



VISITATION REPORT

To the Faculty of Veterinary Sciences, University of Extremadura, Cáceres, Spain

On 28 March – 01 April 2022

By the Visitation Team:

Marc Gogny (Chairperson), Nantes, France: Visitor in Basic Sciences

Artur Niedźwiedź, Wrocław, Poland: Visitor in Clinical Sciences in Companion Animals

Mark Crowe, Dublin, Ireland: Visitor in Clinical Sciences in Food-Producing Animals

Andrej Kirbiš, Ljubljana, Slovenia: Visitor in Food Safety and Quality

Paola Sacchi, Turin, Italy: Visitor in Quality Assurance

Wendela Wapenaar, De Hoef, The Netherlands: Practitioner

Irisz Koutis, Zagreb, Croatia: Student

Marina Spinu, Cluj-Napoca, Romania: ESEVT Coordinator

Contents of the Visitation Report

Introduction

1. Objectives, Organisation and QA Policy
2. Finances
3. Curriculum
4. Facilities and equipment
5. Animal resources and teaching material of animal origin
6. Learning resources
7. Student admission, progression and welfare
8. Student assessment
9. Academic and support staff
10. Research programmes, continuing and postgraduate education
11. ESEVT Indicators
12. ESEVT Rubrics

Executive Summary

Glossary

Introduction

The Faculty of Veterinary Medicine of the University of Extremadura (FVUEx) (called the Veterinary Education Establishment (VEE) in this Report) was established in 1983 and is located 4.5km East of Cáceres, the capital of one of the two provinces of the Autonomous Community of Extremadura, an intensive farming community. Its infrastructure (including the Administration, classrooms, and the Departments) opened in 1990, while the VTH, the Teaching Farm (VTF), and the Food Pilot Plants (FPP) started functioning later, in 2002 (VTH) and 2003 (VTF, FPP).

The VEE underwent two EAEVE Visitations, the first in 1995 and the second in 2010.

This last Visitation identified 3 category I deficiencies, namely: lack of isolation facilities for small animals, lack of a 24-hour emergency service for small animals and insufficient training in food-production animals. The VEE was revisited in April 2012, when, due to the improvements made, it received the “Approval” status.

The VEE offers veterinary education, but also services and research activities in an area where farming generates the most income. Being the only veterinary educational establishment, the FVUEx is well-recognized by the veterinarian community and the broad public, thus providing an extended range of first but also second opinion cases to teach the students. A limited number (95) of strongly motivated students are admitted (approximately 1 of 10 candidates). A reduction (5%) in the students’ numbers annually enrolled followed the previous suggestion from the EAEVE Visitation to Cáceres. The qualifications of the staff and the good communication with the students ensure a friendly and learning-conducive atmosphere.

Since the previous EAEVE Visitation, changes at the VEE included the implementation of a new ANECA (Spanish Agency for Quality Assessment and Accreditation) approved curriculum, subject to a re-evaluation in 2017. The curriculum envisaged changes that included an increase in clinical training (a rotation system), rotations in food hygiene and animal productions, a Veterinary

Degree Dissertation (VDD) at the end of the Degree and the inclusion of self-directed learning in most subjects. The Teaching Guides created for each subject, accessible on the Moodle platform enhanced the follow-up and recording of the practical activities and competences acquired by the students. An Internal Quality Assurance System of the FVUEx (FIQAS) in place and certified since 2010, has been continuously revised according to the ESG standards and recognized by ANECA, benefitting from an AUDIT certification (end of 2020).

The infrastructure also improved after 2010, by extensive renovation of the VTF and acquisition of a computerised tomography system for small animals and equines. The Ambulatory Clinic has been strengthened by hiring three part time lecturers. Further, the emergency service for companion animals and also a scintigraphy service were created. The EMT in abattoirs was reinforced with the recruitment of three part time staff, meanwhile Official Veterinarians of the Extremadura Health Service (EHS). An efficient Integral Management has been implemented in the VTH based on Computer Program Provet Cloud. The audio-visual means and their accessibility were improved. Nevertheless, due to legal limitations, the VEE is confronted with financial constraints (insufficient public financing) and ageing of the staff (constraints to the public expenses in salaries), but measures were implemented to overcome these situations.

The 2019 SOP, as amended in December 2020 is valid for this Visitation.

Standard 1. Objectives, Organisation and QA Policy

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

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

1.1.1. Findings

The VEE clearly states the classical threefold mission which includes education, research and services to society. The main objective is to guarantee to new graduates the development of their professional skills in the fields of medicine and animal surgery, production and animal health, food producing technology, hygiene and food safety and public health as well as to provide chances for long-life learning offering both post graduate programmes and continuing education courses.

The European Directive 2005/36/EC, the Spanish legislation (order ECI/333/2008) and the EAEVE recommendations are the basis for the veterinary five-year training programme delivered by the VEE.

1.1.2. Comments

The VEE is committed to train highly qualified graduates for the veterinary profession in line with the EAEVE recommendations and ESG guidelines. The mission statement and general objectives are clearly expressed and include the promotion of life learning education and research. The mission statement fulfils the requirements of Substandard 1.1 and is supported by the strategic plan. The aspiration to comply with national and ESEVT accreditation standards is noticeable.

1.1.3. Suggestions for improvement

None.

1.1.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Substandard 1.1.

1.2 The VEE must be part of a university or a higher education institution providing training recognised as being of an equivalent level and formally recognised as such in the respective country. The person responsible for the veterinary curriculum and the person(s) responsible for the professional, ethical, and academic affairs of the Veterinary Teaching Hospital (VTH) must hold a veterinary degree. The decision-making process of the VEE must allow implementation of its strategic plan and of a cohesive study programme, in compliance with the ESEVT Standards.

1.2.1. Findings

The University of Extremadura (UEX) is a public institution and depends on the Spanish Ministry of Universities (MIU) and on the Government of the Autonomous Community of Extremadura. The University comprises four campuses with 18 Educational Establishments of which FVUEX is one.

The VEE represents the only academic institution providing a degree in veterinary medicine in the Autonomous community of Extremadura. In addition it offers the Degree in Biochemistry and the Master Degree in Meat science and technology.

As stated by the current legislation, the Faculty is responsible for organising and supervising the curricula; the teaching activities are assigned to Departments that are also responsible for research. The Governing bodies are the Dean, the Executive Team and the Faculty Board. The Dean of the Faculty is elected by the Faculty Board for a four-year term. He/she chairs the Faculty Board and manages the financial and administrative affairs.

The executive Team comprises two vice Deans, one in charge of students and mobility, the other of Academic coordination and infrastructure, the faculty secretary and the Faculty quality manager. They all are nominated by the Dean.

