosecurity Handbook](#) is reviewed every three years or as needed due to legislative changes, amendments to the handbook are approved by the Director of IVMAS. Students are introduced to the handbook during the introductory course, and they must pass a test on its contents. Specific topics related to biosecurity, general safety measures, and labour safety rules are covered in the first session of each lab, practical, or clinic. Students confirm their understanding by signing a document acknowledging they have been instructed. Students and staff may give feedback and report any biosecurity violations to the biosecurity specialist. Institute staff members are introduced to the [Biosecurity Handbook](#), occupational safety documents, and work instructions prior to commencing their duties. Institute staff members are required to complete an occupational safety

test and confirm their familiarity with the instructions via the VITS online work environment platform. The biosecurity specialist, as the head of IVMAS Biosecurity WG, revises guidelines and oversees related processes. Each chair and unit, including the Small Animal Clinic, has two biosecurity contact persons. The Equine and Production Animal Clinic has one designated contact person responsible for monitoring and developing daily biosecurity practices. Topics requiring development will be discussed in the WG. Proposals are presented at regular meetings of the IVMAS Board. Based on the submission of the biosecurity specialist, the proposals are approved by order of the Director.

At IVMAS laboratories, operations are based on the principles of Good Laboratory Practice (depending on the nature and needs of the experiment or educational). The requirements for Good Laboratory Practice are established by the regulation of the Minister of Health and Labour, Requirements for assessing and proving good laboratory practices and procedure.

The [Occupational Health and Safety \(OHS\) Management Procedure](#) outlines OHS activities and responsibilities at the University, with compliance to the [Occupational Health and Safety Act](#) being mandatory. An 8-member council addresses OHS issues. The chief OHS specialist oversees practices, evaluates activities, and organises training, with funding provided by the University HR Department. Each structural unit designates individuals for critical safety roles, including first aid, AED operation, work environment, fire protection, and overall safety.

The [waste management](#) system of the University complies with EU and Estonian regulations with regular audits. [Waste handling guidelines](#) at IVMAS were adopted in 2022. Biohazardous waste is collected separately and transported to an incineration plant, and chemical waste is stored and transported to a hazardous waste facility. IVMAS has agreements with certified waste management services for proper disposal. Manure from the Production Animal Clinic is stored and regularly exchanged by a waste management service. IVMAS also has a small-scale incinerator for use in exceptional circumstances to destroy biological material.

Regular updates about changes in procedures and guidelines are communicated to students and staff via mailing lists and included in the IVMAS blog. This information is also available on the Intranet or Institute [website](#) and is discussed at Chair and staff meetings.

A list of emergency contacts and [procedures](#) is readily available in all laboratories and clinics.

Each clinic has a Head Veterinarian supervising daily operations, including clinical practices, biosecurity, and communication. Major changes are discussed in weekly board meetings and decided by the Chief Clinical Officer and Administrative Manager. Waste management is handled by the Head Veterinary Assistant. The Chief Clinical Officer manages facility changes and communicates updates via email or staff meetings. The biomedical engineer is responsible for equipment maintenance, acquisition, and training, informing staff as needed. He is specially trained for radiation training.

Biosecurity contact persons in each clinic assess and implement changes, sharing information through emails, meetings, and one-on-one conversations. Head veterinarians ensure good laboratory and clinical practices, assessing work daily and implementing changes through direct communication, emails, or meetings.

Practicing veterinarians in Estonia must hold a professional license, regulated by the [Professions Act](#) and issued by the Veterinary Register at the [Agriculture and Food Board](#). The Board handles medical malpractice cases, while the University provides expert advice on such matters. Based on international standards of Good Clinical Practice, the Estonian Veterinary Chamber / Eesti Loomaarstide Koda has established the Estonian Code of Ethics for Veterinary Medicine.

Safe animal handling is included in the submodule *Basics of Animal Production* (32 ECTS), as well as in the subjects [VL.1277 Clinical-laboratory diagnostics of equine](#) (2 ECTS), [VL.1276 Clinical-laboratory diagnostics of production animals](#) (2 ECTS), [VL.1300 Clinical-laboratory diagnostics of small animals](#) (2 ECTS), and the clinical skills training course [VL.1340 Veterinary clinical skills](#) (1 ECTS).

When students notice a breach of safety measures, they submit their complaints to the responsible lecturer of the particular subject, Head Veterinarian, or the Director of Academic Affairs. Staff members report their concerns according to the occupational environment to the Head Veterinarian or Chief Clinical Officer, who then forwards the information whenever relevant, to the management at IVMAS or University level. All clinics provide information about their procedures and services on their [website](#) and on-site, including

recommendations for pet owners, insurance options, and payment methods. Clinics share updates and information on their social [media platforms](#) as well.

Comments on Area 4

The University, through its decision-making bodies and the Territorial-Spatial DP, has decided on investments for the renovation and extension of IVMAS teaching facilities. Due to the geopolitical situation and limited public budget allocations for studies and research at universities in Estonia, a rapid increase in this financial instrument is unlikely. Therefore, the modernisation of IVMAS facilities may take more time.

The current infrastructure lacks adequate, appropriately furnished spaces for self-directed and independent learning and group work. However, an upgrade is planned with future renovations and expansions.

Suggestions for improvement in Area 4

The University is equipped with all the necessary facilities and equipment to provide veterinary medicine education at a contemporary level. However, the study environment can still be improved and further developed as follows.

Accelerate the renovation of teaching buildings and the development of modern study spaces that support independent and group learning, including better access to digital learning tools.

Increase awareness among staff and students of good clinical and laboratory practice through regular training, instructional materials, and open discussions.

Continue developing the systems for biosecurity and waste management, including improving feedback mechanisms and updating risk assessment procedures.

Improve the regular renewal of clinical and practical teaching resources (e.g. simulators and equipment) to ensure a high-quality and up-to-date learning environment.

AREA 5. ANIMAL RESOURCES AND TEACHING MATERIAL OF ANIMAL ORIGIN

Standard 5.1: The number and variety of healthy and diseased animals, first opinion and referral cases, cadavers, and material of animal origin must be adequate for providing the practical and safe hands-on training in all relevant areas 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.

Description of the global strategy of the VEE about the use of animals and material of animal origin for the acquisition by each student of Day One Competences (see Annex 2)

The use of animals for teaching (and research) purposes requires special animal welfare approval and must be coordinated with the regulatory authorities according to following relevant national laws – the [Veterinary Act](#) and the [Animal Protection Act](#). IVMAS adheres to EAEVE requirements to ensure all students achieve an equal level of practical skills and knowledge.

IVMAS adheres to the principles of *never the first time on a live animal* and the 3Rs – *Replace, Reduce, Refine* in both educational and research activities. Whenever possible, live animals are replaced with anatomical models, phantoms, and simulators.

In their second academic year, students participate in the *Animal Production module*, which covers topics such as animal production, nutrition, welfare, and management. This includes farm visits involving various animal species for all students, as well as a four-week practical training course [VL.0822 Practical training on livestock farm](#). The [experimental dairy farm in Märja](#) serves as a valuable resource for both preclinical and clinical training.

The practical clinical training with different patients occurs at the University Animal Clinic. During this phase, each student spends a designated number of weeks in different clinics, actively participating in daily clinical rotations.

In the anatomy subjects [VL.1278 Anatomy of domestic animals I](#) (5 ECTS), [VL.1279 Anatomy of domestic animals II](#) (5 ECTS), [VL.0260 Anatomy of domestic animals III](#) (4 ECTS), delivered over three semesters, a system-based approach is employed, emphasising species-specific differences within each organ system. Teaching methods incorporate the use of dry specimens, wet specimens, and cadavers. The proportion and frequency of use of each material type are guided by the teaching methodology outlined in the SIS. Cadaver parts are used across different courses and preserved for future use.

The pathological anatomy courses [VL.1263 Pathological morphology I](#) and [VL.1264 Pathological morphology II](#) begin with the introduction of existing wet specimens to illustrate a variety of pathological conditions. The necropsy course, [VL.1265 Pathological morphology and necropsy](#), conducted over two semesters, focuses on performing necropsies on different animal species. To ensure that each student gains adequate hands-on experience across species, cadavers are regularly provided for necropsy, including the use of previously frozen specimens when necessary.

Students also visit slaughterhouses, food processing plants, markets, and other relevant facilities to gain insight into the veterinarian's role in food safety and public health (FSQ/VPH). Through a combination of structured preclinical, clinical, and field-based training across multiple species, supported by ethical frameworks and diverse teaching methodologies, IVMAS ensures that each student acquires the full range of Day One Competences required for safe and effective veterinary practice.

Description of the specific strategy of the VEE ensuring that each student receives the relevant Core Clinical Training (CCT) before graduation, e.g. number of patients examined/treated by each student, balance between species, balance between clinical disciplines, balance between first opinion and referral cases, balance between acute and chronic cases, balance between consultations (day patients in the clinic) and hospitalisations, balance between individual medicine and population medicine

Clinical training sessions during the Semesters 6 to 8, ensuring that all students receive required hands-on experience aligned with the LOs of each clinical subject. The subjects are species-specific (see Appendix 6). Practical training groups typically consist of 10–15 students. The lecturers responsible for each clinical subject coordinate the training and ensure the availability of a sufficient number of animals across all relevant species.

Systematic practical training is followed by clinical practice rotations in Semesters 7, 8, and 10, during which students take part in the routine work of the clinics and participate in herd health visits.

Clinical rotations are conducted at the University Small Animal Clinic, Equine Clinic, and Production Animal Clinic. Each student spends a designated number of weeks at each clinic, with training based on the actual caseload. The number of patients in the clinics remains consistent throughout the year, providing adequate clinical exposure across different animal species.

During the seven-week practice [VL.0737 Practical training in small animal medicine](#) (10 ECTS) at the Small Animal Clinic, students rotate among various specialists. As the largest clinic in Estonia in terms of staff and patient volume it ensures a sufficient number of cases. A maximum of 10 students are in practice at the same time, working in either morning or evening shifts. From 2025/26 academic year, this subject will be replaced by [VL.1371 Practical training in small animal medicine](#) (8 ECTS)

During the three-week practice [VL.1270 Practical training in equine medicine](#) (4 EAP) at the Equine Clinic students are involved in both inpatient care and field visits to stables. At any given time, 3–4 students are assigned to the clinic. From 2025/26 academic year, this subject will be replaced by [VL.1370 Practical training in equine medicine training](#) (6 EAP).

During the four-week practice [VL.1269 Practical training in production animal medicine](#) (6 ECTS) at the Production Animal Clinic, students participate in farm visits, treating individual animals and conducting herd health assessments. A maximum of seven students are in practice at the clinic simultaneously.

Description of the procedures developed to ensure the welfare of animals used for educational and research activities

At the University Animal Clinic, all animals used for teaching purposes at IVMAS are managed and housed in accordance with [Animal Protection Act](#) and [Veterinary Act](#) of Estonia.

All lecturers responsible for using healthy animals for educational purposes are committed to ensuring animal welfare and avoiding any procedures that may cause discomfort. Prior to the start of each course, the lecturer provides an overview of the procedures to be performed.

IVMAS does not house healthy small animals or production animals on-site. However, the Equine Clinic maintains a limited number of horses exclusively for educational purposes. These horses are cared for in accordance with national animal welfare standards, under the supervision of dedicated staff. All teaching activities involving these horses are non-invasive, and detailed records are kept to monitor their use and prevent overexposure.

All researchers conducting experiments on live animals are required to complete a certified course in laboratory animal medicine and must hold a valid certificate authorising them to perform such experiments. All animal experiments must be approved by the Animal Experimentation Authorisation Committee under the [Agriculture and Food Board](#). In accordance with the [Animal Protection Act](#), the Board monitors the housing conditions and welfare of animals kept in clinics for both educational and experimental purposes. The Board also ensures that all animal experiments comply with applicable national and EU legislation. Within IVMAS, a designated responsible veterinarian coordinates all animal experiments to ensure compliance with legal and ethical standards.

Description of how the cadavers and material of animal origin for training in anatomy and pathology are obtained, stored and destroyed

The chairs, along with the responsible lecturers and support staff, are tasked with ensuring an adequate supply of animals and animal-derived materials for teaching purposes. This includes the procurement of animals, biological materials, and cadavers, as well as the organisation of their transportation. Dissection materials and other teaching resources are sourced both internally – from the University Animal Clinic and the experimental dairy farm in Märja – and externally from slaughterhouses, farms, and animal shelters. Pet owners and farmers are also encouraged to donate deceased animals for educational use. All cadavers and body parts are properly labelled and stored in freezers to ensure traceability and compliance with biosecurity standards.

Cadavers and organs used for anatomy training are sourced from multiple locations: the University Animal Clinic (dog, cat, horse, small ruminants), the experimental dairy farm in Märja (cattle), slaughterhouses (organs), and external farms (poultry) (see Table 5.1.1).

Anatomical teaching materials of animal origin are categorised into two types: permanent specimens and fresh specimens. The permanent collection includes an extensive array of skeletons and bones from various animal species, housed in the [Anatomy Museum](#) and the anatomy classroom. Students are granted free

access to these collections for study purposes. Dried permanent specimens are stored at room temperature in a dry room, while wet specimens are preserved in alcohol solution.

Fresh specimens – comprising organs and cadavers of different species – are stored in freezers at -9°C and refrigerators at $+4^{\circ}\text{C}$. After each practical session, animal waste is collected in a designated container and transported to the rendering plant [Vireen](#) for disposal, using the company’s own vehicle. Bodies and organs not used immediately are frozen for future use.

Cadavers used for practical necropsy training are primarily sourced from the Small Animal Clinic, the Equine Clinic, and the Production Animal Clinic (see Table 5.1.6). Cadavers from the Animal Clinic are transported directly to the necropsy facilities via an internal corridor or in closed metal or plastic containers. A dedicated box-type vehicle is available for transporting necropsy materials.

External sources include slaughterhouses, farms, and animal shelters. Organs and small animals from abattoirs are delivered in sealed boxes using a dedicated vehicle. Necropsy materials are typically acquired on the day of the training session to ensure freshness. All cadavers (excluding large animals) and body parts are labelled and stored either in refrigerators at 0 to $+4^{\circ}\text{C}$ or frozen when necessary.

Strict biosecurity measures are in place, including thorough cleaning and disinfection protocols for all vehicles and containers before they leave the necropsy area. Deceased horses may be transported from the field or euthanised at the clinic before being moved into the necropsy hall. These procedures ensure the safe, hygienic, and efficient transport of all cadavers and organs used for teaching purposes.

For the FSQ training within the subject [VL.0434 Meat inspection](#) (5 ECTS) and related intra-mural training at the University facilities five student groups are formed. During the training, each group is provided with at least one pig carcass, half of a cattle carcass, ten poultry carcasses, and a variety of associated internal organs – such as tongues, tracheas, oesophagi, hearts, lungs, stomachs, livers, kidneys, spleens, and intestines. Additionally, heads and limbs from slaughtered animals are supplied. Internal organs are made available to all students to ensure comprehensive hands-on experience. All materials are sourced from Estonian slaughterhouses and collected one day prior to the intra-mural training sessions at IVMAS.

Table 5.1.1. Cadavers and material of animal origin used in practical anatomical training

Species		2023/24	2022/23	2021/22	Mean	Remarks
Various species	Entire skeletons Anatomy Museum + Lab	72	71	70	71	
Cattle	Cadavers	2	4	2	3	
	Organs	52	NA	NA	NA	
Small ruminants	Cadavers	4	2	3	3	
	Organs	34	NA	NA	NA	
Pigs	Cadavers	2	1	0	1	
	Organs	19	NA	NA	NA	
Companion animals	Cadavers	57	55	50	53	
	Organs	9	NA	NA	NA	
Equine	Cadavers	3	2	1	2	
	Organs	26	NA	NA	NA	
Poultry & Rabbits	Cadavers	36	19	23	20	
	Organs	0	NA	NA	NA	
Exotic pets	Cadavers	2	0	1	1	Guinea pig
Others (specify)	Cadavers	2	2	2	2	birds of prey

Table 5.1.2. Healthy live animals used for pre-clinical training

Species	2023/24	2022/23	2021/2022	Mean
Cattle (Märja)*	255	255	255	255
Small ruminants	255	85	735	358
Pigs ¹	1000	1000	1000	1000
Companion animals	5	13	13	10
Equine ²	8	16	16	10
Exotics	17	12	12	14
Poultry ³	1162	1141	1719	1341
Other (aquaculture) ⁴	1200	1200	1200	1200

Note: As part of the subject [VL.1274 Artificial insemination and reproduction I](#), students visit various farms. Approximately 45 additional cows per academic year are involved in these visits and are not included in the table. In [VL.0135 Animal hygiene](#) students also visit farms with different species, including cattle (both dairy and beef herds), horses, sheep, pigs, and quail. For instance, in recent years, students have visited Tartu Agro farm in Vorbuse (640 dairy cattle), the Luunja stable (50 horses), Puutsa farm (45 beef cattle), Meekalda farm (250 sheep), and Estfarm (6,000 quails). These are not included in the table. Animals in [VL.0822 Practical training on livestock farm](#) (3 ECTS) in Semester 4 are not included in the table.

* Students attend the University experimental dairy farm in Märja for both preclinical and clinical training. This facility houses an average of 125 dairy cows and 130 youngstock per calendar year.

¹ Due to African swine fever, access to pig farms is restricted. IVMAS has a contract with Kaubi Farmid OÜ in Puurmani, which operates a full-cycle farm housing 400 sows and approximately 1,000 pigs a total

² In [VL.0818 Animal production](#) students take a field trip to a horse stable, with approximately 20 to 40 horses. During the visit students practise establishing contact with the horses, leading them, and lifting their legs, among other activities.

