



# **European Association of Establishments for Veterinary Education**

**(EAEVE)**

## **Self-Assessment Report**

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**This self-assessment report by the European Association of Establishments for Veterinary Education (EAEVE) was initiated and produced by EAEVE with one main purpose:**

*To examine how the EAEVE meets the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area in order to become a full member of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA), and for recognition and inclusion in the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR) upon presenting compliance with the European Standards and Guidelines 2015 (ESG 2015)*

# 1. Introduction

This Self-Assessment Report (SAR) is designed to set out the necessary information and evidence to demonstrate how the European Association of Establishments for Veterinary Education (EAEVE) meets and complies with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG 2015), as published by ENQA.

This SAR also reflects on the many changes within EAEVE that emanated from the extensive suggestions made by ENQA following their visitation to EAEVE in 2013.

## EAEVE vision, mission, objectives

The **vision** for EAEVE is the harmonisation and improvement of quality within all Establishments for Veterinary Education (called Establishments in this SAR) in agreement with the EU Directive 2005/36/EC as amended by Directive 2013/55/EU and to be the official accreditation authority for veterinary education establishments within Europe

The **mission** of EAEVE is to evaluate, promote and further develop the quality and standard of Veterinary Teaching Establishments within, but not limited to, the member states of the European Union (EU)

The primary **objective** is to monitor the harmonisation of the minimum standards set down in the study programme for veterinarians or veterinary surgeons (called veterinarians in this SAR) in the EU Directive 2005/36/EC as amended by Directive 2013/55/EU, as well as monitoring the levels of quality assurance within these standards.

This is enacted through the European System of Evaluation of Veterinary Training (ESEVT), which is managed by the EAEVE in cooperation with the Federation of Veterinarians of Europe (FVE). A list of evaluated and approved/accredited Establishments is maintained on the EAEVE website.

Other **objectives** are:

- To reinforce cooperation between member Establishments and to act as a forum for discussion in order to improve and harmonise veterinary education
- To facilitate information exchange, staff exchange, student exchange and also exchange of teaching materials between members.

The latter objectives are especially effectuated during and around the General Assemblies (GA): these are held annually at a different European city at an Establishment, and offer a wide variety of educational and scientific topics in veterinary education.

For many years, Veterinary Establishments' recognition was based on antiquity, so the eldest ones were considered the best. But for the last 17 years in Europe, after the Bologna Declaration in 1999, antiquity has been increasingly replaced by **quality**. **Quality** is a never-ending process, because it is based on standards that are constantly changing to adapt to dynamic scenarios and challenges, and Veterinary Education is no exception to that rule. In fact, EAEVE and its member Establishments have contributed actively to this culture of evaluation in Europe, anticipating the rating of Veterinary Establishments by applying standards of quality, 20 years before the Bologna Declaration.

As a supra-national but subject focused agency, EAEVE aims to deliver all of its external work programmes to a high standard, with strong internal quality assurance and accountability processes. However, and not surprisingly, EAEVE has to be aware of the diverse needs of the different higher education policies as determined by each nation for their Veterinary Establishment(s), while still operating as a single entity within Europe.

In addition to demonstrating EAEVE's compliance with the ESG, this SAR also describes a number of features of good practice in the Agency's work. These include:

- A process for developing the QA concept within both the Veterinary Establishments themselves and then within the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) used for reviewing the Establishments;
- EAEVE's expanding involvement in providing similar accreditation reviews outside the EU;
- The training of EAEVE experts;
- Student engagement with the accreditation process.

## **Regulation of Veterinary Graduates in the EU**

*One of the key aspects of the European Union (EU) is that individual members of certain regulated professions in the EU can move across borders and practice their occupation or provide services abroad*

Veterinary medicine is one of these regulated professions within the EU.

Health based professions such as Doctors, Dentists, Pharmacists, Nurses, Midwives, and Veterinarians benefit from the automatic recognition of their qualifications, on the basis of harmonised minimum training requirements. These requirements were developed over a long period and were laid down in a single legislative document, the EU Professional Qualifications Directive 2005/36/EC which was subsequently amended by Directive 2013/55/EU.

Provisions within these EU Directives regulate the conditions for admission to the training, the minimum duration of the training and list elements of knowledge and skills veterinary graduates have to acquire in the course of their training.

Responsibility for compliance with both EU Directives rests with the competent authorities of individual Member States. The current EU legislation, establishing automatic recognition of veterinary degrees delivered in the EU, assumes that an equivalent level of training is provided throughout the EU. However, and crucially, EAEVE evaluations do show that this assumption is not congruent with reality, and that in fact, several Veterinary Teaching Establishments within 7 of the 25 EU Member States deliver substandard training programmes incompatible, in one or more crucial areas, with both EU Directives.

This real-time situation emphasizes the importance of EAEVE as the sole provider of accreditation for Veterinary Teaching Establishments within the EU. It also emphasizes the real need for EAEVE itself to be carefully and meaningfully accredited as an effective accrediting agency, and as a result, for EAEVE to be a full and working member of ENQA.

### **Veterinary degree structure and their mutual recognition within EU Member States**

Although mutual recognition of veterinary qualifications is automatically granted between Member States, the degree structure and variation in how graduate degrees are linked to practising the profession, differ substantially. In general, and after successfully fulfilling the 5-

year minimum training requirement, the graduate degree of veterinarian is issued. In some Member States this basic degree is sufficient to practice. In many other countries, the degree is linked with a final year thesis, which is either optional or mandatory, and is completed before entering the practicing profession. Finally, in other Member States this final year thesis requires additional studies of substantial length, ending with a PhD-like veterinary degree.

***Although veterinary curricula share many similarities, as a supra-national accrediting agency, EAEVE through its accrediting process the European System of Evaluation of Veterinary Training (ESEVT), must take account of these national variations.***

In addition to this diversity of the degree structure, the competent national authorities responsible for the quality of training in their respective veterinary Establishments, and also for the issuing of the veterinary degrees, differ from State to State. Governmental structures, of which universities are in general part, usually oversee the delivery of the academic degrees; those governmental bodies may be ministries of science & research, of health, or agriculture.

On the other hand, permission to practice the profession necessitates, in most countries, registration with and acceptance by a national professional organisation (e.g. licensing bodies, veterinary chambers). In reality, the levels of communication, coordination and harmonisation between and among these two entities of competent authorities on the national level is on occasion scarce, or sometimes nearly non-existent.

### **Curricula in Veterinary Teaching Establishments**

Traditionally, European Establishments (universities, faculties, departments, colleges, schools of higher learning) are largely autonomous in generating, applying and transmitting veterinary curricula. Although governmental authorities endorse and approve curricula in most Member States, feedback and external quality control mechanisms of veterinary curricula (and their compatibility with both EU Directives) are infrequently applied in several member states; in fact, European legislation for establishing an academic quality assurance and control system is very recent and usually restricted to the national level. The Bologna declaration and subsequent development of the ESG, with ENQA as a European membership organisation representing a wide range of QA agencies, has now created an active environment for the promotion of high quality QA processes within higher education. Incidentally, international and transnational evaluation of nearly all European veterinary teaching Establishments has been carried out regularly and with full transparency by EAEVE since 1985, for more than 32 years (see Chapter 4).

## 2. Development of the self-assessment report (SAR)

This SAR is a collaborative effort between members of EAEVE Executive Committee (ExCom), the GA of EAEVE and stakeholders, particularly Federation of Veterinarians of Europe (FVE) and its branch organisations of the Union of European Veterinary Practitioners (UEVP), European Association of State Veterinary Officers (EASVO), European Veterinarians in Education, Research and Industry (EVERI), Union of European Veterinary Hygienists (UEVH) and European Board of Veterinary Specialisation (EBVS). In addition, input was sought from the International Veterinary Students' Association (IVSA). Input from stakeholders led to final amendments and subsequent approval by ExCom.

The SAR also represents the results of intensive reflection on the internal functioning of EAEVE and its constituent committees, especially concerning the external functioning of ESEVT in the context of accreditation visitations to European Veterinary Teaching Establishments. Prior to the stakeholders receiving the draft SAR, an update of the EAEVE Strategic Plan for 2015-2020 had been sent to all Establishments and to all stakeholders listed, before final amendments and approval by the ExCom in May 2017. In addition, all Establishments received the updated SWOT analysis (see chapter 13).

As mentioned previously, EAEVE had developed a visitation system to approve European Veterinary Teaching Establishments before the endorsement of an EU wide QA system in Bologna resulting in ESG 2005. As a result, discrepancies appeared between the two systems which were not fully resolved before the SAR was written for the ENQA external review in June 2013. Nevertheless, as a follow up to the ENQA external review, a number of extremely useful suggestions were made by ENQA in order to help EAEVE further develop and embed QA processes within its evaluation visitations to European Veterinary Teaching Establishments.

In January 2017, the first draft (Draft A) of the report was discussed by ExCom and reviewed to obtain Draft B; after including all pendant data Draft C was distributed within EAEVE and to external stakeholders for detailed consultation on 06/03/2017 with 07/04/2017 as the deadline for replying.

These consultations involved all EAEVE Member Establishments, ExCom, ECOVE, Coordinators Group, CIQA, FVE and its branch organisations (EVERI, UEVP, UEVH, EASVO), EBVS, VetCEE as well as IVSA. Feedback from these sessions was received in March and April 2017 and after integration and final review by members of ExCom was morphed into the current document.

### Feedback from stakeholders

Feedback was obtained from a wide number of stakeholders, ranging from the veterinary teaching Establishment themselves, to a number of specialist groups representing a plethora of veterinary specialisation, both academic, governmental and from the general workplace.

More specifically, this feedback from stakeholders included input from:

- University of Veterinary Medicine, Department of Microbiology and Infectious Diseases, Budapest, Hungary
- EAEVE Committee on Internal Quality Assessment (CIQA)
- School of Veterinary Medicine and Animal Science, Faculty of Health and Medical Sciences, University of Copenhagen, Denmark
- Vetsuisse Faculty, University of Zurich, Switzerland
- Federation of Veterinarians of Europe (FVE)

- Istanbul University, Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, Turkey
- Université de Liège, Faculté de Médecine Vétérinaire, Liège, Belgium
- Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, Faculty of Veterinary Medicine and Animal Science, Uppsala, Sweden
- School of Veterinary Medicine, UCD, Dublin, Ireland
- Vizerektorin für Lehre und Klinische Veterinärmedizin, Veterinärmedizinische Universität Wien, Austria

The majority of this useful feedback has been incorporated into Draft D. However, a proportion of the feedback received did not specifically offer suggestions on deletions/additions/changes within the SAR; instead, the feedback raised points of order concerning other documents emanating from EAEVE e.g. the current SOP used in the visitations to Establishments. Such “feedback” needs to be addressed by the ExCom of EAEVE and any final changes to be agreed by the annual GA of EAEVE.

Nevertheless, the majority of the feedback has been incorporated covering areas such as:

- Re-emphasising that the veterinary curricula in Establishments are quite similar, so allowing an integrated approach to European wide evaluations
- Emphasis on the ‘One Health Concept’
- Further emphasis on the independence of ECOVE from EAEVE as the ‘owner’ of ECOVE
- Further emphasis on the fact that the member Establishments are the stakeholders, **not** ECOVE/CIQA
- Emphasis on the development of the detailed responses by EAEVE to ENQA’s suggestions, following the latter's initial evaluation visit in 2013
- CIQA and ECOVE are not **fully** independent, they are both ‘independent decision makers’
- Emphasise how all assessment reports and decisions by EAEVE based on these reports, are made public by EAEVE as well as by the visited Establishments
- Emphasising the continuous two-year rotation of ExCom members and ECOVE chair and vice chairs
- Further emphasis on how ESEVT accreditation visitations are increasingly co-ordinated with national accreditation visitations
- Clarification of how student members of the visitation team are selected by the IVSA

Finally, after incorporation of the feedback into the Draft D of the SAR, individuals and groups that provided said feedback were personally contacted to verify with them the importance of their feedback within the final draft of the SAR.

### **3. Higher education and QA of higher education in the context of the agency**

#### **Veterinary graduates in EU Member States: minimum standards and EU Directives 2005/36/EC and 2013/55/EC**

Within the 28 EU Member States, there are presently 75 veterinary teaching Establishments in 25 countries. All are members of EAEVE. Those Establishments teach nearly 60.000 students and graduate every year approximately 9.000 veterinarians. Of those 75 Establishments, 63 fulfil European minimum standards according to the EU Directives as established by the ESEVT.

Directive 2005/36/EC as amended by Directive 2013/55/EU are the legislative basis for automatic recognition of 7 regulated professions, setting a common framework for knowledge, skills, competence and common minimum standards for training in veterinary medicine.

Time wise, the minimum training requirement for veterinarians is 5 years of full time study, corresponding to a minimum of 300 ECTS credits; furthermore, Directive 2005/36/EC lists required study subjects in Annex V.4.1 and defines minimum competences (some of them amended by Directive 2013/55/EU), which students are expected to have acquired by the time they graduate; the concept of continued professional development and the Bologna concept are endorsed as well.

*The EU Directives are at the basis and core of the evaluation and accreditation criteria of EAEVE, as laid down and published in the ESEVT Standard Operating Procedures (SOP).*

Although all European Establishments are members of EAEVE, membership is voluntary but evaluation is obligatory; although there is presently no legal mechanism to ensure that recommendations of the team of expert visitors, and, more critically, deficiencies concerning non-compliance with requirements of the EU Directives, are acted upon. Nevertheless, member States within EAEVE agree that control mechanisms such as those applied by EAEVE must be recognised to guarantee that the level of the training is comparable throughout the EU, so reassuring veterinary employers and the public at large about the quality of the veterinary training. The existing EAEVE evaluation system, ESEVT, in collaboration with the FVE, is thereby endorsed by many competent authorities such as the Directorate General Internal Market and Services (DG GROW) and Directorate General for Health and Consumers (DG SANTE) of the European Commission. It remains, however, unclear which effect these measures may have in the future on automatic recognition and free movement of graduates from non-approved/non-accredited Establishments.

#### **Development of quality control in veterinary education in Europe: EAEVE, history and involvement**

EAEVE is the only international or EU transnational non-governmental accrediting organisation for veterinary medicine within Europe. Based on the yearly number of Visitations, it is the largest one in this field in the world. As indicated above, EAEVE membership is voluntary and currently has 96 member Establishments (75 within the EU, the rest in Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, FYROM, Israel, Jordan, Norway, Serbia, Switzerland and Turkey). Admission into EAEVE for veterinary teaching Establishments within the EU is based on a simple request. On the other hand, membership candidates from outside the EU have to undergo

a screening procedure including a consultative on-site Visitation before being admitted. All new members, both EU and non-EU are encouraged to undergo a full on-site visitation and evaluation within 3 years of admission.

In practice, almost all visited and non-approved/non-accredited Establishments have undertaken every effort possible to correct deficiencies, with the aim for quality improvement and for being re-visited to reach full approval/accreditation. However, these efforts are also largely voluntary, as a negative outcome following an EAEVE evaluation has no legal effect in most Member States. Mutual recognition of veterinary degrees and free movement within the EU of graduates from non-approved/non-accredited Establishments is not impeded. There are, however, legal consequences on the national level in some Member States (Italy for instance) where competent authorities have decided not to assign students to non-EAEVE approved/accredited Establishments.

***Increasingly, however, it is the market that drives non-approved/accredited Establishments to improve and seek recognition, as in a climate of overproduction of veterinary graduates, employers are now well aware of the lack of full accreditation of certain Establishments.***

Competent national authorities within the veterinary profession that are simultaneously the accrediting agency as well as the licensing body, are uncommon in Europe, with the exception of the Anglo-Saxon area; examples are the Royal College of Veterinary surgeons (RCVS) in the UK and the Irish Veterinary Council. Overseas, there are similar joint accrediting/licensing agencies such as the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA), the Australasian Veterinary Boards Council (AVBC) and the South African Veterinary Council (SAVC). EAEVE is cooperating closely with these latter organisations, especially in striving for reciprocity. EAEVE also participates in the International Accreditors' Working Group, which is formed by these organisations aiming at harmonising global accreditation standards for veterinary medicine. Full joint evaluations are being already conducted regularly with the RCVS and AVMA. In addition, EAEVE entertains an exchange programme on the observer level with the aforementioned overseas organisations.

Although the EAEVE evaluation system is recognised world-wide and serves together with the US and UK systems as a template for other accrediting agencies (South Africa, Hong-Kong Veterinary Board), reciprocity is impeded by the lack of a European-wide legal basis for EAEVE evaluation and the subsequent outcome of their accreditation visitations.

At the Member State level, however, cooperation with the national academic quality assurance agencies is developing and intensifying. In several Member States, in which such agencies are already operative, EAEVE is closely collaborating (Austria, Italy, France, and Switzerland; in the latter country for example, ESEVT and national visitations are already well coordinated). However, national academic quality assurance agencies are not always specialised in the field of veterinary medicine and during their accreditation process tend to apply more general principles of academic quality assurance and management, with a reduced emphasis on the professional competences of veterinary graduates. In Austria and Hungary, for instance, EAEVE approval/accreditation of veterinary training Establishments is being accepted in lieu of governmental quality assessment procedures. It is anticipated, and this is endorsed by the DG MARKT and DG SANTE, that such agreements will be extended to all Member State authorities and that national veterinary licensing agencies could instigate consequences of any non-approved/non-accredited status of veterinary training Establishments under their jurisdiction.

## 4. History, profile and activities of the agency

Veterinary Medicine was the first, and remains today the only, section of regulated health professions with a Europe-wide quality assessment/evaluation and accreditation programme; which has now been running for more than 32 years, sponsored and run by EAEVE and its stakeholder partners (especially FVE representing the practising arm of the profession).

The EAEVE/FVE evaluation system gives assurance to:

- The public – to know they can trust the quality of graduating veterinarians and the service they deliver
- Veterinary students – to know their education reaches agreed and acceptable standards
- Veterinary Establishments – to know that their curricula and school reach agreed benchmarked levels.

EAEVE was founded in 1988 in Paris, France, as a European Accrediting Organisation and registered under French law. Offices were first in Paris, then in Brussels and since 2007 in Vienna, Austria. The formation of the Organisation was based on a 3-year cross-national peer assessment, which started in 1985 on the initiative of, and financed by, the EU Commission's Advisory Committee on Veterinary Training (ACVT). Consequently, and upon recommendation of the study, ACVT installed a permanent evaluation system for European Veterinary Teaching Establishments and recognised EAEVE as the evaluating agency.

In 1993, the EU Commission withdrew its financial support and ACVT mandated EAEVE and the Federation of Veterinarians of Europe (FVE) to continue managing the evaluation system independently and with its own budget. The EAEVE Member Establishments decided to maintain the system by paying membership and evaluation fees, as they recognised the benefits of such a Europe-wide profession-specific evaluation system. In 2000, based on the EU-ACVT mandate, a Joint Educational Committee (now European Committee on Veterinary Education, ECOVE) was formed acting as an independent decision-making Evaluation/Accreditation Board within EAEVE, with ESEVT as its accrediting arm. After each accreditation Visitation, ESEVT reports back to ECOVE for a final decision.

### Organisation and Structure

#### Statutes

The **Statutes** (Annex 2 of the SAR) are the legislative body of the Association determining the permanent rules of governing all internal affairs.

Any modification of statutes (two-third majority required) becomes effective immediately in the General Assembly in which they are approved

#### Organisational Structure

The Organisational Structure of EAEVE involves:

1. The General Assembly (GA)
2. The Executive Committee (ExCom)
3. European Committee of Veterinary Education (ECOVE) - (independent entity)
4. Committee on Internal Quality Assessment (CIQA)

## General Assembly

It is the supreme body of the Association which has at its disposal all powers necessary for running and governing the Association. Among its tasks are:

1. Electing the President by secret ballot,
2. Electing the Vice-President by secret ballot, after a proposal from the President,
3. Defining the geographical groups within the association,
4. Confirming the members of the ExCom (as nominated by the regional representatives),
5. Defining the responsibilities of the ExCom,
6. Defining and adopting its own rules of procedure and those of the ExCom,
7. Adopting proposed modifications to the statutes by a two-thirds majority of members with a voting right present,
8. Creating or deactivating working groups in order to realise any of the objectives as stated in Article 3 of the statutes,
9. Setting and adopting the budget and the annual membership fee.