The key representative body of the VEE is the Faculty Board, which approves strategic decisions (regulations, annual budget and academic policies), prepares proposals for educational plans, and elects the Dean. The board consists of the dean's executive team, the administrator, and representatives of the departments, of the permanent academic staff, of the hired teaching and research staff, of the undergraduate students, of the support staff and meets three times per academic year. Many committees are delegated for different aspects of the Faculty management. The committee members are appointed by the Faculty board and all committees include representatives of the students.

The VEE comprises ten departments of which five are located in the campus of Cáceres, the other five in the campus of Badajoz. The departments act as operative units in charge of teaching and research activities, headed by a Head of department that leads the Department council.

The VEE's infrastructures comprise a Veterinary teaching hospital (VTH), a Veterinary teaching farm (VTF) and some food pilot plants (FPP). These are used to support teaching and research activities. The main external bodies with which the Faculty collaborates are the Cáceres Province Council, the Centre for animal selection and reproduction, the Minimally invasive surgery centre Jesus Uson (CCMIJU), the San Jorge animal shelter and the two official colleges of veterinarians of Cáceres and Badajoz.

1.2.2. Comments

The VEE organisation is highly dependent on the Spanish legislation that governs the Veterinary degree. The Faculty board, that is the managing and governing body, can make proposals for the changes in the curriculum, but only a low level of autonomy is allowed.

The composition of the governing bodies and committees are stated by the University regulations: the attendance of representatives from internal stakeholders is well defined whereas the involvement of external stakeholders is not envisaged on a permanent basis. Nevertheless, in order to facilitate mutual interaction and discussions with representatives from distinct branches of the profession, the VEE sets up a temporary external advisory committee of the external stakeholders with specific tasks, also accepted by the University.

The involvement of external stakeholders is ensured in other several ways: the Quality Assurance Unit for the Establishment (EQUAU) at University level gathers information about the outcomes and performance indicators of the Degrees and Masters from the external stakeholders; the improvement plans, after internal and ANECA evaluations are available on the VEE's website to the external stakeholders; the Interuniversity Cooperation and Mobility Programs Committee through the Executive Team fosters collaboration agreements (674 at the time of the Visitation); the Internal Quality Assurance System of the FVUEx (FIQAS) considered the external stakeholders' contribution in shaping the intermediary versions of the Strategic Plan of the VEE.

The constant collaboration with the Minimally invasive surgery centre Jesus Uson, a prestigious institution with a very well organised infrastructure and high technical level of its equipment and technologies, represents an asset to the VEE students and PhD students and also to its teaching staff when performing EPT, PhD theses and continuing education.

1.2.3. Suggestions for improvement

Formal invitations addressed to the representatives of external stakeholders to attend the Faculty board whenever needed could better serve a fluent cooperation; as an alternative, a permanent external committee could further improve closing the loop of the QA process.

1.2.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Substandard 1.2.

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

1.3.1. Findings

The VEE has a three-year strategic plan which includes a detailed SWOT analysis. The last strategic plan was approved in 2018 and it covers 2018-2021. The strategic plan is publicly available via the VEE's website. A new strategic plan was approved in February 2022, covering the period 2022-2025 with the consultation of the temporary external advisory committee. The VEE strategic plan and the university strategic plan are strictly connected and refer to the same indicators.

The VEEs actual strategic plan includes a thorough SWOT analysis, the SER summarising some of the strengths (prestige at national level, availability of a large number of herds/flocks for training, high scientific level of the research groups, a good networking of the supporting teaching facilities (VTH, VTF, FPP), a fully operating Quality Assurance system, exploitation of teaching platforms, participation of the teaching staff in teaching innovation projects.

Weaknesses considered by the VEE comprise low economic independence, few diplomates of European colleges, limited possibilities of intervening in the design of teaching programmes, a mainly “research based” policy in evaluating the teaching staff.

Opportunities are: the improvement of the education programmes, teaching quality and the quality of training to comply with the European directive and guidelines for higher education, the growing importance of the food and farming industry in Spain as well as the increasing number of pet owners.

Threats are: decrease in funding sources, ageing of academic staff, increase cost in veterinary education, excessive centralisation of decision making in university services.

An operating plan with objectives, actions, responsibilities and timeframe in four areas (teaching, research, management and services, and social impact) has been drawn up.

1.3.2. Comments

The VEE strategic plan is well-structured, the EAEVE recommendations and the ESG guidelines are followed leading to clearly defined objectives and activities, responsibilities, deadlines and indicators. Based on the SWOT analysis the VEE is targeting its continuous improvement along with efforts to overcome the weaknesses and threats identified.

1.3.3. Suggestions for improvement

The design and the implementation of the strategic plan could benefit from an improved connection between the weakness identified in the SWOT analysis and the corresponding activities meant to correct it.

1.3.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Substandard 1.3.

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

1.4.1. Findings

The internal quality assurance system of the FVUEx has been recognized since 2010 by the national agency ANECA (Spanish Agency for Quality Assessment and accreditation), and the certification was renewed in 2020. ANECA is a member of ENQA, which ensures that a positive assessment report is in full compliance with the ESG Standards.

The quality assurance policy has a formal status and it can be found on the website. The quality policy and objectives are designed by the Executive Team, discussed and approved by the VEE board. The operating body, coordinated by the faculty quality manager, is the EQAU which is charged with planning and monitoring the FIQAS, collecting evidence and information about the outcomes and gathering suggestions and satisfaction indications from internal and external stakeholders. An annual self-evaluation report is drawn up and submitted for approval to the VEE board. The evaluation of the achievements and development of proposals for improvements close the PDCA-cycle. The self-evaluation report together with the ANECA report are published on the

website and made available to internal and external stakeholders.

1.4.2. Comments

The VEE quality assurance system is a well-integrated part of the Extremadura University quality assurance system and the interactions between the Faculty and the central body are extensive and lead to an active cooperation. The positive attitude and commitment of the University QA Vice-Rector and the entire team towards the continuous development of quality culture are commendable.

The VEE has clear written procedures for QA to guide the different processes and to make them consistent, reliable and fair.

Strategic plans are expected to include the stakeholders' contribution in order to analyse, identify and prioritise the needs of the labour market. In the published document the stakeholder analysis is not evident.

1.4.3. Suggestions for improvement

The inclusion of internal and external stakeholders at an earlier stage of the Strategic Plan drafting could improve the process by suggestions brought and not only by comments before its validation by the VEE board.

1.4.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Substandard 1.4.

1.5 The VEE must provide evidence that it interacts with its stakeholders and the wider society. Such public information must be clear, objective and readily accessible; the information must include up-to-date information about the study programme, views and employment destinations of past students as well as the profile of the current student population. The VEE's website must mention the ESEVT VEE's status and its last Self Evaluation Report and Visitation Report must be easily available for the public.