³ Includes chicken, quail, geese, ducks, guinea fowls, turkeys and Muscovy ducks.

⁴ Students visit the Chair of Aquaculture's research station at 56 Kreutzwaldi Str., Tartu. Number of fish: about 1,000 rainbow trout and about 200 noble crayfish (*Astacus astacus*).

Table 5.1.3. Number of patients* seen intra-murally (in the VTH)

Species	2023/24	2022/23	2021/22	Mean
Cattle	0	0	0	0
Small ruminants	21	22	14	19
Pigs**	4	4	1	3
Dogs outpatient ¹	5678	5773	6214	5888
Dogs inpatient ²	696	704	792	731
Cats outpatient ¹	2314	2185	2335	2278
Cats inpatient ²	543	529	565	546
Companion animals total	9231	9191	9906	9443
Equine outpatient ¹	696	445	389	510
Equine inpatient ²	308	279	140	242
Equine Total (in VTH)	1003	722	528	751
Poultry & rabbits	21	22	19	21
Exotic pets, outpatient ¹	914	885	792	864
Exotic pets, inpatient ²	73	71	65	70
Exotic pets total	987	956	857	933
Camelids	23	21	14	19

* This table includes all animals admitted to the VTH, including both day-case basis and those hospitalised for more than 24 hours. This Table contains numbers from the University Animal Clinic excl. data from the experimental dairy farm in Märja.

** Pigs are not transported to the VTH but visited on-site.

¹ Ambulatory patients – animals that are discharged on the same day they are admitted to the clinic.

² Stationary patients – animals that remain in the clinic overnight.

Table 5.1.4. Number of patients seen extra-murally (in the ambulatory clinics)

Species	2023/24	2022/23	2021/22	Mean
Cattle	1303	1629	2735	1889
Cattle in experimental dairy farm in Märja*	1032	1179	1196	1136
Cattle (Surveillance Specimens) ¹	2184	1689	0**	1291
Small ruminants	365	173	188	242
Small ruminants (Surveillance Specimens) ²	484	570	0**	351
Small ruminants (total)	849	743	188	593
Pigs	8	7	7	7
Pigs (Surveillance Specimens) ²	225	130	0**	118
Companion animals	0	0	0	0
Equine (On-site call)	181	217	232	210
Poultry & rabbits	38	53	103	65
Exotic pets	0	0	0	0
Camelids	64	28	26	39

Note: This table presents data on animals visited and treated by veterinarians, accompanied by students, outside the University clinic premises (i.e. during on-farm visits).

* Summary of all veterinary procedures carried out at the University's experimental dairy farm in Märja. These procedures encompass routine activities such as hoof trimming, pregnancy checks, and other standard herd health practices.

** The contract started in 2022.

¹ Tuberculosis (TBC) testing was carried out, and blood and milk samples were collected from individual animals as part of the national surveillance programme, on behalf of the veterinary authority (Agriculture and Food Board), with the assistance of students.

² Blood samples were collected from sheep and pigs as part of the national surveillance programme, on behalf of veterinary authority (Agriculture and Food Board), with the assistance of students.

Table 5.1.5. Percentage (%) of first opinion patients used for clinical training (both in VTH and ambulatory clinics, i.e. Table 5.1.3. & 5.1.4.)*

Species	2023/24	2022/23	2021/22	Mean
Cattle	99	99	99	99
Cattle in experimental dairy farm in Märja	99	99	99	99
Small ruminants	99	99	99	99
Pigs	99	99	99	99
Companion animals (total)	80	80	80	80
Equine	90	90	90	90
Poultry & rabbits	99	99	99	99
Exotic pets	80	80	80	80
Camelids	99	99	99	99

* Notes on Table 5.1.5: The percentages shown are estimates. At virtually any given time, a group of students or an individual student is present in both the Small Animal Clinic and the Equine Clinic, participating in every animal's treatment or history-taking. Students are also always included during farm visits.

Table 5.1.6. Cadavers used in necropsy (Subject [VL.1265 Pathological morphology and necropsy](#))

Species	2023/2024	2022/2023	2021/2022	Mean
Cattle	28	29	31	29
Small ruminants	25	30	28	28
Pigs	52	55	48	52
Companion animals	136	130	125	130
Equine	18	17	19	18
Poultry & rabbits	101	96	94	97
Aquatic animals*	118	104	114	112
Exotic pets	17	13	16	15
Others (fox, squirrel, wolf, racoon, wild goat, lynx, rhinoceros)	12	10	8	10

* Each student must perform autopsy and parasitological examination on two fishes in the subject [VL.0827 Aquaculture technologies, fish and crayfish diseases and hygiene](#).

Table 5.1.7. Number of visits in herds/flocks/units for training in Animal Production and Herd Health Management

Species	2023/24	2022/23	2021/22	Mean
Cattle ^{1, 4, 8, 9}	28	30	23	27
Small ruminants ^{5, 11}	2	2	2	2
Pigs ^{2, 10}	2	2	2	2
Poultry ⁷	1	1	1	1
Rabbits ¹²	0	0	0	0
Aquatic animals ⁶	1	1	1	1
Other (please specify) - horses ³	2	2	2	2

¹ One field trip to a cattle farm with 600 cows and 400 youngstock during [VL.0818 Animal production](#). Additionally two farm visits during [VL.0135 Animal hygiene](#), each year 3 visits.

² Two visits during [VL.0135 Animal hygiene](#) to a single farm which is composed of 400 sows (a total 1,000 pigs on a full-cycle farm).

³ For each group of students (10–20 students per group, with four groups in total), there is one visit to the horse stable, which accommodates approximately 20–40 horses. On-site, students observe horses in the stable or pasture. In the stall, they practice fitting halters. During each visit, one or two horses are taken from the paddock or stall and brought to the riding arena, where students can practice establishing contact with the horse, walking it, lifting its legs, and similar activities.

⁴ Each student performs two farm visits in [VL.1161 Herd health and environment](#) in Semester 9.

⁵ Small ruminant farms are visited during [VL.0135 Animal hygiene](#).

⁶ Students have a field trip to the Chair of Aquaculture research station in 56 F. R. Kreutzwaldi Str., Tartu.

⁷ Field trip to a farm during [VL.0135 Animal hygiene](#). Chicken farming is primarily concentrated on large-scale farms, where access is restricted due to biosecurity risks.

⁸ Including herd health visits conducted by Production Animal Clinic: 2023/24 = 23; 2022/23 = 25; 2021/22 = 18.

⁹ Each student performs seven farm visits in [VL.0266 Cattle health management](#) during Semester 11 (Production animal elective submodule (track)), which is excluded from this table.

¹⁰ Each student performs two farm visits in [VL.1348 Pig health management](#) during Semester 11 (Production animal elective submodule (track)) and two visits in [VL.1165 Swine clinical medicine](#) during Semester 8, which are excluded from this table.

¹¹ Each student performs one farm visit in [VL.1273 Health management of small ruminants](#) during Semester 11 (Production animal elective submodule (track)), which is excluded from this table.

¹² In Estonia, rabbit farming is not commonly practised for meat production or on large-scale farms. Rabbits are more often kept as pets.

Table 5.1.8. Number of visits in slaughterhouses and related premises for training in FSQ

Species	2023/24	2022/23	2021/2022	Mean
Cattle	5	5	5	5
Small ruminants	1	NA	NA	1
Pigs	5	5	5	5
Poultry*	1	1	1	1
Related premises**	1	1	1	1

NA not applicable because of very small slaughter volumes in Estonia. In 2023/2024 cooperation started with a small-scale slaughterhouse (+ meat industry) in Vasula, Estonia

*Provided exclusively on University premises within the subject [VL.0434 Meat inspection](#), due to the lack of access to the only large-scale poultry slaughterhouse in Estonia.

** During the practical training in meat inspection at slaughterhouses, students are also introduced to meat cutting, processing, and storage.

Table 5.1.8A. Number of animals provided for FSQ training (Inspection of slaughter animals)

Species	2023/24	2022/23	2021/2022	Mean
Ruminants*	110	115	120	115
Pigs*	3800	3800	3900	3833
Poultry**	50	50	50	50

*Within one-week practical training in slaughterhouses in average

**Provided only at the University premises within [VL.0434 Meat inspection](#)

Waste management at IVMAS adheres to EU and Estonian regulations and undergoes regular audits. Waste at the University Animal Clinic is categorised into three main types: a) ordinary (non-hazardous) waste: general waste similar to mixed domestic waste; b) clinical waste requiring special handling: hazardous waste, including radioactive, pharmaceutical, and chemical waste; c) specific veterinary medical waste: items contaminated with bodily fluids, infectious organisms, sharps, and waste from microbiology, immunology, and veterinary clinical laboratories.

As outlined in the [Biosecurity Handbook](#), waste of animal origin is collected and stored in specialised containers, then transported to the rendering plant [Vireen](#) or to Linnutee Cremo OÜ for pet cremation service. In laboratories, waste materials are segregated into labelled containers and disposed according to their category. Biological samples are disinfected using chemical disinfection or autoclaving before disposal. Chemical waste is stored in a dedicated room in IVMAS until transported to a hazardous waste disposal facility [Epler & Lorenz](#). Unused medicines, needles, and other consumables are collected and managed by the [Epler & Lorenz](#). Manure is stored in a designated container and managed by waste management company [Ragn-Sells](#). A small-scale incinerator is available at IVMAS for exceptional circumstances, such as suspected exotic notifiable diseases.

Description of how (procedures) and by whom (description of the committee structure) the number and variety of animals and material of animal origin for pre-clinical and clinical training, and the clinical services provided by the VEE are decided, communicated to staff, students and stakeholders, implemented, assessed and revised

The number and variety of animals (healthy animals, patients, cadavers, organs) required for training is based on practical considerations (availability and group size) and is managed by the Chair responsible within the curricular framework.

In both pre-clinical and clinical training, the responsible lecturer, in cooperation with the Chair should ensure the availability of a sufficient number of animals and/or organs and/or cadavers to achieve LOs for certain subject. While their practical trainings in clinics, students see patients according to their rotation schedule and the workflow of the clinics.

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 the supervision of teaching staff and follows the same standards as those applied in the VEE.

Description of the organisation and management of the external sites (teaching farms) and the involvement of students in their running (e.g. births, milking, feeding)

During both preclinical and clinical training, students participate in several practical training sessions at external sites. These training sessions are integrated into the curriculum and conducted according to a set schedule across different subjects. IVMAS has established long time cooperation with partners who keep cattle, small ruminants, pigs, horses, and who engage in aquaculture as well as with zoo, to enable students to participate in practical training related to animal handling, health assessments, and biosecurity practices under real-life conditions. This ensures that the respective partners meet the objectives and requirements of the curriculum and courses, including practical training, and guarantee that students achieve the necessary learning outcomes according to these objectives. All activities are supervised by teaching staff. Because of African swine fever in Estonia visiting multiple pig farms are complicated, however official agreement is settled to visit with pig farm for teaching purposes. The University holds an official permit from the Agriculture and Food Board for conducting farm visits.

At the [experimental dairy farm in Märja](#), located 5 km from the University campus, houses between 120 and 130 dairy cows and a similar number of youngstock (calves and heifers), with a total capacity of up to 250 animals. The farm is established to support both teaching and research and the animals play a central role in education, particularly in the areas of animal husbandry, reproduction, and internal medicine. The farm is equipped with both robotic and conventional milking systems, as well as a modern animal monitoring system. Following its renovation in 2024, the farm implemented advanced precision farming technologies, including automatic body condition scoring, milk progesterone measurement, rumination and activity monitoring, and animal positioning systems.

The farm serves as the primary site for developing practical skills in cattle production, herd management, and both preclinical and clinical veterinary practice. Veterinary students from all academic years participate in hands-on training at the facility.

The following agricultural enterprises provide opportunities for students to undertake their practical training placements.

Tartu Agro Farms have two milking farms, in total 1200 dairy cows. These farms locate 3 km from the University campus, and both of them are kept approximately 600 dairy cows and 400 youngstock. Second-year students visit this farm as part of the [VL.0818 Animal production](#) and [VL.0135 Animal hygiene](#). In the fourth year, students engage with topics such as calf health and udder health and reproduction during the course [VL.1163. Ruminant clinical medicine](#) and [VL.1283 Obstetrics and gynaecology II](#). Sixth-year students conduct herd health visits at the farm as part of [VL.0266 Cattle health management](#).

Practical training in small ruminant health and management takes place at a sheep farm Lutike located 45 km from the University. During a scheduled farm visit as part of the [VL.0135 Animal hygiene](#), students learn about the assessing of, environment, and hygiene practices related to sheep. Additionally, handling techniques, clinical examinations, and basic procedures in sheep are introduced during a separate farm visit under the subject [VL.1163 Ruminant clinical medicine](#).

Swine management and health-related subjects are taught at a full-cycle swine farm Kaubi Farmid in Puurmani, housing approximately 400 sows. Second-year students visit the Ekseko Farmid in Viljandi county as a part of their [VL.0135 Animal hygiene](#) course to assess the suitability of the environment as part of their training. During the clinical phase, each student completes two farm visits as part of [VL.1283 Obstetrics and gynaecology II](#) and two visits in [VL.1165 Swine clinical medicine](#). An additional farm visit is conducted in [VL.1348 Pig health management](#) during Semester 11.

As part of the [VL.0181 Animal production](#), students participate in a visit to Gramina Stud and Tähtvere Stud that accommodate approximately 20–40 horses. During the visit, students observe and assess horses' environment in stables. Additionally, one or two horses are brought from the paddock or stall to the riding arena, where students engage in hands-on activities such as establishing contact with the horse, leading it, lifting its legs, and performing other basic handling exercises.

Students participate in a field trip to the Chair of Aquaculture research station. Additionally, within the speciality elective subject [VL.1207 Terrarium animals and their healthcare](#), an annual visit is organised

to the [MiniZoo exotic terrarium](#) in Pärnu. This visit provides students with the opportunity to observe and interact with a variety of exotic species, enhancing their understanding of non-traditional animal care and broadening both their practical and theoretical knowledge in veterinary medicine.

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.

Description of how and by whom the nursing care skills are implemented and taught to undergraduate students

All students undergo a two-week practical training on a livestock farm during the summer of their second year, where they learn safe handling of production animals. The University assigns a responsible lecturer to oversee the practical training, while on-site instruction is provided by the farm own trainers. In the third year, nursing is taught through clinical laboratory diagnostics of small animals, production animals, and equines, along with courses in artificial insemination and reproduction, and artificial insemination and veterinary nurse training. As part of all clinical training conducted at the University's clinics, students gain practical experience in animal handling and nursing care.

Description of the group size for the different types of clinical training (both intra-murally and extra-murally) to guarantee hands-on training of all students

In clinical training related with teaching of clinical subjects from the third to fifth academic year, the group sizes remain consistent across years and subjects. On average, students are divided into four to five groups, each consisting of 12–15 students. All students acquire the same practical skills during these sessions. As each clinical training session lasts approximately three hours, supervisors may divide students into smaller subgroups to optimise the training process.

In the Clinical Skills Lab, a daily schedule is created for each student at the beginning of Semester 3. Based on availability, students can practise their clinical skills daily from 09:15 to 16:00 throughout Semesters 5 and 6.

Details regarding the duration and group sizes for clinical training at the University Animal Clinic during Semester 10 are provided in Standard 5.1.

In Semester 12, students may undertake the elective speciality submodule practical training also on an extra-mural basis. A trilateral agreement is then established between the University, the host institution, and the student. Typically, host institutions accommodate no more than 1–2 students at a time, depending on their caseload and the availability of qualified supervisors.

Description of the hands-on involvement of students in clinical procedures in the different species, i.e. clinical examination, diagnostic tests, blood sampling, treatment, nursing and critical care, anaesthesia, routine surgery, euthanasia, necropsy, report writing, client communication, biosecurity procedures, etc. (both intra-murally and extra-murally)

Information regarding biosecurity protocols is outlined in Standard 4.9.

Practical, hands-on training in clinical procedures begins in Semester 5, with courses focused on clinical examination and propaedeutics. During this phase, students learn essential sampling techniques, conduct clinical examinations on healthy live animals, and perform diagnostic tests such as haematology, parasitology, and bacteriology.

The most common clinical procedures, treatments, and routine surgeries are introduced in Semesters 7 and 8 through clinical subjects aligned with the LOs of each clinical discipline.

Core practical training begins in Semester 7. In Semester 10, during clinical rotations across various clinics, students are involved in taking case histories, conducting clinical examinations, and performing specific diagnostic and treatment procedures, including critical care and surgery, all under direct supervision.

At the Small Animal Clinic, each supervising veterinarian works closely with one to two students, fostering an environment that encourages active participation and ensures meaningful hands-on clinical experience.

In the Equine Clinic, students are actively involved in clinical procedures. They perform diagnostic procedures under supervision, contribute to developing treatment plans, and assist in administering medications, gaining comprehensive hands-on experience in all aspects of patient care. In surgical cases, students are assigned to either the surgical or anaesthesia team.

At the Production Animal Clinic, veterinarians conduct daily farm visits during which all diagnostic and treatment procedures, including surgeries, are carried out. Students participate in these activities, typically accompanying the veterinarian in groups of one or two.