The GA is composed of the deans (or equivalents) or their nominated representatives of the member Establishments. In case of any voting, each member Establishment with voting rights has a single vote. An ordinary session of the GA is called once a year, on the initiative of the President who chairs and determines the agenda in collaboration with ExCom; the date and place are decided by the GA (as a rule two years beforehand) by proposal from the floor or by approving a proposal from ExCom.

The GA shall have a quorum if, at least, half of the number of the member Establishments with voting rights are represented including delegated votes.

At each session of the GA the following items have to be presented and approved:

1. A President's report of the previous business year,
2. A financial report and an auditors' report; both of them to be approved for the work undertaken by ExCom and the President for the year under consideration,
3. A budget plan reported for the next year.

With the exception of amendments to the statutes (two-thirds majority) decisions are adopted by a simple majority vote of those members with voting rights present or validly represented by delegation. In the case of a tied vote, the President's vote is decisive.

## Executive Committee (ExCom)

It is responsible vis-à-vis the GA for the running of the Association. It is composed of the President and the representatives of the 8 geographical area groups which are as follows (as of February 2017):

Group 1: Ireland, the Netherlands and UK

Group 2: Portugal and Spain

Group 3: Albania, Greece, Israel, Italy and Romania

Group 4: Belgium and France

Group 5: Austria, Germany and Switzerland

Group 6: Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway and Sweden

Group 7: Croatia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Slovak Republic and Slovenia

Group 8: Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, FYROM, Serbia and Turkey

ExCom members, each representing one of the 8 regions, are nominated by the members of the

respective geographical groups; rotation amongst different countries is encouraged. Only representatives of approved/accredited or conditionally approved/accredited Establishments are eligible for office in the ExCom. ExCom members are nominated for two years and the mandate is renewable only once.

All ExCom members of EAEVE must have current employment at an EAEVE-evaluated veterinary teaching Establishment. Any EAEVE committee membership ends with retirement from academic employment and after completing the mandate at EAEVE.

One of the ExCom members is elected as Treasurer of the Association by the ExCom; one ExCom member is proposed by the President to be the Vice-President, and elected by the GA.

The role and responsibilities of the ExCom members (regional representatives) are:

- To represent the Establishments of the region in the ExCom,
- To keep contact with the Establishments, to keep an up-to-date database, to inform the EAEVE office on changes,
- To inform the Establishments on matters discussed in the ExCom and to collect their opinion,
- To initiate discussions on the matters arisen by the member Establishments,
- To attend the ExCom meetings and participate actively in its work, to comment on the topics from a regional point of view:
  - To prepare the agenda for the sessions of the GA, the programme of activities and the budget,
  - To propose the annual membership fee,
  - To implement the decisions of the GA,
  - To ensure the smooth running of the Association between the sessions of the GA,
  - To nominate the EAEVE members of any working group,
  - To maintain the list of evaluated and approved/accredited Establishments,
- Present proposals to the meetings of the ExCom,
- To participate in working groups,
- To promote the work of the ExCom and EAEVE.

ExCom meetings take place on average 3 to 4 times a year.

### **European Committee of Veterinary Education (ECOVE)**

The European Committee of Veterinary Education (ECOVE) is an independent decision maker within EAEVE. It is the decision-making body in the framework of ESEVT.

The office of ECOVE operates under the umbrella of EAEVE. The ECOVE office site is the same as the office of the EAEVE, in Vienna, Austria.

The Manual of Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) serves as the decision-making basis for the activities of ECOVE. While EAEVE is the “parent owner” of ECOVE, the decision-making process is entirely independent.

ECOVE consists of 7 members coming from 7 different countries; all have to have been experts of at least 2 on-site Visitations of veterinary teaching Establishments within the past 5 years before taking office. Four members are appointed by the ExCom of EAEVE; 3 members are nominated by the Board of the FVE. The Chair and vice chair are elected by its members from among its members for a 2-year term, renewable once.

While serving on the Committee, members shall not act as team members in any full on-site Visitation.

EAEVE and FVE shall nominate one alternate member each, who will be called upon in case of conflict of interest of a full member. Where conflict of interest arises e.g. in discussions of Visitation Reports with one of the Members being a national of the country in which the Establishment in question is located or currently working in that country or having worked or studied at the Establishment in question for a significant period of time, the Member in question must not participate in the evaluation, has no voting rights and shall leave the room. He/she shall be replaced by an alternate member.

The primary tasks of ECOVE are:

- Approve the Visitation Programmes of Veterinary Educational Establishments for Evaluation,
- Approve the selection of both Chair and members of visiting teams,
- Make the final decision on the visitation report, giving full justice to the suggestions made by the Chair and his/her visiting team, and based thereupon, decide whether “Accreditation”, “Conditional Accreditation” or “Non-Accreditation” should be assigned to the Establishment, or any other approval status, as defined in the SOP,
- Decisions concerning the results of evaluations and accreditations are based uniquely on the suggestions made by the visiting team in the visitation report, the Self Evaluation Report (SER) and on the verbal report given by the Chair. In the case of voting, each full member has one vote; a simple majority prevails; the Chair has a casting vote.

Meetings are held as frequently as deemed necessary; however, a minimum of 2 meetings take place per year.

### **Membership of EAEVE**

The Association is composed of members which are Establishments for higher education in veterinary sciences which lead to an academic degree, permitting application for a professional status allowing the exercise of veterinary medicine.

Establishments are eligible for membership on condition they adhere to the present statutes, pay the annual membership fee and comply with the Association’s evaluation system, as published in the SOP.

Non-EC Establishments have to agree to undergo a Consultative Visitation at the discretion of the ExCom before applying to become a member of EAEVE.

The right to vote is restricted to Establishments which have paid their annual membership fee before 1st of April of each year and have been approved/accredited or conditionally approved/accredited.

At the time of writing, EAEVE consists of 93 full members and 3 affiliate members; 67 Establishments of which are approved/accredited; 7 are conditionally approved/accredited; 8 are not as yet approved/accredited; 7 have undergone a Consultative Visitation and 4 have never been visited.

Membership ceases by written resignation or by exclusion as a result of non-payment of membership fees for more than one year or as pronounced by the GA, following a proposal of the ExCom as a result of non-compliance with the principles of the EAEVE.

EAEVE, and its main stakeholders such as FVE and the European Board of Veterinary Specialisation (EBVS) working together in the European Coordination Committee on Veterinary Training (ECCVT), recognised quality assurance in veterinary education to be fundamental for assuring the health and wellbeing of people and animals. It was felt to be also crucial for establishing trust in veterinary services, for legislation to be well implemented, and

for the free market to function properly throughout the EU.

The veterinary profession's core competences include the protection of animal health, animal welfare, public health and increasingly the concept of "One Health". Many issues, such as the prevention and control of animal diseases, including zoonotic diseases that can be transmitted to people, food safety, fighting antimicrobial resistance, and safe interactions with companion animals, hinge on the involvement of well-trained veterinarians. These core competences are of particular importance in the EU, where the free market requires the same quality of veterinary services in all member states and inevitably the same minimum level of training.

In developing the veterinary profession's core competences, ECCVT felt it essential that scientific development of veterinary medicine, research-based education and evidence-based medicine are fundamental quality aspects of all schools in the EU. That, in principle, requires appropriate university-owned facilities, equipment, staff and procedures for education and research in all subjects of the core professional curriculum, to provide the undergraduate students with a sound university-structured environment and clear links between education and science.

ESEVT acting as the accrediting arm of the independent decision-making body, ECOVE, is able to offer a visitation scheme to the members of EAEVE to consistently evaluate the schools (Establishments) in their ability to deliver such quality aspects. This consistent evaluation scheme operating within the EAEVE/FVE standard operating procedures (SOP), supports such harmonisation of veterinary education and in that way, improves trust in veterinary services throughout the European Community.

The "*Harmonisation of veterinary education: fundamental for establishing EU citizens' trust in veterinary services*"<sup>1</sup> contains a more detailed analysis by ECCVT on the importance of an evaluation system for veterinary teaching Establishments.

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<sup>1</sup> [http://fve.org/education/docs\\_to\\_download/2015\\_1%20Position%20on%20ESEVT%20FINAL.pdf](http://fve.org/education/docs_to_download/2015_1%20Position%20on%20ESEVT%20FINAL.pdf)

## 5. Higher education quality assurance activities of the agency

### One of the main Objectives of EAEVE is to promote the culture of quality in the Establishments for Veterinary Education

To achieve this objective, we aim:

1. To encourage and support the members of EAEVE to achieve the standards of quality defined by ESEVT in their current SOP based on, and including aspects of, the ESG 2015
2. To encourage members to apply for approval/accreditation
3. To encourage approved/accredited Establishments by the ESEVT to twin non-visited and non-approved/non-accredited Establishments in their preparation for an evaluation
4. To intensify our cooperation with Technical Assistance and Information Exchange (TAIEX) managed by the Directorate-General Enlargement of the European Commission, to improve the quality of veterinary education in the non-EU member states of Europe and in the beneficiary countries of TAIEX
5. To act as a forum for the discussion on matters of veterinary education, in order to improve and harmonise veterinary education amongst the members.

Expected outcomes of the successful achievement of these objectives are:

- a. Increased number of applications for ESEVT evaluation from EU and non-EU Establishments, both from continental Europe and farther afield
- b. Increased number of approved/accredited members following ESEVT visitations
- c. Regular cyclical evaluation intervals for all Establishments

Quality assurance within EAEVE is based on the principles found in the ESG 2015, and as a result is interwoven into the agency's SOP embracing the following basic concepts:

- The use of generic frameworks and standards when assessing veterinary teaching Establishments
- A single framework applies to both the theoretical and applied (clinical) parts of a professional programme such as a veterinary qualification
- A recognition of the ownership shown by those within the Establishments who create and then manage quality
- Accountability and improvement are to be integrated in all quality assurance processes, and the development of a quality culture is considered equally important as accountability
- Assessment panels to be composed of independent experts (peers), including student members, and subject to approval by stakeholders such as EAEVE, FVE and IVSA. Each team will have as a member an individual with experience and training in QA processes
- All assessment reports and all decisions of EAEVE on the basis of these reports are made public by EAEVE as well as by the visited Establishment.

As part of the quality assurance activities within EAEVE, the members have developed a code of conduct for all activities within the organisation.

## Code of conduct of EAEVE

In its 2007 International Good Practice Guidance, *Defining and Developing an Effective Code of Conduct for Organisations*, the International Federation of Accountants provided the following working definition: "Principles, values, standards, or rules of behaviour that guide the decisions, procedures and systems of an organisation in a way that (a) contributes to the welfare of its key stakeholders, and (b) respects the rights of all constituents affected by its operations."

In this spirit EAEVE has developed its own Code of Conduct. Full details of this Code of Conduct are shown in Annex 3 of the SAR. However, in summary, EAEVE members and proactive participants of EAEVE activities are expected to apply and uphold the following principles:

**Integrity, commitment and loyalty.** EAEVE members and proactive participants of EAEVE activities shall perform their work with honesty, diligence and responsibility, obey the law and shall not knowingly be a party to any illegal activity or engage in acts that are discreditable to the association. The legitimate and ethical objectives of the association are to be respected.

**Objectivity/Conflict of interest.** EAEVE members and proactive participants of EAEVE activities to exhibit the highest level of professional objectivity in gathering and communicating information about the activity or process being evaluated. To make a balanced assessment of all the relevant circumstances and not be unduly influenced by their own interests or by others in forming judgments.

**Confidentiality.** EAEVE members and proactive participants of EAEVE activities should respect the value and ownership of information they receive and not disclose information without appropriate authority, unless there is a legal or professional obligation to do so.

**Competency and professionalism.** EAEVE members and proactive participants of EAEVE activities should apply the knowledge, skills, and experience needed in the performance of their job.

**Respectfulness/Non-discrimination.** EAEVE members and proactive participants of EAEVE activities shall treat their colleagues, member Establishments, stakeholders and others with whom they do business with respect, dignity, fairness and courtesy. They are committed to maintaining a work environment that is free from harassment.

**Corporate responsibility.** EAEVE members and proactive participants of EAEVE activities should express support for fundamental human rights and avoid participating in business activities that abuse human rights. They shall act in a socially responsible manner, within the laws, customs and traditions of the countries in which they conduct evaluations.

**Creation of a culture of open and honest two-way communication.** EAEVE members and proactive participants of EAEVE activities should feel comfortable to speak his or her mind; management also have a responsibility to create an open and supportive environment where members and proactive participants of EAEVE activities feel comfortable raising questions, interacting with each other and resolving issues at the most appropriate level.

**Regular performance of evaluation.** The performance of EAEVE members and proactive participants of EAEVE activities is to be assessed on a regular basis, be it by regular

reviews/interviews, be it by means of questionnaire feedback.

**Accurate Public Disclosures/record keeping/archiving.** All disclosures made in financial reports are to be full, fair, accurate, timely and understandable.

**Publicity/Transparency.** All documents and results of the evaluations done by EAEVE are publicly available on their website.

**Management of finances.** The financial means available are to be employed as economically as possible, making sure that the budgeted expenditure per cost unit is not exceeded.

## 6. Processes and their methodologies

**In this chapter the following areas will be covered:**

- The standard operating procedure for accreditation visitations
- The different steps for an accreditation visitation, both before, during and after each visitation
- The selection, training and role of the external experts in the team (including student representation)

### Standard Operating Procedure

The Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) is the document that drives the accreditation process utilised by ESEVT during visitations to Establishments, and is appended in Annex 1 of the SAR.

The original evaluation system operated through ACVT was governed by the EU Commission Document II31/D/5056/5/89, which became the first working paper of EAEVE. Under ACVT it was amended and published as an SOP in EU Doc XV/E/8488/2/98.

Following the dissolution of ACVT in 2000, this SOP document was adopted by EAEVE and applied exclusively as of 2002. Since then, the SOP has been thoroughly revised and progressively updated under approval of the respective annual GA's. Important amendments to the SOP were the adaptation to EU Directive 2005/36/EC and then EU Directive 2013/55/EU. Initially, this led to the introduction of Stage 2 visitations in 2009 that concentrated on quality assessment procedures. These Stage 2 QA visitations utilised two QA experts and were combined with Stage 1 Visitations (evaluation of quality of training). After a relatively small number of combined Stage 1 and 2 visitations to different Establishments were undertaken, doubts were raised in ECOVE as to whether this separation was the correct approach. This concern was then both justified and supported by the ENQA report on EAEVE after their visitation in 2013 who came to the conclusion that EAEVE should ***“immediately consider revising both the evaluation methodology and the site-Visitation agenda for stage 2 evaluations in order to include a general review of the HEI and not just QA documents and not just meeting the people responsible for quality assurance”***

As a result of this justifiable criticism, EAEVE undertook a complete overhaul of the SOP which involved a series of iterations (seven in total) with detailed input from stakeholders such as EAEVE members, committee members, and FVE (UEVP, EVERI, UEVH, EASVO), EBVS, IVSA. Over 20 veterinary teaching Establishments made an extensive number of useful comments after they were given this opportunity to study the draft SOP. The draft versions of the SOP were also based on the document “Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area, abbreviated to ESG 2015” which was in fact drafted by several European based stakeholder organisations, including ENQA.

The 7<sup>th</sup> and final version of the SOP was formally adopted by the GA in Uppsala in May 2016 and is termed the “Uppsala SOP”, which is now used on all visitations to veterinary teaching Establishments.

As EAEVE is adjusting to globalisation it has supplemented its SOP by a “limited approval status”. That is to allow veterinary HEI's outside the EU to be quality assessed under well-

defined circumstances, despite an *a priori* incompatibility in one major area: for instance, the lack of adequate teaching in the porcine species or the sole teaching of slaughter procedures not commonly used in Europe. In such a case, insufficiency in only one area may be acceptable, whereas all other quality parameters will be evaluated by the complete EAEVE standards (SOP). As a guideline, any incompatibility area will be clearly defined and graduates originating from foreign faculties with “limited approval” would have to complete additional training in a specific field should they apply for recognition of their degree within EU.

### **Review of an Establishment**

The external quality assurance criteria used by EAEVE are defined and publicly available. The criteria are summarised in the SOP and are based on the requirements of the European Directives 2005/36/EC and 2013/55/EU, as well as the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG 2015). All these documents are available on the EAEVE website.

The basic outline of the process for an evaluation review of an Establishment can be summarised as follows:

1. The Establishment applies for a visitation at least one year before expiration of the current term for accreditation, or similarly at least one year in advance for a *prima nova* visitation
2. A mutually acceptable date is chosen and an agreement signed between the Establishment and EAEVE
3. The first step of the evaluation is the Self Evaluation Report (SER) written by the Establishment due to be evaluated. The guide for the preparation of the SER by the Establishment is published as Annex II of the SOP
4. During this initial period of time a panel of experts (from accredited Establishments) are selected by ECOVE through the EAEVE office to be part of the visiting team. In addition, an experienced ESEVT expert is appointed as the Chair and a Coordinator is also appointed. The coordinator is an EAEVE staff member with a wide experience in the process of ESEVT visitations. A senior individual from the Establishment (with a good knowledge of written and spoken English) is selected to be the Liaison Officer between the Establishment and the panel of experts. Details of how experts are selected and trained will be found in chapter 9.4
5. ESEVT has a number of team Chairs who are appointed to 1 to 2 visitations per year and whose position as a Chair is dependent on the confidential reports from team members on previous Visitations. These reports are mandatory following a visitation and allow a continuing and confidential assessment of both Chair and individual team members
6. The ESEVT Coordinators number four at the present time and each organise several visitations a year
7. The panel members are asked to verify and state their independence from any links with the Establishment to be visited by signing the conflict of interest form
8. The Establishment is consulted on the composition of the panel
9. At least 2 months before the on-site Visitation, the Establishment submits the SER to all members of panel of experts and to the EAEVE Office
10. On receipt of the SER, the Chair assigns individual panel members to one or more of the Standards within the SOP. After reading the SER, panel members are expected to submit a brief summary of additional evidence they wish to have during the visitation. The Chair collates these requests, and has the right to inform the Establishment in the case of major gaps in the SER that could require the Establishment to gather such additional information before the Visitation itself
11. The panel consists of six experts, including the Chair, plus one student proposed by the

International Veterinary Student Association (IVSA) and one of the ESEVT Coordinators. The students from IVSA are chosen from final year students or new graduates within one year of graduating from an accredited European Establishment.

The team of experts are chosen to represent experience in the following areas:

- Basic Sciences
- Companion animals Clinical Sciences [academic]
- Food-producing animals Clinical Sciences [academic]
- Professional knowledge [practitioner]
- Food Safety and Quality and Veterinary Public Health
- Quality Assurance

12. The Visitation takes 5 working days and involves meetings with senior and junior teaching staff, administrative and support staff and students, together with a detailed visitation/evaluation of all teaching facilities and equipment. There are also meetings with external stakeholders and recent graduates of the Establishment.

13. In a preparatory meeting on the Monday, the panel discusses the SER and decides on the day to day logistics of the visitation. To provide a level of uniformity amongst the experts on the team as they embark on the week of assessment, and also to produce a similar level of uniformity amongst other ESEVT visitations, the Coordinator holds a briefing session at this time<sup>2</sup>. The main areas covered are:

- What are the main duties of all Visitors on site
- What is expected from all Visitors concerning the Visitation
- What is expected from all Visitors concerning the writing of the Visitation Report
- What is expected about the exit presentation on Friday morning
- What is expected from all Visitors after the Visitation.

14. The team are assigned a “Base room” at the Establishment which not only acts as a focus for the meetings, but contains much of the documentation necessary for the team to gather evidence.

The first day at the Establishment itself is designed to allow the combined group to gather a general impression of the Establishment by visiting as many of the facilities as possible; during these tours the Establishment are requested beforehand to include as many areas as possible where students are being actively taught or actively learning

15. The next 2 to 3 days are then set aside for meetings and visits based on the 11 Standards within the SOP. To provide uniformity the format of the week follows an established pattern as laid down in Annex 7 of the SOP<sup>3</sup>.