1.5.1. Findings

The governing bodies of the VEE have formal meetings with the representatives of veterinary practitioners with the aim of gathering suggestions from and investigate the needs of professionals for updating both teaching and research programmes.

The main way of providing information to stakeholders and society on the veterinary programmes is the internet via the VEE website as a major channel to communicate the VEE's goals, teaching plans, activities and events. Further, information may be found on the UEx social media account/profile on Facebook, Twitter and YouTube.

The ESEVT certificate of approval, the 2010 SER, and the report of the 2010 Visitation, the 2012 Re-visitation report, and the 2021 SER are available on a specific section of the website.

1.5.2. Comments

As observed during the Visitation, there is a transparent interaction between the VEE and its stakeholders, also including the broader society. The website is constantly updated, the responsible being part of the FIQAS.

The SER provided by the VEE is a little too long (145 pages, 118 pages when excluding the divider pages) and makes an abundant use of links, sometimes redundant, leading to information in Spanish. Nevertheless, the on-site information was provided with concision and preciseness.

1.5.3. Suggestions for improvement

The VEE should pay greater attention to compliance with the drafting recommendations concerning the SER, as mentioned in the SOP.

1.5.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Substandard 1.5.

1.6 The VEE must monitor and periodically review its activities, both quantitative and qualitative, to ensure that they achieve the objectives set for them and respond to the needs of students and society. The VEE must make public how this analysis of information has been utilised in the further development of its activities and provide evidence as to the involvement of both students and staff in the provision, analysis and implementation of such data. Any action planned or taken as a result of this data analysis must be communicated to all those concerned.

1.6.1. Findings

The strategic plan as well as quality policy and objectives are designed by the Executive Team, then discussed and approved by the VEE board. The implementation, assessment and revision of the plan are supported by EQUA primarily and by several internal stakeholders. The plan is reviewed yearly and the outcomes are summarised in the self-evaluation report. The Rectorate oversees the QA development. All documents are available on the VEE website.

1.6.2. Comments

The annual self-evaluation report deeply analyses indicators monitoring the VEEs activities, includes the feed-back from several stakeholders, provides information on the students' admission, progression and graduations, reports the assessment outcomes and identifies the areas of improvements, thus providing a useful tool to monitor the progress.

1.6.3. Suggestions for improvement

None.

1.6.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Substandard 1.6.

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

1.7.1. Findings

The VEE was visited in 2010 and three category 1 deficiencies were found. The Re-visitation, in April 2012, verified that all the category 1 deficiencies had been rectified and finally the VEE received the "approval" status.

Since the last EAEVE Visitation, a lot of improvements have been undertaken including the implementation of a new curriculum, the enhancement of the Internal Quality Assurance System and the implementation of some main facilities

1.7.2. Comments

Recommendations to rectify the weaknesses identified during the previous Visitation have been carefully reviewed and noteworthy efforts to meet the suggested improvements have been made.

1.7.3. Suggestions for improvement

None.

1.7.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Substandard 1.7.

Standard 2. Finances

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

2.1.1. Findings

The finances of Spanish public universities are governed by legislation that grants economic and financial autonomy to public universities under certain conditions. The legislation also requires that universities have sufficient funds to provide high- quality basic services. As educational responsibilities have been transferred to regional governments, they provide financial resources to universities to support their higher education and promote their full participation in the European higher education area. Finally, each university is granted autonomy to develop, approve, and manage its budget and administer its funds.

In addition to the funds UEx receives from the regional government, other sources of revenue are tuition fees, which are managed by UEx's central services and not by the VEE. Tuition fees contribute only 15.5% of total revenues.

In terms of expenses, staff salaries represent the area with the highest numbers. In the last 3 academic years, these costs have increased by one million Euro.

The impact of COVID-19, was reflected in the reduction of ministry budgets, which have been cut by 15%.

Maintenance and running costs have increased sharply in the last three years due to investments in refurbishing facilities and upgrading equipment. In addition, the VTH and VTF improved in terms of biosafety.

Staff salaries account for 85% of the budget.

The annual balance for each academic year is neither positive nor negative (zero) because the total amount of money received is spent for the VEEs purposes. The VEE receives annual funds from the Rectorate that come directly from the provincial government and are invested in buildings and renovations and managed through UEx. Thus, the VEE manages only 2.60% and UEx manages 87.08% of the total invested funds.

The annual cost of educating students is calculated by dividing the total cost of the veterinary diploma by the number of students enrolled in the veterinary diploma each year. In recent academic years, the cost per student has increased.

2.1.2. Comments

The institution has a sufficient budget to implement its strategic plan. The increase in personnel costs is mainly due to the hiring of technical and scientific staff, as more research projects have been carried out in recent years. It is also worth mentioning the funding of research projects led by VEE research groups, which are growing steadily, although there is a general decrease due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

2.1.3. Suggestions for improvement

None.

2.1.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Substandard 2.1.

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

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

2.2.1. Findings

VTH is part of the University-Society Foundation (USF), a non-governmental organisation that manages VTH's budget. Revenue is derived from clinical activities and from funds received by the Foundation from public and private entities. Although VTH charges market prices for its clinical and field services, these services are offered to non-profit organisations such as animal shelters at lower prices in order to obtain sufficient clinical training cases.

Although VTF is a VEE service, animal sales and accounts are managed by USF. If necessary, USF also contributes to VTF costs.

2.2.2. Comments

The VEE confirms that it has the necessary autonomy in allocating state budget funds for education. The selling price of livestock is determined by prices set directly on the official market (which is regulated by representatives of farmers' associations). The price varies depending on whether the animal is intended for breeding or for the food industry, therefore the income from this source is changing. The FPPs function as instructional resources, but do not generate income, their products only representing animal by-products. Nevertheless, the commercial activities at both the VTH and VTF support teaching activities, rather than self-sufficiency.

2.2.3. Suggestions for improvement

The inclusion of FPP in the income generating category of VTH and VTF, by moving them to another location and obtaining the approval by the competent authority could be beneficial.

2.2.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Substandard 2.2.

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

2.3.1. Findings

The VEE coordinates and manages infrastructure repair, maintenance, and acquisition with the Rector's Office. The VEE submits to UEx the maintenance plan at the beginning of each year.

The VEE Executive Team prepares an initial draft of the VEE's budget and annual financial report each year. These financial documents are then presented to the Business and Infrastructure Committee, chaired by the Associate Dean for Academic Planning and Infrastructure, which is composed of various representatives from departments, staff (academic staff, non-academic staff), and students. Once the drafts are approved, they are presented to the Faculty Council for final approval.