Description of the procedures used to allow all students to spend extended periods in discussion, thinking and reading to deepen their understanding of the clinical case and its management

Staff room with access to students during rotations is available within the clinics, equipped with reference literature and computers. These spaces allow students to prepare for the cases they are responsible for, while also serving as venues for teachers and instructors to conduct case reviews and /patient discussions. During clinical training, each shift begins with round-table discussions involving the clinical team, setting the stage for collaborative learning. At the end of each shift, case discussions are held to reflect on patient management. At the Equine Clinic, students attend a weekly journal club where selected research papers are critically reviewed and discussed, further enhancing their analytical and clinical reasoning skills. At the Small Animal Clinic, all journal clubs and diagnostic imaging meetings are open to students, providing opportunities for discussion and the development of clinical guidelines. These sessions help to strengthen students' communication skills, critical thinking, and capacity for self-directed learning.

Standard 5.4: Medical records for patients seen intra- and extramurally under Core Clinical Training (CCT) must be comprehensive and maintained in an effective retrieval system to efficiently support the teaching and learning, research, and service programmes of the VEE.

Description of the patient record system, its completion, its availability to staff and students and how it is used to efficiently support the teaching, learning, research, and service programmes of the VEE

Over the past decade, the University Animal Clinic has utilised [Veterinary Software |Provet Cloud](#), a cloud-based electronic patient record system. Provet consolidates comprehensive patient information, including lab results, diagnostic images, owner details, and billing data. Diagnostic images – such as those from radiography, ultrasonography, CT and MRI scans – are archived and linked directly to the electronic patient records. These digital images are stored in an open-source Picture Archiving and Communication System (PACS).

All clinical staff members have secure access to detailed patient records, with strict controls in place to ensure data confidentiality. Students who require access to the ProVet Cloud for their studies must apply to the clinic manager. Researchers, PhD students, and students working on graduation theses may use the system for retrospective and prospective studies, as well as clinical research. As part of their training, students also learn the principles of comprehensive record-keeping and are expected to uphold professional ethical standards.

Additionally, the [Vissuke](#) program – national dairy cattle performance recording system – is used during practical training in cattle health management. Veterinarians working with the experimental dairy farm in Märja record all treatments in the Vissuke database and introduce students to its use during their training.

Comments on Area 5

In Estonia, the limited number of animals and animal species must be taken into account, which imposes certain restrictions on working with animal material and live animals. Small-scale producers have largely disappeared, and fish farming remains minimal. Cattle breeding and milk production are of significant importance to the Estonian economy. As of 2025, there are 375 dairy herds in Estonia, with an average of approximately 140 dairy cows per farm.

Suggestions for improvement in Area 5

A current focus of curriculum development in Veterinary Medicine is the formulation of a strategy to regulate the use of animal material and live animals.

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. Learning resources must be suitable to implement teaching facilities to secure the ‘never the first time on a live animal’ concept. 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, together with basic English teaching if necessary.

One of the University’s primary goals is to develop and enhance learning resources, IT systems, and infrastructure to meet the needs of students. This ongoing enhancement supports studies, research and practice, while also aiming to improve the general and digital competencies of both students and academic staff members.

The [University Library](#) provides access to essential study and research materials for both the University members and the public. As a member of the Estonian Libraries Network Consortium [ELNET](#) and the Association of European Research Libraries [LIBER](#), the library offers a wide range of paper and electronic materials. It ensures optimal access to key databases such as [CABi Digital Library](#), [EBSCO databases](#), [ScienceDirect](#), [Scopus](#), [Taylor & Francis](#), [Web of Science](#), [Wiley Online Library](#), and periodicals not referenced in databases. Additionally, the library facilitates [Interlibrary Loans](#) and maintains an extensive e-catalogue, [ESTER](#), which covers all paper printed and e-materials that have been purchased title-by-title.

The University’s digital archive, [EMU DSpace](#), managed by the library, collects and provides access to research outputs, including theses, publications, research data, and reports. As of January 2024, EMU DSpace housed 8,107 items, with significant contributions to veterinary medicine (803 items). Indexed in prominent search portals like Google Scholar and [OpenAIRE Explore](#), the archive supports the dissemination and accessibility of research.

The library also assists researchers with obtaining scientific literature, assigning DOIs, managing research data, and creating data management plans. Regular updates about learning resources are shared through various channels, including the library’s website, newsletters, and social media platforms in both Estonian and English. The library regularly gathers information on literature needs and acquires publications based on recommendations from institutes, including chairs and other units.

To uphold the principle of *never the first time on a live animal*, procedures in the clinical skills lab are initially practiced on inanimate models and simulators. The lecturer responsible for clinical skills teaching, in collaboration with the Head of Curriculum and the Chief Clinical Officer, determines the acquisition of simulators and materials.

Study materials are available in both Estonian and English, with materials from foreign guest lecturers exclusively in English. Additional resources, such as research articles and manuals, are also in English.

During the Orientation Days taking place at the beginning of the academic year, all freshmen pass an introductory session in the library on basic search interfaces, available services and resources. The library offers online courses: [OP.1452 Library and information skills](#) (2 ECTS) for international students, and [OP.1447 Searching scientific information from database](#) (3 ECTS) for national students. The objectives of the subjects are to introduce library’s resources and services and to obtain basic knowledge and practical skills in order to use research databases. Additionally, the library provides group and individual consultations for finding literature for theses, seminar papers, essays, and general database usage. Students can book consultation times online or submit questions via a dedicated [form](#), with support provided by an information services specialist. The library also offers reference management tools such as Mendeley and Zotero, as well as access to the online survey software QuestionPro. Upon request, the library staff conducts seminars and training sessions in Estonian and in English for lecturers, researchers, and students on using library resources, digital competencies, information search, referencing, and research data management.

The library regularly shares information about the available learning resources on the [website](#), staff and student lists, weekly newsletter, [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#).

Within the VM curriculum, the practical use of research databases and work with scientific literature are integrated into several subjects. These include [VL.1218 Basics of evidence-based veterinary medicine](#) (2 ECTS, Semester 1), [VL.1284 Research methodology in veterinary medicine](#) (1 ECTS, Semester 9), [VL.1355 Final thesis in veterinary medicine](#) (22 ECTS, Semesters 11 and 12). At the doctoral level, the development of research competencies continues through the mandatory module *Research* (7 ECTS), ensuring that students are well-equipped to engage with scientific literature and conduct independent research throughout their academic journey.

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 a qualified IT person, an e-learning platform, and 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).

Main library

The University library employs 12.75 full-time equivalent (FTE) permanent staff, including the Director of the library. Staff qualifications are continually being developed to better support students, researchers, and faculty management. The team includes a Services Development Manager and a Collections Development Manager, two information services specialists, two cataloguers, a bibliographer, a librarian, and three customer service representatives.

The library is open from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. on working days and from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Saturdays.

Funding for library acquisitions comes from the University budget, fees for paid services, donations, and targeted contributions. The library budget adheres to the University budget process rules, outlining all activities, revenues, and expenses.

Table 6.2.1. Annual budget of the library (in euros)

Academic year	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024
Budget	493 724	524 031	598 553

The library is centrally located on campus in the Main Building at 1A F. R. Kreutzwaldi Str., occupying a total area of 1,057 m². It features one reading room with 54 seats, two group study rooms, accommodating up to 12 students each, and two individual study rooms designed for two students each. All study rooms are available for booking.

The library is equipped with six computers for research and catalogue searches. It also offers WiFi access and numerous electrical outlets for personal devices. Students can make use of cloud-printing services and self-service lending machine.

IT facilities and of the e-learning platform

The University Department of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) comprises ten staff members. In addition to the department head, there are four specialists who handle Microsoft servers, *nix servers, and general information systems. Furthermore, each building has an ICT specialist available on-site to provide information and resolve issues.

The campus has a total of 16 computer classrooms, one of which is hosted by Zoomeedikum.

Students increasingly rely on their laptops and tablets, as all campus buildings are equipped with WiFi. For the past five years, both students and staff have utilised Microsoft 365 cloud (available at office.com) as their email management platform. Microsoft 365 allows students to use Microsoft Office applications either online or installed on their personal computers or smart devices and also provides access to Copilot. Additionally, all students are eligible for 100 GB of One Drive storage online.

To access licensed databases and journals, both students and staff use a secure VPN service. Students can access [databases](#) and [e-periodicals and -journals](#) linked on the University library [website](#). The staff members have access to internal services and file servers within the University. The VPN is compatible with Windows, Mac, Linux PCs, Android, and Apple smart devices. For ease of installation, the ICT department has created guidance videos alongside the guidelines available on the [IT Wiki website](#).

The University utilises the Study Information System ([SIS](#)) to facilitate the exchange of information

related to the organisation of studies. The SIS provides comprehensive details on curricula, including LOs, timetables, study materials, e-environments, and assessment methods. It also offers access to exam plans, academic progress tracking, student status information, and profiles of academic staff. Through the SIS, students can apply for speciality and performance-based grants, register for subjects and exams, and receive essential study-related updates. The use of SIS is governed by the [Study Regulations](#), which outlines the rights and responsibilities of its users. Access to the SIS requires a University user account and an official University email address.

Academic staff members use the WebDesktop document management system to access, handle, search, and distribute documents daily. This system is integrated with both the SIS and the AXAPTA program, which is used for human resource management. While University staff make full use of the document management system, students' access is restricted and role-dependent, such as when participating in decision-making bodies and committees.

In addition to the WebDesktop, the University leverages a variety of digital tools to enhance teaching and support studies. Among e-learning platforms, Moodle is the most widely used. Currently, approximately 40% of courses at IVMAS are supported through Moodle.

Alongside Moodle, the content creation tool H5P is used to create interactive learning materials such as quizzes, presentations, interactive videos, and other engaging content to enhance the learning experience. Online platforms such as BigBlueButton, MS Teams, and Zoom have seen increased usage for lectures, seminars, and workshops over the past years. Web-based polling platforms such as Mentimeter, Slido and Quizizz as well as applications like Wooclap and Kahoot are used to engage students and collect feedback. Through the University library, it is possible to use the online survey research tool QuestionPro. As of February 2024, the MER has acquired the plagiarism detection system [StrikePlagiarism](#) for use across all higher education institutions in Estonia. Currently, all Estonian higher education institutions utilise this system, enhancing the reliability of its database by incorporating files checked by all participating institutions. University staff can access and use StrikePlagiarism both via the web and through Moodle.

The University clinics use [Provet Cloud](#) veterinary software to manage clinical cases, record patient data, and support clinical teaching. When students begin their practical training at the clinics, they can request access to the software through clinic manager. [Provet Cloud](#) is also used to retrieve retrospective data for thesis research.

The University experimental dairy farm in Märja uses national program [Vissuke](#) to record for recording cattle performance data.

In the 2023/2024 academic year, the University prioritised replacing all feasible Google services with Microsoft solutions. This decision was driven by data protection concerns, as Google, being a US-based company, is considered a third country in terms of data protection regulations. Consequently, the University does not utilise Google for authentication purposes.

The academic staff members may consult the University's educational technologist for guidance on the use of IT tools and digital environments in the learning process. General and individual training sessions are organised University-wide (42 in the past three academic years), most of which have been recorded and are available via the Intranet and other platforms. Individual consultations are offered, including support for the development of e-courses.

Additionally, IT guides tailored for both academic staff and students are available on the University website in [English](#) and [Estonian](#). The Communication Specialist at IVMAS also provides support of video and podcast production. Best practices in the use of IT tools, along with opportunities for experience sharing, are promoted through regular seminars organised by the DAA.

During Welcome and Orientation Week, organised by the DAA, first-year students are introduced to the educational technology solutions used throughout their studies. Furthermore, within specific subjects, academic staff members offer guidance to students regarding the effective use of study environments.

Standard 6.3: The VEE must provide students with unimpeded access to learning resources, internet and internal study resources, as well as facilities and equipment for the development of procedural skills (e.g. clinical skills laboratory). 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.

Number of veterinary and other (e)books and (e)periodicals

As of 01.01.2024 the University library has 165,139 printed materials and 9,280 research digital objects (e-books and e-journals with permanent access, and content of DSpace). University staff and students have access to 36 [databases](#). In addition, subscriptions are held for 48 foreign-language scientific journals and 83 Estonian newspapers and journals. To increase the availability of recent scientific information, various [trial periods for e-databases and data sets](#) are organised.

The search, use and management of digital resources is facilitated by EBSCO [Discovery Service](#) and [EBSCO Full Text Finder](#), which provide access to approximately 500,000 e-books and 40,000 e-journals. The [reference management software](#) and the plagiarism detection system [StrikePlagiarism](#) are available. Regular evaluations of the library's services contribute to ongoing improvements. As a result, the library has increased the availability of e-materials and introduced a parcel locker and self-lending machine for contactless lending and returns. Additionally, the library hosts periodic displays of books and art items.

Table 6.3.1. Number of veterinary books and periodicals

	1.01.2022	1.01.2023	1.01.2024
Veterinary books	6938	6984	7030
Veterinary e-books	176	191	206
Other books and periodicals	Books 105,186 items Periodicals 1139 titles	Books 105,670 items Periodicals 1134 titles	Books 105,961 items Periodicals 1137 titles

University staff and students make use of the [Library of the University of Tartu](#).

Printed resources are available in the University library. E-resources are accessible both on campus and off-campus (via VPN) by signing in with the University login details. Students have unlimited access to SIS and Moodle platform-based environments of subjects ensuring availability of necessary learning materials, self-tests, PowerPoint presentations, essays, etc. The use of digital learning resources is aligned with the curriculum's LOs and continuously improved through student feedback, self-assessment, and teaching evaluations.

Organisation and supervision of the skill labs

In the academic year 2021/2022, an Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE) was initially introduced for fifth-year students. However, based on student feedback, the subject [VL.1340 Veterinary clinical skills](#) (1 ECTS) was rescheduled from the Semesters 9 and 10 to the Semesters 5 and 6 in 2022/2023. The subject is designed to cover basic skills essential for clinical practical training. Additionally, communication skills are a part of the course agenda. The subject now plays a crucial role for third-year students, equipping them with basic procedures according to the best practices before they engage in clinical studies. By utilising simulation models, students can develop and consolidate their professional abilities without involving live animals, adhering to the principles of animal welfare. Learning occurs through workshops, either in small groups or individually, under the supervision of a dedicated specialist. Students sign up for these workshops, and a customised schedule is created. When the room is free, students can practice on their own initiative by prior agreement. The course has Moodle-based support. Additionally, printed work instructions are available, and each table is equipped with a tablet where students can watch videos on learning respective skills. In addition, practical sessions for various subjects are conducted in the clinical skills workshop, in this way academic staff members are involved in the activities.

During their anatomy studies, students have free access to the [Anatomy Museum](#) and the histology classroom.

Comments on Area 6

As part of future renovation and expansion plans, the clinical skills lab is set to be expanded and its capabilities diversified. Adding tasks and procedures to the skills lab is an ongoing process, currently limited by space constraints.

The University is exploring alternative options for the SIS to sufficiently and efficiently meet the future needs of students.

The Moodle platform is undergoing changes. Starting from the 2025/2026 academic year, the service will be provided by a private company instead of the MER.

Suggestions for improvement in Area 6

During the preparation of the University and Institute DPs for the upcoming period, the need for learning resources at the University and within Institutes/Chairs must be clearly identified and defined according to the specific requirements of the curricula, in order to ensure an optimal, modern, and forward-looking study environment. The DP for learning resources must allocate funding from the University budget and ensure its implementation. This includes IT resources (such as hardware, software, AI tools, and learning platforms), facilities, online access and booking systems for study rooms, equipment and literature, as well as specialised educational equipment.

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 the educational programme in all advertisements for prospective national and international students.

Formal cooperation with other VEEs must also be clearly advertised.

Relevant information about the enrolment, is available on the University website in both [Estonian](#) and [English](#). The academic calendar, curriculum descriptions, LOs, study plans, progression and certification, and detailed information about all subjects are provided in the [SIS](#).

The Department of Marketing and Communication of the University promotes curricula both in Estonia and internationally. Each August, a comprehensive analysis of the annual admission campaign is conducted, including a comparative review of media strategies and expenditures across universities. The 2024/2025 admission campaign, developed in collaboration with the media and marketing agency [PHD Media](#), focused on digital platforms and outdoor media over a four-week period. It utilised social media channels (Facebook, Instagram, Reddit, TikTok), as well as YouTube, Spotify, Google, Bing, and banner advertisements on major Estonian news portals such as Postimees.ee and Delfi.ee. The campaign also featured digital displays in transit hubs and shopping centres, along with select print advertisements. Additionally, Estonian National Broadcasting produced a television programme highlighting the [veterinary profession and studies](#).

Internal communication and outreach efforts target upper secondary school teachers and prospective students through meetings, campus tours, and workshops. Student organisations contribute by visiting schools to present study opportunities. The University participates in education fairs, hosts Open Door events, and offers a student shadowing program. To strengthen international outreach, the University collaborates with the [Study in Estonia](#) portal and veterinary medicine student organisations such as [Suolet](#), [EVÜS](#) and [IVSA](#). International students also serve as study ambassadors, representing the University around the world.

Collaborations and partnerships with other VEEs are showcased through the IVMAS blog, dedicated Instagram clinic accounts ([equine](#), [small animal](#)), published articles, press releases, and testimonials from participants in exchange programmes and joint initiatives. A comprehensive list of partner institutions is available on the Erasmus+, Erasmus+ International Credit Mobility, and BOVA-NOVA Network websites.

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.

The MER defines each university’s areas of responsibility, which in turn determines their public funding. Universities independently decide which curricula are open for admission and the number of students to be admitted.

According to the [Higher Education Act](#), students enrolled in a curriculum taught in Estonian are exempt from tuition fees. While the VM curriculum taught in Estonian offers state-funded study places, full-fee study places may be established for curricula taught in English. The current tuition fee for the VM curriculum taught in English is 4,800 euros per semester; this amount is reviewed annually and approved by the University Senate, with a potential increase of up to 10% per year.