16. An ‘open consultation hour’ is part of the site visit, allowing anonymous access to the panel for any member of the Establishment, including students

17. The site visit concludes with a short presentation of the findings and judgements by the panel chair.

18. The report is drafted by the team both during and immediately after the visitation. The report utilises a standard format which can be seen in Annex 8 of the SOP<sup>4</sup>. Each chapter ends

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<sup>2</sup> [http://eaeve.org/fileadmin/downloads/ESEVT/Briefing\\_by\\_the\\_Coordinator\\_at\\_the\\_start\\_of\\_a\\_Visitation.pdf](http://eaeve.org/fileadmin/downloads/ESEVT/Briefing_by_the_Coordinator_at_the_start_of_a_Visitation.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> [http://eaeve.org/fileadmin/downloads/SOP/ESEVT\\_Uppsala\\_SOP\\_May\\_2016\\_Annex\\_7\\_Timetable\\_and\\_guidelines\\_for\\_Visitations.pdf](http://eaeve.org/fileadmin/downloads/SOP/ESEVT_Uppsala_SOP_May_2016_Annex_7_Timetable_and_guidelines_for_Visitations.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> [http://eaeve.org/fileadmin/downloads/SOP/ESEVT\\_Uppsala\\_SOP\\_May\\_2016\\_Annex\\_8\\_Timetable\\_and\\_guidelines\\_for\\_writing\\_the\\_Visitation\\_Report.pdf](http://eaeve.org/fileadmin/downloads/SOP/ESEVT_Uppsala_SOP_May_2016_Annex_8_Timetable_and_guidelines_for_writing_the_Visitation_Report.pdf)

with a paragraph of “Suggestions” in which any deficiencies are specifically analysed and highlighted. After collation of all the sections by the Coordinator the draft report is sent back to the Establishment for verification of any factual errors.

A summary of the different level of decisions that the team can make for a Standard or substandard would be:

**Comments:** Data obtained by comparing the information collected from the SER together with the on-site visits and discussions with staff, students and stakeholders. Comments could also include areas that the visiting team felt were worthy of praise

**Suggestions:** These are proposals from the experts on how enhancing the quality of education could be achieved by correcting Minor Deficiencies

**Minor Deficiency:** A deficiency that does not significantly affects the quality of education and the Establishment’s compliance with the ESEVT Standards (i.e. partial compliance with an ESEVT Standard)

**Major Deficiency:** A deficiency that significantly affects the quality of education and the Establishment’s compliance with the ESEVT Standards (i.e. non-compliance with an ESEVT Standard).

19. The completed report is then sent to ECOVE for evaluation and deliberation at their next meeting. This process usually involves a real-time interview of the Chair of the Visitation. ECOVE bases its decision on the SER, the report of the Visitation team and the interview of the Chair. The evaluation outcome will be transmitted to the Establishment within hours

20. The final outcome of the quality assurance processes is the sole responsibility of the EAEVE in that the final decision is made by ECOVE

21. The final evaluation report remains the property of EAEVE and the Establishment involved. Visited Establishments have to publish their SER and the evaluation report on their web site, and they must agree in the visitation contract that the entire evaluation report and the SER are also published on the EAEVE website.

### Follow-up procedures

Decisions by ECOVE on evaluations are:

- Accreditation, meaning Accreditation in case of no Major Deficiency i.e. absence of non-compliance with any Standard;
- Conditional Accreditation in case of a single Major Deficiency;
- Non-Accreditation in case of several Major Deficiencies

Conditional Accreditation of an Establishment implies that within a defined period (a maximum of 5 years, in practice usually 3 years) all major deficiencies have been rectified and that a Re-visitation will take place.

Non-Accreditation Establishments may also request a Re-visitation but not before all major deficiencies had been rectified, which usually takes a longer period of time.

In the case of Non-Accreditation or Conditional Accreditation Establishments, ECOVE asks for regular follow-up reports to be sent to EAEVE for information on the progress of rectifying the major deficiencies.

Accredited Establishments undergo mandatory (full) Visitations every 7 years.

Teams re-visiting Establishments with Non-Accreditation or Conditional Accreditation status require visiting teams with expertise in all areas of the major deficiencies identified. The extent of such a Re-visitation will depend upon the complexity of the major deficiencies previously identified and will be decided upon by ECOVE. It can range from a small group consisting of the Chair of the former Visitation plus an ESEVT Coordinator, to a full 8-member panel. All expenses for Re-visitations have to be borne by the Establishment involved.

### **Appeal Procedure**

For the Establishments not agreeing with or not accepting the decision of ECOVE, a formal appeal mechanism is in place. Any Establishment may appeal an ECOVE decision. If ECOVE rejects the appeal, an independent Appeal Panel will be set up whose decision will be final. The appeal mechanism is described in chapter 9.7 and Chapter 1.8 of the SOP<sup>5</sup>.

### **Pool of Experts on ESEVT visitations**

Applying uniform and equal evaluation standards to all Establishments visited is a major objective of EAEVE which has received much attention since the ENQA external review in 2013 providing explicit criticism of this area. To that end, we involve experienced and well-trained experts, accompanied by an EAEVE staff member (Coordinator), all operating strictly according to the SOP. Full details on the selection, composition and training of experts will be found in chapter 9.4.

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<sup>5</sup> [http://eaeve.org/fileadmin/downloads/SOP/ESEVT\\_Uppsala\\_SOP\\_May\\_2016\\_Chapter\\_1.8\\_Appeal\\_process.pdf](http://eaeve.org/fileadmin/downloads/SOP/ESEVT_Uppsala_SOP_May_2016_Chapter_1.8_Appeal_process.pdf)

## 7. Agency's internal quality assurance

### Policy for Assurance of Quality

The main mission of EAEVE is to evaluate, promote and further develop the quality and standard of veterinary medical Establishments and their teaching within, but not limited to, the member states of the EU. In order to achieve these aims a structured profession-specific evaluation system has been developed, the ESEVT.

EAEVE is committed to quality assurance of veterinary training as published in its mission statement. To reach this goal that all major documents are made available and public, a structured internal quality assurance system is run by EAEVE. All activities of the organisation are fully transparent.

For internal quality assurance EAEVE has developed an organisation and associated structure.

### Internal Quality Control

#### Committee on Internal Quality Assessment (CIQA)

Being an agency involved primarily in evaluating and assessing teaching quality and outcomes assessment of its member Establishments, EAEVE submits itself to an internal quality assessment and assurance control. To that end CIQA was brought into existence in 2009.

CIQA consists of five members not involved in any other EAEVE governance bodies and while "owned" by EAEVE is independent in formulating its opinion. CIQA's main responsibilities (approved a posteriori) are:

- To direct the development, implementation, revision and improvement of quality in the ESEVT
- To present to the EAEVE GA an annual report on the fulfilment of the policies and objectives of quality, the follow up system and the proposals for improvement
- To control the effective management of the office
- To control the effective management of the post-on-site-Visitation questionnaire
- To perform a critical review on the development, results and personnel involved in all the steps of the annual evaluation processes, including the final decisions taken by ECOVE, looking for the equal application of the system to all the members without any type of discrimination, and controlling absence of conflict of interest. The review should include as a minimum an evaluation of the procedures followed at the site Visitations
- The composition and quality of the site Visitation reports
- The quality assurance feed-back from faculties and team members
- To meet at least 2 times a year
- To inform the ExCom, the ESEVT Director and the EAEVE President about the outcome of the meetings
- To evaluate the composition of the visiting groups.

### Evaluation of visiting groups

The following criteria for the assembling of visiting teams was drawn up by CIQA:

- No expert from the same country as the visited Establishment
- Previous experience of the expert in the evaluation system linked to positive post-Visitation feedback (based on questionnaires filled in by the Dean (or equivalent), the Chair and the Coordinator)

- No more than two novel experts in any team, to guarantee sufficient cumulative experience
- At least one female expert per team
- Experts from at least 3 officially recognized geographical groups
- At least one practitioner or official veterinarian as nominated by FVE
- Rotation amongst listed experts, in general no more than 1-2 Visitations per year
- Of the two experts in Clinical Sciences, one is to be expert in companion animals and the other one in food-producing animals
- No conflict of interest (no direct connection to personal interest in the Establishment to be visited; not having studied at or having been employed by the Establishment; none of the close family are studying at or being employed by the Establishment; that the expert has neither received nor been promised any gifts or benefits of any nature by the Establishment; that the expert is not a citizen of the country where the Establishment to be visited is situated in)
- The participating student shall be a final year undergraduate student from an accredited European Veterinary Establishment or an individual who has graduated within the last 12 months from such an Establishment.

### **Post Visitation questionnaires**

These form an important part of the quality assurance tools utilised for internal quality assurance in EAEVE. The questionnaires are filled in by both the visited Establishment and the members of the team. The questionnaire involves critique of the team, individuals and procedures, and invites the visited Establishment to suggest improvements. All evaluation forms are forwarded to and collected by the EAEVE office for analysis (internal feedback mechanism) and final evaluation by CIQA. CIQA in turn reports outcomes and makes suggestions for changes and improvements and checks their effectuation (internal reflection mechanism). A feedback evaluation system has been implemented and is used on a regular basis (see the feedback questionnaire as Annex 16 of the SOP<sup>66</sup>).

### **Evaluation of Feedback Reports by CIQA**

As mentioned above, CIQA has the responsibility of analysing and then reporting the various feedbacks following a visitation to an Establishment, feedback from both the visiting team members as well as from the Establishment itself.

For example, in 2016/2017 CIQA analysed 31 separate feedback forms from Establishments and 58 separate feedback forms from individual team members. One result of this analysis is that CIQA has recommended that pressure should be applied to Establishments to increase their feedback by ensuring that ECOVE will not consider reports pertaining to them until sufficient feedback is obtained. In addition, CIQA has recommended that team members who fail to provide feedback, even after a reminder, should not be considered for future team membership.

### **Follow up of internal quality assessment**

Recommendations and statements of CIQA are thoroughly discussed by ExCom and at the GA. As a rule, the suggested improvements are implemented without delay.

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<sup>6</sup> [http://eaeve.org/fileadmin/downloads/SOP/ESEVT\\_Uppsala\\_SOP\\_May\\_2016\\_Annex\\_16\\_Post\\_visitation\\_questionnaire.pdf](http://eaeve.org/fileadmin/downloads/SOP/ESEVT_Uppsala_SOP_May_2016_Annex_16_Post_visitation_questionnaire.pdf)

## Publicity

All documents and results of the evaluations done by EAEVE and the activity of the Association are publicly available on the homepage, so not only the evaluation processes, the Standard Operating Procedure, rules, self-evaluation reports, final reports and results but most documents of the Association can be assessed.

Knowing that an efficient and transparent quality assurance system is a prerequisite for the widely accepted work of EAEVE in the veterinary academic society, we are continuously developing quality assurance. Topics related to quality assurance are always on the agenda of the Education Conference which is a consistent part of the annual General Assemblies. Internationally known invited speakers summarise their opinion and the participants can thoroughly discuss the issue. All member Establishments are invited to share their ideas on development of quality assurance, with all suggestions and improvements being welcomed for the benefit of ESEVT and of the profession in general.

EAEVE has developed a document for both internal and external use termed:

**Policy for Assurance of Quality** which can be found in Annex 4 of the SAR. The main driver behind the development of this document was to evaluate, promote and further develop the quality and standard of veterinary teaching Establishments within, but not limited to, the member states of the EU. To achieve these aims a structured profession-specific evaluation system is now delivered by EAEVE throughout the continent.

Although EAEVE is committed for quality assurance of veterinary training, as published in its mission statement, it is aware that a strong internal quality assurance system is the basis of accountability, transparency and reliability for an accrediting agency such as EAEVE. For this reason, EAEVE submits itself regularly to an internal process of quality assessment and assurance control. To that end, and as described above, CIQA was created 8 years ago and is regularly active.

### External quality assurance

As yet, EAEVE has yet to through a series of formal cyclical external reviews. However, following an extremely useful review by ENQA in 2013, EAEVE were able to reassess their policies for quality assurance and now look forward to a formal cycle of review procedures in the future.

## 8. Agency's international activities

**EAEVE is the only international or transnational non-governmental accrediting organisation for veterinary medicine in Europe. It is the largest one in this field in the world.**

EAEVE membership remains voluntary, although compliance for accreditation is mandatory; currently EAEVE has 96 member Establishments of which 75 are within the EU. The other members come from outside of the EU where many veterinary teaching Establishments have joined EAEVE; for example, from Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, FYROM, Serbia, Switzerland, Norway, Turkey, Israel and Jordan.

Although admission for veterinary teaching Establishments within the EU is based on a simple request, candidates for membership from Establishments outside the EU have to undergo a screening procedure which includes a consultative on-site Visitation, with a need for a positive outcome decision by ExCom before admittance. All new members are encouraged to undergo a full on-site visitation and evaluation within 3 years of admission.

Within the EU, competent national authorities covering the veterinary profession which are simultaneously accrediting agencies **and** licensing bodies are uncommon; with the exception of the Anglo-Saxon area, examples being the Royal College of Veterinary surgeons (RCVS) in the UK and the Irish Veterinary Council. Overseas, agencies such as the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA), the Australasian Veterinary Boards Council and the South African Veterinary Council act as both the accrediting agency and licensing body.

EAEVE is cooperating closely with these latter organisations, especially in striving for reciprocity. EAEVE also participates in the International Accreditors' Working Group, which is formed by these organisations aiming at harmonising global accreditation standards for veterinary medicine. Full joint evaluations are being already conducted regularly with the RCVS and AVMA. In addition, EAEVE entertains an exchange programme on the observer level with the aforementioned overseas organisations. Another example of EAEVE's international activity is with the 'Réseau des établissements d'enseignement vétérinaire de la Méditerranée' (REEV-Med).

As an example of the international profile of the agency, EAEVE is undertaking between 12 and 17 evaluations of Veterinary Establishments per year, in Europe and beyond. Annex 7 of the SAR lists the visitations undertaken during the last five years.

The Standards within an ESEVT visitation are increasingly applied outside the EU, and even outside geographical Europe, where evaluation by ESEVT has been requested. For several years, close collaboration with TAIEX targeting evaluation veterinary Establishments in the Balkans and North Africa have been conducted. For instance, the Establishments in Irbid (Jordan), Nanjing (China), Ulaanbaatar (Mongolia) and Rabat (Morocco) have recently been evaluated by a Consultative Visitation. Japanese Establishments are on the verge of adapting the methods of ESEVT, with three Consultative Visitations due to take place to three groups, pairing six of the Japanese veterinary Establishments, during the next 18 months.

## 9. Compliance with European Standards and Guidelines (Part 2)

### 9.1 ESG Standard 2.1 Consideration of internal quality assurance

**Standard:** *External quality assurance should address the effectiveness of the internal quality assurance processes described in Part 1 of the ESG.*

The standards and guidelines of Part 1 of ESG 2015 have been addressed in the legislation within the ESEVT SOP, where the 11 Standards (especially standard 11) assessed during ESEVT accreditation visitations link with the ESG framework. Establishments are made aware of their responsibility for implementing the elements of Part 1 in their vision and policies on education and quality management.

Eight QA training courses have been held in early 2017 for each of the EAEVE regions, where the constituent veterinary teaching Establishments within each region sent not only senior management, but also staff responsible for developing QA in the particular Establishment. These courses covered the importance of a QA approach as a philosophy running through all aspects of the teaching programme and then crucially how to implement it. In addition, discussions take place on how QA is assessed during an ESEVT visitation. These meetings also allowed the different Establishments in the region to both compare and help each other in the implantation of a QA culture.

Whilst aspects of an ESEVT visitation will necessarily be assessing areas such as physical facilities and clinical training, and therefore not prescriptively part of the ESG, many of the 11 Standards have QA processes woven into their policies and deliverables. This can be illustrated in a tabular form:

#### Comparison of the 10 ESG Standards and the 11 ESEVT Standards

ESG Standards	ESEVT Standards
1.1 Policy for quality assurance	Standard 1: Objectives and Organisation Standard 11: Outcome Assessment and Quality Assurance
1.2 Design and approval of programmes	Standard 3: Curriculum Standard 11: Outcome Assessment and Quality Assurance
1.3 Student-centred learning, teaching and assessment	Standard 3: Curriculum Standard 8: Student assessment Standard 11: Outcome Assessment and Quality Assurance
1.4 Student admission, progression, recognition and certification	Standard 7: Student admission, progression and welfare Standard 11: Outcome assessment and Quality Assurance
1.5 Teaching staff	Standard 9: Academic and support staff Standard 11: Outcome Assessment and Quality Assurance

1.6 Learning resources and student support	Standard 2: Finances Standard 4: Facilities and equipment Standard 5: Animal resources and teaching material of animal origin Standard 6: Learning Resources Standard 10: Research programmes, continuing and postgraduate education Standard 11: Outcome Assessment and Quality Assurance
1.7 Information management	Standard 1: Objectives and Organisation Standard 3: Curriculum Standard 6: Learning resources Standard 11: Outcome Assessment and Quality Assurance
1.8 Public information	Standard 1: Objectives and Organisation Standard 3: Curriculum Standard 6: Learning resources Standard 11: Outcome Assessment and Quality Assurance
1.9 On-going monitoring and periodic review of programmes	Standard 1: Objectives and Organisation Standard 3: Curriculum Standard 6: Learning resources Standard 8: Students assessment Standard 11: Outcome Assessment and Quality Assurance
1.10 Cyclical external quality assurance	Standard 1: Objectives and Organisation Standard 11: Outcome Assessment and Quality Assurance

As mentioned above, one of the members of the ESEVT visitation team will be an individual with both training and experience in QA. This QA expert within an ESEVT team will be mainly responsible for:

- Standard 7: Student admission, progression and welfare
- Standard 8: Student assessment
- Standard 11: Outcome Assessment and Quality Assurance
- However, he/she will also be involved in Standard 1: Objectives and Organisation and Standard 3: Curriculum

Each of the other experts will have gone through and successfully passed the E-learning course, as detailed in 9.4

**In more detail, each of the ESEVT Standards will have the following QA components to be assessed by the ESEVT team during the visitation:**

### **Standard 1: Objectives and Organisation**

Important points where QA must be evident:

- The development of a Mission Statement that must be embraced by all the ESEVT standards
- The organisational structure must allow input not only from staff and students but also from external stakeholders
- The Establishment must have a strategic plan, which includes a SWOT analysis of its current activities, a list of objectives, and an operating plan with timeframe and indicators for its implementation

### **Standard 2: Finances**

- Somewhat difficult for team members to evaluate Standard 2 from a QA perspective, since the ESEVT SOP indicates only descriptions of procedures but not a PDCA (Plan-Do-Check-Act) cycle
- Allocation of funds must be regularly reviewed to ensure that available resources meet the requirements
- In addition, the lack of risk assessment within finances is relevant for QA; the Establishment should always have a ‘plan B’
- Also, variations within this Standard from a QA perspective may be derived from the autonomy of the Establishment, whether they depend on financial support from a “higher” university body or whether they have complete control of their finances as an autonomous Establishment. In the former case, the Establishment has to explain any difficulties in providing sufficient finances to the previously-set aims

### **Standard 3: Curriculum**

For the ESEVT team this Standard is absolutely crucial from a QA perspective

- Programme learning outcomes must be regularly reviewed, managed and updated to ensure they remain relevant, adequate and are effectively achieved
- 3.4 is the key section from a QA perspective as the Establishment 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.