Since the VTH is financially dependent on USF, the USF Director works with the VTH Director to prepare the budget and annual report for approval.

Requests for expenditures exceeding the regular budget are submitted to the Rector's Council for approval as extraordinary expenditures. The Rectorate decides which infrastructure projects will be implemented after reviewing all VEE requests, subject to the available budget.

2.3.2. Comments

A well-established review system is in place, allowing the permanent monitoring of the revenue-expenditure balance by the VEE structures, although the majority of funds are managed at UEx level.

2.3.3. Suggestions for improvement

None.

2.3.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Substandard 2.3.

Standard 3. Curriculum

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

3.1.1. General findings

3.1.1.1. Findings

According to the Spanish regulation (law 44/2003), the curriculum duration offered by the VEE is five years and 300 ECTS and is considered as a master level degree. Each academic year is divided into two 30 ECTS semesters. Since 2009, it has been redesigned according to the competence approach, the Day-one competences being split into capabilities, divided in four groups: ebasic skills (5), general capabilities (7), transversal abilities (11) and specific capabilities (104).

FINAL REPORT AS ISSUED BY ECOVE ON 8 JUNE 2022

The curriculum fulfils the Directive 36/2005/EU requirements.

Topics are grouped into modules: Common Basic Veterinary Sciences (96 ECTS), Compulsory subjects [grouping Clinical Sciences and animal health (108), Animal Production (30), Food Hygiene, Technology and Safety (24)], and Elective Subjects (12). Two additional modules are devoted to VTH rotations and EPT (24 ECTS), and the Veterinary Degree Dissertation (6).

If the modules offer a view of the weight of different groups of topics through the entire curriculum, the skeleton of the curriculum remains based on a discipline-oriented organisation. During each semester, the different disciplines are systematically grouped in five 6 ECTS units.

The organisation, coordination and supervision of all teaching activities is mainly devoted to the EQAU (Quality Assurance Unit for the Establishment) and especially the VQC (Veterinary Science Degree Quality Committee). This committee receives proposals from the Departments.

Once published by the Dean's office, the timetables cannot be changed, especially after the coordination meeting, scheduled in the beginning of July which can make final adjustments, taking into account the results of the passed academic year, on a P-D-C-A basis.

The different topics that are taught each semester are distributed as follows:

Year	Topic	ECTS	Semester
1	Biology - Ethology	6	First
	Veterinary Biometry	6	
	Biochemistry	6	
	Embryology – Anatomy I	6	
	Physics and chemistry for vets	6	
	Agronomy and rural economy	6	Second
	Anatomy II	6	
	Veterinary Cytology and histology	6	
	Endocrinology and metabolic regulation	6	
	Genetics	6	
2	Ethics, legislation and veterinary expertise	6	Third
	Animal physiology	6	
	Immunology	6	
	Microbiology	6	
	Parasitology	6	
	General pathology	6	Fourth
	Animal husbandry and health	6	
	General pharmacology and toxicology	6	
	Ethnology and veterinary business management	6	
	General Pathology	6	
3	Applied pathology	6	Fifth
	Pharmacology and therapeutics	6	
	Animal nutrition	6	
	Clinical propaedeutics	6	
	Food technology and biochemistry I	6	
	Diagnostic imaging and radiobiology	6	Sixth
	Internal parasitology I	6	
	Infectious diseases I	6	
	Food technology and biochemistry II	6	
	Clinical and environmental toxicology	6	
4	Internal parasitology II, tropical parasitology and public health	6	Seventh
	Food safety and quality I	6	
	Infectious diseases II	6	
	Internal medicine I	6	

FINAL REPORT AS ISSUED BY ECOVE ON 8 JUNE 2022

	Animal production I	6	Eighth
	Food safety and quality II	6	
	Internal medicine I	6	
	Surgery I	6	
	Animal production I	6	
	Reproduction and obstetrics I	6	
5	Epidemiology, preventive medicine	6	Ninth
	Surgery I	6	
	Reproduction and obstetrics II	6	
	Clinical activities	6	N.d.
	Ambulatory clinics and production animal activities	6	N.d.
	Electives	6	N.d.
	Livestock Resources and Food Hygiene and Technology	6	N.d.
	Veterinary dissertation	6	N.d.

The electives offered by the VEE during the first semester of the 5th year are shown in the next table.

Electives

5	Applied anatomy	6	
	Large animal clinics	6	
	Small animal clinics	6	
	Food safety and quality	6	

From the table 3.1.2 provided in the SER, the breakdown of the teaching methods over the 5 years is given in the next table.

Years*	A	B	C	D	E	F	H
Total	1710.75	105.75	4001.25	600.25	144.5	636.5	7200

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

*electives not included

From this table, several pieces of information can be calculated or derived about the teaching methods (see next table) :

- On average, the number of weekly face-to-face teaching hours is lower than 25h. Thus, the weekly timetables leaves enough room for personal work, the part of self-directed learning being 55,6% of the total student workload.
- Among face-to-face teaching methods, the majority are lectures and seminars (56,8%), where the students are passively listening in a lecture hall, with a low to medium attendance (20 to 50% of the students being physically present).
- Small group (5 to 12 students) active non-clinical teaching activities are mainly represented by practicals (23,3% of the teaching methods and 10,3% of the total student workload). The number of small group seminars using active methods and problem/case based learning is low.
- The part of clinical activities is 19,9% among the teaching methods and 8,8% of the total student workload and these numbers include the external practical training periods.

Face-to-face teaching methods during the whole curriculum	Learning activities among the total student workload
---	--

FINAL REPORT AS ISSUED BY ECOVE ON 8 JUNE 2022

Passive teaching methods (A+B)/(H-C)	Active non-clinical teaching methods (D+E)/(H-C)	Clinical Activities F/(H-C)	Passive attendance to lectures and seminars (A+B)/H	Practical Activities (D+E)/H	Clinical Activities F/H	Self directed learning C/H
56.8%	23.3%	19.9%	25.2%	10.3%	8.8%	55.6%

The synchronous face-to-face teaching activities are completed by an excellent e-learning environment based on the Moodle software (see Standard 5), called Virtual Campus, providing students with numerous documents, assignments, quizzes etc. under supervision of the academic staff.

3.1.1.2. Comments

The VEE is making significant effort to create an outcome-based curriculum that meets both the national and ESEVT Standards, and emphasises practical training, professional skill development and research-based activities. However:

- Face-to-face teaching methods remain mainly descriptive, in lecture halls with a low student attendance. Among the small group sessions, the number of sessions devoted to problem/case based learning, using for example a flipped-class model, is low. This is partially compensated with well-designed and organised practical sessions, in small groups (5 to 12 students), allowing a very good student-teacher interaction.
- The different intramural clinical rotations are very short (generally 2 days per rotation in small animal and equine clinics, see 3.1.3), leaving little room for day-one competences acquisition and assessment.