The DAA evaluates several key indicators, including the total number of applications received, competition for study places, the number of applicants meeting admission criteria, and the admission score of the last accepted applicant across the University. For the curricula taught in English, the geographical origins of applicants and the home countries of enrolled students are analysed and compared with data from previous years. This information is shared within IVMAS with the Director, the Director of Academic Affairs, and the Head of Curricula. In the integrated veterinary medicine curriculum, student intake has remained unchanged for the past ten years due to limited facilities. Given the current budget and staffing level, the existing capacity is considered optimal – although the availability of healthy and diseased animals, as well as materials of animal origin, could support a larger student cohort.

Table 7.2.1.A Number of new students admitted to the VM curriculum taught in Estonian

Type of students	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	Mean
Standard students	34	34	34	34
Full fee students	0	0	0	0
Total	34	34	34	34

Table 7.2.1.B Number of new students admitted to the VM curriculum taught in English

Type of students	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	Mean
Standard students	0	0	0	0
Full fee students	38	39	26	34
Total	38	39	26	34

Table 7.2.2. Number of veterinary undergraduate students at the VEE

Year of programme	2021/2022		2022/2023		2023/2024		Mean	
	EST	ENG	EST	ENG	EST	ENG	EST	ENG
First year	41	39	39	40	38	30	39.3	36.3
Second year	28	34	32	37	30	35	30.0	35.3
Third year	28	34	28	36	31	42	29.0	37.3
Fourth year	25	31	23	30	32	33	26.7	31.3
Fifth year	21	29	24	31	17	28	20.7	29.3
Sixth year	18	37	20	31	27	33	21.7	33.7
Total	161	204	166	205	175	201	167.3	203.3

EST – curriculum taught in Estonian; ENG – curriculum taught in English

Table 7.2.3. Number of veterinary students graduating annually

Type of students	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	Mean
Standard students (EST)	14	16	15	15.0
Full fee students (ENG)	31	33	30	31.3
Total	45	49	45	46.3

Table 7.2.4. Average duration of studies of the students who graduated in 2023

Duration	No	%
+ 0*	40	88,9
+ 1 year	3	6,7
+ 2 years	2	4,4
+ 3 years or more	0	0

* The total duration of the studies matches the minimum number of years of the curriculum at the University (6 years).

Table 7.2.5. Number of postgraduate students enrolled

Programmes	2021	2022	2023
Interns*	–	–	–
Residents	–	–	–
PhD students	5	4	3
Others	–	–	–

* Interns see Table 10.3.1, Standard 10.3.

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.

The prerequisite for enrolling studies according [Higher Education Act](#) is a secondary education or an equivalent qualification. The University recognises foreign qualifications based on international conventions, agreements, and Estonian legislation. The Estonian [ENIC/NARIC Centre](#) evaluates international candidates' access to higher education based on their diplomas and academic supplements. Candidates with the required education level abroad must submit a certificate showing they meet the curriculum's minimum language proficiency requirements. Universities have the right to set additional admission criteria specific to each curriculum to ensure they select the most suitable candidates.

The veterinary medicine CDC is revising selection criteria for veterinary curricula, considering the number of applicants and the reasons for student dropouts from previous years. The CDC's recommendations will be presented to the DAA for review and, if necessary, adjustment. Based on these proposals, the DAA updates the admission regulations. The DAA then submits the regulations to the University Senate's Academic Committee, which forwards the final version to the Senate for approval. The admission regulations are reviewed and approved annually by the Senate in November.

Admission procedures for standard students

Admissions are centrally organised by the DAA through the Estonian admission information system [SAIS](#) and the [DreamApply](#) platform. The DAA admissions specialist reviews applications to ensure they meet the requirements. The Veterinary Admissions Committee evaluates motivation letters and compiles a ranking list, which is then submitted to the University's Admissions Committee.

The admission schedule, including deadlines, is approved by a directive issued by the Rector. Admission to VM curriculum taught in Estonian runs from May to June, with applications submitted through SAIS. Accepted applicants are notified via email in mid-July and must confirm their enrolment in SAIS within two days.

Selection criteria for standard students

The University Senate approves the admission regulations for each curriculum annually, and this information is made available to applicants in both Estonian and English on the University's [website](#). The [selection criteria](#) for standard students applying to the VM curriculum taught in Estonian, as determined each year in the University Senate regulations, are as follows: results of Estonian language and mathematics state exams; grades of chemistry, biology, mathematics, and the Estonian on the upper secondary school graduation certificate, and a letter of motivation.

Selection criteria for full fee students

The [selection criteria for full-fee students in the VM curriculum](#) taught in English include the International Student Admission Test (ISAT), proof of English language proficiency at a minimum of level B2, and a letter of motivation.

Candidates are ranked based on their overall results, and study places are offered to those who are shortlisted. Ranking lists are compiled separately for each curriculum.

Admission procedures for full fee students (if different from standard students)

Admission to the VM curriculum taught in English runs from February to May, with international candidates submitting their applications via the [DreamApply](#) platform. The final admission decision is announced at the end of June, and notifications are sent through DreamApply. Accepted students have seven days to confirm their enrolment within the platform.

Policy for disabled and ill students

Applicants with special needs are subject to the same admission conditions as all other applicants at the University. As information regarding special needs is considered sensitive personal data, the University may only collect such data if the applicant voluntarily chooses to disclose it. In the case of a student with special needs, the University takes an individual approach to assessing learning opportunities in cooperation with the head of curriculum and the University psychologist, who also serves as the contact person for students with special needs. Together, they evaluate the student's ability to complete the curriculum and determine what adjustments may be necessary based on the student's specific needs.

All University buildings are accessible to persons with mobility impairments.

Composition and training of the selection committee

The members of the University Admission Commission and sub-commissions are approved by a directive issued by the Rector. The University Admission Commission, chaired by the Vice-Rector of Academic Affairs and comprising Directors of Academic Affairs, a student representative, and DAA admissions specialists, approves the list of admitted students and handles complaints and exceptions. Sub-commissions are established for curricula requiring motivation letters or entrance exams.

Appeal process

To contest the results of the admission test, except for the motivation letter, the student candidate must submit an appeal to the Admissions Committee electronically no later than the working day following the announcement of the results of the admissions test. The Admissions Committee will make a decision on the appeal and notify the student candidate of this decision within two working days following the day the appeal was submitted. The decision of the Admissions Committee is final. Procedure is described each year in the University Senate Regulation with relevant information provided for students at [website](#).

Information on admission is available at the University website both in [Estonian](#) and [English](#). See also Standard 7.1.

Description of how the VEE adapts the number of admitted students to the available educational resources

Stakeholders are concerned about the shortage of veterinarians in specific fields, with demand for both small and production animal veterinarians and specialists. The University, along with the Estonian Veterinary Chamber and Estonian Chamber of Agriculture and Commerce, are addressing this shortage.

The Veterinary Medicine CDC analyses admission data and labour market demand to plan student admissions for the VM curriculum taught in Estonian. Factors such as funding, staff, facilities, and animal resources are considered to ensure teaching quality. The CDC submits recommended admission numbers to the DAA, and the Senate approves them.

For the 2024/2025 academic year, the University has increased the number of standard students from 34 to 36 and is implementing measures to prevent dropouts. Over the past three years, 38 full-fee students have been admitted annually to the VM curriculum taught in English.

Over the past five years, approximately 70 students have enrolled annually – half in the VM curriculum taught in Estonian and half in the VM curriculum taught in English. An analysis of enrolment trends, academic staff workload, and available facilities indicates that increasing the intake beyond 75 students in the near future is unlikely.

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.

The support policy for students with disabilities and illnesses is outlined in Standard 7.3.

Information about special needs is considered sensitive personal data and is collected only if voluntarily disclosed by the student. These details are recorded in the University's database solely when the student

requests support services or applies for a scholarship based on their special needs. Full-time students diagnosed with a disability may apply for a state-funded scholarship ranging from 60 to 520 euros per month, depending on the type and severity of the disability. Each application is assessed individually, with the University's psychologist serving as the primary contact. In cases of serious illness, students are required to interrupt their studies or take academic leave until they are medically cleared to continue, as confirmed by a specialist doctor. The University offers free psychological counselling for students experiencing mental health challenges. First- and second-year students also benefit from mentorship provided by tutors and course supervisors. The curriculum includes the subject [VL.0142 Veterinary mental health and self-care](#) (2 ECTS) to promote student well-being.

University buildings are wheelchair accessible and equipped with elevators. Hostel Torn on campus offers rooms adapted for wheelchair users. All dining areas are located along accessible routes, and designated accessible parking spaces are available near campus buildings and hostels.

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.

The [academic calendar](#), approved annually by the Vice-Rector of Academic Affairs, serves as the basis for organising studies and is available on the University website and in the [SIS](#).

Deadlines for graduation and thesis defence are determined by the Director of Academic Affairs and published on IVMAS [website](#). Students follow a study plan approved by the CDC and the Director of Academic Affairs. This plan outlines the sequence of subjects and the number of credits per semester. Full-time students are required to complete 30 ECTS per semester, totalling 60 ECTS per academic year. While the [Higher Education Act](#) allows for part-time studies, the VM curriculum mandates full-time enrolment. Studies are conducted in accordance with the [Regulation of Studies](#), as approved by the University Senate. Academic progress is recorded in the SIS and can be accessed by the student, the study officer who monitors the student's progress and provides support when needed, the Director of Academic Affairs who issues regulations related to studies and students, and DAA members according to their respective roles. Full-time students who have completed at least 75% of the cumulative study load by August 31 are promoted to the next academic year. Those who do not meet full-time study requirements by this date are removed from the matriculation register.

Credits from RPL may be transferred if they correspond to mandatory, elective or optional subjects. This process follows the Senate's regulation titled [Terms and Procedure for Accreditation of Prior and Experiential Learning and Transfer of Study Results](#).

Students who have completed all compulsory and elective subjects outlined in the curriculum by the specified deadline are permitted by the Director of Academic Affairs to defend their final theses.

Support for students who do not perform adequately

The VM curriculum maintains academic standards while providing flexibility to support students facing challenges. The [Regulation of Studies](#) outlines the procedures for evaluating academic progress. According to the study plan, students must complete [prerequisites](#) before enrolling in [clinical subjects](#).

To progress to the next academic year, students are required to complete 75–100% of the prescribed credits. Retake examinations are available until the end of academic year. Students who fail to accumulate at least 75% of the required credits are subject to exmatriculation. Academic progress is monitored by officers of academic affairs, who contact students experiencing difficulties and work collaboratively to find solutions. Where necessary, they coordinate with academic staff to provide targeted support. This may include additional consultations, personalised guidance, and feedback to help students better understand complex material and overcome learning obstacles. In cases where academic difficulties persist, students may be advised to take academic leave. [Academic leave](#) may be granted for one year upon request, for up to two years for health-related reasons, until a child reaches the age of three for maternity leave, and for up to one year for military service. During academic leave, students may take re-examinations to accumulate

the credits required for progression. If a student misses a scheduled exam for a valid reason, they may be permitted to take it individually.

To be eligible for the defence of the FT, sixth-year students must complete all required courses by a specified deadline. A one-year extension may be granted. If the thesis is not defended within this period, students may do so as externs following exmatriculation.

See also Standard 7.7.

Advertisement to students and transparency of these procedures

The primary platform for communicating academic progress criteria and ensuring transparency is the SIS. Tutors and buddies, who are trained to support students, provide guidance on academic procedures and important dates throughout the first academic year. Academic officers and the Director of Academic Affairs offer both individual and group consultations and providing continuous support to students. Personnel from the DAA are also available for one-on-one consultations. Any changes to important dates are communicated via student mailing lists, with student organisations assisting in the dissemination of information. IVMAS administration maintains open and transparent communication to ensure that all information is accessible and clearly understood. The study plan, detailed course descriptions, prerequisite subjects, and criteria for both coursework and examinations are available in the SIS. Students can monitor their academic progress and current status at any time through the SIS.

Rate and main causes of attrition

For students admitted between 2015 and 2018, the dropout rate for the VM curriculum taught in Estonian was 45%, while the rate for the curriculum taught in English was significantly lower at 7.5%, resulting in an overall average attrition rate of 25.7%. The majority of dropouts (86%) occurred within the first two academic years, with the remaining 14% taking place in later years. Most students (79%) discontinued their studies voluntarily, while 21% were dismissed due to unsatisfactory academic performance. In an effort to reduce dropout rates, the University revised the admission criteria for the VM curriculum taught in Estonian in 2020. The entrance examination in biology and chemistry was replaced an evaluation based on upper secondary school grades, and the maximum score for the motivation letter were increased from 5 to 20 points. This change has had a measurable impact: the dropout rate among first- and second-year students admitted in 2021 and 2023 decreased by 1.7 times – from 32.9% to 18.1% – compared to those admitted between 2015 and 2019.

The information of how and by who the admission procedures and criteria, the number of admitted students and the services to students are decided, communicated and revised is provided in Standard 7.3

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.

The [Regulation of Studies](#) outlines the procedures for student exclusion. Students may be exmatriculated at their own request, at the initiative of the University, or due to exceptional circumstances such as serious illness. University-initiated exmatriculation may occur due to failure to commence studies within two weeks of the official start date, prolonged absence without a valid reason, unsatisfactory academic performance, non-payment of tuition fees, or inappropriate conduct, including academic fraud. Students with fewer than 75% of the required credits by 31 August each academic year or those who fail to complete the curriculum by the designated end date, will also be exmatriculated. Students have the right to request the formation of an examination board to retake an exam by submitting a reasoned application to the Director of Academic Affairs. However, failure in a board examination also results in exmatriculation. The final decision for exmatriculation is made by the Vice-Rector for Academic Affairs, based on a proposal submitted by the Director of Academic Affairs.

The [Regulation of Studies](#) provides detailed guidance on the appeal process. In order to challenge decisions in matters related with studies the student shall approach the decision-making person or the chairperson of the decision-making body within ten working days after the decision is made public, who submits their reasoned decision within five working days from the filing of the complaint. If the response is not satisfying for the student, the student shall present a written appeal to the Director of Academic Affairs of IVMAS within five working days after the student was informed of such decision. The director of Academic Affairs shall inform the student about his decision within 15 working days of the submission of the appeal the

latest. In disputes pertaining to the procedure and/or result of the defence of the doctoral thesis appeals are submitted pursuant to University Senate regulation [The Conditions and Procedure for Awarding Doctoral Degrees](#).

Students can also challenge the results of their final exam or thesis defence by submitting a formal complaint to the Defence Committee or the Director of Academic Affairs within five working days. The University will provide a written response within the same timeframe.

Additionally, students can file complaints concerning unequal treatment on the grounds of nationality, race, gender, language, religion, social status, age, disability, or sexual orientation. For further support, student representatives, academic mentors and academic officers are available to assist students in navigating the appeals process according to the University's [Procedure for Processing Proposals and Complaints](#).

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 for disabled students, consistent with all relevant equality, diversity and/or human rights legislation.

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

The University provides comprehensive support for students' physical and emotional well-being through a range of dedicated services, and opportunities.

Orientation Week for Estonian students and Welcome Week for international students offer essential support during the transition to academic life. These programmes introduce students to leisure activities, life in Tartu, Estonian culture and customs, and local points of interest. Alongside the subject [VL.1268 Introduction to veterinary studies](#) (2 ECTS), they help students adapt to university life by offering guidance on study skills, academic procedures, document templates, and available resources. The course also focuses on developing time management and effective learning strategies.

During Orientation and Welcome week, first-year students meet representatives from the University administration, international and academic officers, the Head of Curriculum, the Director of Academic Affairs, alumni, Heads of Chairs, psychologists, and others. Peer support plays a key role, with [tutors](#), buddies, and members of the [Student Union](#), playing an active role in welcoming and assisting new students. To strengthen the buddy and tutor system, the University offers two 3-ECTS subjects: [OP.1449 Training programme for tutors](#) and [OP.1453 Training programme for international student tutors](#).

The role of academic supervisor was introduced specifically to support veterinary students. This initiative has been well received, particularly by first- and second-year students, as it provides both academic guidance and motivational support.

Officers of academic affairs assist students in creating personalised study plans that accommodate individual needs, abilities, and preferences. They also help with class scheduling, study group selection, and the RPL.

The University provides comprehensive support and counselling services for international full-time and exchange students. For academic matters, international relations specialists within the DAA and Erasmus+ coordinators are available to offer guidance. Additional support is provided by the [Tartu Welcome Centre](#). The University's [International Club](#) also organises social and cultural events for international students and visiting lecturers, helping to foster a sense of community and inclusion.

The Estonian state offers scholarships to support students with special needs in pursuing higher education. Students with moderate, severe, or profound disabilities are entitled to a tuition fee exemption. Subject-specific accommodations are discussed directly with the relevant academic staff. During examinations, reasonable adjustments – such as larger print formats, the use of hearing aids, or extended time for students with dyslexia or dysgraphia – may be made, while maintaining academic standards.

The University provides comprehensive [mental health support](#) through two psychologists who offer counselling on both academic and personal matters. They also recommend preventive strategies to help students maintain their mental well-being. This psychological counselling service is free of charge for all students. In addition, veterinary students benefit from a mandatory course, [VL.0142 Veterinary mental health and self-care](#) (2 ECTS), which focuses on mental health awareness and self-care practices.

Career counselling is also available, particularly for students approaching graduation. International relations officers and career advisors collaborate to support international students, and the University partners with the [Baltic Research Institute](#) to assist third-country nationals in finding employment opportunities. The University also organises an annual Career Fair, which introduces students to potential employers and internship opportunities.