If this sub-standard 3.4 is failed under Standard 3, it means that compliance with Standard 11 is also failed. Examples of such a failure (Major Deficiency) would include:

- Insufficient committee structure on developing the curriculum and on monitoring the review outcomes
- ‘Cyclicity’ is insufficiently emphasised; as it is an important issue for the ESG 2015, i.e. to have a system of periodic reviews
- Lack of input from a range of stakeholders
- Lack of sufficient information gathering for comprehensive reviews
- Lack of effective evaluation and responding to feedback
- At some Establishments, the committee on developing and reviewing the curriculum is merged with the team responsible for QA, whereas at others these two are separated
- In the latter case, communication between the two is vital with written evidence
- There has to be a triangulation of the documents between the committee, the QA group and the stakeholders
- Compliance with sub-standard 3.4 means an effective PDCA cycle

An important part of the programme at Veterinary Establishments is what is termed “External Practical Training (EPT)” or “Extra-Mural Studies (EMS)”, both of which refer to undergraduates spending time away from the Establishment to gain experience within a wide range of veterinary related providers such as Farms, Abattoirs, Clinics, Government institutes etc. If EPT is widely utilised within a programme, the ESEVT team need to assess what are the QA mechanisms in place to:

- Ensure a similar quality/standard of provision for a particular skill
- Train EPT providers
- Provide feedback to the Establishment
- Ensure effective management of EPT programme within the Establishment

#### **Standard 4: Facilities and Equipment**

- It is important to have strategies in place for maintaining, upgrading and restoring all facilities and equipment related to learning
- Documentation should be available to demonstrate such strategies and non-compliance with this approach could be a deficiency from a QA point of view
- There should be a well-organised approach for delivering a clear operational procedure on biosafety and biosecurity with evidence of leadership within the Establishment for this area; an area of critical importance in a “hands-on” teaching programme such as veterinary medicine. Significant problems in this area would again be recognised as a deficiency
- Also, evidence of any documentation relating to external QA (national agency or ISO certification)
- The QA of the Veterinary Teaching Hospital is more related to variations between European countries and the national ISO; such differences between Establishments among Europe has to be taken into account by the ESEVT visitors

#### **Standard 5: Animal resources and teaching material of animal origin**

This is, of course, a unique Standard with reference values/indicators to be assessed in each Establishment

- Insufficiency within Standard 5 could be a Major Deficiency on its own and compliance is covered by the ESEVT Indicators
- The number of animals that students encounter is considered as a learning resource
- For QA, the Establishment must have a method of checking the numbers on a yearly basis and demonstrating how ‘low’ numbers are corrected
- Lack of such methods is a deficiency within the understanding and practice of QA

#### **Standard 6: Learning Resources**

- Standard 6 has QA aspects (as written under Standard 11.6): “The Establishment must have appropriate funding for learning and teaching activities and ensure that adequate and readily accessible learning resources and student support are provided” (e.g. IT, E-learning etc.)
- In addition, the regular analysis of students’ needs and requests regarding learning resources, i.e. ‘customer satisfaction’, is again within the approaches of QA
- Furthermore, external QA is possible for Standard 6 when requested by another agency, such as from a central university education policy or even a national policy

#### **Standard 7: Student admission, progression and welfare**

- When evaluating the Establishment against Standard 7 it is necessary to examine the flowchart for student admission and progression with at least three years’ worth of data
- Evidence should be provided of a regular review and subsequent reflection on the

selection processes to ensure they are appropriate for students to complete the programme successfully

- 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 basis for decisions on progression (including academic progression and professional fitness to practise) must be explicit and readily available to the students
- The Establishment 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
- Establishment policies for managing appeals against decisions, including admissions, academic and progression decisions and exclusion, must be transparent and publicly available
- Mechanisms must be in place by which students can convey their needs and wants to the Establishment
- The Establishment must provide students with a mechanism, anonymously if they wish, to offer suggestions, comments and complaints regarding compliance of the Establishment with the ESEVT standards
- Data should be provided to illustrate actions taken following the above student input including feedback to the students

#### **Standard 8: Student assessment**

- From a QA point of view, the Establishment must have a process in place to review assessment outcomes and to change assessment strategies when required
- QA will also include the quality control of the students' logbooks/portfolios in order to ensure that all clinical procedures, practical and hands-on training planned in the study programme have been fully completed by each individual student

#### **Standard 9: Academic and Support staff**

- For QA purposes, evidence should be provided of formal training for all staff involved with teaching, including good teaching and evaluation practices, learning and e-learning resources, biosecurity and QA procedures
- For QA, provision of evidence of a well-defined, comprehensive and publicised programme for the professional growth and development of both academic and support staff
- Evidence of formal appraisal and informal mentoring procedures including action and feedback.

#### **Standard 10: Research programmes, continuing and postgraduate education**

- The SOP used by ESEVT does not explicitly define QA within this Standard. However, this remains a highly important Standard for the ESEVT visitation
- For postgraduate students, much of the points outlined under Standard 7 would also apply

#### **Standard 11: Outcome Assessment and Quality Assurance**

- This Standard is a summation of QA processes for the Establishment, and as discussed previously will integrate with aspects of the other Standards
- The Standard is also a direct copy of the Standards for internal quality assurance within ESG 2015
- This is important to convince Establishments that ESEVT does not request a QA level higher than what is requested by the ESG 2015 (no less, no more)

- Such an approach should also allay some of the past difficulties with the old system of Stage 2 visitations to Establishments.

There is another important role for Standard 11:

- To convince the national QA accreditation bodies that the ESEVT evaluations use the same standards as them
- Therefore, such an ESEVT evaluation could replace their own evaluation of Veterinary Establishments
- In order to save time and money for the visited Establishment, the national QA body is encouraged to send an observer during an ESEVT Visitation.

## 9.2 ESG Standard 2.2 Designing methodologies fit for purpose

**Standard:** *External quality assurance should be defined and designed specifically to ensure its fitness to achieve the aims and objectives set for it, while taking into account relevant regulations. Stakeholders should be involved in its design and continuous improvement.*

In the development of evaluation frameworks since 1987, EAEVE works together with stakeholders to accommodate their demands and make the frameworks fit for purpose. At every step in this process, Establishments, students and other stakeholders are consulted and given the opportunity to comment on proposals.

After the visitations, ESEVT is constantly reviewed and evaluated by each visiting team (with a questionnaire), each visited Establishment (again by questionnaire), CIQA annual review presented in the GA, ExCom discussion and update of annexes in the SOP every 6 months, regular evaluation of the ESEVT as a whole by all stakeholders (system-wide analysis of the ESEVT).

The Standard Operating Procedure (SOP), which is shown in Annex 1 is the document that drives the accreditation process utilised by ESEVT during visitations to Establishments.

The original SOP document evolved from the first working paper of EAEVE governed by the EU Commission Document III/D/5056/5/89. This initial document was amended and published as a SOP in EU Doc XV/E/8488/2/98.

Following the dissolution of ACVT in 2000, this SOP document was adopted by EAEVE and applied exclusively as of 2002. Since then, the SOP has been thoroughly revised and progressively updated under approval of the respective annual GA's. The implementation of these revisions and updates followed circulation to stakeholders, the latter representing both the national Establishments themselves as well as European wide bodies such as FVE.

After an update to the SOP in 2008 in Copenhagen, there was a major shift in 2009 at Hannover where the concept of a Stage 1 and Stage 2 evaluation system was adopted. Following further updates to the SOP in 2011 at Lyon and 2012 in Budapest the Stage 1 and Stage 2 system was fully implemented. Soon after this implementation doubts were raised in both ESEVT and ECOVE as to whether this separation was the correct approach. This concern was then both justified and supported by the ENQA report on EAEVE after their visitation in 2013.

As a result of this justifiable criticism, EAEVE undertook a complete overhaul of the SOP which involved a series of iterations (seven in total) with detailed input from stakeholders such as EAEVE members, committee members, FVE (UEVP, EVERI, UEVH, EASVO), EBVS, IVSA. The draft versions of the SOP were also based on the Standards and Guidelines for

Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (the ESG 2015 document).

The 7<sup>th</sup> and final version of the SOP was formally adopted by the GA in Uppsala in May 2016 and is termed the “Uppsala SOP”, which is now used on all visitations to veterinary teaching Establishments. This current SOP also underlines the actions taken by EAEVE to overcome the shortcomings/non-compliances with ESG standards as outlined in the 2013 ENQA report by designing methodologies (ESEVT) fit for purpose.

Working with this SOP ESEVT has now an increased chance to assess the true presence and then enhancement of quality in the Establishments under review. The central thrust of the evaluation of the establishment depends clearly on the defined 11 standards and 90 sub standards; these sub standards are present throughout the majority of Veterinary Teaching Establishments throughout the world, so allowing the visitation team to assess the depth each substandard meets. The feedback after the visitation allows the Establishments to know the areas of weaknesses they must work on: consequently, this process has a direct impact on improving quality.

EAEVE is increasingly aware of the financial and “manpower” responsibilities that visited Establishments have to undertake as part of the requirements behind a visitation. While it is true that visited Establishments are an integral part of the GA where the visitation fees are decided on, EAEVE do recognise the variation in the financial background with different Establishments. The workload has been simplified in the new SOP with a shorter SER, better definition of standards, and a reviewed evaluation programme decreasing the number of meetings, dinners, etc. to the minimum, making the process as efficient as possible.

### 9.3 ESG Standard 2.3 Implementing processes

**Standard:** *External quality assurance processes should be reliable, useful, pre-defined, implemented consistently and published. They include - a self-assessment or equivalent; - an external assessment normally including a site Visit; - a report resulting from the external assessment; - a consistent follow-up.*

#### Review of an Establishment

The external quality assurance criteria used by EAEVE are defined and publicly available. The criteria are summarised in the SOP and are based on the requirements of EU Directives 2005/36/EC and 2013/55/EU and the ESG 2015. All these documents are available on the EAEVE website.

The ESEVT evaluation process is a fully transparent accreditation procedure based on a system of Visitations together with periodic Interim Reports provided by the Establishment. It is compulsory for EAEVE members, as stated in the EAEVE statutes.

To be accredited by ESEVT, a veterinary degree provided by an Establishment must meet all the standards set out in the SOP, in order to be compliant with the EU Directives on the recognition of professional qualifications and the ESG.

If an establishment offers more than one veterinary programme, e.g. in different languages, all programmes must be evaluated.

Four types of evaluation are organised by ESEVT, i.e.:

1. Full Visitation
2. Re-visitation
3. Consultative Visitation
4. Interim Report.

## VISITATIONS

Full details of the four categories of visitations will be found in the current ESEVT SOP (Uppsala SOP). A brief summary of the process would include:

### **Initial agreement for an evaluation between the Establishment and the ESEVT**

Not less than 14 months before the intended Visitation, the Establishment (which must be an EAEVE member in good standing) must contact the EAEVE Office to ask for a Visitation.

The Visitation must be carried out during a period of full academic activity, i.e. when most staff and students are present on site.

### **Identification of the Visitation Team**

Not less than 6 months before the Visitation, ECOVE, through the EAEVE Office, appoints the members of the Visitation Team and sends to the Establishment the list and details of each Visitor.

The Visitation Team is composed of 8 Visitors:

- Expert in Basic Sciences
- Expert in Clinical Sciences in companion animals (including Equine and exotic pets)
- Expert in Clinical Sciences in food-producing animals (including Animal Production and Herd Health Management)
- Practitioner (proposed by FVE) (P);
- Expert in Food Safety and Quality (including Veterinary Public Health)
- Expert in Quality Assurance
- Student (min -1yr or max +1yr graduate veterinary student proposed by the International Veterinary Student Association)
- ESEVT Coordinator

All Visitors (regardless of the type of Visitation) must:

- Have successfully completed the E-learning course for ESEVT Visitors;
- Be fluent in English, both speaking and writing;
- Have been granted their University degree and work in a country other than the visited one;
- Sign a declaration confirming that they have no conflict of interest with the visited Establishment and a commitment to strictly follow the ESEVT SOP and the EAEVE code of Conduct (see Annex 3 of the SAR).

Upon an official request from the visited Establishment, ECOVE may accept observers from other official bodies, in addition to the ESEVT Visitors.

Upon an official request from the visited Establishment and in order to save time and money, ECOVE may accept to share Visitors with other veterinary accreditation bodies in the case of joint Visitations. However, if such a joint visitation is proposed:

- The joint Visitation Team must include among others 1 ESEVT Coordinator, 1 Student and no less than 2 ESEVT Experts;

- All ESEVT fields of expertise (i.e. BS, CS-CA, CS-FPA, FSQ, QA) must be covered within the joint Visitation team;
- The Visitation Agreement, the SER and the Visitation Report must be written in full agreement with the ESEVT SOP;
- The Visitation programme must be compliant with the ESEVT SOP.

### **Self-Evaluation Report (SER)**

The SER must be the result of an objective, accurate and in-depth review of the Establishment and the education it provides. It must contain accurate factual information together with a SWOT analysis, including the measures proposed to address the weaknesses and threats identified by the Establishment. Major points for the SER to follow include:

- The SER must demonstrate how the Establishment meets the ESEVT Standards described in the SOP
- The SER must closely follow the template and guidance provided in Annex 6 of the current SOP

### **Programme for the Visitation**

The major aim of the Visitation is to establish whether the Establishment complies with the ESEVT Standards described in chapter 3 of the SOP. The Visitation Team must verify and supplement the information presented in the SER by visiting the facilities, consulting the databases and meeting the relevant individuals.

The programme of the Visitation must be in compliance with the timetable and guideline proposed at Annex 7 of the SOP.

The Visitation Team must meet groups of teaching staff who represent a broad range of disciplines and levels of experience, as well as support staff, students and external stakeholders. An opportunity is provided during the Visitation for any staff member or student to meet confidentially with the Visitation Team and/or to send confidential communications to the Team by e-mail.

### **Visitation Report**

The Visitation Report must be completed in agreement with the template and guidance provided in Annex 8 of the SOP. For further details see 9.6 ESG Standard 2.6 Reporting in this SAR,

### **ECOVE decision**

For each visited Establishment, the ECOVE analyses and discusses the final draft Visitation Report and decides to confirm or amend the recommendations of the Visitation Team. The Chair and/or the Coordinator must be available to ECOVE for discussing the Visitation Report and for answering any questions that may arise. The Major Deficiencies must be clearly listed in agreement with a standardised terminology and the Establishment's status clearly identified, i.e.:

- Accreditation in case of no Major Deficiency;
- Conditional Accreditation in case of a single Major Deficiency;
- Non-Accreditation in case of several Major Deficiencies.

(NB Accreditation is valid for 7 years from the date of the (full) Visitation; Conditional Accreditation is valid for 3 years from the date of the (full) Visitation. When the validity period

is exceeded, the Establishment automatically reverts to Non-Accreditation status).

Immediately after the meeting, the ECOVE Chair through the EAEVE Office informs the Establishment's Head by e-mail and letter about:

- The granted status;
- The Major Deficiencies (if any);
- The appeal process;
- The obligation to publish the final Visitation Report issued by ECOVE on the website of EAEVE and the Establishment.

### **Appeal process**

Again, full details of the appeal process can be found in the SOP. In summary;

If the Establishment believes that the decision by ECOVE is not justified by the findings in the visitation report, it must inform the ECOVE Chair. The first stage of the appeal process involves reconsideration by the ECOVE during its next meeting. If the ECOVE dismisses the appeal and if the Establishment intends to continue the appeal process, it is then considered formally by an appeal panel. The decision of the panel is final.

Until the end of the appeal process, the Visitation Report is not published and the appealing Establishment holds its current status.

### **RE-VISITATION**

Again, full details of this process can be viewed in the current SOP.

However, as the system of external QA provided by EAEVE, operating as a supra-national QA agency, has become firmly established in HEI's, the number of requests for re-visitations has greatly increased. This is due the desire of an Establishment with identified major deficiencies to rectify them as soon as possible and then to request a re-visitation. This approach has resulted in major changes, both physical and organisational, in many European veterinary teaching Establishments; the speed and effectiveness of such changes would not normally have occurred without the expert analysis and advice linked to the accreditation process provided by EAEVE.

#### **Agreement for a Re-visitation between the Establishment and the ECOVE**

Two years after the previous (full) Visitation at the latest, an Establishment that considers that it has rectified its Major Deficiencies may ask ECOVE through the EAEVE Office for a Re-visitation.

A Re-visitation must be performed 3 years after the previous Visitation at the latest and can only be performed once. If this interval is exceeded, only a (full) Visitation can be undertaken.

#### **Identification of the Re-visitation Team**

The Re-visitation Team is composed of a minimum of 2 Visitors, i.e. 1 member of the previous Visitation Team (most often the Chair, who will chair the Re-visitation Team) and a Coordinator. The number and specific expertise of Visitors are decided by ECOVE on the basis of the number, type and complexity of the Major Deficiencies identified during the (full) Visitation.

The duty of the Visitors is mainly to evaluate whether the Major Deficiencies identified by ECOVE after the Visitation have been corrected. It is also to evaluate if an on-going process is

in place in order to correct the Minor Deficiencies.

### **Re-visitation Report and ECOVE decision on Re-visitation Report**

For each revisited Establishment, the ECOVE analyses the Re-visitation Report and decides to confirm or amend the recommendations proposed by the Re-visitation Team.

Immediately after the meeting, the ECOVE Chair through the EAEVE Office informs the Establishment's Head by e-mail and letter about:

- The granted status;
- The remaining Major Deficiencies (if any);
- The appeal process;
- The obligation to publish the final Re-visitation Report adopted by ECOVE on the website of EAEVE and the Establishment.

The new granted status lasts 7 years from the date of the original (full) Visitation (and not from the date of the Re-visitation).

### **Appeal process**

The appeal process after an ECOVE decision based on a Re-visitation is identical to the one mentioned above after a full Visitation.

## **CONSULTATIVE VISITATION**

Again, full details of consultative visitations are given in the current SOP. Briefly:

The purpose of a Consultative Visitation is an appraisal of the overall compliance of an Establishment with ESEVT Standards. The Visitation is advisory in nature and the result is not listed nor made public.

A Consultative Visitation is a prerequisite for granting membership in EAEVE, as stated in the EAEVE statutes.

## **INTERIM REPORT**

3.5 years after the (full) Visitation, all Establishments that are members of EAEVE must send a concise Interim Report to the EAEVE Office.

It must include:

- The name and details of the current Establishment's Head;
- Any major changes in each ESEVT Standard since the previous SER;
- Progress in the correction of Deficiencies (if any) and plans for the near future;
- The expected date of the next evaluation (Consultative Visitation, Visitation or Re-visitation);
- Updated list of Indicators.

The Interim Report must be completed in agreement with the template and guidance provided in Annex 14 of the SOP 2016.

After being reviewed by an ESEVT Coordinator designated by ECOVE, the Interim Report is sent by the EAEVE Office to ECOVE for consideration during its next meeting.

In case of a lack of Interim Report or evidences in the Interim Report of the occurrence of potential major issues, ECOVE may send a warning to the Establishment.

## **JOINT VISITATIONS**

Although the ESEVT accreditation scheme is designed to assess a wide range of standards which all, to a greater or lesser extent, have a QA component, there are several standards which are unique to Veterinary Schools, as well as many others which are common to accreditation visitations to other higher education establishments. As such, EAEVE felt it vital that, as a supra national QA agency, EAEVE should aspire for inclusion onto the EQAR Register.

On confirming that the application from EAEVE was eligible for such inclusion, EQAR requested that EAEVE's SER included visitations to Establishments both within and outside the European Higher Education Area. In addition, EQAR requested that EAEVE should address how it ensures compliance with the ESG in visitations that it shares with other QA agencies, especially in cases where such agencies are not on the EQAR Register. Although most of the National Accrediting QA Bodies in Europe are included in the EQAR Register, other veterinary-focused QA agencies are not.

Since 2014 ESEVT has conducted 5 joint visitations with the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS) and the American veterinary Medical Association (AVMA). In addition, during the same time frame, ESEVT has accepted observers in another 5 visitations.

In addition, the ESEVT standard 11 is a copy & paste of the requirements for accrediting agencies addressed in the ESG 2015 which is designed to help ensure that the ESEVT accreditation process would be fully compliant and homogeneous with the accreditation by QA national agencies. In fact, EAEVE will be one of the first agencies fulfilling ESG 2015 standards and presumably all the QA national agencies will have to undergo a similar review to renew their accreditation once verified that they meet the ESG 2015. It is also relevant to consider that the QA agencies, even as a member of EQAR, only revise standard 11 whilst the ESEVT team has another 10 standards to assess.

As mentioned above, both the UK based Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS) and the USA based American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) are not on the ENQA register.

### **Joint visitations with the RCVS**

EAEVE collaborates with the RCVS for all the visitations to the seven UK veterinary teaching Establishments. Unlike EAEVE, the RCVS is both a licensing and accrediting agency with the power to withdraw the automatic recognition of a veterinary degree qualification from any particular university. Although the protocols for the visitation are essentially similar for both the RCVS expert team and the ESEVT expert team, there has recently been a move to harmonise both protocols and have a coordinated SER and visit schedule; a draft proposal from the RCVS is currently under consideration.