While learning outcomes form a functional entity and are precisely described in the syllabi, they are often written with more emphasis on knowledge and remembering than analysing or decision-making.

The VEE tries to constantly monitor the performance of the training and has established a QA loop to adjust the curriculum when necessary; it has to be noticed that a full assessment of the quality of the training by students that have completed the course of study and entered the profession is not yet possible.

The acquisition of clinical manual skills is ensured in some places (for example in the surgery laboratory and in the equine reproduction clinic) using inert models and manikins. However, students only have access to these materials during the teaching sessions in their timetable, thus limiting the number of attempts and opportunities to adequately master their practical skills. Moreover, some clinical and nursing skills, like animal handling, bandaging, venipuncture, catheterizations, tracheal tubing, etc. are not covered at the moment.

3.1.1.3. Suggestions for improvement

As far as compatible with the teaching duties of the academic staff, it is suggested to further increase the part of small group activities focussing on clinical reasoning, problem solving using a case-based approaches. Moreover the number of hours devoted to intramural clinical activities should be increased in order to ensure the adequate acquisition and assessment of the relevant day-one competences (see 3.1.3 and 3.1.4).

This can be made possible by revisiting the timetables and by a further reduction of the number of students.

The second lever could be the curriculum length. The VEE claims that “the Deans from all the VEE in Spain and the Spanish Government are working to increase the length of the Degree from

300 to 360 ECTS". This would be a very positive decision as the adjustment variable of a 5 year course is always the clinical training.

The VEE should also consider the organisation of a centralised clinical skills lab, with defined opening hours but on a free access basis and under supervision of a staff member, in order to ensure that the students master the technical skills and gestures before entering the VTH.

The low number of intramural clinical activities will be pointed out in Substandards 3.1.3 and 3.1.4. Nevertheless, the overall balance between face-to-face activities and student personal work, the enthusiasm of teachers permanently interacting with the students in the whole 5 year curriculum and the excellent e-learning environment represent compensation.

3.1.1.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Substandard 3.1.1.

3.1.2. Basic Sciences

3.1.2.1. Findings

Learning objectives related to basic subjects and sciences are addressed and properly covered. The equilibrium between all different topics within each semester (6 ECTS each), theoretically preventing any hypertrophy of any given discipline, is nevertheless allowing substantial emphasis on basic veterinary sciences subjects such as Anatomy, Histology and Embryology (430 hrs Total Student Workload TSW) and Pathology (310h TSW) as compared to Physiology (224), Biochemistry (225 hrs), Pharmacology (224), General and Molecular Genetics (150) and Animal nutrition (150).

The curriculum also covers important subjects such as Animal Welfare, Ethology, Information Literacy and Data management, Professional Ethics and Communication, Animal Health Economics and Epidemiology.

During the anatomy classrooms, dissections are conducted in small groups of students, mainly on small animal cadavers with an excellent student-teacher interaction. Large animal anatomy is performed on bones, previously prepared pieces and organs and on plastic models. There is very limited use of plastinated preparations.

The former department of Pharmacology and Toxicology was split a few years ago, leading to a partitioning of the academic staff and little collaboration. At present, pharmacology is totally taught by non-veterinarian academics, sometimes leading to a deficit of veterinary examples and applications, if not to the absence of important chapters (for example steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs).

3.1.2.2. Comments

Basic veterinary science subjects have sufficient to good hours allocated in the curriculum. The systematic organisation of small group practicals allows a very good interaction between students and staff.

The enthusiasm and commitment of teachers (anatomy and immunology for example, but not exclusively) in teaching and training the students by a good combination of face-to-face sessions and e-learning materials is commendable.

The anatomy practical sessions could benefit from the preparation and/or acquisition of plastinated pieces or organs, and of specific veterinary anatomy software.

The fact that non veterinarians teach in the veterinary curriculum is not a problem *per se*. But if it concerns para-clinical sciences, the VEE has to ensure that all learning objectives are met and to

ensure interactions and harmonisation between academics from the related disciplines, in order to allow students to integrate their knowledge with clinical topics. If not, this situation leads to a waste of time when other academics try to compensate if necessary, or by a gap in the relevant knowledge.

3.1.2.3. Suggestions for improvement

The VEE should ensure that the topics that are taught by non-veterinary academic staff in paraclinical sciences are fully adapted to the requirements of the veterinary training.

3.1.2.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Substandard 3.1.2.

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

3.1.3.1. Findings

The teaching of clinical sciences in companion animals is included in the Clinical Sciences and Animal Health module, carried out in the third, fourth, and fifth years. The clinical sciences consist of 2307 hours, of which 521.25 are clinical animal work. The total number of teaching hours corresponds to 108 ETCS. All elements described in the list of clinical sciences subjects (SOP Annex 2) are included.

In the third year, students start with Propaedeutics - fundamental animal handling techniques, physical exploration, complementary diagnostic techniques, collection of samples, and their analysis and interpretation. Further, skills' acquisition is continued with Parasitic Diseases, Infectious diseases, Pathological Anatomy, Image-based Diagnosis, and Toxicology. All the indicated subjects are conducted in small student groups, emphasising the practical part. This phase provides broad training in critical elements of veterinary professional practice, focusing on common and important problems and presentations encountered in veterinary work.

The core of clinical practice takes place in the fourth and fifth years. During this time, students are involved in all aspects of the work in the VTH. Surgical Pathology consists of supervised practical classes carried out in basic surgical techniques, dressings, surgical material, and sterilisation methods, preparation of the operating area, and clinical healthcare practice in the VTH's Small and Large Animals Surgery Service. Internal Medicine and Nutritional Disorders are carried out as practical classes in internal medicine clinics at the VTH in tiny groups, under the supervision of a teaching clinician. Students are responsible for the clinical history and exploration of the animals, carrying out basic analytical techniques, interpreting the results, and diagnosing the most common illnesses, as well as pharmacotherapy. Reproduction and Obstetrics include supervised practical classes aimed at acquiring skills in lab techniques and clinically oriented practical courses such as diagnosis of gestation and hormonal control methods of the oestrus cycle in horses and ruminants, with exploration methods (rectal palpation, ultrasound, etc.). This subject also consists of healthcare practices where the students attend the VTH's Reproduction Service clinics.

During VTH classes, students rotate with the following activities:

- stays in the different Clinical Services of the Hospital
- stays in the different Hospital Laboratories
- attend, according to their interests and possibilities, the training activities organised by the Hospital

Students have four optional subjects in the last year of the Degree, of which they must take two. Regarding clinical sciences in companion animals, they can choose large and small animal clinics.