Students actively participate in decision-making bodies such as the University Senate, the IVMAS Council, the Student Union, and the CDC. This involvement ensures that students remain informed about institutional procedures and can effectively communicate relevant information to their peers.

Veterinary students are also engaged in various student associations, including Finnish Veterinary Students' Association [Suolet](#), International Veterinary Students' Association ([IVSA](#)), Estonian Veterinary Students' Association ([EVÜS](#)), [Hyraco](#) – Veterinary Students' Association for those interested in horses, Surgery Club, Journal Club, and other student organisations in Tartu. They also participate in the work of [University Student Union](#), located in Torn Dormitory (52 F. R. Kreutzwaldi Str.). The University offers a wide range of student services, including IT support, [library](#) access, language centre, sports centre, dormitories and canteens. Students are encouraged to participate in the [Chamber Choir Camerata Universitatis](#), the [Tartu Academic Male Choir](#), the [Tartu Students' Mixed Choir](#), the [Folk Dance Group Tarbatu](#), and the [Erasmus Student Network Tartu](#).

IVMAS actively supports student initiatives by providing logistical resources (e.g. rooms and equipment for lectures or surgery clubs) and financial assistance to help student organisations achieve their goals.

Veterinary students are covered by accident and liability insurance provided by IVMAS.

Students have access to multiple channels for raising and resolving grievances. For informal concerns, they are encouraged to contact the appropriate individual based on the nature and severity of the issue – this may include their tutor, buddy, responsible lecturer, course supervisor, officers of academic affairs of IVMAS, or the Head of Curriculum. Many issues are resolved amicably through these informal discussions, without the need for formal procedures. In cases involving serious misconduct or unresolved concerns, students may submit a formal complaint to the Director of Academic Affairs, a student representative in decision-making bodies, the Vice-Rector for Academic Affairs, or the Rector.

Several University regulations govern the procedures for addressing and appealing academic and administrative decisions: [Regulation of Studies](#), [Requirements and Procedure for the Awarding of Bachelor's and Master's Degrees](#) and [Conditions and Procedure for Awarding Doctorates](#) pertain to academic decisions. [Terms and Procedure for Covering the Cost of Tuition in Formal Education](#) addresses tuition fee-related grievances. [Procedure for Processing Proposals and Complaints](#) handles cases related to discriminatory, harassing, or bullying conduct. [Guidelines for Equal Treatment](#) and [Good Academic Practice and Implementation of Principles of Academic Ethics](#) ensure fair treatment and ethical behaviour. All relevant documents and information are accessible via the University's website.

Grievances are handled confidentially and in a timely manner. Support services, including psychological counselling, are available to assist students throughout the process. Students may also raise issues through their elected representatives in decision-making bodies such as the IVMAS Council and the University Senate.

Additionally, the Director of IVMAS meets with representatives of student organisations once per semester to discuss feedback and concerns.

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 the compliance of the VEE with national and international legislation and the ESEVT Standards.

In accordance with the [Regulation of Studies](#) (section 173.2) every student has the right to submit reasoned proposals for improving teaching activities. These proposals may be directed to lecturers, the Head of Curriculum, the Director of Academic Affairs, the Head of the DAA, the Vice-Rector for Academic Affairs, or the Rector. The University has established various channels for expressing opinions, suggestions, and feedback. However, students are also entitled to submit proposals outside of these formal mechanisms, including by contacting relevant individuals directly or via email.

Feedback on courses, lecturers, and curricula can be provided through the SIS. Feedback on support services, including service quality, is collected through a dedicated survey conducted regularly by the University. Additionally, feedback from international exchange students is gathered in cooperation with the Erasmus+ coordinating unit. The Head of Curriculum organises meetings with students to facilitate direct feedback. IVMAS Board also holds regular meetings with the Veterinary Student Organisation, providing a platform for students to raise concerns, discuss issues, and seek solutions collaboratively. Students are involved in various decision-making bodies at both the IVMAS and University levels. They are represented on bodies such as the IVMAS Council and the University Senate, including the Committee for Academic Affairs, and CDC. Students also have the opportunity to stand for election to the Student Union, through which they can participate in University management and contribute to institutional development.

Comments on Area 7

IVMAS is considering various methods to screen the most suitable student candidates, including the potential introduction of a face-to-face interview stage.

Suggestions for improvement in Area 7

IVMAS should continue enhancement of student welfare by upgrading its infrastructure and facilities to better support academic and personal development.

While there is a growing national demand for production animal veterinarians in Estonia, the majority of graduates currently pursue careers in small animal practice. Strategies to encourage more graduates to enter the production animal sector should be explored.

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.

The assessment strategy of the VM curriculum is based on clearly defined processes and division of responsibilities, as set out in the [Regulation of Studies](#) and the [Statutes of Curriculum](#). This ensures the integrity of the assessment management and supports the continuous development of students throughout the entire curriculum. The responsibility for planning, implementing, monitoring, and continuously improving the assessment strategy is shared among the following parties:

The Head of Curriculum, together with the CDC, coordinates the harmonisation of assessment methodologies and practices at the curriculum level, in alignment with the curriculum objectives and intended LOs.

The CDC is responsible for ensuring the appropriateness of assessment methods and criteria within the overall context of the curriculum. The committee analyses assessment data, including student feedback and curriculum performance, and proposes improvements to the assessment management.

The DAA organises the collection and centralised analysis of student feedback and conducts internal evaluations of curricula.

The Director of Academic Affairs oversees the compliance of assessment processes with established regulations and ensures smooth information and communication flow between IVMAS and University management bodies.

Teaching staff are responsible for conducting assessment methods in their courses and applying assessment criteria clearly, consistently, and fairly.

Organisation of the Assessment Process:

Teaching is conducted according to the curriculum approved by the Senate. All courses are registered in the SIS, and for each course a syllabus is prepared based on the objectives and LOs. The syllabus also defines prerequisites for accessing the final assessment, assessment principles, and possibilities for resolving outstanding obligations. The responsible teaching staff member prepares and submits the syllabus before each academic semester. Curriculum change proposals approved by the CDC are reviewed by the Director of the Academic Affairs, who prepares the curriculum change documentation and forwards it to the DAA. The DAA verifies the documents' compliance with both internal and external regulations and then submits compliant documents to the Senate's Academic Affairs Committee, which decides on approval or forwards the proposals to the Senate.

A new curriculum version is approved at the beginning of each academic year following a thorough review. The review is conducted by the Head of the Curriculum, the Director of Academic Affairs and the CDC and includes analysis of course and curriculum statistical indicators (e.g., dropout and graduation rates) and consideration of student feedback.

Besides the annual curriculum review at the IVMAS level, the University conducts internal curriculum evaluations every three years. The internal evaluation pays special attention to the assessment of courses, including the clarity and appropriateness of assessment methods and criteria, the purpose and role of assessment, and the alignment and coherence of assessment with the course and curriculum LOs. A key element of the VM curriculum assessment strategy is the system of prerequisite courses, which aims to support the learner's gradual development and the logical structure of the curriculum, ensuring the purposeful achievement of LOs.

In addition to what is described in the syllabus, teaching staff must offer two regular exam or assessment sessions during the semester and one make-up exam session. If a student fails the exam twice or misses it without a valid reason, they must retake the course. Students have the right to appeal exam results according to the [Regulation of Studies](#) and to request a commission exam organised by the Director of Academic Affairs.

Description of the methodologies for assessing the acquisition of knowledge and skills

In accordance with the autonomy granted to Estonian universities, the VM curriculum employs a diverse and comprehensive range of methodologies to assess students' acquisition of theoretical knowledge, pre-

clinical skills, and clinical practical skills. The chosen methods are aligned with the intended LOs and aim to support both academic progress and professional competence.

Theoretical knowledge is assessed through a combination of formative and summative methods, using both written and oral examinations. Assessment formats include multiple-choice questions, true/false statements, short-answer and essay questions, matching exercises, case analyses, written tests, presentations, research projects, specimen identification, literature reviews, thesis plans, thesis writing and defence, and written self-analyses. In many subjects, active class participation is also assessed, including through group work, presentations, essays, project tasks, and mathematical exercises.

Pre-clinical practical skills are mainly assessed through checklist-based evaluations and skills demonstrations, particularly during Semester 6, prior to the students' progression into clinical training. Additionally, students' performance in laboratory assignments and dissection protocols is systematically assessed.

Clinical practical skills are assessed throughout clinical rotations and EPT. Assessment methods include the use of logbooks, case analyses, and clinical reports. Both host supervisors at EPT sites and academic staff from the University contribute to the final evaluation. Interim assignments and guided reflections are employed to monitor students' ongoing progress and to ensure that clinical LOs are met.

Assessment criteria, grading principles, and final examination requirements for each subject are published in the SIS. In accordance with [regulation of Studies](#), students are informed of the deadlines for the publication of examination results, and the procedures for appealing results are clearly outlined.

Students receive feedback on their test results and submitted assignments to support learning and enhance performance.

Within the curriculum, soft skills are learned and developed in a wide variety of subjects on a daily basis. These competencies include, among others, teamwork skills, foreign language proficiency, communication skills, written and oral expression skills, analytical and synthesis skills, and source criticism. Subjects have and are being included in the VM curriculum that address time management, mental health and self-care, client communication and entrepreneurship, e.g.

[VL.0142 Veterinary mental health and self-care](#) (2 ECTS), [VL.0825 Veterinary practice and management](#) (3 ECTS), [VL.0113 Client communication and practice management](#) (2 ECTS), [KE.0093 English/Estonian mediation for academic and professional purposes](#) (3 ECTS).

The Estonian Standard of Higher Education highlights the importance of incorporating soft skills not only into curricula but every subject. Transition of soft skills to LO-s and updated curricula is planned for the 2028/29 academic year in Estonian universities. Such topics as digital skills, general skills, creativity, self and change management, green skills, the ability to take care of mental and physical health and adaptability are emphasised.

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.

Processes for ensuring the advertising and transparency of the assessment procedures

The [Regulation of Studies](#) regulates the assessment methods and scales, recording of results, rights and obligations of the student, as well as the appeal process. This information is available for students, lecturers and examiners on the University [website](#).

The SIS provides key assessment information, including types, criteria, final requirements, retake options, study materials and the formation of the final grade. Responsible lecturer explains study process including assessment procedures at the start of courses. The date, time and form of the examination(s) are available in SIS. Students must be offered at least two dates for the scheduled examination and at least one date for the retake. At least two days are required between the scheduled examinations in different subjects. The result for the exams is entered in the report, which is the source document for accounting study results. The results are available for the students in the SIS according the timelines as indicated in the [Regulation of Studies](#). The student can see only their own study results and the lecturer that of their subject.

The students have the right to request and see their written exam and receive explanation of their examination results.

Processes for awarding grades

Grading procedures are outlined in the [Regulation of Studies](#). According to the Regulation each course specifies whether it concludes with a graded (differentiated) or non-differentiated (pass/fail) assessment. The methods used to verify the acquisition of knowledge and skills are usually an exam or a credit test, but other forms of assessment may also be used, such as course projects, etc. As with the curriculum, assessment methods and criteria are communicated to students no later than at the beginning of the course. During the learning process, interim assessments are also applied to check the material covered, including the achievement of LOs, or to provide students with feedback on their progress. Some courses use interim assessment results to compile the final grade, while others apply formative assessments that allow students to develop their knowledge and skills towards the final grade.

For each grade, a threshold is defined that the level of achievement of the LO must meet. The principles for determining the final grade are described in the [Regulation of Studies](#) (V.2. Assessment scales).

The modification of a course's type of assessment (differentiated/non-differentiated) falls under the competence of the CDC. If a lecturer wishes to change the type of assessment, they must submit the course description form to the CDC, which evaluates the request and forms a decision. Subsequently, the Head of the Curriculum submits the request to the Academic Affairs Office for implementation of the change in the SIS.

Certain subjects have prerequisites that must be successfully completed to progress to subsequent courses. Additionally, by 31 August, students are required to have completed at least 75% of the obligatory courses, prescribed in the curriculum for the corresponding academic year in order to continue their studies. If a student fails a course twice, they must retake the course. If they fail it twice again, they have the right to request a committee examination. If the student fails the committee examination, they will be expelled.

The Requirements and Procedures for Awarding Bachelor's and Master's Degrees outline general principles for defending final theses (FT). The evaluation of the FT is based on a combined assessments by appointed reviewers and the members of the five-member Defence Committee. The defence is conducted publicly, while the evaluation takes place in a closed session using a differentiated grading scale. The final grade is communicated to the student via the SIS. Decisions are made unanimously by the Defence Committee, taking into account the reviewer's opinion or grade. If the supervisor of the FT is also a member of the Defence Committee, they do not participate in grading process for the FT they supervised or co-supervised. Students who are unable to attend the defence due to valid reasons are entitled to defend their FT at a later date, as determined by the Director of Academic Affairs. In the event of failed defence, students may request a re-defence, which will also be scheduled by the Director of Academic Affairs. Guidelines, including the evaluation matrix and materials for all stages of assessment are accessible through SIS and Moodle, thus ensuring transparency and fairness throughout the process.

Processes for providing to students a feedback post-assessment and guidance for requested improvement

The process of providing feedback on a student's academic performance varies by course and depends on the structure of the assessment process in the specific subject. Feedback can be individual, where each student receives a personal feedback, group-based, or automated (e.g., in tests conducted through the Moodle platform). Feedback is provided both during the course and after the final assessment.

After final assessment, results are published, students are given the opportunity to review their written exam papers and receive explanations regarding the determination of their grades. Within three days of the publication of results, students have the right to submit a request for clarification of the assessment.

Appeal processes against assessment outcomes

Students may challenge academic decisions by initially contacting the decision-maker within five days, either in person or in writing. The majority of issues are resolved at this stage. If the matter remains unresolved, a second written appeal may be submitted to the Director of Academic Affairs, who may consult the University legal counsel. In cases involving doctoral evaluations, the Academic Committee of the University Senate is also engaged. The second appeal must be submitted within five days of receiving the initial response, and a final decision is issued within 15 days.

If a student disputes a grade or examination result, they may apply for a retake before an examination board by submitting a reasoned request to the Director of Academic Affairs. The board is formed within two weeks. Failure in the board examination results in dismissal from the University.

To contest FT defence results, students may submit a written protest to the Director of Academic Affairs within five working days. An Appeal Committee is appointed and must respond within ten days. Based on committee's input, the Director may propose changes to degree or diploma decision. The Defence Committee may permit a re-defence or amend the grade. These decisions are final and cannot be appealed further within the University.

Cases of academic fraud are handled in accordance with the [Regulation of Studies](#). Where fraud is suspected, the lecturer requests a written explanation from the student and submits the relevant evidence to the Director of Academic Affairs. The Director may issue a reprimand or recommend expulsion to the Vice-Rector. In cases involving exchange students, the student's home university is notified. The Defence Committee has the authority to revoke an academic degree in cases of confirmed academic fraud. The decision is submitted to the DAA and made public. If an award is rescinded due to academic fraud, the student has the right to apply for a repeat defence no earlier than one year after the original decision.

Appeals are typically resolved at the IVMAS level. In the past three years, no appeals have been escalated to the University administration.

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.

The University has a clearly defined and structured process for the continuous development, implementation, and monitoring of its student assessment strategy.

The CDC, comprising academic staff, student representatives, and external stakeholders, holds primary responsibility for the assessment strategy. In collaboration with the Director of Academic Affairs and the CDC ensures that assessment aligns with LOs and the levels defined by the European Qualifications Framework. The CDC reviews the assessment framework and proposes changes based on feedback and ongoing curriculum development. At the course level, the responsible lecturer designs and implements the assessment strategy, selecting appropriate methods that align with specific LOs of the course.

All information regarding assessment methods, criteria, and formats is communicated to students through course syllabi available in the SIS and on Moodle. Any changes to assessment principles are communicated to academic staff via meetings or email, and to students through the SIS.

At the end of each academic year, the officers of academic affairs collect key performance indicators such as grade distributions, dropout rates, and examination pass rates. Based on this data, the CDC may recommend adjustments to assessment types, their weightings, or even the redefinition of LOs.

A comprehensive internal curriculum evaluation is conducted every three years, contributing to the ongoing development and enhancement of the curriculum.

Link between learning outcomes and assessment design

The assessment process within the VM curriculum is systematically designed to support students' development and to evaluate the achievement of all curriculum LOs. Each course's LOs are aligned with the overall objectives of the curriculum. Assessment methods are chosen based on the specific knowledge, skills, or attitudes that the students are expected to acquire in each course.

All assessment methods and criteria are described in the course syllabi, which are available in the SIS and on the Moodle platform. At the beginning of each course, students are informed of the assessment criteria and the expected LOs.

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.

The assessment supports learner-centred and active learning. Each course syllabus defines LOs. Assessment methods are selected based on the specific knowledge, skills, and attitudes that students are expected to

acquire in the course. Successful completion of a course confirms that the corresponding LOs have been achieved.

Academic progress is monitored by the officer of academic affairs at the end of each semester, and students are supported through academic advising and guidance when needed. A student may progress to the next academic year if they have completed at least 75% of the required credits and passed all prerequisite courses. To enter clinical courses, students must successfully pass the clinical skills examination and all required preclinical subjects.

Students are allowed to defend their thesis only after successfully completing all curriculum-based subjects. This system ensures that assessment is not merely a tool for checking knowledge but actively supports student development and reflects their active engagement in the learning process.

The teaching staff use of diversity of teaching methods: lectures, seminars, practical sessions, group work, discussions, case analyses, flipped classroom methodology, presentations, problem-solving tasks, keeping practice logbook, etc. Blended learning formats, such as recorded or live-online lectures, enable students to learn at their own pace and engage in self-assessment. Contact seminars and practical sessions provide valuable interaction.