### **Joint visitations with the AVMA**

EAEVE collaborates with the AVMA for all the visitations to veterinary teaching Establishments that seek both AVMA and EAEVE accreditation. Similar to the situation in the UK with the RCVS the AVMA is both a licensing and accrediting agency, with the power to withdraw the automatic recognition of a veterinary degree qualification. Currently, there are about eight European Establishments either holding or actively seeking AVMA accreditation together with EAEVE accreditation. The joint AVMA/ESEVT visitations are conducted with

two teams utilising the same SER but usually sharing one or two experts who are appointed to represent both teams. Nevertheless, although there are some joint meetings, the decision process on accreditation is conducted separately with a final decision on accreditation being entirely separate for EAEVE and AVMA.

### **Visitations and links with National QA Agencies**

As mentioned above, ESEVT has conducted several visitations with a national QA representative as an observer:

- ANECA, the national QA agency in Spain and on the Register of EQAR, sent an observer to the visitation in Kosice as a first step to recognising ESEVT evaluation at their level before signing a MoU
- In addition, the Italian national QA agency ANVUR (on the Register of EQAR) has also pursued a similar path to recognition of the ESEVT accreditation system. EAEVE took part to a meeting on QA in higher education in Bologna, together with ANVUR and ENQA
- Further to ANVUR and ANECA, the Estonian Quality Agency for Higher and Vocational Education, EKKA, (also on the EQAR Register) now recognises the ESEVT SOP following a visitation to Tartu in November 2015. Even though there was no observer from EKKA, the agency agreed to approve the Final Report
- An observer from the Swiss Agency of Accreditation and Quality Assurance (OAQ- now AAQ) participated in a VetSuisse visitation
- The Austrian QA agency "AQ Austria" (Agentur für Qualitätssicherung und Akkreditierung Austria and on the EQAR Register) together with the Austrian Ministry of Education, now officially recognizes the ESEVT SOP, resulting in no need for an observer in future visitations.

### **Ongoing analysis of the ESEVT visitation process**

Although EAEVE and its constituent committee structure are always attempting to improve the approach **to** and practice **of** accreditation visitations to veterinary teaching Establishments, there are a number of areas that remain under active discussion:

- While EAEVE realises of the absolute necessity for the training of experts comprising the ESEVT teams, it is an area that needs constant review. Ideally, a daylong training session in a single location would be beneficial; however, with experts drawn from throughout Europe, the expense would presently be prohibitive. Other than the current online training, a more electronically visual and real-time training programme might well be beneficial. Further information regarding the training of experts is given below in 9.4
- Although the presence of a student as a full member of visitation teams has been and continues to be a real success story, there are some potential drawbacks to the current link with the International Veterinary Student Association (IVSA), For example, the president and senior members of the IVSA will often come from outside European veterinary teaching Establishments and as a result often have a limited knowledge of such establishments and their teaching methods. This situation could well influence the selection of an individual from IVSA to be appointed on visitation teams.
- Another area under active consideration involves the expert member of the team with an adequate QA experience. Following on from the recent eight regional QA training exercises, EAEVE is in the process of recruiting additional experts with proven QA

experience. However, such individuals are predominantly from veterinary teaching Establishments themselves; further recruitment is necessary to attract QA experts who are not necessarily clinically qualified. A drawback to recruiting such experts is that there is currently no financial payment to individual experts other than their travel and accommodation expenses covered by the visited Establishment; those from a university background continue to receive their salary, while those with a consultancy background can suffer a financial loss.

External QA is at the heart of EAEVE's *raison d'être*. As such, it remains vital that EAEVE retains an ongoing ambition to reflect on the effectiveness of its own external QA procedures by "asking" the following:

- Are the current ways of recruiting, training and selecting experts for the visitations the most effective; how can we improve on these parameters?
- What are the measures in place to ensure the standardisation of visitations to the different European Veterinary Teaching Establishments; can we improve on them?
- Is there sufficient and ongoing feedback from the main stakeholders to ensure the effectiveness of the visitation programme and avoid complacency?
- What evidence is there of the outcomes generated by the publication of the visitation reports/decisions, both from the visited Establishment itself and its host country, as well as from the wider field of veterinary higher education?

To deliver on such a series of analyses, EAEVE relies on an integrated system of checks and balances which are widely discussed and then implemented by:

- The General Assembly of EAEVE
- CIQA
- ECOVE
- Assessment of visitations by the Experts within that particular visitation
- Assessment of visitations by the Establishment itself

As a QA agency working for more than 32 years in the accreditation of Establishments for Veterinary Education in Europe and beyond, EAEVE has learnt that QA is a continuous process that requires, amongst many actions, of the periodic update of the procedures (SOP), improvement of the recruitment and training of experts, and fulfilment of QA Standards (ESG 2015). EAEVE's constant commitment to improve the ESEVT, makes it being perceived as a reliable, transparent and easy-going process that has increased substantially the quality of the Establishments for Veterinary Education in Europe, contributing to the harmonisation of Veterinary Education, as stated by the European Coordinating Committee on Veterinary Education (ECCVT) ([http://www.eaeve.org/fileadmin/downloads/eccvt/2015\\_1\\_Position\\_on\\_ESEVT\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.eaeve.org/fileadmin/downloads/eccvt/2015_1_Position_on_ESEVT_FINAL.pdf))

#### **9.4 ESG Standard 2.4 Peer-review experts**

**Standard:** *External quality assurance should be carried out by groups of external experts that include (a) student member(s).*

The experts involved in the evaluation process are proposed by both the EAEVE member Establishments through their dean's offices, by individuals themselves and by the FVE. Internationally acknowledged experts employed in academia are only accepted when coming from EAEVE approved/accredited Establishments. FVE nominate experts in the field of clinical

sciences (practitioners, official veterinarians, QA experts). All expert candidates are required to complete an application form with an up to date curriculum vitae. Applications are screened by a procedure described in the document ‘ESEVT Expert Application and Acceptance Procedure’ which is available on the EAEVE website<sup>7</sup>. Accepted experts are listed in the following categories of expertise: Basic Sciences, Companion Animals Clinical Sciences (Academic), Food-producing Animals Clinical Sciences (Academic), Professional knowledge (Practitioner), Food Hygiene & Public Health and Quality Assurance Management.

Expert lists are the basis for the compilation of the visitation expert teams. All expert lists are continuously up-dated and are published on the website. Presently there are nearly 100 experts available and listed.

### **Training of Experts**

This was an area of weakness identified by the previous ENQA panel in their review report issued in September 2013. EAEVE have further developed this area with mandatory training for all experts who aspire to be full members of visitation teams as well as additional training for those team members with a QA focus. The Executive Committee of EAEVE decided to implement an E-learning platform for the training of all visitors who are involved with the on-site evaluation of establishments devoted to veterinary education through ESEVT. As mentioned above, it is now a prerequisite to successfully complete this E-learning course before acceptance as an ESEVT expert and being proposed to be a formal member of a Visitation Team. Full details of these Training programmes are shown in chapter 12.

Before undertaking the Multiple Choice Questions, each candidate expert must have read and understood the ESEVT Uppsala SOP (2016), including its annexes, and the EAEVE Code of Good Conduct.

The first part of the E-learning went live in October 2015 and the second part in July 2016. A third and updated part of this on-line E-learning assessment was launched in June 2017.

The first part of the E-learning is mainly devoted to:

- the Mission Statement, Objectives and Code of Conduct of EAEVE,
- the EU Directives on the recognition of professional qualifications,
- the ESEVT Day One Competences,
- the ESEVT Indicators,
- the Visitation Programme,
- the Visitation Report.

The second part of the E-learning, introduced in 2016 after approval by the General Assembly of EAEVE and of FVE, is mainly devoted to:

- the ESEVT evaluation process,
- the ESEVT Standards for Accreditation,
- the Template and guidelines for the writing of the Visitation Report,
- the ESEVT Indicators.

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<sup>7</sup>

[http://www.eaeve.org/fileadmin/downloads/Experts/ESEVT\\_Experts\\_Application\\_and\\_Acceptance\\_procedure\\_FINAL\\_approved\\_by\\_ExCom\\_May\\_2016.pdf](http://www.eaeve.org/fileadmin/downloads/Experts/ESEVT_Experts_Application_and_Acceptance_procedure_FINAL_approved_by_ExCom_May_2016.pdf)

## 9.5 ESG Standard 2.5 Criteria for Outcomes

**Standard:** *Any outcomes or judgments made as the result of external quality assurance should be based on explicit and published criteria that are applied consistently, irrespective of whether the process leads to a formal decision.*

The report following an accreditation Visitation to an Establishment is collated by the Chair and Coordinator after collective input from all the experts. This report is returned to the Establishment within 2-3 weeks for any corrections of a factual nature. The report is then sent to ECOVE. As ECOVE only meets twice a year, this can sometimes lead to quite a delay. Nevertheless, the Establishment is made fully aware of the process and timing of the decision making during the exit presentation by the Chair.

### ECOVE decision

ECOVE must base its decision on the SOP which was valid at the time of the agreement between the Establishment and EAEVE unless the Establishment has explicitly agreed to follow the most recent SOP. In any case, the SOP on which ECOVE has based its decision must coincide with the SOP the Establishment followed when preparing its SER. In its decision, ECOVE must state on which SOP it has based its decision on (version, date). At the present time this is a pertinent point as the switch to the current SOP occurred during mid-2016 and some Establishments had been planning for a visitation at a time when the old “Budapest” was still in use; this situation, however, will be temporary as all requests for visitations must be based on the new “Uppsala” SOP.

For each visited Establishment, the ECOVE analyses and discusses the Visitation Report and decides to confirm or amend the recommendations of the Visitation Team. The Chair and/or the Coordinator must be available in person (or via a video link) to ECOVE for discussing the Visitation Report and for answering any questions that may arise. In the decision from ECOVE the Major Deficiencies must be clearly listed in agreement with a standardised terminology and the Establishment’s status clearly identified, i.e.:

- Accreditation in case of no Major Deficiency;
- Conditional Accreditation in case of a single Major Deficiency;
- Non-Accreditation in case of several Major Deficiencies.

Accreditation is valid for 7 years from the date of the (full) Visitation; Conditional Accreditation is valid for 3 years from the date of the (full) Visitation. When the validity period is exceeded, the Establishment automatically reverts to Non-Accreditation status.

While the above timeline that follows a visitation explains the actual process, it is important to consider how the consistency and interpretation of the application of the criteria covering the standards, is applied by each visiting team.

The *a priori* situation with the standards that form the basis of the ESEVT process is that they must be fully understood by stakeholders, especially including the visited Establishments, and the processes involved in their assessment are also fully understood by both the establishments and the expert assessors. It is a given that not only are these standards clear and logical, but their subsequent assessment by the experts is also clear, logical and evidence based. In addition, the assessments must be seen to be both equitable and especially repeatable for each visitation. It is obviously vital that decisions made following such assessments must be reliable and similarly applied on all visitations. The success of such an approach should convince the body of stakeholders, involved in both the delivery and then dependence on veterinary higher education, that the evaluation of the standards is both fair and “standardised” across the sector.

With respect to the consistency of the application of the standards by the team of visitors, the whole team (8 members) must reach a unanimous decision on the grade of compliance of the Establishment with the 90 standards (11 standards and sub-standards) compiled in the rubrics (page 77-80 of the SOP).

To deliver on such an analysis of the evidence based criteria for the evaluation of the standards, EAEVE has developed an integrated system of checks and balances which are discussed and implemented by:

- The General Assembly of EAEVE
- CIQA
- ECOVE
- Assessment of visitations by the Experts within that particular visitation
- Assessment of visitations by the Establishment itself.

## 9.6 ESG Standard 2.6 Reporting

**Standard:** *Full reports by the experts should be published, clear and accessible to the academic community, external partners and other interested individuals. If the agency takes any formal decision based on the reports, the decision should be published together with the report.*

The individuals that are responsible for the visitation report are:

- The Expert Visitors within the team and their varying experience
- The Chair of the visiting team
- The ESEVT Coordinator
- The Liaison Officer from the Establishment

### Visitation Report

The Visitation Report must be completed in agreement with the template and guidance provided in Annex 8 of the SOP.

The main duties of the Visitors are to establish if the veterinary degree granted by the visited Establishment is compliant with the ESEVT Standards.

More specifically, the duties of the Visitors are:

- Before the Visitation, to read the Self Evaluation Report (SER), to write the draft report for their respective chapters (as allocated by the Chair and Coordinator) and to send it together with a list of questions and issues to be clarified to the Coordinator 2.5 weeks before the visitation at the latest;
- During the Visitation, to check the accuracy of the information provided in the SER, to visit the facilities, to consult the databases, to meet students, staff, representatives of the national veterinary associations and other stakeholders, to request any missing information and to finalise the writing of the draft Visitation Report for their respective chapters in collaboration with the other members of the team;
- Immediately after the Visitation, to send their comments on the final draft of the Visitation Report to the Coordinator and the post-visitation questionnaire (Annex 16 of the SOP) to the EAEVE Office.

All members of the Visitation Team are expected to contribute to all chapters of the visitation report but a principal writer is identified for each chapter by the Chair and Coordinator at least 2 months before the Visitation.

Standard 1 Objectives and Organisation

Standard 2 Finances

Standard 3 Curriculum:

3.1 General curriculum

3.2 Basic Sciences

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

3.4 Clinical Sciences in food-producing animals

3.5 Animal production

3.6 Food Safety and Quality

3.7 Professional Knowledge

Standard 4 Facilities and equipment

Standard 5 Animal resources and teaching material of animal origin

Standard 6 Learning resources

Standard 7 Student admission, progression and welfare

Standard 8 Student assessment

Standard 9 Academic and support staff

Standard 10 Research programme, postgraduate and continuing education

Standard 11 Outcome Assessment and Quality Assurance

Executive Summary

Indicators For further information regarding this statistical section see Annex 4 of the SOP<sup>8</sup>.

Although detailed in Annex 4 of the SOP, the indicators are used in a non-prescriptive way in the evaluation of an Establishment. They reflect a given situation at the time of the Visitation, allowing for EAEVE to compare Establishments and to be aware of any perceived trends. The Indicators are calculated with data from the last three complete academic years, in order to smooth the annual variations and to avoid temporary improvements restricted to the period of the Visitation.

The Visitation Team is responsible for making an independent assessment and proposing an unambiguous statement on the adequacy of the Establishment against each ESEVT Standard, i.e. compliant, partly compliant (one or more Minor Deficiencies that does not significantly affect the quality of education and the Establishment's compliance with the ESEVT Standards) or not compliant (one or more Major Deficiencies that affect the quality of education and the Establishment's compliance with the ESEVT Standards).

When assessing the adequacy of the Establishment, the visiting team is referencing the list of Standards and the longer list of Sub standards of the rubrics (to a total of 90 standards, page 77-80 of the SOP), which is a far more effective approach than a list of major deficiencies gathered over decisions made from past visitations. Such an approach on the grade of compliance by the establishment, based on scoring the rubrics, remains the most effective and objective way for the team to reach collective decisions, adopted not only by EAEVE but also by other International Accrediting bodies of Veterinary Establishments outside Europe (ABVC Australasian Boards Veterinary Council and AVMA, American Veterinary Medical Association).

In the Visitation Report, each chapter is subdivided into 4 parts:

1. Findings;
2. Comments;
3. Suggestions of the Visitation Team (Minor Deficiencies which must be limited in

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<sup>8</sup>[http://eaeve.org/fileadmin/downloads/SOP/ESEVT\\_\\_Uppsala\\_\\_SOP\\_May\\_2016\\_Annex\\_4.\\_ESEVT\\_Indicators.pdf](http://eaeve.org/fileadmin/downloads/SOP/ESEVT__Uppsala__SOP_May_2016_Annex_4._ESEVT_Indicators.pdf)

number, agreed by the whole team i.e. not linked to personal opinions, relevant for the visited Establishment, and in agreement with the ESEVT SOP).

4. Decision of the Visitation Team (in case of non-compliance, the Major Deficiencies must be clearly listed in agreement with a standardised terminology).

The main duties of the Chair are to chair all the meetings during the Visitation, to make decisions (after consulting the Visitation Team) when an unexpected problem occurs during the Visitation and, subsequently, to be available to ECOVE to discuss the Visitation Report and answering any questions that may arise. The Chair is also responsible for delivering the final exit presentation to the Establishment. At this meeting the Establishment is informed of a selection of the “Comments” (items that the review team felt worthy of praise) that will be in the Report. They are also informed of items of concern, some of which will be minor (“Minor Deficiency”) and also some which might be more of a major concern (“Major Deficiency”). At the end of the meeting the Establishment is told of the next steps involving the review teams final Report, correction of factual errors by the Establishment and a decision by ECOVE.

The main duties of the Coordinator are to coordinate the whole Visitation process in close contact with EAEVE Office, the Chair and the visited Establishment (i.e. its preparation, its completion and the writing of the Visitation Report), in order to help the experts in their duties, to facilitate contacts with the Establishment, to ensure a strict implementation of the SOP, and to guarantee an equal level of all reports.

The main duties of the Liaison Officer are to facilitate the whole Visitation process in agreement with the ESEVT SOP and to be in close contact with the EAEVE Office, the Coordinator and the Establishment’s Head before, during and after the Visitation. The Liaison Officer must provide the Visitors with the information requested before and during the Visitation, to address any technical problems and to organise the relevant meetings in the most efficient way.

The Liaison Officer must be a senior member of the Establishment who is:

- Well aware of both the ESEVT SOP and the structure and functioning of the Establishment;
- Fluent in English;
- Easily accessible by e-mail and by phone and readily available at all times, particularly during the visitation.

### **Evaluative description**

EAEVE publishes all the accreditation visitation decisions and the associated reports on which these decisions are based on its website (<http://www.eaeve.org/esevt/ser-and-visitation-report-of-visited-establishments.html>). These documents follow a mandatory format and include:

- Information on the Establishment and the context of the Visitation;
- Description of the way the visitation was conducted, including the composition of the panel, the Chair and ESEVT Coordinator;
- The programme of the site Visitation;
- An executive summary of the findings and the judgments by the panel through ECOVE;
- Description of the findings of the panel, including details of any Major Deficiencies as well as any Suggestions for further improvement;
- In the case of a conditional judgment: the conditions that should be met before full accreditation.
- Before any visitation takes place, the Establishment must sign the Evaluation Agreement with the agreement to make public all documents related to the process, in

EAEVE's and the Establishment's web sites, namely the SER, Evaluation report, final decision by ECOVE and Establishment status.

With ESEVT visitations, all reports are sent to the Establishments for a check of factual details before a decision is taken by ECOVE.

### **Example of a recent Visitation SER and the ESEVT Report**

In order to effectively demonstrate up to date evidence of ESEVT visitations, the Annexes contain the SER from Madrid Complutense, the resultant ESEVT Visitation Report and the Re-visitiation SER. Madrid Complutense, one of Spain's leading Veterinary Schools, was first visited by the ESEVT Visitation Team on 27-31 March 2017 and by the ESEVT Re-visitiation Team on 25-27 September 2017. These documents are shown in Annex 8 of this SAR.

### **9.7 ESG Standard 2.7 Complaints and appeals**

**Standard:** *Complaints and appeals processes should be clearly defined as part of the design of external quality assurance processes and communicated to the Establishments.*

#### **Appeal procedure**

The following section has already been mentioned in an earlier section. However, it is also included here to re-emphasise the link with the relevant ESG Standard.

If the Establishment does not consent to or is not agreeing with any ECOVE decision, the right to appeal may be used. Details can be found under 1.8 in the ESEVT SOP<sup>9</sup>.

When an Establishment believes that the decision by ECOVE is not justified by the findings in the visitation report, it must inform the ECOVE Chair through the EAEVE Office of its intention to appeal the ECOVE decision within 2 weeks. That notification and the argued basis for the appeal must be made in writing 2 months after the receipt by mail of the ECOVE decision and final Visitation Report by the Establishment at the latest.

The first stage of the appeal process involves reconsideration by the ECOVE during its next meeting. The Chair and the Coordinator of the relevant Visitation Team may be asked to participate in the reconsideration process. The appeal may be accepted or dismissed.