3.1.3.2. Comments

In the Companion animals and horses' clinics, the students have access to a well-equipped and well-organised VTH. The diagnostic and treatment infrastructure is excellent and allows proper training. The hospital organisation for small animals and equine provides an appropriate number of cases. It should be emphasised that the areas for dogs and cats are appropriately separated.

The simulation training system is also used in the training process but is limited to a few dummies, mainly horse reproduction, equine colic, and surgical procedures. The information obtained from VEE shows that purchase of more simulators is currently underway, which enables dry lab training. The simulators are scattered among individual units, and VEE does not currently have a plan to create a separate clinical simulation laboratory.

It is worth emphasising the presence of European Diplomates and the constant increase in their numbers and on-site residencies in this area. Clinical teachers are committed to their work, and feedback from students shows positive interactions between them. Nevertheless, even considering the presence of several European Diplomates, the number of specialists in various clinical fields is inadequate. There are no separate specialists in ophthalmology, oncology, neurology, and dentistry, and patients in this area are mainly served by the internal medicine team. The VEE does not have a separate, functioning ICU for companion animals. The existing ICU office is unused and is deficient in specialised equipment. Cases requiring intensive therapy are handled in a hospital ward.

The above-mentioned positive aspects of training in companion animals and equine does not compensate the deficiencies in the area. The time spent in clinical rotation at VTH is insufficient. The total time spent intramurally at the VTH is 18 days. The entire period consists of a rotation between hospital departments, but no more than two days in one unit.

The discussions with students and external stakeholders indicate insufficient practical training allowing the acquisition of Day One Competencies. The students confirmed they do not consider themselves competent in performing surgical procedures such as ovario-hysterectomy, treatment of medical colic, or venipuncture immediately after graduation.

Although students have access to a well-functioning hospital in terms of the number of specialists, patients, and equipment, they do not spend enough time in the hospital to acquire practical skills. Moreover, the VEE curriculum does not include "Exotic animal diseases," and the number of animals in this discipline in VTH is insufficient. Single cases of exotic animals are conducted by one teacher specialising in veterinary surgery. The analysis of clinical charts from the last few months shows the absence of reptiles, amphibians and exotic birds, and only a few small mammals as patients. During the meetings, the students emphasised the need to introduce a separate subject and increase the number of exotic animal patients.

3.1.3.3. Suggestions for improvement

Altogether, more time must be dedicated to clinical training either by reducing basic or pre-clinical aspects or extending the whole curriculum. The rotation at the VTH must be converted so students spend more time under the direct supervision of an experienced teacher handling real patients.

The VEE should add to the curriculum a separate subject dedicated to exotic animals and make an effort to increase the number of patients in this discipline.

The VEE should encourage the employment of more diplomates, particularly in the clinics. This strategy could raise the level of clinical services and lead to new residency opportunities, attracting young veterinarians from all over Europe and improving the quality of clinical service.

It is advisable to create a clinical skills laboratory as a separate unit, based on unlimited access for students.

3.1.3.4 Decision

The VEE is not compliant with Substandard 3.1.3 for clinical sciences in companion animals because of insufficient number of hours of hands-on clinical training on real patients under the supervision of academic staff in order to achieve Day One Competences for each individual student.

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

3.1.4.1. Findings

The teaching of clinical sciences in food producing animals is included in the Clinical Sciences, and Animal Health modules carried out in the third, fourth, and fifth years, in addition to animal production modules in second.

Clinical animal work of 521.25 hours represents 22.59% of the total of 2307 hours of the clinical sciences (108 ETCS). It is difficult to separate the clinical sciences into companion and food-producing animals. All elements described in the list of clinical sciences subjects (SOP Annex 2) are included. There are a further 30 ECTS included for animal production.

Students start with propaedeutics in the third year, along with physical exploration, complementary diagnostic techniques, collection of samples, and their analysis and interpretation. Further, they study parasitic and infectious diseases, pathological anatomy, image-based diagnosis and toxicology. The relevant practical aspects are emphasised in all those subjects to small groups of students. During this period of training, guidance is provided in critical elements of veterinary professional practice, focusing on various potential problems encountered in the veterinary practice.

The specific modules of direct relevance to Clinical - food producing animals in the curriculum are: genetics (6 ECTS, year 1), agronomy and agricultural economics (6 ECTS, year 2), breeding and animal health (6 ECTS, year 2), animal nutrition (6 ECTS, year 3), physical examination and clinical diagnosis (6 ECTS, year 3), animal production I (6 ECTS, year 4), animal production II (6 ECTS, year 4), reproduction and obstetrics I (6 ECTS, year 4), epidemiology, preventive veterinary medicine and sanitary policy (6 ECTS, year 5), reproduction and obstetrics II (6 ECTS, year 5), large animal clinic (6 ECTS, year 5 elective) in addition to clinical activities (6 ECTS).

Reproduction and obstetrics include supervised practical classes aimed at acquiring skills in lab techniques and clinically oriented practical courses such as diagnosis of gestation and hormonal control methods of the oestrous cycle in ruminants, with exploration methods (rectal palpation, ultrasound, etc.). This subject also consists of healthcare practices where the students attend the VTH's reproduction service clinics.

In the fifth year each student spends 2.5 weeks (12 days) with the farm ambulatory service. The ambulatory clinic is serviced by one full time academic staff member, plus 3 part time academic staff members that are partly paid by the VEE and partly paid from private clinical services. These 3 part time academics provide their own cars for the ambulatory service and equipment and therapeutic drugs are provided by their practice.

Students have four optional subjects in the last year of the Degree. Each student must take two of them. Regarding clinical sciences in food producing animals, they can choose large animal clinics. The large animal clinic provides those that are interested further opportunities to develop proficiency in the farm animal species.

The basic principles of herd health management are taught in breeding and animal Health (Second year, animal production), animal nutrition (third year, animal production), infectious diseases I and

II (third and fourth years, module of clinical sciences and animal health), parasitic diseases I and II (third and fourth years, module of clinical sciences and animal health), internal medicine and nutritional disorders I and II (fourth year, module of clinical sciences and animal health), animal production I and II (fourth year, module of animal production), epidemiology, preventive veterinary medicine and sanitary policy (fifth year, module of clinical sciences and animal health). In fourth year animal production the students will evaluate a farm and write a report in the context of animal production, and when in the ambulatory clinic they conduct herd health assessments and reports.

3.1.4.2. Comments

The time spent with the farm animal ambulatory service is documented as 12 days per student. However students informed the team that the actual time spent with the farm animal ambulatory clinic is only 5 days (one week). The caseload for farm animals in the VTH is negligible and so there is almost complete reliance on the ambulatory clinic for farm animal clinical teaching (also see the Indicators).