Since the 2022/2023 academic year, at least 50% of courses have been supported through the Moodle learning environment, which offers diverse online learning activities and personalised feedback, thus promoting active student participation. Independent learning includes the use of online materials, self-testing, preparation for group work, keeping learning/practice diary etc.

In addition to coursework, extracurricular activities such as surgery clubs, research projects, etc provide opportunities for students to apply their knowledge and skills in real-life contexts. Elective courses and the choice of a specialisation in the final year allow students to personalise their learning paths according to their interests and goals.

Initiated by students, a pilot project is currently in place, in which they support first-year students by acting as teaching assistants, thereby enhancing engagement and peer learning.

Support services, including tutors, academic advising, and mental health support help students maintain motivation and stay engaged in their studies. IVMAS has reinstated a system of course supervisors for first- and second-year students to support their smooth transition into academic life.

The system is also supported by strict academic regulations requiring students to stay on track with their studies (e.g., completing at least 75% of the curriculum by the end of each academic year).

Standard 8.5: Methods of formative and summative assessment must be valid and reliable and comprise a variety of approaches. Direct assessment of the acquisition 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 regular quality control of the student logbooks, with a clear distinction between what is completed under the supervision of teaching staff (CCT) or under the supervision of a qualified person (EPT). The clear distinction between CCT and EPT ensures that all clinical procedures, practical and hands-on training planned in the study programme have been fully completed by each individual student. The provided training and the global assessment strategy must provide evidence that only students who are Day One Competent are able to graduate.

Assessment of Day-One Competencies (D1C) is at the core of the VM curriculum's assessment strategy. During practical training, students work in small groups, ensuring continuous direct feedback from supervisors. In simulation environments, students safely practice procedures before working with real patients. Each student maintains a logbook throughout the various practical placements. The academic staff member responsible for the course conducts quality control and is accountable for maintaining the quality of the training. Appendix 2 outlines the contribution of each subject to achieving D1C-s (See also Standard 3.1.)

Comments on Area 8

In accordance with the updated requirements of Standard of Higher Education, which came into force in June 2024, it is essential to implement a structured strategy for the development and assessment of soft skills (e.g. communication, teamwork, ethical reasoning) across the VM curriculum by the academic year 2028/2029 at the latest. General competencies should be systematically assessed, teaching staff trained in

relevant methodologies, and soft skills should be intentionally integrated across subjects, modules, and longitudinally throughout the entire curriculum.

Suggestions for improvement in Area 8

Develop a comprehensive didactic approach that supports the education of gifted and talented students. During the internal evaluation in 2024, the LOs for the VM curriculum and each individual subject were mapped. The CDC plans to systematically strengthen the link between LOs and assessment methods to ensure constructive alignment. Although a variety of teaching methods are already in use, ongoing development is needed in the area of didactic competence.

Since 2021, IVMAS has organised teaching skills seminars for academic staff. To further promote teaching quality and motivation, the CDC is currently developing a proposal to include didactical development as a formal component in lecturer evaluation and promotion criteria.

Continue developing didactic skills, particularly in assessment, among teaching staff by providing structured training for veterinarians and support personnel involved in the teaching process.

AREA 9. TEACHING 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 quality-assured programme of teacher training (including good teaching and evaluation practices, learning and e-learning resources, use of digital tools education, biosecurity and QA procedures) must be in place for all staff involved with teaching. Such training must be mandatory for all newly appointed teaching staff and encouraged on a regular basis for all teaching staff.

Most teaching staff (calculated as FTE) involved in core 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.

The University's human resource management goals and activities are outlined in the DP and a five-year action plan, with an annual operational plan specifying the activities required to achieve these goals.

The regulation for [Academic Staff Positions](#) includes requirements, rights, obligations, and procedures for recruiting, evaluation, tenure, honorary titles, emeritus status, and sabbatical leave. [Job descriptions](#) specify minimum requirements, duties, and recommended proportions for each position, filling, and evaluation at the University. The academic career model (see Figure 9.1.1.) includes positions corresponding to levels R1 to R4 of the European Research Area.

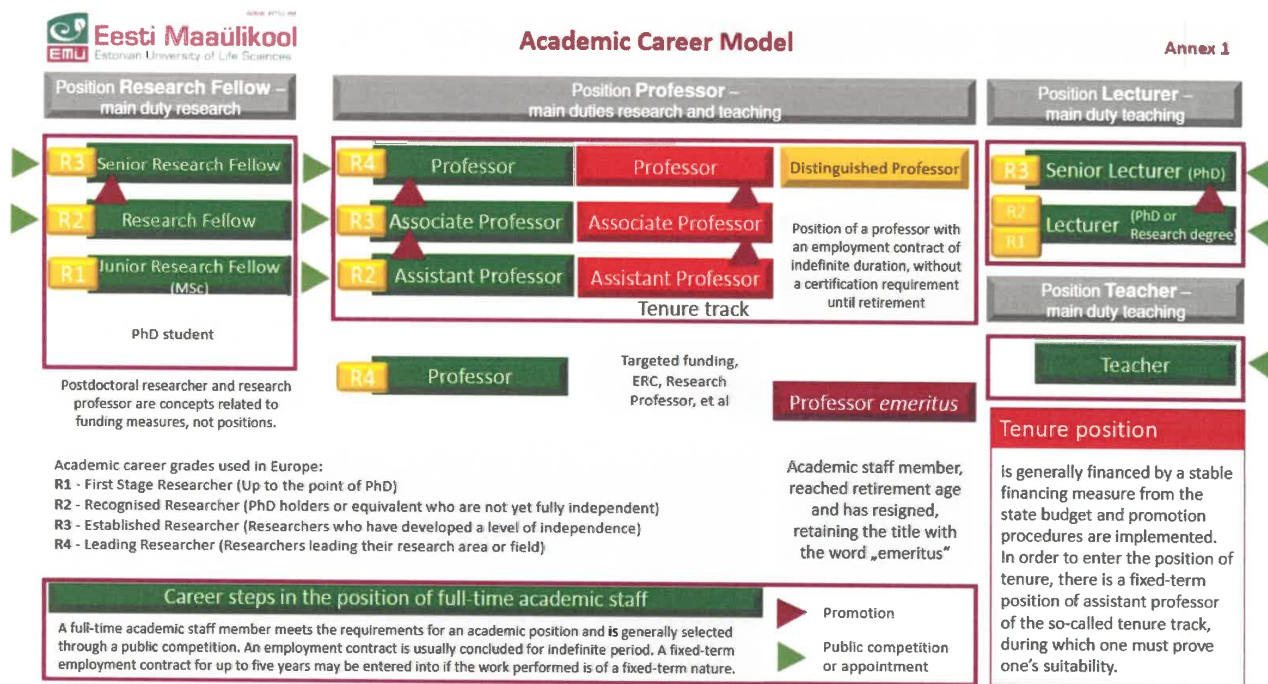


Figure 9.1.1. Academic career model of the University

A Professor holds the highest rank within the academic staff hierarchy. This role includes three ranks: Assistant Professor, Associate Professor, and Professor. Research Fellows primarily focus on research-related activities. The position of Junior Research Fellow is specifically designed for doctoral students and requires both a Master's degree and enrolment in a doctoral curriculum. Both Professors and Research Fellows are also responsible to teaching students.

The primary responsibilities of a Lecturer involve teaching, with research activities serving to support their instructional duties. To qualify for a lecturer position, candidates must hold a doctoral degree or an equivalent qualification. This role includes two ranks: Lecturer and Senior Lecturer. The distribution of an academic staff member's working time across various tasks is detailed in the [job description](#) attached to their employment contract.

The Head of the Chair is responsible for organising the work of academic staff within the Chair's area of responsibility.

As the University does not have its own educational training centre, it collaborates with other universities to support continuing education and training. Additionally, IVMAS provides training on student feedback collection, LOs assessment, and student-centred learning, and continues to offer regular courses on didactics and psychology on various topics as needed. To ensure the quality of teaching and learning, the DAA and IVMAS CDC conduct regular surveys and monitor student feedback via the SIS. Feedback is also gathered from professional student organisations and exchange students, allowing for comparisons of teaching and assessment practices with those at VEEs in other countries. Further, in-depth analyses are carried out at various levels by the Head of Curriculum, Director of Academic Affairs, Heads of the Chairs, and responsible lecturers to continuously improve academic quality.

The University offers long-term educational development opportunities through the Open University, Erasmus+ programmes, and other EU-funded institutional development initiatives for research and higher education institutions. A variety of courses are available, focusing on research, administration, leadership, and digital competencies. The University's educational technologist provides digital skills training and individual support for the teaching staff, while the Language Centre offers English language courses. The HR Department gathers input from academic staff regarding training needs and proposals to ensure relevant and targeted development opportunities. Besides courses on professional and educational topics, IVMAS offers courses on self-care, raising work motivation and on the use of equipment. In 2025, an institutional agreement with the University of Tartu for didactic training will be signed to achieve a systematic and regular variety of opportunities for the academic staff members of IVMAS.

Heads of Chairs ensure educational training, which is also checked during the academic staff members' annual [performance reviews](#) and the evaluation of performance through attestation every five years. During attestation, the attestation committee evaluates the staff member's compliance with the position requirements and assesses the professionalism of the academic staff member in accordance with the [Higher Education Act](#).

All staff members of the University must familiarise themselves with [occupational health and safety](#), [biosecurity](#), and [work organisation rules and guidelines](#). Annual training in occupational health, biosecurity, fire drills, CPR, and first aid is mandatory. Laboratory and clinic staff receive safety, biosecurity, and hygiene instructions from their supervisors and must stay updated on guideline amendments. Information on changes is disseminated via mailing lists and administration meetings. Guidelines are available on the Intranet.

Standard 9.2: The total number, qualifications and skills of all staff involved with the study programme, including teaching, technical, administrative and support staff, must be sufficient and appropriate to deliver the study 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, teaching or support staff, senior or junior, permanent or temporary, teachers. Guidelines for the minimum training to teach and to assess are provided in Annex 6, Standard 9.1.

The total number of teaching staff involved in the core VM curriculum is presented in Table 9.2.1.

Veterinarians constitute a significant portion of the teaching staff, approximately 85% (Table 9.2.2.). More than 2/3 of the instruction received by students, as determined by student teaching hours, is delivered by qualified veterinarians.

The support staff for the VM curriculum are presented in Table 9.2.3.

Academic staff members are funded in accordance with the regulation for [academic staff positions](#) and the definitions provided in this document. Therefore, Table 9.2.4 is not applicable in this context. As to Annex 4, individuals holding full-time Research Fellow position are not involved in teaching of core curriculum subjects, with the exception of Junior Research Fellows (PhD students), who may participate in teaching activities with a limited workload.

The teaching skills of academic staff are assessed at multiple levels. Systematic feedback is collected each semester from students via the SIS. This feedback is analysed by the Head of Curriculum, the Head of Chair, and the Director of Academic Affairs to inform continuous improvement. During this review, individual training needs and professional development opportunities are discussed. Furthermore, as part of the regular attestation of a five-year performance period, the Head of Chair provides an assessment of each academic staff member's teaching competence and professionalism.

Table 9.2.1. Teaching staff involved with the core veterinary curriculum**

Type of contract	2024*	2023	2022	Mean
Academic staff (FTE)	37.1	36.7	36.2	36.7
Interns (FTE)	0	0	0	0
Residents (FTE)	0	0	0	0
PhD students (FTE)	2.9	1.7	1.7	2.1
Certified specialists (FTE)	0	0	0	0
Practitioners (FTE)	39.8	40.6	38.3	39.6
Others (teacher) (FTE)	1.4	1.3	1.4	1.4
Total (FTE)	81.2	80.3	77.6	79.8

* The last complete academic year prior to the Visitation

** All staff included in this table must be contracted by the VEE and have received training to teach and to assess undergraduate students. Qualified persons/practitioners involved with EPT are not included in this table

Table 9.2.2. Percentage (%) of veterinarians in teaching staff

Type of contract	2024	2023	2022	Mean
Permanent (FTE)	85.5	85.3	84.5	85.1
Temporary (FTE)	0	0	0	0

Table 9.2.3. Support staff of the veterinary curriculum

Type of contract	2024	2023	2022	Mean
Permanent (FTE)	29.5	29.7	29.2	29.4
Temporary (FTE)	50.3	49.2	48.8	49.4

Table 9.2.4. Research staff of the VEE

Type of contract	2024	2023	2022	Mean
Permanent (FTE)	2.3	2.1	2.2	2.2
Temporary (FTE)	0	0	0	0

This assessment framework ensures that the teaching abilities of each academic staff member are reviewed, regardless of their workload (full-time or part-time).

The University has initiated a revision of academic job descriptions. As part of this process, the requirement to develop teaching competence will be formally established as a prerequisite for employment, a defined job responsibility, and a criterion for performance evaluation. This includes a requirement to complete a specified amount of training in teaching methodology.

Academic staff members who have completed their doctoral studies at Estonian University of Life Sciences have undertaken pedagogical training and teaching practice as part of their studies. These components are specifically designed to develop competencies in higher education teaching.

No significant changes are foreseen in the near future regarding the prospected number of FTE teaching and support staff involved in the VM curriculum, as IVMAS does not plan any major changes in student intake. However, it may be necessary to replace staff members who retire or leave the University. The continued development of research projects supports the future growth of the academic staff at IVMAS.

Formal programme for the selection and recruitment of the teaching staff and their training to teach and assess students

The HR Department of the University oversees the recruitment process of academic positions. Professorships, including tenure, are established by the University Senate based on proposals submitted by the IVMAS Council or the Rector. The Director is responsible for creating positions for research fellows, lecturers,

and teachers. These positions may be filled through public competition, direct appointment, or by inviting visiting staff. Doctoral students may be offered fixed-term contracts as Junior Research Fellows.

The recruitment process begins with an official announcement published in public media at least one month prior to the application deadline. The HR Department reviews submitted documents for compliance. If a candidate's qualifications were obtained abroad, an assessment from the Estonian [ENIC/NARIC Centre](#) is requested. All application materials are reviewed within two weeks of the application deadline. Candidates applying for Professor, Senior Lecturer, and Senior Research Fellow positions are assessed by an expert committee at the IVMAS level, which provides a summary to the IVMAS Council.

For lower-level positions, the direct organiser of the work provides a written evaluation. The IVMAS Council elects academic staff members through secret ballot. The Rector confirms the election results for academic positions within IVMAS. For Professor positions, the final decision is made by the University Senate through closed voting, taking into account the expert committee's evaluation, and the proposal of the IVMAS Council and the Academic Committee of the University Senate. The entire selection process is completed within three months, and candidates are informed of the outcome within seven working days.

To apply for available veterinarian positions, candidates must submit a CV and a motivation letter. Applications are evaluated by a committee comprising the Head of the Chair, the Chief Clinical Officer, and the head veterinarians of the Animal Clinic. The IVMAS Council has adopted the career model for teaching veterinarians at the University Animal Clinic and the career model for support staff (2020, amended 2024), which includes veterinary assistants, caretakers, and receptionists. Veterinarians are classified into three levels: Junior Veterinarian, Veterinarian, and Senior Veterinarian. Annually, a committee consisting of the Chief Clinical Officer and the head veterinarians conducts performance reviews for all veterinarians, following established guidelines and procedures.

Support staff are categorised as follows: Veterinary Assistant on Level 1, Veterinary Assistant on Level 2, Senior Veterinary Assistant, Caretaker, Receptionist, and Chief Senior Receptionist.

The HR Department, in collaboration with the relevant chair or department, organises the initial orientation for new staff members. This includes the organisational structure and occupational health and safety procedures.

To this end, the HR Department coordinates refresher courses and continuing education training based on a comprehensive training needs analysis. Final decisions regarding training needs are made by the direct organiser of the work and are informed by performance reviews, HR surveys, and feedback from unit heads and staff.

At the IVMAS level, the lecturer responsible for a subject may propose to the Head of the Chair the inclusion of additional lecturers, visiting foreign lecturers, or practitioners, with the aim of enhancing the quality of clinical and practical teaching. The effectiveness of this approach is reflected in student feedback and other indicators.

Educational courses related to teaching and assessment are organised annually by IVMAS in cooperation with the University and external institutions.

In 2024, a two-level programme was introduced. From 2025 onwards, all new teaching staff are required to complete a 6 ECTS education course at the University of Tartu's Department of Education. Continuing education for existing academic staff is conducted annually, with a requirement to complete at least 16 hours of didactics-related training each year.

Formal programme for the selection, recruitment and training to perform their specific duties of the support staff

The formal process for the selection, recruitment, and training of support staff is designed to ensure that individuals are well-prepared to perform their specific duties and contribute effectively to the organisation.

Responsibility for filling vacant positions lies with the head of the relevant chair or department. Vacancies are typically filled through a public competition, initiated by identifying the required skills and competencies for the role, based on detailed job descriptions. The HR Department supports this process by announcing the competition and facilitating the recruitment procedures.

The selection process involves a thorough review of applications, followed by interviews and assessments to evaluate candidates' qualifications, experience, and suitability for the organisation's needs. The

selection of support services managers, including interviews, is generally conducted in cooperation with a representative from the HR Department.

For non-managerial positions, the selection process – including interviews – is usually carried out independently by the structural unit. However, the HR Department remains available to assist as needed, including evaluating candidates' suitability, conducting interviews, and performing background checks.