If the ECOVE dismisses the appeal and if the Establishment intends to continue the appeal process, it is then considered formally by an appeal panel. The panel will comprise three members, all of whom should preferably have chaired a Visitation Team. The appointment of the panel is coordinated by the President of EAEVE or his/her nominee in the event that he/she is ineligible through other considerations. One member each is appointed by the EAEVE and the FVE, with the appealing Establishment having the right to nominate a third member. At least one member must have expertise relating to the subject area(s) under dispute. The panel selects its own Chair. All three members must sign a declaration confirming that they have no conflict of interest with the visited Establishment and a commitment to strictly follow the ESEVT SOP and the Code of Conduct for Visitors (Annex 15 of the SOP<sup>10</sup>).

The appeal and the discussion of it is first carried out by correspondence. If a decision cannot be reached by this means, the Chair of the Appeal Panel may consider that a meeting is necessary, at the Establishment or elsewhere, between the members of the panel,

<sup>9</sup> [http://eaeve.org/fileadmin/downloads/SOP/ESEVT\\_Uppsala\\_SOP\\_May\\_2016\\_Chapter\\_1.8\\_Appeal\\_process.pdf](http://eaeve.org/fileadmin/downloads/SOP/ESEVT_Uppsala_SOP_May_2016_Chapter_1.8_Appeal_process.pdf)

<sup>10</sup> [http://eaeve.org/fileadmin/downloads/SOP/ESEVT\\_Uppsala\\_SOP\\_May\\_2016\\_Annex\\_15\\_Conflict\\_of\\_interest\\_statement.pdf](http://eaeve.org/fileadmin/downloads/SOP/ESEVT_Uppsala_SOP_May_2016_Annex_15_Conflict_of_interest_statement.pdf)

representatives of the Establishment and the Chair and/or Coordinator of the Visitation Team. In this case, all expenses must be paid by the Establishment.

Once the Appeal Panel has reached a decision, by majority if necessary, its Chair will inform the ECOVE of its decision by submitting an adjudicating statement. The EAEVE Office is responsible for informing the Establishment of the appeal panel's decision in writing. The decision of the Panel is final.

Until the end of the appeal process, the Visitation Report is not published and the appealing Establishment holds its current status. The report of the Appeal Panel is confidential and is not publicly available; nevertheless, all correspondence, documents and statements are collected and filed in the EAEVE Office.

Since 2010 there have been 7 separate appeals. An analysis of all these appeals demonstrates;

- 5/7 appeals were rejected by ECOVE and the decisions then accepted by the Establishment
- 2/7 appeals went further and were further investigated by the independent panel of three individuals with the following outcome:
  - 1/7 appeal was fully justified
  - 1/7 appeal was justified for one “major deficiency” but rejected for other “major deficiencies”
- Reasons for appeal by the Establishments included:
  - Visitors not taking sufficient account of data in the SER and annexes
  - Decisions not taking full account of the “real situation in university”
  - Arguments against a perceived “lack of a strategic plan”
  - Faulty interpretation on the number of clinically qualified teaching staff

It is of note that the appeal which was fully justified, rested on an incorrect procedural decision by ECOVE.

## 10. Compliance with European Standards and Guidelines (Part 3)

### 10.1 ESG Standard 3.1 Activities, policy and processes for quality assurance

**Standard:** *Agencies should undertake external quality assurance activities as defined in Part 2 of the ESG on a regular basis. They should have clear and explicit goals and objectives that are part of their publicly available mission statement. These should translate into the daily work of the agency. Agencies should ensure the involvement of stakeholders in their governance and work.*

As clearly outlined on its website and publications, EAEVE has:

- The **vision** to be the official accreditation authority for veterinary education establishments for Europe
- A **mission** to evaluate, promote and further develop the quality and standard of Veterinary Teaching Establishments and their teaching within, but not limited to, the member states of the European Union (EU)
- The main **objective** is to monitor the harmonisation of the minimum standards set down in the study programme for veterinarians in the EU Directives 2005/36/EC and 2013/55/EU. This objective is enacted through ESEVT, an evaluating system which is managed by the agency (EAEVE) in cooperation with the Federation of Veterinarians of Europe (FVE, which is the major voice for practicing veterinarians throughout Europe)
- Other **objectives** are:
  - To reinforce cooperation between member Establishments and to act as a forum for discussion in order to improve and harmonise veterinary education
  - To facilitate information exchange, staff exchange, student exchange and also exchange of teaching materials between members.

The ESEVT evaluation system gives assurance to:

- The public – to know they can trust the quality of graduating veterinarians and the service they deliver
- Veterinary students – to know their education reaches agreed and acceptable standards
- Veterinary Establishments – to know that their curricula reach agreed benchmarked levels

A list of Evaluated and Approved/accredited Establishments is maintained on the EAEVE website (<http://www.eaeve.org/esevt/establishments-status.html>).

As outlined in chapter 2 EAEVE is committed to ensure the involvement of stakeholders in both the governance and work of EAEVE and its constituent committee structure.

The ESEVT evaluation process is a fully transparent Accreditation procedure based on a system of a Visitation programme over one week, together with periodic Interim Reports provided by the Establishment. It is compulsory for EAEVE members, as stated in the EAEVE statutes.

To be accredited by ESEVT, a veterinary degree provided by an Establishment must meet all the Standards set out in the ESEVT SOP and be compliant with the EU Directives on the recognition of professional qualifications and the ESG 2015.

Four types of evaluation are organised by ESEVT, i.e.:

1. Full Visitation (called Visitation in this document);
2. Re-visitation;
3. Consultative Visitation;
4. Interim Report.

The ESEVT evaluations are carried out by a team of experts, whose experience, selection and training are described in the ESEVT Expert Application and Acceptance Procedure<sup>11</sup>. The team are fully international, chosen predominately but not exclusively from member states of the EU. A mandatory requirement for membership of the team, and a full and valued member, is a student chosen from a group of volunteer final year students by the International Veterinary Students' Association (IVSA).

## 10.2 ESG Standard 3.2 Official status

**Standard:** *Agencies should have an established legal basis and should be formally recognised as quality assurance agencies by competent public authorities.*

ACVT recommended a permanent evaluation system for European Veterinary Teaching Establishments and recognised EAEVE as the evaluating agency. In 1993 the EU Commission withdrew its financial support and ACVT mandated EAEVE and the Federation of Veterinarians of Europe (FVE) to continue managing the evaluation system independently utilising its own budget. When ACVT was finally dissolved in 2000, EAEVE was assigned the sole responsibility for evaluation of Veterinary Teaching Establishments within the EU. The member Establishments within EAEVE decided to maintain this system on a voluntary, self-financing basis.

EAEVE has thus grown out of an EU initiative. An increasing number of national authorities in Europe recognise EAEVE decisions and act accordingly, for example in Austria where EAEVE is recognised as the legitimate accrediting agency for veterinary science. Another example is in Italy, where the Veterinary Teaching Establishments that are not accredited by EAEVE may not enrol first year students). EAEVE has stated a purpose of further developing such cooperation with national authorities in the future. In addition, EAEVE cooperates with other national quality assurance agencies in order to contribute to the quality of the national HE systems (e.g. in the UK and the Netherlands) as well as outside the EU in Australia for example working with the AVBC (Australasian Veterinary Boards Council). After an evaluation visitation to an Establishment, the results and recommendations decided on by ECOVE and communicated back to the Establishment, are often not 'legally binding' in a number of European countries and it is up to the individual HEI's to react (or not to react) to these results. This of course is dependent on national policies, especially in terms of recognition and licensing of veterinarians, over which EAEVE itself does not have any direct power. Nevertheless, the decisions on accreditation status by ESEVT/ECOVE have an increasing level of influence through the widespread publicity of such decisions. The public availability of such findings associated with a veterinary teaching Establishment, has an increasing effect and far reaching consequences on the ability of graduates from such Establishments to find a suitable career; this is especially of importance for those Veterinary Establishments in the EU who are

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[http://www.eaeve.org/fileadmin/downloads/Experts/ESEVT\\_Experts\\_Application\\_and\\_Acceptance\\_procedure\\_FINAL\\_approved\\_by\\_ExCom\\_May\\_2016.pdf](http://www.eaeve.org/fileadmin/downloads/Experts/ESEVT_Experts_Application_and_Acceptance_procedure_FINAL_approved_by_ExCom_May_2016.pdf)

actively establishing courses with the prime designation to attract and then to train overseas applicants in veterinary science. Establishments are well aware of the risks involved in being a “non-approved” school and are therefore incentivised to move as quickly as possible towards remedying both the major and minor deficiencies.

### 10.3 ESG Standard 3.3 Independence

**Standard:** *Agencies should be independent and act autonomously. They should have full responsibility for their operations and the outcomes of those operations without third party influence.*

Independence is one of EAEVE’s core values. The organisational independence of EAEVE is guaranteed by the statutes. EAEVE has rules and documents in place that determine competences and responsibilities of all its constituent bodies.

EAEVE has full organisational and operational autonomy in implementing accreditation procedures. This especially applies to ECOVE, the independent body overseeing and deciding on the outcomes of assessment procedures.

All experts engaged in assessment visitations, sign a declaration of confidentiality and independence before the start of the procedure. This practice is mentioned explicitly in the guidelines for the composition of expert panels. Panel members should not have had any relevant links with the Establishment being visited. This check for independence is a standard procedure in the assessment and approval of all panels.

A separate Code of Conduct (See Annex 3 of the SAR) for panel members also outlines the requirements for independence.

Members of ECOVE cannot take part in the handling of or decision making on applications from Establishments in which they are currently employed or have/had substantial links with.

As stated above, EAEVE is an international and autonomous organisation, not influenced by governments or other national accrediting agencies. Although it is a membership organisation (consisting of Veterinary Teaching Establishments), members do not influence the work of ECOVE which as stated above is the decision-making body for accreditations.

ENQA stated in its 2013 report:

*“The Deans are the only persons who are able to nominate people to the evaluation expert pool, which could contribute to shunning by a number of dedicated and motivated experts. The same narrow approach applies also to the selection of the student members. Thus, it appears that the evaluation and accreditation processes are run by a rather small circle of people who in fact are in turn also assessing the same circle”*

This situation has now been rectified with nominations for team experts being sought independently of the Deans (or equivalents) (although the latter remain free to suggest suitable candidates from their staff) and the student team members now independently chosen by the International Veterinary Student Association (IVSA).

## 10.4 ESG Standard 3.4 Thematic analysis

**Standard:** *Agencies should regularly publish reports that describe and analyse the general findings of their external quality assurance activities.*

Since EAEVE was established as the European accreditation agency for Veterinary Teaching Establishments, there have been over 200 visitations leading to a plethora of information, with almost all the SER's and visitation reports available for public scrutiny on the web, either in the websites of the visited Establishments or on the EAEVE website.

As stated by its stakeholders, ESEVT has provided important information on the compliance of the Establishments with the EU Directives. Its efficiency in terms of systematic improvement and quality assurance of veterinary education throughout Europe could now be considered as very high; for instance, 20 years ago only 25-30% of Establishments in the EU were approved or conditionally approved; in November 2016, 84% of EU Establishments are approved or conditionally approved. Nevertheless, EAEVE lacked a measure of feedback, meta-analysis of the system and QA approaches (i.e. closing the QA loop).

As pointed out by the ENQA external Review report in 2013:

*“EAEVE is not conducting any in-depth analysis of its evaluations and activities, which would serve it to develop its overall policies and contribute to quality enhancement at large in Europe in the veterinary field”*

Based on all this available data EAEVE commissioned a team to cover the recent five-year period for a structured analysis across the higher education system in veterinary teaching Establishments. The objective of this report was to complete a system-wide analysis of ESEVT for the period 2011-2015 in order to propose recommendations for improvement of ESEVT in general and of veterinary education in Europe in particular, and to identify the main challenges for the future. The full report can be seen in Annex 6 of the SAR.

The findings from this report certainly contributed to the reflection on and the improvement of quality assurance policies and processes in the new ESEVT SOP accreditation visitations.

The collated material accrued from accreditation visitations could be used to publish thematic analyses based on large scale cluster-based accreditation projects; examples of the latter could include an analysis of research master's programmes within some of the veterinary teaching Establishments and the extent of extra-mural teaching amongst the Establishments.

## 10.5 ESG Standard 3.5 Resources

**Standard:** *Agencies should have adequate and appropriate resources, both human and financial, to carry out their work.*

### Office

Since 2007 the office of EAEVE has been situated in Vienna, Austria, where EAEVE is duly registered, employing local staff. EAEVE has a Director of the ESEVT who handles the planning of the Visitations, the timetables, the selecting and proposing of visiting teams, and who accompanies many of the visiting teams as one of the Coordinators. With respect to the administrative tasks, he works hand in hand with an Office Manager as well as an Assistant to the EAEVE Office, both with an academic background in Business Administration.

In addition, the Office executes the handling of payments/funds and the daily account keeping,

quarterly budgeting, preparations for auditing, writing the Treasurer's report on behalf of and under supervision of the Treasurer.

Both the Office Manager and the Assistant to the EAEVE Office attend GA, ExCom, ECOVE, CIQA and working group meetings ex officio, without voting rights, being responsible for arranging meetings, for generating the minutes and for the correspondence with the members of the different committees. They may also act as rapporteur for selected evaluation visitations, collaborating with the Coordinator/Chair with respect to assembling and timely distribution of evaluation reports.

In addition, there are 3 part-time Deputy Coordinators who also accompany on-site Visitations. The Office is supervised by the President of EAEVE through monthly reports of activities and is evaluated on a yearly basis in the framework of an ExCom meeting.

EAEVE is able to run efficiently with only a small number of paid employees (two full time administrative staff, a part time Director of the ESEVT and three Coordinators for the visitations). As a result, EAEVE relies on a large number of "volunteers" both for acting pro bono as committee members and as experts on the visitation panels. This is in marked contrast to other large accrediting agencies such as the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) that employs large numbers of personnel in their headquarters in Illinois.

As regards financial resources, EAEVE has a regular and sustainable income from membership and evaluation fees together with sufficient bank deposits.

With regards to the practitioner appointed by FVE as one of the panel experts, considering that he/she loses money for staying outside of their place for one week during on site visitations of Establishments, UEVP and, in some countries, the Veterinary Union or Chamber, finance the professional with daily allowances.

## **10.6 ESG Standard 3.6 Internal quality assurance and professional conduct**

**Standard:** *Agencies should have in place processes for internal quality assurance related to defining, assuring and enhancing the quality and integrity of their activities.*

In accordance with its statutes, EAEVE produces annual reports which account for all the activities within EAEVE as well as financial reports setting out income, expenditure and reserves. The annual reports are discussed and approved by the GA of EAEVE during the annual meeting. The annual financial statements are assessed by two external Auditors before GA approves them.

As described above, EAEVE has introduced various procedures and measures to assess and improve the quality of its own processes and accreditation visitations. These procedures and measures would include:

- Regular discussions of existing procedures and regulations at the weekly staff meetings
- Discussions with colleagues drawn from members of ExCom, the President, ESEVT Director and Coordinators concerning issues that have arisen during preparations for Visitations, during the Visitations themselves or in the production of reports. On occasions, such discussions have led to revisions of existing procedures
- When draft reports have been produced, circulation of such to colleagues for consultation and further input
- Yearly evaluation of the agency and the ESEVT by CIQA. The CIQA report is presented to all members at the GA and discussed by the ExCom to develop procedures aimed at improving/closing the QA loop.

EAEVE feels that their current procedures for internal quality assurance are appropriate.

EAEVE has been able to improve the overall quality of its reports in the course of time as a result of assessments of draft reports by colleagues from both within the committee structure of EAEVE as well as from the wider membership.

Within the Veterinary Teaching Establishments regularly assessed by EAEVE, there has been a steadily increasing need for effective evaluation, especially in the field of QA. As a result, EAEVE continues to pay serious attention to the quality of its reports and to look for ways to further improve that quality. EAEVE considers that a major aim of these accreditation visitations is not only reporting on the assessment of the Establishment by the panel of experts, but also offering a number of suggestions to the Establishment for further improvement.

### **10.7 ESG Standard 3.7 Cyclical external review of agencies**

**Standard:** *Agencies should undergo an external review at least once every five years in order to demonstrate their compliance with the ESG.*

EAEVE was assessed by an ENQA review panel in 2013. As a result of this review a number of suggestions were made by the ENQA panel which were enthusiastically taken up by EAEVE in both the internal QA workings of the agency as well as in its accreditation processes (see chapter 12 of the SAR). Following on from these changes EAEVE has produced this current self-assessment report in preparation for another external review by ENQA. Even though there exists no formal requirement for EAEVE to undergo a periodic external review, EAEVE considers it vital to demonstrate that its activities comply with international standards such as the ESG.

## 11. Information and opinions of stakeholders

*Describe the agency's main stakeholders and provide information on their opinions of the agency's key stakeholders. More substantial analysis can be added as an annex (e.g. a feedback analysis on the quality and consistency of the services of the agency). Information on eventual complaints and appeals can also be provided here.*

EAEVE has several main stakeholders:

- **Veterinary Teaching Establishments throughout the EC and also within wider geographical Europe**
- **ECOVE and CIQA whose members are elected by EAEVE**
- **Federation of Veterinarians of Europe (FVE)**. FVE is an umbrella organisation of veterinary organisations within 38 European countries
- **Union of European Veterinary Practitioners (UEVP)**. Since 1970 UEVP has represented the interests of practicing veterinarians at the European level; it also acts as the European umbrella organisation of national veterinary practitioner associations
- **European Association of State Veterinary Officers (EASVO)**. EASVO represents veterinary inspectors, most of whom are employed in State Veterinary Services. They are involved in national disease eradication programmes, the protection of public health and food or animal inspection.
- **European Veterinarians in Education, Research and Industry (EVERI)**. EVERI is an umbrella organisation of national and European associations of veterinarians employed in the sectors of education, research and/or industry. The objectives of EVERI are to provide members with up-to-date information on Council of Europe and EU policies and legislation related to education, professional qualifications, medicines and welfare of laboratory animals, so providing a platform for veterinarians working in those fields. RVERI also aims to promote professional representation at the level of European decision-making bodies, and to be a coordinator between the different members and FVE. The constituent organisation has members employed by academia, profit and non-profit research, pharmaceutical or commercial organisations, or act as consultants for these.
- **Union of European Veterinary Hygienists (UEVH)**. UEVH exists to study and recommend any measures permitting the improvement of the quality and safety of foodstuffs with the objective of the protection of veterinary public health and improving conditions for humans, by using veterinary science; also, to promote the role of the veterinarian in the whole of the food chain, from stable to table
- **European Board of Veterinary Specialisation (EBVS)**. The European Board of Veterinary Specialisation (EBVS) is the umbrella organisation for veterinary clinical specialties within Europe. EBVS includes 26 veterinary specialist Colleges, comprising more than 35 distinct specialties with more than 3300 veterinarians active as a European Veterinary Specialist. European veterinary specialists are ready to serve the public, its animals, and the veterinary profession by providing high quality service in disciplines as varied as anaesthesia and analgesia, clinical pathology, companion animal or equine internal medicine, surgery, ophthalmology, pathology, pharmacology and toxicology, public health, and zoological medicine.
- **International Veterinary Students' Association (IVSA)**. IVSA was founded in 1953 with a mission to benefit the animals and people of the world "by harnessing the potential and dedication of veterinary students to promote the international application of veterinary skills, education and knowledge". The way in which this is achieved is by arranging annual meetings (congresses and symposia), running permanent projects, facilitating exchanges and publishing regular newsletters.

As described above, the development of many documents involves a wide circulation to stakeholders in order to ascertain their views or suggestions for deletions/additions, before collation and recirculation for additional editing.

Such development, update and improvement of important procedures or documents related to EAEVE management and the ESEVT, involve feedback from stakeholders with several iterations until the final document is finished. This was the case for the development of EAEVE SWOT analysis and Strategic Plan 2015-2020, the System Wide Analysis of the ESEVT 2011-15, the Uppsala SOP 2016, and this current SAR.