The teaching and learning that does take place in the farm ambulatory clinic is excellent, with 1 to 3 students per staff member.

3.1.4.3. Suggestions for improvement

The VEE should consider expanding the ambulatory clinic activities so that there is increased time for students in the farm animal clinical activities. There may be a requirement for additional resources (academic staff) to help with this expanded activity.

3.1.4.4. Decision

The VEE is partially compliant with Substandard 3.1.4, because of suboptimal time spent in farm animal clinical training to achieve day one competencies for each individual student.

3.1.5. Food Safety and Quality

3.1.5.1. Findings

Food Safety and Quality (FSQ), Veterinary Public Health (VPH) and One Health concept (OH) are taught for a total of 858 hours, equivalent to 29 ECTS. Slightly more than half of these hours (55 %) are categorised as supervised self-learning and the number of hours in FSQ and VPH practical training is 182,5 hours. The number of hours of extra-mural practical training in FSQ and VPH (I9) is 50. All elements described in the list of subjects (SOP Annex 2) are included.

A total of 177,5 hours laboratory training is distributed as follows:

- 79 hours laboratory work in Food technology.
- 41,5 hours laboratory work on Control of food, feed and animal by-products.
- 28 hours laboratory work on Veterinary legislation including official controls and regulatory veterinary services, forensic veterinary medicine and certification.
- 28 hours laboratory work on Food hygiene and food microbiology.
- 1 hour laboratory work on Zoonoses (also included in Medicine subjects)

In the practical training in meat inspection, students participate in inspections in slaughterhouses. Students are divided into small groups (2 students). Each student spends 42 hours in three farm animal slaughterhouses. Five hours refer exclusively to the clinical examination of animals before slaughter (ante-mortem inspection). In the course "Livestock, Food Hygiene and Technology" (fifth year, module of supervised practical), all students of the Veterinary Medicine programme

spend 37 hours in the slaughterhouse (7 hours for each working day of the week + 2 hours for the completion of the practical questionnaire in the slaughterhouse). In addition, students must write a report on the activity performed in the slaughterhouse in the following 15 days after the completion of the 37 hours of stay. The students are supervised by official veterinarians (OV) who have a part time contract with FVE.

3.1.5.2. Comments

The Food Safety and Quality teaching has a clear focus on food of animal origin. At the VTF, students conduct hands-on instruction in the technology of meat and dairy products, in the FPPs. Since the farm is not approved by the competent authorities, the products must be declared unfit for human consumption (animal by-products).

3.1.5.3. Suggestions for improvement

The administration of VFE should consider to move the FPP to an approved location, so that the practical training in meat and dairy production technology could result in products that could be marketed, adding financial value to the process.

3.1.5.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Substandard 3.1.5.

3.1.6. Professional Knowledge

3.1.6.1. Findings

The professional knowledge activities are developed in different parts of the course and relate to public, corporate or private practice. The curriculum is fully compliant with the EU Directive 2005/36/EC (as amended by directive 2013/55/EU) and its Appendix V.4.1 and is designed to ensure that all graduates have achieved the Professional Knowledge attributes. Most of this knowledge and skills are taught in two subjects (Ethics and Epidemiology & Preventive Veterinary Medicine) and covers an extensive and up to date range of skills and topics.

An External Advisory Committee made up of professionals drawn from distinct branches of veterinary medicine, employers, and representatives of professional associations, institutions and graduated students exists. In addition to this, there is a clear understanding of staff of the need to maintain regular contact with the different branches of the profession that graduates of Cáceres could move into.

3.1.6.2. Comments

Although in the SER there was limited detail on the professional knowledge and skills taught in the curriculum, the visit confirmed a more than sufficient delivery of certain areas, such as the cases and material taught in the Ethics course. In addition, in the Preventive Veterinary Medicine course, there is emphasis on professional skills when writing and preparing their report following a self-organised farm visit. The topics covered and reports written are discussed in a group setting leading to important discussions around professionalism, which are important to students at this stage of the course. Areas that get limited attention are veterinary business skills and practice management.

Professional knowledge cases are discussed in group sessions using real life examples, for example from legal court cases. In addition, the professional attitude of students (graduate and postgraduate) was confirmed by the team's interactions and by their future colleagues and teachers.

It was clear from staff contributions during our visit that the course remains up to date and therefore relevant with regards to the content taught.

3.1.6.3. Suggestions for improvement

Veterinary business aspects could be further developed.

3.1.6.4 Decision

The VEE is compliant with Substandard 3.1.6.

3.2 Each study programme provided by the VEE must be competency-based and designed so that it meets the objectives set for it, including the intended learning outcomes. The qualification resulting from a programme must be clearly specified and communicated and must refer to the correct level of the national qualifications framework for higher education and, consequently, to the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area. The VEE must provide proof of a QA system that promotes and monitors the presence of an academic environment highly conducive to learning including self-learning. Details of the type, provision and updating of appropriate learning opportunities for the students must be clearly described, as well as the involvement of students. The VEE must also describe how it encourages and prepares students for self-learning and lifelong learning.

3.2.1. Findings

The study programme in place is consistent with the provisions of the European directives (Dir 36/2005/EC, Dir 55/2013/EC) and with the current Spanish regulations (RD 1837/2008) governing veterinary training and complying with the training requirements for practising sanitary profession (Law 44/2003).

The general learning outcomes are divided into competences (basic, general, transversal, and specific). A detailed list is available on the website. The relationship between competences and learning outcomes are defined at subject level.

Self-learning is fostered by offering on the Moodle platform a personalised learning environment with multiple training tools.

There are two official master's programs for graduates in veterinary medicine, one in meat science and technology and one in endoscopy and minimally invasive surgery in small animals.

Four educational programs, ie, informal master's degrees, training courses, college professional courses, and training courses for professionals and companies are also offered by the VEE.

The FIQAS is involved in step-by-step evaluation of the QA implementation in undergraduate and postgraduate training promotion and closing the loop. A student member is also involved in this committee.

3.2.2. Comments

Teaching and training are competency-based, fitting into the European and Spanish framework. The VEE adopts well-established procedures for the monitoring and periodic evaluation of the study programme, demonstrating the willingness to further improve the quality of student training.

3.2.3. Suggestions for improvement

Synergy and coordination should be guaranteed between the different departments.

3.2.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Substandard 3.2.

3.3. Programme learning outcomes must:

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

3.3.1. Findings

The curriculum involves 300 ECTS and is organised in 5 years subdivided in 10 semesters. Each subject is worth a minimum of 6 ECTS. Learning outcomes are established for each teaching unit and are published in the online repository which is accessible to students and stakeholders.