The training system for support staff is divided into two main categories: professional training and educational training. Professional training is overseen by the Head of the Chair or Department and is tailored to the specific duties of the staff member – such as laboratory assistance, student supervision, or administrative responsibilities. As part of this, support staff participate in student supervision training courses. Continuing training for existing staff is conducted annually, with content determined by institutional priorities, staff feedback, and the ongoing development goals of IVMAS.

In addition, the HR Department offers a variety of training programmes based on identified needs. These cover areas such as mental health, communication skills, IT proficiency, artificial intelligence (AI), environmental, and social topics, among others.

Formal rules governing outside work, including consultation and private practice, by staff working at the VEE

Staff members are required to inform the head of their structural unit of any employment with another organisation – whether it be an educational institution, research organisation, company, or other entity operating in the same field as the University, both in Estonia and abroad. This notification must be submitted in a written format that can be reproduced.

In cases of full-time employment, any external teaching activities undertaken by staff members at other higher education institutions must be governed by a formal agreement between the University or Institute and the respective institution. Such agreements must comply with the University's general policies and regulations.

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.

Teaching positions must offer the security and benefits necessary to maintain the stability, continuity, and competence of the teaching staff. Teaching 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.

The recommended distribution of workload for academic staff across research, teaching, organisational and administrative duties, and societal engagement varies by position and is outlined in the annexes to the [Academic staff positions](#).

For full-time roles, the total workload is based on approximately 40 working hours per week. The teaching workload for each semester is determined by the Head of the Chair and/or the direct organiser of work, in consultation with the academic staff member. This allocation may vary between semesters. Annual holiday are as follows: Professor, Lecturers and Teachers are entitled to 56 calendar days, while Research Fellows are entitled to 42 calendar days.

The maximum proportion of working time allocated to teaching is as follows:

Teacher: up to 90% of total working time

Lecturer: up to 70%

Research Fellow: up to 20% (except Junior Research Fellow, with a maximum of 10%)

Professor: up to 40%.

At the University level, various initiatives have been implemented to strengthen the research and development competencies of academic staff. Training sessions on science communication – including the use of social media and LinkedIn – have been organised to enhance public engagement and visibility of research. Additionally, seminars have addressed key topics such as research ethics, data protection, open science, intercultural differences, and internationalisation. Academic staff are also encouraged to pursue self-development through annual training in information and educational technology. Each year, approximately ten courses are offered, covering topics such as e-learning platforms, digital learning

materials, educational technology integration, online teaching, data security, and emerging innovations such as artificial intelligence. To support staff well-being, the HR Department provides mental health training, including workshops focused on managing challenging situations and practicing effective techniques to support mental resilience and overall well-being.

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 teaching 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 teaching 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.

Staff development is overseen by the Head of the Chair or Department. Professors and PhD students are actively involved in research as part of their roles and regularly present their work at both national and international conferences. IVMAS organises annual conferences that connect science with practice, such as “Healthy Animal, Healthy Food”, and also contributes to the national “Veterinary Medicine” conference, organised by the Estonian Veterinary Chamber.

PhD students present their research at annual doctoral conferences. To support their involvement in teaching, they are initially assigned specific topics under the supervision of a senior staff member or designated mentor. In the VM curriculum, PhD students begin their teaching journey by serving as co-supervisors for undergraduate final theses.

To support early-career professionals two supervised training programmes for Junior Veterinarians (interns) – one in the Small Animal Clinic and another in the Equine Clinic are launched at IVMAS.

Professional development is further supported through participation in the Erasmus+ programme and the Institutional Development Programme for R&D Institutions and Universities – ASTRA (2015–2022) and its successor ASTRA+ (2025–2029), both funded by the European Union. IVMAS actively promotes Erasmus+ staff exchange opportunities, enabling collaboration with international colleagues and the exchange of best practices and innovative teaching strategies. Each year, approximately 10 teaching staff members participate in outgoing mobility through Erasmus+, with slightly more incoming staff taking part.

In addition, the [Agriculture and Food Board](#) of Estonia mandates that veterinarians engage in regular professional development to maintain and enhance their qualifications.

The performance of academic staff members is evaluated through annual [performance review](#), which is a comprehensive discussion with the staff member, and evaluation of performance through attestation every five years. The evaluation process covers a broad range of topics, including work tasks and practices, the working environment and relationships with colleagues, professional development and career prospects, motivation, and involvement in professional, educational, and social activities to evaluate academic staff member's achievements.

The outcomes of the performance reviews are documented and stored in the University's document management system, where they are accessible to the staff member, the direct organiser of work, and the HR Department representative responsible for continuing education.

Attestation is performed by a committee, except for the position of professor, whose attestation is carried out by the academic committee. Attestation committee comprises at least three internal experts, including one from outside the staff member's structural unit. The committee bases its decision on the minimum requirements for academic positions, the employment contract, and supporting documents such as a five-year report or portfolio covering teaching, research, and administrative activities, an assessment by the immediate superior, student feedback, and a summary of professional development and training. The evaluation may result as follows: the staff member meets or does not meet professional requirements. If the staff member meets the requirements, the committee may propose a promotion within their current position to the next career level. The decision is communicated to the staff member, their superior, and the HR Department within two weeks. The Rector has the authority to promote regular academic staff based

on a proposal from the head of the structural unit, supported by the attestation committee's decision and the staff member's written consent, provided the staff member meets the criteria for the higher career level. Evaluations for professors at the professor career level are conducted by the Academic Committee of the University Senate.

Recognition. The University honours members who significantly contribute to its goals, as well as external individuals and organisations that support its educational and research advancements. Rector establishes awards for outstanding achievements in various fields, such as research and development, teaching and educational activities, and service to society and the University, and sets the conditions for granting them. The [Colleague Award](#) recognises staff members, who excel in cooperation, creativity, innovation, and upholding university values. Annually, IVMAS selects one outstanding colleague from each department at the end-of-the year gathering.

At the University level, teaching skills training sessions have been designed to enhance the competencies of FT supervisors. These sessions have focused on key areas such as the principles of effective supervision, clearly defining the roles of both supervisors and students in the research process, and the importance of delivering supportive and constructive feedback.

In addition, academic staff are eligible for sabbatical leave. Every five years, ordinary academic staff members have the right to apply for a semester free from teaching duties to focus on professional development, research and development activities, or creative work. During the sabbatical semester, staff members continue to receive remuneration as specified in their employment contract.

Staff members have the opportunity to influence decision-making processes through regularly held meetings at both the department and institute levels. The heads of all units also meet regularly, and issues discussed in these meetings can be escalated to the IVMAS and University administration if necessary. Academic and support staff actively participate in the University's strategic management and quality assurance and are involved, for example, in the preparation of the SWOT analysis and the development plan (DP). Students also contribute actively by participating in all relevant decision-making bodies and councils.

Additionally, staff members can contribute to the University's development by taking part in various working groups, committees, and councils that discuss teaching and research processes as well as staff wellbeing. Employee proposals and feedback are highly valued and used in shaping management decisions and policies.

Standard 9.5: A system for assessment of teaching and teaching staff must be implemented on a cyclical basis and must formally include student participation. Results must be communicated to the relevant staff and commented upon in reports. Evidence must be provided that this system contributes to correcting deficiencies and to enhancing the quality and efficiency of education.

The evaluation of lecturers by students is governed by the [Regulation of Studies](#), which stipulates that students are required to provide feedback on the quality of teaching. Course and teaching evaluations are conducted electronically via the SIS twice per academic year, at the end of each semester. Students are notified of the opening and closing dates of the evaluation period through notifications sent to their university email accounts.

Following each evaluation cycle, the CDC analyses the feedback on courses and lecturers. The results are then communicated to the Head of Curriculum and the respective Heads of Chairs. In addition, student organisations conduct annual evaluations of courses and lecturers. The outcomes of these evaluations are submitted to both the CDC and the IVMAS administration. The CDC holds meetings with student organisations at least twice a year to jointly review and discuss the quality of teaching. Furthermore, students' feedback is also incorporated into the academic staff's portfolio for the attestation process.

Comments on Area 9

Given current trends in the public budget, increasing staff numbers in the coming years is expected to be challenging. To support teaching activities, IVMAS maintains long-term collaboration with 15 to 20 invited lecturers, both local and international, each of whom delivers more than 1 ECTS annually. All guest lecturers work under the supervision of responsible academic staff to ensure quality and consistency of teaching. Local lecturers are integrated into the University's teaching skills development programme, supporting continuous improvement in teaching practices.

Veterinary assistants are trained at the vocational school level in accordance with the relevant professional standard, which is scheduled for review in 2025. The demand for veterinary assistants in Estonia remains high, and there is currently a shortage of qualified professionals in the labour market. Therefore, veterinary clinics also provide on-site training for veterinary assistants to meet their staffing needs.

Considering the labour shortage in the Estonia, veterinary clinics further support additional training and upskilling of their personnel.

To date, five veterinarians from Estonia have completed their residency through the EBVS. Three of these specialists are currently involved, or have previously been involved, in teaching at the University in the fields of cardiology, dermatology, and imaging diagnostics.

Suggestions for improvement in Area 9

At the University, teaching staff are required to enhance the competencies and knowledge related to teaching. However, this requirement has not yet been formally defined. A list of core competencies will be compiled in the future to provide clear guidance and substance to this obligation.

To support this initiative, IVMAS will begin offering continuing education in teaching skills, with a focus on promoting active learning and the adoption of modern teaching methods. This is aligned with a DP scheduled for completion in 2025.

Currently, the University has an existing obligation for continuing education in teaching competencies, particularly in the areas of active learning and contemporary teaching approaches. Strengthening and systematising this requirement would significantly contribute to achieving the strategic objectives in veterinary education.

AREA 10. RESEARCH PROGRAMMES, CONTINUING AND POSTGRADUATE EDUCATION

Standard 10.1: The VEE must demonstrate significant and broad research activities of teaching staff that integrate with and strengthen the study programme through research-based teaching. The research activities must include veterinary basic and clinical sciences. Evidence must be provided that most teaching staff are actively involved with research programmes (e.g., via research grants, publications in congress proceedings and in peer-reviewed scientific journals).

Academic staff members at IVMAS are involved in the implementation of [research projects](#). The University requirements for [academic staff and career model](#) stipulate the prerequisite such as applying for research funding, publishing of scientific work, and supervising students. These activities are evaluated every five years as part of the [performance review of the academic staff](#). The effectiveness of student research supervision is measured by the number of successfully defended final and doctoral theses. Teaching staff at IVMAS are expected to be actively engaged in research activities, either as authors of peer-reviewed publications or as leaders or members of research project teams (see Appendix 5: List of scientific publications from the IVMAS teaching staff in peer-reviewed journals during the last three years 2022–2024; publications by IVMAS researchers not involved in teaching have been excluded). In total, according to the Estonian Research Information System (ETIS), lecturers and researchers at IVMAS published [625 articles](#) between 2022 and 2024.

The University supports high-quality research by providing baseline funding to proposals that receive positive evaluations in the Estonian Research Council's grant competitions, in accordance with the [Procedure for the Use of Baseline Funding for Research and Development Activities](#).

IVMAS actively promotes cross-disciplinary collaboration (e.g. the [Combivet](#) project) and encourages innovation, applied research, and the One Health approach (e.g. [One Health Boost project](#)). Both doctoral and VM students are integrally involved in the execution of research projects. Many funding bodies either encourage or require student participation, and since 2016, all VM students enrolled in the VM curriculum have been required to complete a final thesis.

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

The concepts and relevance of evidence-based medicine, critical appraisal, the decision-making based on scientific evidence, and the research-oriented approach to the diverse challenges of the veterinary profession is emphasised in multiple ways throughout the VM curriculum. In the early years of study, students are introduced to research terminology and the importance and application of statistical concepts and data representation through compulsory courses such as [VL.1218 Basics of evidence-based veterinary medicine](#) (Semester 1), [VL.0413 Informatics and biometry](#) (Semester 1), [KE.0093 English/Estonian mediation for academic and professional purposes](#) (Semester 1), [VL.0508 Veterinary epidemiology](#) (Semester 3), and [VL.0796 Professional ethics](#) (Semester 5). In addition to formal coursework focused on scientific writing, students undertake various tasks across multiple subjects that familiarise them with key aspects of academic work. These include engaging with scientific literature, writing summaries based on sources, preparing and delivering presentations, and learning proper formatting and referencing techniques.

During practical clinical training in small groups, students are encouraged to adopt evidence-based thinking. They receive instruction in effective clinical report writing and presenting relevant scientific data. Furthermore, students can enhance their information-searching and management skills by enrolling in the elective course [OP.1452 Library and information skills](#) (see also Area 6, Standard 6.1).. In the latter half of the curriculum, the students are expected to deepen their engagement with evidence-based approaches, particularly during small-group clinical rotations and other professional practical training (PPT) activities.

In Semester 9, the subject [VL.1284 Research methodology in veterinary medicine](#) includes a task requiring students to present a study plan for their chosen final thesis topic.

Since 2016, matriculated students have been required to complete and defend FT as part of their graduation requirements. The FT is an independent learner-centred study involving the collection, analysis and

synthesis of original data by the student. It may also take the form of existing data or a specific project, such as a biosecurity plan for a farm or animal clinic, a herd health programme, a disease control strategy, etc. Completion of FT aligns with the LOs of the VM curriculum, particularly in developing research skills and acquiring specialised knowledge relevant to veterinary education. Students are expected to agree on a topic with the supervisor(s) during Semester 9. Topics are drawn from various curriculum modules to ensure professional relevance and comprehensive coverage. According to the [Academic Staff Positions at Estonian University of Life Sciences](#), the IVMAS academic staff members and senior veterinarians with a workload of at least 0.5 FTE are required to submit at least one FT topic annually. Students may also propose their own topics in consultation with academic staff. Each thesis may have up to three supervisors, with at least one affiliated with IVMAS. The suitability of the topics is evaluated by the CDC, and the committee responsible for FT coordination.

The FT as a subject *VL.1355 Final thesis in veterinary medicine* comprises two parts.

During Semester 11, students undertake the writing of a literature review (8 ECTS) as part of their thesis preparation. The [Guidelines for Writing and Formatting Final Thesis](#) have been approved by the Rector. Detailed instructions for compiling the literature review, along with the assessment matrix, are available in SIS. Assessment is conducted using a visual analogue scale, with scores distributed across three categories: overall formatting (25%), sources (25%), and content (50%). The first part of the FT is graded on a pass/fail basis.

As the second part of the FT (14 ECTS), a full text concludes with the public defence in Semester 12. Comprehensive guidelines covering thesis composition, the assessment matrix, the review process, and defence procedures are available to students, supervisors, and reviewers in SIS. A list of defended theses is accessible on the website of IVMAS and the University library. [The deadline for submitting the completed FT](#) is announced by the Director of Academic Affairs at the beginning of the calendar year. The schedule and locations are published on IVMAS [website](#). Prior the defence, students must upload their (digitally) signed FT to [Moodle](#) and to the University library's digital repository [DSpace](#), via the self-service portal [SPOKU](#). Defences are held concurrently across multiple committees appointed by Director of Academic Affairs, over one to two days in June during Semester 12.

The final FT grade is determined by combining the reviewer's assessment with individual assessments from each Board member based on the established [matrix](#). Any Board member with a direct connection to a specific thesis (e.g., as a supervisor) must recuse themselves from the evaluation process. Following the presentation, responses to questions, and review the thesis, the Board deliberates and assigns a final grade using the A–F grading scale. The FT title (in both Estonian and English), the final grade, and the name(s) of the supervisor(s) are recorded in SIS and appear on the diploma supplement. Examples of FT completed in 2022–2024 by students involved in research projects aligned with the IVMAS areas of responsibility include works by S. [Saarinen](#), C. [Kosonen](#), K. [Ambus](#), K. [Anniste](#), M. [Nurmi](#), R. [Hahndorf](#) etc.

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.

IVMAS runs a 14-month [junior veterinarian programme](#), admitting 3–4 participants per year, at the Small Animal Clinic. This programme combines general practice and emergency care with clinical rotations across various disciplines. Supervising veterinarians are typically advanced practitioners or hold specialist qualifications (Diplomate or PhD). The programme includes participation in a journal club and involvement in undergraduate teaching.

The [Equine Clinic internship](#) adheres to the recommendations of the British Equine Veterinary Association (BEVA), following its formal recognition in 2025. It represents an intensive yet formative stage in a veterinary career. Interns are valued members of the VTH and are assigned in teams: Internal Medicine and Anaesthesia, or Orthopaedics and Surgery. During clinical rotation, students are distributed among the interns, and their activities are carried out under the interns' supervision, who in turn are overseen by senior veterinarians. Interns are responsible for a maximum of 25% of primary care duties, with the remaining 75% of their responsibilities performed under direct supervision by senior veterinarian.

Table 10.3.1. Number of students registered at postgraduate clinical training

Training	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	Mean
Interns:	NA	NA	NA	NA
Companion animals*	2	0	3	1.7
Equine**	NA	NA	1	1
Production animals	NA	NA	NA	NA
Other	NA	NA	NA	NA
Total	NA	NA	NA	NA
Residents	NA	NA	NA	NA
EBVS disciplines (specify)	NA	NA	NA	NA
Total	2	0	4	2
Others	NA	NA	NA	NA

*The Small Animal Clinic employs 3–4 junior veterinarians each year for a one-year internship-like training programme, covering various areas of small animal medicine.

**The Equine Clinic offers an internship programme in accordance with the guidelines of the British Equine Veterinary Association (BEVA).