EAEVE takes very seriously all suggestions for improvement from stakeholders as the best practice to keep the agency and ESEVT fit for the purpose of both assessing and increasing the quality of training of Veterinary Establishments in Europe and beyond.

Over the last five years there has been numerous occasions involving feedback from stakeholders over different documentation; examples of such feedback would include:

- Continued need for all assessment reports and decisions by ECOVE based on these reports, to be made public by EAEVE
- Establishments themselves must publish the findings of the ECOVE after visitations by ESEVT
- Importance to several stakeholders that the independence of ECOVE from EAEVE and CIQA is maintained
- The continued need to emphasise that it is the member Establishments who are the stakeholders, not ECOVE or CIQA
- A wish for more joint visitations involving national accreditation agencies
- Support for expansion of the ESEVT accreditation system beyond the geographical borders of Europe
- Support for student involvement in the visitation teams, but concern that student members of ESEVT teams suggested by the IVSA could well come from outside Europe

## **12. Recommendations and main findings from previous review(s) and agency's resulting follow-up (for second and subsequent reviews only)**

*Address the previously made recommendations by the ENQA Board and/or by the review panel and show how the agency has followed-up on them and in a more general approach, provide a short summary of the main findings of the previous review(s) and subsequent actions taken by the agency.*

### **EAEVE PROGRESS SINCE THE 2013 ENQA REVIEW**

In its report on EAEVE<sup>12</sup> the ENQA review team highlighted a number of areas for development. As ENQA acknowledged in its report on EAEVE, the review by ENQA was a different type of review, as EAEVE is **not** a national agency. However, as ENQA itself has expanded its influence, a number of other agencies with more of a multinational role have now been visited by ENQA teams.

*The results of the main findings and recommendations from the ENQA review in 2013 are itemized below together with action subsequently taken by EAEVE in response*

## **List of ENQA Panel's Recommendations**

### **ESG 2.1 USE OF INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCEDURES**

**Conclusion:** Partially compliant.

**Recommendation:** The Panel recommends for EAEVE to **immediately consider revising both the evaluation methodology and the site-Visitation agenda for Stage 2 evaluations** in order to include a **general review of the HEI and not just QA documents** and not just meeting the people responsible for quality assurance. Furthermore, we suggest **developing the pool of students and their full inclusion in the evaluation process.**

#### **Response by EAEVE**

##### **1. Evaluation Methodology and Site-Visitation agenda**

After the development of a two-stage process for full accreditation of Veterinary Teaching Establishments, the system was utilized in a number of ESEVT visitations. The Stage 2 QA process involved two separate experts studying QA documents and meeting up with those within the Establishment responsible for QA implementation and then delivering a separate report from the Stage 1 evaluation. It soon became obvious from critical feedback involving the Chair and Coordinators of the visiting ESEVT Teams as well as from senior staff of the Establishments themselves, that this two-stage accreditation process was flawed.

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<sup>12</sup> [http://www.eaeve.org/fileadmin/downloads/news/EAEVE\\_evaluation\\_report\\_-\\_final.pdf](http://www.eaeve.org/fileadmin/downloads/news/EAEVE_evaluation_report_-_final.pdf)

Coincidentally, there was the planned visit from ENQA to assess EAEVE in its application for ENQA membership. The report from ENQA, quoted above, advised EAEVE to *“immediately consider revising both the evaluation methodology and the site-visit agenda for Stage 2 evaluations in order to include a general review of the HEI and not just QA documents and not just meeting the people responsible for quality assurance”*

EAEVE immediately set up the process to write a new SOP which would be the cornerstone document in future ESEVT evaluations of Veterinary Teaching Establishments. The initial draft was widely circulated to a wide range of stakeholders including ECOVE, CIQA, FVE and its branches, EBVS and IVSA. A major outcome of this widespread consultation with stakeholders was that stage 2 was abolished, and assessment of QA within an Establishment was integrated throughout the first 10 Standards with Standard 11 being a summation of QA processes for the Establishment, and also and deliberately a direct copy of the Standards for internal quality assurance within ESG 2015.

This was felt to be important to convince Establishments that ESEVT does not request a QA level higher than what is requested by the ESG 2015 and should allay some of the past difficulties with Stage 2 visitations to Establishments.

After several iterations when input from stakeholders led to amendments, the document gained approval by ExCom and then this SOP was finally adopted at the EAEVE General Assembly in May 2016 at Uppsala. This Uppsala SOP is now the document driving ESEVT visitations.

## **2. Developing a pool of students and their full inclusion in the evaluation process**

The International Veterinary Students' Association (IVSA) has now agreed to be more intensively involved in the ESEVT evaluation system. IVSA creates and provides EAEVE with a list of students at the beginning of each academic year, who applied through the Dean's Office and submitted their CVs (just like regular members of the team). A “Memorandum of Understanding” was signed by both IVSA and EAEVE Presidents in 2016.

The student member of the team is a full member with responsibilities for input into a number of Standards including sourcing documentation, questioning both Establishment members and students and finally helping in drafting the report.

## **3. Utilising QS experts who are non-veterinarians**

EAEVE is actively involved in recruiting members of the ESEVT visitation teams who are not veterinarians. This has resulted in an increasing number of such team members, for example from Italy and Hungary.

## **ESG 2.2 DEVELOPMENT OF EXTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCESSES**

**Conclusion:** Partially compliant

**Recommendation:** It is suggested that EAEVE still **strengthens its relations with its internal and external stakeholders**, regarding policies, procedures, criteria and the entire evaluation system, in a systematic way. This would apply in particular to the process of producing **periodic summary analyses** as part of the strategy of EAEVE. **Cooperation with FVE appears good but could be strengthened in the future.** In addition, student members seem to be only handpicked as participants in evaluations, also using somewhat vague and inconsistent criteria. Apparently, there is **no general cooperation with the student representative bodies** like the International Veterinary Students' Association (IVSA).

## **Response by EAEVE**

### **1. Students**

As far as student representation is concerned, see above explanation under 2.1.2. There is now full cooperation with IVSA leading to a group of final year undergraduates or first year postgraduates who possess a real commitment to partaking in the ESEVT evaluations. Such individuals will naturally change every 1-2 years as the students themselves graduate and move into the workplace.

### **2. Stakeholders**

Within EAEVE, whenever a new item or change in the Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) is proposed, a thorough regional discussion involving Deans (or equivalents) and member Establishments is set in motion. This therefore ensures that every region in Europe has a chance to comment. In addition to this involvement from EAEVE members, the proposed SOP changes are also thoroughly discussed with other important stakeholders such as ECOVE, CIQA, the Federation of Veterinarians in Europe (FVE) and its branches, the European Board of Veterinary Specialisation (EBVS) and IVSA (more details provided above in 11). Indeed, it was for this very reason that the European Coordinating Committee of Veterinary training, consisting of representatives from some of these associations, was brought into existence. All these documents were also available on EAEVE's website.

### **3. Periodic Analysis**

Two important documents have been produced by EAEVE that help in underlining the strategic approach to deliver the vision and mission of EAEVE:

- System-wide analysis of ESEVT evaluations 2011-2015
- Strategic Plan for EAEVE 2015-2020

Both these documents are in the Annexes (6 and 5 of the SAR respectively)

### **System-wide analysis of ESEVT evaluations 2011-2015**

The history of ESEVT is accessible at <http://www.eave.org/esevt/history-of-the-esevt.html> ESEVT started in 1985 with pilot evaluations completed in several European Establishments, and in 1992 a permanent system was set up and implemented for most European Veterinary Teaching Establishments.

The objective of this system-wide analysis was to complete a system-wide analysis of ESEVT for the period 2011-2015 in order to propose recommendations for improvement of ESEVT in general and of veterinary education in Europe in particular, and to identify the main challenges for the future. The report has been first drafted by CIQA and the Director of the ESEVT before being released to stakeholders for proposals; these stakeholders included the Coordinators' Group, CIQA, ECOVE, FVE, IVSA and the EBVS.

Assessment on ESEVT activities for the period 2011-2015 was mainly completed by analysing the Post-visitation questionnaires. These mandatory surveys are systematically completed after each Visitation and cover various aspects of the system, i.e. logistics of the Visitation, team cooperation, experts' skills and performance, Coordinator and EAEVE Office support. They are completed both by the visited Establishment's Head and Liaison Officer, and by all members of the Visitation Team.

During this time, the analysis of the feedback and subsequent improvements have concerned mostly general principles of ESEVT and selected areas, like the Major Deficiencies encountered in the Establishments of Veterinary Education after the evaluation.

As a result, it was felt that ESEVT should move more towards a strictly organised accreditation system with clearly defined Standards and that a permanently updated SOP to deliver these Standards must be a clear objective especially following an integration of QA into these Standards.

## Visitation Teams and experts

The previous system of nominating and approving experts as well as the system of nominating teams is available at <http://www.eaeve.org/esevt/experts.html>. Although complete QA loops have not yet been established, CIQA has produced recommendations for ExCom to produce a formal and publicly available document defining criteria for selection of experts, composition of evaluating teams and procedures for nominating experts and teams. These recommendations have been recently implemented.

As far as cancellation of existing nominations of experts is concerned, detailed rules and procedures are not yet available, although the completion of the E-learning is now compulsory.

## Analysis of the results of the evaluation of the veterinary training in Europe

During the period 2011-2015, the visitations were completed based on the SOP's prior to the current Uppsala SOP; 71 visitations were completed, i.e. 34 Stage 1 Visitations, 10 Stage 1 & 2 Visitations, 19 Re-visitations and 8 Consultative Visitations. Precise information on the date and location is available on the website (<http://www.eaeve.org/esevt/visitation-programme.html>).

The system of evaluation was based on the assessment of the compliance of the visited Establishment with the standards described in the SOP leading to the identification of commendations and recommendations.

Major Deficiencies (formerly Category I Deficiencies) are deficiencies that significantly affect the quality of education and the Establishment's compliance with the ESEVT Standards/EU Directives. The majority of Major Deficiencies means a lack of compliance with a single Standard, although a few Major Deficiencies means a lack of compliance with two or more Standards or several Minor Deficiencies focusing on one Standard.

The Establishment's status is decided by ECOVE, i.e. Approval in case of no Major Deficiency, Conditional Approval in case of a single Major Deficiency, and Non-Approval in case of several Major Deficiencies.

Minor Deficiencies and/or Suggestions for improvements are deficiencies that do not significantly affect the quality of education or the Establishment's compliance with the ESEVT Standards/EU Directives. They are also identified by the Visitation Team but do not affect the status of the Establishment (except when ECOVE decides that some of them are in fact Major Deficiencies). However, it is strongly recommended that the Establishment initiates a strategy in order to correct as soon as possible these Minor Deficiencies.

In case of conditional Approval or non-Approval, a Re-visitation may be undertaken when the Establishment provides evidence that the Major Deficiencies identified during the Visitation have been corrected and that an on-going process is in place to correct the Minor Deficiencies. A summary of the Major Deficiencies identified by ECOVE during the period 2011-2015 are shown in annex 6 of the SAR in order of decreasing frequency.

Based on the reading of the SER and Visitations Reports, the most common reasons why Major Deficiencies occurred could be the result of:

- Inadequate knowledge of the EU Directives and of the ESEVT SOP;
- Inadequate application of the SOP;
- Insufficient financial support from the governing body;
- Insufficient autonomy of the Establishment in the decision-making process;
- Traditions and specific cultural and/or regional factors;
- Misunderstanding of some indicators like the ESEVT ratios.

Concerning QA and ‘Accreditation’, only 12 Establishments (over a total of 96) were evaluated by a Stage 2 procedure. As suggested by the 2013 ENQA External Review and by CIQA, the system in place needed replacing in order to embed the implementation of the QA loop in all aspects of the programme (*now undertaken as described in the SOP 2016, Annex 1 of the SAR*).

The current system of defining approval *versus* non-approval still needed further improvements in terms of QA and harmonisation. As suggested by the ENQA External Review, the Experts should receive a specific training before participating in an evaluation (*now undertaken as described above*).

Based on the above analysis and on the SWOT analysis included in the EAEVE 2015-2020 Strategic Plan (Annex 5 of the SAR), the major recommendations were summarised:

- Merging of stage 1 & 2 in order to make QA evaluation compulsory for all Establishments;
- QA standards in full agreement with ESG (2015) and integrated within all aspects of the evaluation procedure;
- Reduced period (7 *versus* 10 yr) between two full visitations;
- Interim Reports in order to monitor the progress in the correction of Minor Deficiencies and to identify the occurrence of potential new issues;
- Training for all experts, e.g. by E-learning and by seminars for continuing education;
- Standardisation of the SER and Visitation Reports;
- Visitation Report based on the SER drafted before the start of the Visitation;
- Revised Indicators with clear definition of all parameters;
- Collaboration with FVE/IVSA for the selection of the practitioner/student of the Visitation Team;
- List of Day One Competences amended with input from stakeholders (e.g. through the ECCVT);
- Tracking system for all documents.

All these recommendations have already been taken into account within the latest iteration of the ESEVT SOP (‘Uppsala’ SOP unanimously approved by the May 2016 EAEVE General Assembly, Annex 1 of the SAR).

### **Strategic Plan for EAEVE 2015-2020**

This Strategic Plan was unanimously approved by ExCom in January 2015.

The detailed plan is in Annex 5 of the SAR. It is based on the history of EAEVE applying and promoting ESEVT for more than 32 years. This experience enriched us with the exchange of new ideas and methods on veterinary training and quality assessment which continue to stimulate EAEVE to respond to new challenges.

The plan sets out a vision for the future and will guide EAEVE to achieve an aspiration of being considered the unique and undisputed institution for the evaluation and accreditation of veterinary training in Europe, both within the EU itself as well as in wider geographical Europe. After a first draft from ExCom the plan was made available on the website for review and comments not only by all members, but also by students, stakeholders, the wider veterinary profession and partner organisations, all of whom were encouraged to participate in reviewing the document.

Further details of this Strategic plan, including the SWOT analysis are discussed in Chapter 13. Being aware of the importance of keeping QA as an on-going process, EAEVE has prepared a Mid-term analysis of the Strategic Plan 2015-20 updated to February 2017, which was approved by the ExCom on 17 May 2017. This document is available as Annex 10 of the SAR.

## ESG 2.3 CRITERIA FOR DECISIONS

**Conclusion:** Fully compliant.

**Recommendation:** A future challenge might be the **possible merging of Stage 1 and Stage 2** evaluations so that the processes and criteria also meet the requirements of ESG.

### Response by EAEVE

As detailed above EAEVE has undertaken a radical review of the standard operating procedure for the ESEVT evaluations culminating in a new SOP, termed the Uppsala SOP, with 11 Standards based on ESG 2015, resulting in QA being assessed within all Standards rather than as a separate entity.

## ESG 2.4 PROCESSES FIT FOR PURPOSE

**Conclusion:** Partially compliant.

**Recommendation:** We recommend EAEVE to take measures so that **all members of evaluation teams undergo an adequate training**. Moreover, we advise EAEVE to consider that **all members of the evaluation teams are nominated through the same processes, including the student** as well as suggested more openly, e.g. beyond the Dean's office.

### Response by EAEVE

**This recommendation has been addressed by several developments:**

1. A two-part mandatory E-learning course for all members of the evaluation teams
2. A separate course on QA for a limited number of members who will then partake in evaluation teams as a source of QA knowledge for the other team members
3. On the ESEVT visitation teams a "newbie expert" is added in order for him/her to be individually coached by the Coordinator and Chair
4. Each yearly GA is now followed by a one-day educational programme for all members/experts/stakeholder representatives where the development of the ESEVT programme linked to both the SOP and ESG 2015 is discussed

### E-learning of the EAEVE/FVE Experts

In order to be in agreement with the requirements of ENQA, the ExCom of EAEVE decided to implement an E-learning platform for the training of all experts/visitors who are involved in the on-site evaluation of Establishments devoted to veterinary education through ESEVT. After tendering with specialist groups to run the E-learning course, the ExCom decided to appoint Vetucation® (Learn-Platform of the University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna).

The course is on the learning platform Vetucation® is available at <https://vetucation.vetmeduni.ac.at> and is based on Blackboard Learn software.

The first part of the E-learning was released in September 2015 and is mainly devoted to:

- the Mission Statement, Objectives and Code of Conduct of EAEVE,
- the EU Directives on the recognition of professional qualifications,
- the ESEVT Day One Competences,

- the ESEVT Indicators,
- the Visitation Programme,
- the Visitation Report.

So far 110 experts have successfully completed the course

The second part of the E-learning was made available in July 2016 after the approval of the revised ESEVT SOP at the GA in 2016 and tests the knowledge of the new Uppsala SOP. So far 99 experts have completed this second part. Although the E-learning course is ongoing, an update on 1<sup>st</sup> February indicated that 99 experts have completed both Part 1 and 2 (59% of those invited).

### **QA course for EAEVE/FVE Experts**

This course was run for 14 ESEVT experts, all of whom had previous experience of QA and who could join an ESEVT visiting team as the QA advisor; the course was designed to illustrate and discuss how future ESEVT visitations based on the new SOP would integrate an analysis of the 11 Standards from a QA prospective. The areas covered included:

- QA in Higher Education in Europe
- Explanation of ESG 2015
- The role of ENQA in European Higher Education
- The role of the project Enhancing Quality through Innovative Policy and Practice (EQUIP)
- The three parts of ESG 2015
- The new ESEVT SOP (Uppsala SOP)
- The need for the ESEVT system to operate under the QA umbrella of ESG 2015
- Need to incorporate the principles in ESG 2015 into the Uppsala SOP
- How to ensure that QA is embedded into each of the 11 Standards within a visitation programme

### **ESG 2.5 REPORTING**

**Conclusion:** Fully compliant.

**Recommendation:** EAEVE should ensure that its **evaluation reports are constantly available** and public on its web site.

### **Response by EAEVE**

Once ECOVE has reached a decision on an evaluation, the report from the ESEVT team is released onto the EAEVE website. In addition, the Establishment itself is requested to publish the report and the associated SER on its own website. The EAEVE office update all SERs and evaluation reports in the EAEVE website twice a year These SERs and evaluation reports are available under:

**<http://www.eavee.org/esevt/ser-and-visitation-report-of-visited-establishments.html>**

## ESG 2.6 FOLLOW-UP PROCEDURES

**Conclusion:** Partially compliant.

*NB Following on from this conclusion and on an appeal from EAEVE, the Appeals and Complaints Committee of ENQA concluded that EAEVE was “at least substantially compliant with this criterion”*

**Recommendation:** It is advisable that EAEVE takes steps towards a **continuous and effective system of follow-ups after institutional evaluations/accreditations**, according to the guidelines in ESG 2.6. Admittedly, the situation is not fully in the control of EAEVE as it is dependent also on national policies, but also on the voluntary nature of the entire evaluation/accreditation system which also complicates the matter.

### Response by EAEVE

It was stated by ESG 2.6 that follow up procedures were needed in order to follow the implementation of the recommendations. Although this standard did not define a specific time, the ENQA external review team, whilst acknowledging that EAEVE did have a Re-visitation strategy in place, felt that the period for a Re-visitation was too long.

As a result, the current strategy within EAEVE for Re-visitations to veterinary teaching Establishments is within 3 years for Establishments that had failed the full accreditation process but are conditionally accredited; and 7 years for a completely new visitation to Establishments who had been granted full approval.

It should also be borne in mind that EAEVE, as a transnational accreditation agency, is not part of a national system where external QA can be compulsory; nevertheless, it is now necessary for all Establishments to be reviewed on the 7-year cycle if they wish to remain full members of EAEVE.

## ESG 2.7 PERIODIC REVIEWS

**Conclusion:** Substantially compliant.

*NB Following on from this conclusion and on an appeal from EAEVE, the Appeals and Complaints Committee of ENQA concluded that EAEVE was “fully compliant with this criterion”*

**Recommendation:** EAEVE is advised to **shorten the periodic reviews**, as a decade is clearly a too long an interval for reviews in the dynamic environment where also veterinary HEIs now have to function. The periods of reviews for the conditionally approved/accredited or non-approved/non-accredited HEI's should also be adjusted accordingly for clear policy targets.

### Response by EAEVE

As discussed above under ESG 2.6, EAEVE has shortened the time for periodic reviews to veterinary teaching Establishments both for conditionally approved/accredited (from 5 to 3 years) or non-approved/accredited Establishments (from 10 to 7 years). Also, a follow-up interim report is now mandatory for the accredited Establishments which must be prepared and sent to the office 3.5 years after the full visitation, mid-term to the next visitation. A template for the interim report is available in Annex 14 of the Uppsala SOP 2016.

## ESG 2.8 SYSTEM-WIDE ANALYSES

**Conclusion:** Not compliant.

**Recommendation:** It is advised that EAEVE develops a **policy of periodic system-wide analyses** of the veterinary education in Europe. These analyses could be important and even crucial tools in developing the veterinary field in Europe at large (and even outside Europe), and also a way of developing the evaluation/accreditation processes and practices of EAEVE itself, including its own long-term strategy and mission.

### Response by EAEVE

The ENQA external review team in 2013 were of the opinion that EAEVE were not even partially compliant for this standard, as according to the standard the agency is expected to produce summary reports and analyse general findings. Although such results are continuously evaluated and conclusions discussed at meetings of ExCom and the GA, EAEVE acknowledged the need for a more systematic approach to the analysis of all aspects of the accreditation visitations, and so commissioned such a five-year detailed analytical report which is appended in Annex 6 of the SAR. To this purpose EAEVE started with the system wide analysis of the ESEVT 2011-2015 described under ESG 2.2.3. Periodic analysis will continue with the system of reporting a summary of the application of the ESEVT every 3 years including the analysis of the general findings as suggested by ENQA.

As initially agreed and then stated by its stakeholders, ESEVT has over the years provided a great deal of important information on the compliance of veterinary teaching Establishments with the EU Directives. However, its efficiency in terms of systematic improvement and quality assurance of veterinary education throughout Europe was not as high as it could have been.

As pointed out by ENQA, “EAEVE is not conducting any in-depth analysis of its evaluations and activities, which would serve it to develop its overall policies and contribute to quality enhancement at large in Europe in the veterinary field”

The major problem was a lack of a systematic check on how ESEVT efficiency had been operating, and the major reason for this situation was probably a lack of relevant rules. Clearly, the QA loop has not been completed at all levels of ESEVT activities. For this reason, it was imperative that ESEVT moved towards a strictly organised accreditation system with clearly defined general standards and a permanently updated SOP.

To this end, the current system-wide analysis was researched to systematically investigate all aspects of the ESEVT evaluation system and, as mentioned above, is detailed in Annex 6 of the SAR.

## ENQA criterion 1 / ESG 3.1, 3.3: Activities

**Conclusion:** Partially compliant.

**Recommendation:** Particular recommendations are given above at each ESG criteria 2.1-2.8.

### Response by EAEVE

See the specific actions taken by EAEVE to meet the full compliance in the above ESG criteria 2.1 to 2.8.

## 4.2 ENQA criterion 2 / ESG 3.2: Official status

**Conclusion:** Partially compliant.

*NB Following on from this conclusion and on an appeal from EAEVE, the Appeals and Complaints Committee of ENQA concluded that EAEVE was “fully compliant with this criterion”*

**Recommendation:** The results and recommendations of **EAEVE evaluations may not be ‘binding’** in a number of European countries, and it appears that it is mostly up to the individual HEIs to react (or not to react) to them. This is all dependent on national policies, over which EAEVE itself does not have any direct power, except maybe through publicity and by keeping its findings as public and accessible as possible.

### **Response by EAEVE**

Whilst it is true that within individual EU Nations there is no legal requirement for Establishments to be fully accredited, the absence of such an accredited status can have serious consequences for an Establishment. Firstly, in areas where there is active competition for veterinary related jobs, applicants from non-accredited Establishments could be at a serious disadvantage against applicants from fully accredited Establishments. In addition, a number of European veterinary Establishments have established new veterinary programmes where the teaching is delivered in English; lack of full accreditation would have a deleterious effect on their ability to recruit overseas fee-paying students.

## 4.3 ENQA criterion 3 / ESG 3.4: Resources

**Conclusion:** Substantially compliant.

**Recommendation:** It appears that EAEVE is managed adequately with the current human and financial resources. Its financial basis rests solely on the membership fees, and apparently, the members appreciate greatly the membership and the benefits they obtain. There have been no member dropouts so far. But to continue this, **it should be necessary that EAEVE keeps opening up not only within the veterinary medicine field itself but also more towards other related academic fields**, also and especially in terms of quality assurance.

### **Response by EAEVE**

The standard within ESG 3.4 requires adequate and proportional resources, both human and financial. As acknowledged by the ENQA external review team in 2013, EAEVE has a small but tightly run central office with a relatively small number of paid employees providing the administrative service for a wide range of accreditation effort. This only works due to the unpaid time freely given by both academics from HEI’s as well as individuals from the practicing arm of the veterinary profession.

Within this “army” of volunteers, and together with the appointed members from the members, there is very limited overlapping of duties. Only one person, the President, has two functions as a member of the European Committee on Veterinary Education and ExCom. At present EAEVE has over 100 experts who have volunteered to give their time either within the management structure of EAEVE or as team members on a visitation.

#### 4.4 ENQA criterion 4 / ESG 3.5: Mission statement

**Conclusion:** Partially compliant.

*NB Following on from this conclusion and on an appeal from EAEVE, the Appeals and Complaints Committee of ENQA concluded that EAEVE was “fully compliant with this criterion”*

**Recommendation:** The Review Panel suggests that EAEVE will **discuss both internally and externally its role and revises its mission and vision accordingly**. Actually, this should also be a continuation of the ESG 2.8 (above).

#### **Response by EAEVE**

EAEVE had prepared a review of its role, mission and vision in the Strategic Plan developed for 2015-20 that was unanimously approved by the ExCom in January 2015 after incorporating the feedback from stakeholders (ECOVE, CIQA, FVE and its branches, EBVS, IVSA). For preparing the next Strategic Plan EAEVE will discuss again, both internally and externally as suggested by ENQA, on the findings of the System Wide Analysis as described in ESG 2.8.

#### 4.5 ENQA criterion 5 / ESG 3.6: Independence

**Conclusion:** Partially compliant.

**Recommendation:** It is recommended that **EAEVE opens up more its evaluation and accreditation processes and procedures**, involving also stakeholders, and also relying on experts who come from outside the veterinary field, especially in matters related to Quality Assurance. It would strengthen the credibility of EAEVE’s evaluation/accreditation work despite the fact that it formally is autonomous and independent in its decision-making.

#### **Response by EAEVE**

As mentioned above, there are now a number of non-veterinarians within ESEVT visitation teams. This is especially true for the QA expert member of the team where a clinical qualification is not at all necessary. Although assessing many of the Standards within the SOP requires experienced clinicians, a similar assessment of the quality and quantity of QA procedures does not. EAEVE continues to actively encourage more experts with a knowledge and enthusiasm for QA to work together with their clinically qualified colleagues.

This cooperation within the Visitation teams has been made so much easier by the integration of QA procedures within each Standard rather than a separate free standing Standard.

#### **ENQA Criterion 6 / ESG 3.7: External quality assurance criteria and processes used by the members**

**Conclusion:** Substantially compliant.

**Recommendation:** The Stage 1 and Stage 2 evaluations differ in many ways and also by their purposes, and especially in terms of the QA process (mostly Stage 2) there exist features that do not fully conform to the ESG procedures, including also the **follow-up practice**. Possible merging of the two stages will be a challenge for EAEVE, first by addressing the EU Directive

and then conforming fully to ESG.

**Response by EAEVE**

As explained in ESG 2.1, 2.3 and 2.6 EAEVE developed a radical review of the SOP addressing all recommendations by ENQA that was unanimously approved by the GA in May 2016 (Uppsala SOP). To elaborate this SOP, EAEVE took seriously the challenge to merge the former stage 1 and 2 visitations and develop 11 Standards based on ESG 2015, resulting in QA being assessed within all Standards rather than as a separate entity. Also a follow-up interim report is now mandatory for the accredited establishments as explained under ESG 2.6

**4.6 ENQA Criterion 7 / ESG 3.8: Accountability procedures**

**Conclusion: Fully compliant.**

**Recommendation:** It is advisable that EAEVE develops a clear and consistent **Code of Conduct**, for use in all its evaluation/accreditation processes.

**Response by EAEVE**

EAEVE has acknowledged this suggestion and has now brought together the varied number of previously published requirements into a single Code of Conduct which is mandatory reading for all members of visitation teams. The document was approved by the ExCom in October 2014 and is available in EAEVE website (Annex 3 of the SAR)

**4.7 ENQA criterion 8: Consistency of judgments, appeals system and contributions to aims of ENQA**

**Conclusion:** Fully compliant.

**Recommendation:** No specific recommendations.

**Response by EAEVE**

As recognised by ENQA, EAEVE continues in applying fair, transparent and evidence-based judgments on the evaluations of veterinary Establishments. In addition, EAEVE has a well-developed and transparent appeal mechanism and is determined to actively promote the QA culture as promulgated by ENQA in Higher Education in Europe and beyond.

### 13. SWOT analysis

*Analyse the agency's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats*

The SWOT analysis was developed as a part of the Strategic Plan 2015-2020 which was first drafted by the EAEVE Management Board and then submitted for revision by ExCom members. The draft version was then released onto the website for review and comments not only from all members, but also to students, stakeholders, the veterinary profession and partner organisations, all of whom were encouraged to participate in reviewing the document. The final iteration was approved by the ExCom on January 29th 2015. The Strategic Plan 2015- 2020 can be found in Annex 5 of the SAR.

Since strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats would change in a short period, EAEVE has prepared an update of the SWOT analysis approved in January 2015 to February 2017 that was approved by the ExCom on 17 May 2017.

#### SWOT ANALYSIS update to February 2017

#### GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT (I)

ITEM	STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<b>General Assembly</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Good representation of EU establishments (almost all schools are members)</li> <li>- Common interest on improving quality of Veterinary Education</li> <li>- Rules strongly supported (two-third majority required to modify the statutes)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Members with different establishments quality and interests</li> <li>- Different number of countries and members/establishments in the regions</li> <li>- Different level with fluency in the English language amongst participants</li> <li>- Difficult rotation of delegates amongst different countries (only eligible from approved or conditionally approved establishments)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To meet colleagues annually to discuss matters relating to Veterinary Education</li> <li>- To strengthen partnership and reinforce cooperation amongst members</li> <li>- To share different experiences and methods to develop a common veterinary curriculum</li> <li>- To increase quality of training in Veterinary Education</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Insufficient knowledge of EAEVE and the ESEVT when new delegates/deans are appointed</li> </ul>
<b>Executive Committee</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Good support (elected by the members of the regional group)</li> <li>- Good experience in management (members have to be dean or former dean)</li> <li>- Wide geographic representation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Difficulties to transmit and collect the information and to explain the decisions taken to the regional group</li> <li>- Lack of feedback from the regional group</li> <li>- No experience in ESEVT visitations required</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To participate actively in the development and execution of the association policies</li> <li>- To contribute to the application of equity principles in decision making</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Taking of decisions based on personal or school interests more than on general educational interests</li> <li>- Insufficient knowledge of the files and background at the moment to make a decision</li> </ul>

<b>President</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Experience in management required (has to be a dean or former dean)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Not full dedication to EAEVE</li> <li>- Different workload throughout the year</li> <li>- Distant from home base (office in Vienna) to offer daily supervision and guide</li> <li>- No experience in EAEVE's decision bodies required</li> <li>- No experience in the ESEVT required</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To propose a standardized protocol for the decision making, transparent and effective, to ensure governance and management</li> <li>- To adhere to a yearly calendar of tasks and responsibilities in the management board (President, Vice-President, Director, Office)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To misguide the association as a consequence of lack of experience in the decision bodies and/or in the ESEVT</li> <li>- To postpone decisions because of a lack of unanimity in the Executive Committee</li> </ul>
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## GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT (II)

ITEM	STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<b>Director</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Good support (elected by a majority of members of the Executive Committee)</li> <li>- Academic and management experience (required in the application)</li> <li>- Experience in the ESEVT (required in the application)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Part time dedication</li> <li>- Distant from home base</li> <li>- Different presidents and Executive Committee members to support</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To participate actively in the development and execution of the association policies</li> <li>- To contribute to the sustainability and credibility of the ESEVT</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To exert an excessive leadership in the association over the President and the Executive Committee ("double head")</li> </ul>
<b>Office</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Highly qualified staff in job descriptions</li> <li>- Permanent office in Vienna which offer a level of stability through the constant change of Head/s (President, Director, Executive Committee members)</li> <li>- Active participation of the staff in all activities, not only administrative</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Suitable but insufficient human resources in some periods of the year</li> <li>- Different workload throughout the year</li> <li>- Diverse tasks to develop (bookkeeping, communication, website management, databases, arrange meetings, taking minutes, assist the ESEVT)</li> <li>- Difficulties to prioritize the tasks with different heads of EAEVE committees</li> <li>- Difficulties to adapt to regular changes of President, Director, Executive Committee members, determined by the rules</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To participate actively in the development and execution of the association policies</li> <li>- To contribute to the internal and external communications of EAEVE</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To work too independently</li> <li>- Burnout of the staff in some demanding periods</li> </ul>
<b>Finances</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Very efficient cost-benefit</li> <li>- Strict financial rules</li> <li>- Annual financial audit</li> <li>- Stable funding based on membership fee and evaluation fee</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Limitation of proposals for improvement based on those members of EAEVE with an acceptable effect on their finances</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To increase funding with associate or affiliate members outside Europe</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To keep the balance between Income and Expenditures if the Agency grows too quickly when increasing both the membership and evaluations</li> </ul>

## ESEVT

ITEM	STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<b>Evaluation system</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Well established and experienced cross-national system of evaluation and accreditation of Establishments of Veterinary Education based on ESG</li> <li>- Positive and transparent outcome after 32 years applying the ESEVT (substantial improvement of the quality of the visited Establishments for Veterinary Education)</li> <li>- Contribution to the culture of quality in Higher Education in Europe and beyond even before the Bologna Declaration</li> <li>- The only regulated profession-specific accrediting peer-review system in Europe</li> <li>- Uniformly accepted within the profession and the academia</li> <li>- Run and developed with the collaboration of veterinary profession (FVE)</li> <li>- Comparable with similar overseas systems</li> <li>- EAEVE is affiliate member of ENQA</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Lack of a legal basis for the evaluation system and the consequences of its outcomes</li> <li>- Official mandate by EU authorities expired in 1998</li> <li>- EAEVE is not full member of ENQA</li> <li>- Duplicity of the QA accreditation process with some National Accreditation Agencies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To develop QA at an international level</li> <li>- Harmonisation without homogenisation of European Veterinary training</li> <li>- To be legally recognized by EU and by national authorities as the accreditation agency for Establishments of Veterinary Education</li> <li>- Increased accountability of schools</li> <li>- High class veterinary service on all levels</li> <li>- Facilitation of international professional movements</li> <li>- Contribution to the culture of quality and Bologna principles in the EHEA and worldwide.</li> <li>- To participate in the development of a global accreditation system for Establishments of Veterinary Education</li> <li>- To assist in the development of QA accreditation systems on Veterinary Education outside Europe</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A widening split between well- and poorly funded faculties</li> <li>- Inadequate adaptation to changes in society and to new challenges from veterinary profession</li> <li>- An increase of members outside Europe with a focus on QA different than that of the EHEA</li> </ul>
<b>Team of experts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Highly qualified, committed and experienced in international peer-review</li> <li>- Independent</li> <li>- Strong involvement of students</li> <li>- Active involvement of stakeholders (practitioners)</li> <li>- Well trained by e-learning, seminars and supervision by the coordinators during on-site visitations</li> <li>- Follow-up of the performance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Insufficient number of female experts in all fields</li> <li>- Insufficient number of non-veterinarian QA experts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To develop and foster an international peer-review system</li> <li>- To increase exchange of expertise in both veterinary curricula and the peer review system</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Non-fulfilment of the rules for appointing the team when cancellation of a given expert occurs at a short notice</li> </ul>

## 14. Current challenges and areas for future development

### CHALLENGES

There are a number of important challenges that are being currently discussed within EAEVE and a number of its important stakeholders. Such challenges would include:

- The transition period between the 2012 SOP and the 2016 ESEVT SOP, as some Establishments are still being assessed under the “old 2012 SOP whilst at the same time another Establishment is working to the 2016 SOP. This problem has a limited lifespan as Establishments who originally signed up to the 2012 SOP will soon be all visited
- The threat of reduced funding for some member Establishments due to a national financial crisis or political decisions
- Implementation of the QA loop in all aspects of EAEVE and ESEVT
- Amendment of the Annex V.4.1 of the Directive 2005/36/EC as amended by Directive 2013/55/EU (Day One competences) needs to be added to the list of subjects during an ESEVT visitation
- Occurrence in some countries of establishing business models of veterinary training, where such models in Establishments are new programmes (often in the English language) established with full fee students in order to raise money. A danger from such Establishments is the threat of insufficient research-based training done by non-academic teachers

### FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

Areas for future development would include:

- Further extension of ESEVT in non-European Establishments; for example in North Africa and Japan
- Better collaboration with national QA agencies
- Increasing the level of cooperation and collaboration with sister associations in the world (e.g. AVMA, RCVS, AVBC)
- Improving and expanding the exchange of teaching experiences between Establishments as well as encouraging veterinary students to spend some study time at Establishments other than their own
- Legal recognition of ESEVT by national authorities in all EU member states.

## Glossary

### Abbreviations

CIQA: Committee on Internal Quality Assurance (of EAEVE)

CSER: Consultative SER

EAEVE: European Association of Establishments for Veterinary Education

EBVS: European Board of Veterinary Specialisation

ECCVT: European Coordination Committee on Veterinary Training

ECOVE: European Committee on Veterinary Education

ENQA: European Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education

EPT: External Practical Training

ESEVT: European System of Evaluation of Veterinary Training

ESG: Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area

ExCom: Executive Committee (of EAEVE)

FVE: Federation of Veterinarians of Europe

GA: General Assembly (of EAEVE)

OIE: World Organisation for Animal Health

QA: Quality Assurance

RSER: Re-visitation SER

SER: Self Evaluation Report

SOP: Standard Operating Procedure

SWOT: Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats

### Standardised terminology

**Accreditation:** status of an Establishment that is considered by ECOVE as compliant with the ESEVT Standards normally for a 7 years period starting at the date of the last (full) Visitation;

**Establishment:** the official and legal unit that organise the veterinary degree as a whole, either a university, faculty, school, department, institute;

**Establishment's Head:** the person who officially chairs the above described Establishment, i.e. Rector, Dean, Director, Head of Department, President, Principal;

**External Practical Training:** clinical and practical training done extramurally and fully supervised by non-academic staff (e.g. practitioners);

**EU Directive:** Directive 2005/36/EC as amended by Directive 2013/55/EU

**Major Deficiency:** a deficiency that significantly affects the quality of education and the Establishment's compliance with the ESEVT Standards;

**Minor Deficiency:** a deficiency that does not significantly affect the quality of education or the Establishment's compliance with the ESEVT Standards;

## **Annexes**

**ANNEX 1: [ESEVT SOP \(2016\)](#)**

**ANNEX 2: [EAEVE Statutes](#)**

**ANNEX 3: [EAEVE Code of Conduct](#)**

**ANNEX 4: [EAEVE Policy on Quality Assurance](#)**

**ANNEX 5: [EAEVE Strategic Plan 2015-2020](#)**

**ANNEX 6: [System-wide analysis of ESEVT 2011-2015](#)**

**ANNEX 7: [List of ESEVT Visitations undertaken during the last five years](#)**

**ANNEX 8: [Example of ESEVT SER \(under Uppsala SOP, i.e. Madrid Complutense\)](#)**

**ANNEX 9: [Example of ESEVT Visitation Report \(under Uppsala SOP, i.e. Madrid Complutense\)](#)**

**ANNEX 10: [Mid-term Analysis of the EAEVE Strategic Plan 2015-2020 and EAEVE SWOT Analysis Update \(February 2017\)](#)**

**Tracking system****ENQA SAR Final 09.08.2017**

	<b>Prepared by:</b>	<b>Reviewed by:</b>	<b>Approved by:</b>
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