Currently, there are no official veterinary internship programmes in Estonia, and IVMAS does not offer any EBVS-approved residency programme. However, IVMAS supports and encourages promising graduates to pursue to EBVS-accredited programmes abroad. Graduates of the veterinary undergraduate programme, i.e. an integrated bachelor's and master's degree curriculum in veterinary medicine, are eligible for registration in the national register of licensed veterinarians, maintained by the Estonian [Agriculture and Food Board](#), and are qualified to practice as general veterinary practitioners.

Table 10.3.2. Number of students registered at postgraduate research training at VEE

Degrees (PhD)	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	Mean
Veterinary Medicine and Food Food Science	37	37	35	36.3
Agricultural Sciences	13	15	17	15
Total	50	52	52	51.3

Note: The University offers two doctoral programmes for IVMAS students: *Veterinary Medicine and Food Science* and *Agricultural Sciences*.

The IVMAS doctoral students are encouraged to participate in the activities of the [Estonian Doctoral School](#) (EDS) which, among other opportunities, compensates the participation at conferences of students presenting orally or with a poster presentation, and in the writing camps organised for crafting articles or PhD theses. EDS is the umbrella body for organising courses and seminars open for the PhD students and mediating training courses abroad.

Table 10.3.3 Number of students registered at other postgraduate programmes in the VEE but not related to either clinical or research work (including any external/distance learning courses)

Not Applicable in Estonia

Courses	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	Mean
NA	NA	NA	NA	NA

Table 10.3.4. Number of attendees to continuing education courses provided by VEE on veterinary medicine, food hygiene and food science related courses.

Calendar year	2021	2022	2023	Mean
Number of continuing education courses	93	98	93	94
Number of attendees	1805	2445	2566	2272

In the academic year 2023/24, IVMAS offers five [microdegree programmes](#) primarily focused on food science.

An annual intake of three to four 3–4 students is anticipated for the continuing education programmes: [KM.1 Rotating internship for junior veterinarians in small animal clinic \(in-service training program\)](#), and a similar number for [VL.15 Equine Rotating Internship \(in-service training\)](#).

The number of state-funded postgraduate (PhD) students – four in Veterinary Medicine and Food Science, and three in Agricultural Sciences PhD curriculum – is expected to remain stable compared to previous years, as no significant changes in state policy are anticipated.

However, should research projects’ applications be successful, an increase in project-funded PhD positions may occur in the coming academic years. At present, there are 11 PhD students enrolled on a research project basis.

Description of how the postgraduate clinical trainings of the VEE contribute to undergraduate veterinary education

The teaching staff are responsible for training undergraduate and postgraduate students, supervising undergraduate final theses, supporting the clinical research of PhD students where relevant to their dissertation topics, and contributing to academic teaching as appropriate.

There are no apparent conflicts regarding case studies between undergraduate and postgraduate students. Often, the same cases are used for teaching both groups, with tasks and levels of involvement allocated according to the students’ stage of education. IVMAS endeavours to ensure a fair and transparent distribution of patient cases enabling students to gain practical clinical experience across varying levels of complexity in a collaborative, team-based environment.

Postgraduate students also contribute to undergraduate teaching where appropriate, including hands-on professional training and clinical activities.

Description of how the continuing education programmes are matched to the needs of the profession and the community

IVMAS as the only centre in Estonia offering in-service and continuing education courses at higher education level for veterinarians and professionals in related fields. IVMAS offers a number of theoretical and practical core courses each year, according to a planned annual schedule. In addition, *ad hoc* courses are provided in response to specific demands from the veterinary profession. The majority of the continuing education provided by the VEE is organised by the [Open University](#) operating under its own [Statutes](#), and in accordance with the [Procedure for continuing education at the Estonian University of Life Sciences](#). Lifelong learning in Estonia is regulated by the [Adult Education Act](#).

Academic staff of IVMAS, as well as graduate and postgraduate students, may participate in continuing education courses organised by the Open University either free of charge or for a tuition fee, depending on the conditions set by the course sponsor.

Maintaining a veterinary professional license in Estonia requires regular participation in continuing education. According to § 20 of the [Veterinary Act](#), professional development for veterinarians primarily involves participation in educational activities organised by universities offering veterinary curricula.

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 study programme.

Regular external evaluations are conducted in Estonian research institutions including universities every seven years. The University successfully passed its most recent research evaluation in September 2024 ([RER 2024; Agricultural and Veterinary Sciences](#)).

Most teaching is delivered by permanent academic staff who are actively engaged in research. [Job descriptions](#) for academic positions specify the distribution of responsibilities across teaching, research, and administrative duties, ensuring a balanced workload that supports the integration of research into teaching. This combination ensures that staff remain familiar with current research in their teaching areas. Academic staff undergo annual [performance reviews](#) and the evaluation of performance through attestation every five years providing an opportunity to identify and address any challenges in collaboration, with the direct organiser of work. Promotion of academic staff is based on their achievements in teaching and research, supervision of undergraduate and postgraduate students, and research publications. Furthermore, annual competitions are held to select supervisors for doctoral students. These selections prioritise candidates with strong performance indicators and adequate research funding, in line with the University's established [requirements for supervisors](#). The [PhD curriculum in veterinary medicine and food science](#) was evaluated in 2022 by international [institutional accreditation in 2022](#), and received the highest possible rating for the subsequent seven-year period.

Description of how and by whom VEE research and (post)graduate programmes are decided, communicated, implemented, assessed and revised

The objectives and priorities for R&D, encompassing both basic and applied research, are outlined in the [IVMAS development plan for 2018–2025](#). The DP was developed collaboratively by the IVMAS Council, the Director and the structural units, and was approved by both the IVMAS Council and the University Senate.

Estonian University of Life Sciences is the only institution in Estonia offering a PhD curriculum in veterinary medicine. In developing PhD studies and ensuring compliance with the requirements for PhD theses and academic quality, the University adheres to the PhD study quality agreement signed by the Council of Rectors of Estonian universities in 2020. The Vice-Rector for Academic Affairs is responsible for the structural alignment of PhD curricula at the University. The development of the PhD curriculum *Veterinary Medicine and Food Science* is an ongoing process overseen by the [curriculum committee](#), which meets as required, but at least once per year. The progress of PhD students is evaluated annually, in accordance with their individual study plans, by the [attestation committee](#), the Defence Committee, and the appointed opponent. The University ensures a strong connection between PhD studies and R&D activities through a two-step selection process for potential supervisors, who are granted the right to announce vacant PhD positions. First, the [Council of IVMAS](#) evaluates and ranks potential supervisors annually based on criteria such as their publication rate and quality, previous success in supervising PhD students, and availability of research funding. Recommendations are then submitted to the Academic Committee of the University Senate, which makes the final selection and ranking. This process ensures that the PhD students are actively involved in research groups and that their research topics are closely aligning their research topics with their supervisors' ongoing projects.

However, research are dependent on available funding, with research at IVMAS primarily financed through external sources, including national competitive grants from the Estonian Research Council, R&D contracts with private sector enterprises and public sector institutions, and international R&D projects as Horizon, Interreg, ERA-Net, COST-Activity. The availability of research funding fluctuates over time and is largely influenced by the initiative and success of individual researchers and research groups. In 2024, the quality of the University's research programmes in Agricultural Sciences and Veterinary Medicine was evaluated by an international panel of experts as part of the regular evaluation of R&D activities in Estonian institutions, organised by the MER. According to initial feedback from the evaluation panel, the University exceeded the threshold in all assessment criteria: scientific impact of research, sustainability of research and societal impact of research. The areas of improvement and recommendations outlined in the report will be taken into account during the preparation of new development plans for both the University and IVMAS.

PhD curriculum *Veterinary Medicine and Food Science* was thoroughly assessed in 2022 by an international panel of experts within the framework of institutional accreditation of the University. Following this, the Higher Education Assessment Council of the Estonian Quality Agency for Education decided to accredit the University for seven years. The opportunities for further improvement highlighted in the assessment report will be considered in the ongoing development of the curriculum. According to the amendments to

the Standard of Higher Education, which came into force in June 2024, new LOs at the higher education level must be implemented by the academic year 2028/2029 at the latest.

Comments on Area 10

The Estonian PhD system also supports the involvement of industrial PhD students through collaborations with companies. Although a support scheme exists for this purpose, local companies unfortunately often lack the capacity and interest to participate.

Access to external research funding significantly influences the research focus at the IVMAS and can shape the future profile of academic staff. Currently, funding is strong in the area of production animal medicine but remains limited in fields such as small animal medicine.

Given the country's size and limited financial resources, the establishment of EBVS-recognised residency programmes has not, thus far, been considered a viable option.

Nevertheless, graduates are encouraged to apply for international residency programmes, with a view to potential future engagement opportunities at the University.

Suggestions for improvement in Area 10

IVMAS academic staff should actively raise awareness and promote opportunities for students to engage in ongoing research projects from their first academic year. Presenting current projects early on is important for fostering student engagement and ensuring future academic continuity. Introducing current projects early is essential for fostering student involvement and ensuring academic continuity in the future.

In line with recent developments, the University aims to advance the effective integration of artificial intelligence (AI) in both research and teaching. AI should remain a central priority in the University's strategic development, requiring sustained investment and support.

Continuing education activities should be carefully targeted to reach diverse societal groups, with a clear emphasis on the IVMAS expertise in its responsibility areas. Its continuing education programmes make a significant contribution to lifelong learning and the enhancement of professional competence.

ESEVT INDICATORS



ESEVT Indicators

Name of the VEE:		Institute of Veterinary Medicine and Animal Sciences, Estonian University of Life Sciences				
Name & mail of the VEE's Head:		Toomas Tiirats; toomas.tiirats@emu.ee				
Date of the form filling:		31.05.2025				
Raw data from the last 3 complete academic years		2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	Mean	
1	n° of FTE teaching staff involved in veterinary training	77,6	80,2	81,2	79,67	
2	n° of undergraduate students	365	371	376	370,67	
3	n° of FTE veterinarians involved in veterinary training	67,2	68,1	68,5	67,93	
4	n° of students graduating annually	49	43	56	49,3333333	
5	n° of FTE support staff involved in veterinary training	78	78,9	79,8	78,9	
6	n° of hours of practical (non-clinical) training	955	936	936	942,3333333	
7	n° of hours of Core Clinical Training (CCT)	799	799	773	790,3333333	
8	n° of hours of VPH (including FSQ) training	702	702	702	702	
9	n° of hours of extra-mural practical training in VPH (including FSQ)	104	104	104	104	
10	n° of companion animal patients seen intra-murally	9906	9191	9231	9442,66667	
11	n° of individual ruminant and pig patients seen intra-murally	15	26	25	22	
12	n° of equine patients seen intra-murally	528	722	1003	751	
13	n° of rabbit, rodent, bird and exotic patients seen intra-murally	857	956	987	933,3	
14	n° of companion animal patients seen extra-murally	0	0	0	0,0	
15	n° of individual ruminants and pig patients seen extra-murally	4126	2988	2708	3274,0	
16	n° of equine patients seen extra-murally	232	217	181	210,0	
17	n° of rabbit, rodent, bird and exotic patients seen extra-murally	0	0	0	0,0	
18	n° of visits to ruminant and pig herds	27	34	32	31,0	
19	n° of visits to poultry and farmed rabbit units	1	1	1	1,0	
20	n° of companion animal necropsies	125	130	136	130,3	
21	n° of ruminant and pig necropsies	107	114	105	108,7	
22	n° of equine necropsies	19	17	18	18,0	
23	n° of rabbit, rodent, bird and exotic pet necropsies	110	109	118	112,3	
24	n° of FTE specialised veterinarians involved in veterinary training	2	2	1	1,7	
25	n° of PhD graduating annually	2	4	7	4,3	

The boxes within the red frames must be filled in by the VEE (the other values will be automatically calculated)



ESEVT Indicators

Name of the VEE:		Institute of Veterinary Medicine and Animal Sciences, Estonian University of Life Sciences				
Date of the form filling:		31.05.2025				
Calculated Indicators from raw data			VEE values	Median values¹	Minimal values²	Balance³
I1	n° of FTE teaching staff involved in veterinary training / n° of undergraduate students		0,215	0,15	0,13	0,089
I2	n° of FTE veterinarians involved in veterinary training / n° of students graduating annually		1,377	0,84	0,63	0,747
I3	n° of FTE support staff involved in veterinary training / n° of students graduating annually		1,599	0,88	0,54	1,059
I4	n° of hours of practical (non-clinical) training		942,333	953,50	700,59	241,743
I5	n° of hours of Core Clinical Training (CCT)		790,333	941,58	704,80	85,533
I6	n° of hours of VPH (including FSQ) training		702,000	293,50	191,80	510,200
I7	n° of hours of extra-mural practical training in VPH (including FSQ)		104,000	75,00	31,80	72,200
I8	n° of companion animal patients seen intra-murally and extra-murally / n° of students graduating annually		191,405	67,37	44,01	147,395
I9	n° of individual ruminants and pig patients seen intra-murally and extra-murally / n° of students graduating annually		66,811	18,75	9,74	57,071
I10	n° of equine patients seen intra-murally and extra-murally / n° of students graduating annually		19,480	5,96	2,15	17,330
I11	n° of rabbit, rodent, bird and exotic seen intra-murally and extra-murally / n° of students graduating annually		18,919	3,11	1,16	17,759
I12	n° of visits to ruminant and pig herds / n° of students graduating annually		0,628	1,29	0,54	0,088
I13	n° of visits of poultry and farmed rabbit units / n° of students graduating annually		0,020	0,11	0,04	-0,024
I14	n° of companion animal necropsies / n° of students graduating annually		2,642	2,11	1,40	1,242
I15	n° of ruminant and pig necropsies / n° of students graduating annually		2,203	1,36	0,90	1,303
I16	n° of equine necropsies / n° of students graduating annually		0,365	0,18	0,10	0,265
I17	n° of rabbit, rodent, bird and exotic pet necropsies / n° of students graduating annually		2,277	2,65	0,88	1,397
I18	n° of FTE specialised veterinarians involved in veterinary training / n° of students graduating annually		0,034	0,27	0,06	-0,026
I19	n° of PhD graduating annually / n° of students graduating annually		0,088	0,15	0,07	0,018
¹	Median values defined by data from VEEs with Accreditation/Approval status in May 2019					
²	Recommended minimal values calculated as the 20th percentile of data from VEEs with Accreditation/Approval status in May 2019					
³	A negative balance indicates that the Indicator is below the recommended minimal value					
*	Indicators used only for statistical purpose					

Note: ESEVT Indicators I4–I7 are calculated based on the fifth academic year, i.e. the calculation includes teaching hours, but does not include tracks (submodules).

Comments on the Indicators

Due to the small size of Estonia (population 1.3 million, with dairy farming as the agricultural priority), a national VM residency programme is not economically viable. IVMAS fully supports those who pursue EBVS-recognised residencies abroad.

Due to the limited number of animals in Estonia, top specialists do not have sufficient opportunities for professional application within the country. IVMAS makes efforts to involve diplomates working in Estonia, but the University's resources are not competitive in terms of remuneration.

Due to the threat of African swine fever, biosecurity regulations on pig farms are extremely strict. Therefore, teaching can only be conducted on contracted farms.

Suggestions for improvement on Indicators

Backyard and small-scale farming are showing a certain increase, which creates some opportunities for IVMAS to increase the number of chickens used in VM teaching.

GLOSSARY

CDC	Curriculum Development Committee
CQF	Descriptor
D1C	Day One Competences
DAA	Department of Academic Affairs
DP	Development Plan
EAEVE	European Association of Establishments for Veterinary Education
EBVS	European Board of Veterinary Specialisation
ECTS	European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System
ECOVE	European Committee of Veterinary Education
EDS	Estonian Doctoral School
ENQA	European Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education
EPT	Elective Practical Training
EQF	European Qualifications Framework
ESEVT	European System of Evaluation of Veterinary Training
ESG	The Standards and Guidelines for quality assurance in the European Higher Education Area
EstQF	Estonian Qualifications Framework
ETIS	Estonian Research Information System / Eesti Teadusinfosüsteem
EU	Europe Union
FSQ	Food Safety and Quality
FT	Final Thesis
FTE	Full-Time Equivalent
HR	Human Resources
ICU	Intensiv Care Unit
IT	Information Technology
IVMAS	Institute of Veterinary Medicine and Animal Sciences. In this report IVMAS represents Veterinary Education Establishments (VEE).
LO	Learning Outcome
MER	Ministry of Education and Research of Estonia
NA	Not Applicable
OSCE	Objective Structured Clinical Examination
PPE	Personal Protective Equipment
Provet	Cloud based electronic patient record system
QA	Quality Assurance
R&D	Research and Development
RPL	Recognising Prior Learning and Work Experience
SER	Self-Evaluation Report
SIS	Study Information System
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats
VEE	Veterinary Education Establishments In this report, VEE refers to the Institute of Veterinary Medicine and Animal Sciences, abbreviated as IVMAS.
VTH	Veterinary Teaching Hospital
VM	Veterinary Medicine
WG	Work Group

Definitions

Biosecurity	an integrated approach that encompasses a set of preventive measures, including elements of biosafety, biocontainment, and the management of biohazards
National student	student studying in the curriculum taught in Estonian

LIST OF APPENDICES

- Appendix 1.** Current teaching staff, qualifications, their FTE, teaching responsibilities and departmental affiliations
- Appendix 2.** Units of study of the core veterinary programme (including clinical rotations, EPT and graduation thesis): title, reference number, ECTS value, position in curriculum (year, semester), whether it is compulsory or elective, hours and modes of instruction, learning outcomes and their alignment with the ESEVT Day One Competences
- Appendix 3.** Maps of the VEE and the intra-mural and extra-mural facilities used in the core veterinary programme
- Appendix 4.** Written assessment procedures for QA
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- Appendix 6.** Curriculum and study plan
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