The subject forms are the basic building block of the programme. They contain a detailed syllabus of the course and all the information regarding course content, learning outcomes, competences delivered, and teaching and evaluation methods.

A document showing the alignment among the ESEVT Day One Competences and the different subjects along the entire curriculum is provided. Achievement of competences is certified by the teacher, using an individual evaluation book, once the acquisition by the student has been verified. A detailed procedure is in place for issuing and reviewing the subject forms. The subject form is filled out by the discipline responsible, is approved by the faculty board and finally is submitted to the Veterinary Quality Committee ([link](#)).

In addition to VQC, other committees such as the Committee of the veterinary degree dissertation, the Practical training committee, the Teaching evaluation committee are involved in the process of assessing and reviewing the learning outcomes. The EQAU coordinates the work of the different structures committed to QA.

3.3.2. Comments

The learning objectives, outcomes including day one competences, and evaluation methods are clearly defined and all the relevant information is easily accessible through the Teaching Guide on the website. The discipline sheets are well defined giving comprehensive information.

3.3.3. Suggestions for improvement

The integration between the general learning outcomes and the learning outcomes of each unit could be improved using a cross reference table.

3.3.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Substandard 3.3.

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

- **determine the pedagogical basis, design, delivery methods and assessment methods of the curriculum**
- **oversee QA of the curriculum, particularly gathering, evaluating, making change and responding to feedback from stakeholders, peer reviewers and external assessors, and data from examination/assessment outcomes**
- **perform ongoing and periodic review of the curriculum at least every seven years by involving staff, students and stakeholders; these reviews must lead to continuous improvement. Any action taken or planned as a result of such a review must be communicated to all those concerned**
- **identify and meet training needs for all types of staff, maintaining and enhancing their competence for the ongoing curriculum development.**

3.4.1. Findings

The current curriculum was introduced in the 2009/2010 academic year and since then none substantial modifications have been implemented. The key body overseeing the curriculum is the Veterinary Quality Committee (VQC). It is composed of 5 teachers, 1 student, and 1 representative of the support staff. VQC is responsible for assessing teaching quality, and supervising, modifying and analysing all aspects related to the teaching activity. To accomplish these tasks, VQC is in charge of:

- reviewing annually the teaching guide in order to identify redundancies, overlaps and deficiencies;
- gathering information and evidences regarding the way studies are developing
- collecting data on outcomes and performance indicators;
- receiving suggestions and satisfaction reports from both internal and external stakeholders;
- drafting improvement plans.

The Teaching evaluation committee is responsible for organising the evaluation of the teaching activity and for proposing the necessary actions for improvement of the teaching quality.

The EQAU coordinates and supervises the activities of all bodies involved in overseeing and managing the curriculum.

3.4.2. Comments

The VQC is a committee with many responsibilities and all the tasks are accomplished following well defined and transparent procedures. Several indicators are collected and thoroughly analysed to monitor the delivery of the curriculum. The students' opinions are gathered using paper questionnaires distributed during the lectures, but the response rate is quite low.

3.4.3. Suggestions for improvement

The VEE should improve the low response rate of student feedback by the timely provision of course feedback forms and further emphasising to students the importance of such feedback.

3.4.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Substandard 3.4.

3.5 External Practical Training (EPT) is compulsory training activities organised outside the VEE, the student being under the direct supervision of a non-academic person (e.g. a practitioner). EPT cannot replace the core intramural training nor the extramural training under the close supervision of academic staff (e.g. ambulatory clinics, herd health management, practical training in FSQ and VPH). Since the veterinary degree is a professional qualification with Day One Competences, EPT must complement and strengthen the academic education inter alia by enhancing student's professional knowledge.

3.5.1. Findings

This training involves students' direct participation in professional undertakings, in a non-academic environment, and enables them to complete and to put into immediate practice the competences and abilities acquired during their university training. This practical activity complements the core intramural training. The practices can be carried out entirely in an external entity (6 ECTS) or partly in a University Department (a maximum of 2 ECTS). In the latter case, the student must complete the activity with practices in an external entity (to sum up the total 6 ECTS required).

The students must spend time in external practices which are listed on the VEE's website. When the student is allocated to an EPT provider, 2 tutors are also assigned, one from the VEE and one from the EPT provider, who will be directly responsible for the student's training. They should evaluate the student's participation in assigned duties, their professional behaviour, knowledge, skills and the ability to face everyday problems. Students and both tutors complete a report of each EPT, which is delivered to the Academic Secretary. At the VEE, EPT does not replace intramural teaching.

3.5.2. Comments

External Practical Training is well organised and structured, there are plentiful opportunities for students to pursue their area of professional interest.

3.5.3. Suggestions for improvement

To enhance self-reflection, it would be helpful for the student, while reporting activities, to also reflect on the value this activity had for them; what were the acquired key elements, how did they perform (self-assessment) and how does their self-evaluation relate to the evaluation by the staff. Using these experiences could enhance critical thinking in students.

3.5.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Substandard 3.5.

3.6. The EPT providers must have an agreement with the VEE and the student (in order to state their respective rights and duties, including insurance matters), provide a standardised evaluation of the performance of the student during their EPT and be allowed to provide feedback to the VEE on the EPT programme. There must be a member of the academic staff responsible for the overall supervision of the EPT, including liaison with EPT providers.

3.6.1. Findings

The VEE has an extensive list of Spanish and international providers, where students can perform their EPT. Entities sign an agreement which covers students for accidents and liability issues that might arise during the EPT. Practitioners, as external tutors, are responsible for evaluating the achievement of the students professional skills on site. Thus, these tutors evaluate the student's participation in the duties assigned, professional behaviour, knowledge, skills and the ability to

face everyday problems using a standardised approach. The academic tutor also approves the student's EPT report, provided that the external tutor's approval is satisfactory.

This evaluation supports that the student has attained the curriculum competences. Altogether, the process aims to assure that students demonstrate competence in diverse professional fields (Day One competences).

3.6.2. Comments

A well-structured EPT procedure is in place at the VEE clear to both EPT providers and students.

3.6.3. Suggestions for improvement

In the EPT portfolio it would be helpful, to more clearly confirm to which areas of D1C the performed activities belong. This would enable students to reflect on their performance across the range of skills required and may help them focus on areas of weakness if needed.

3.6.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Substandard 3.6.

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

3.7.1. Findings

Students have a list of companies with an active ECA with the VEE from which they can choose or they can also suggest new entities to be added to this list. The EPT coordinator is available to students for additional information, if something about the procedure was not clear during the coordination meetings. Once the VEE has accepted the student, he/she must complete the acceptance document (period and practices/activities are specified). Further forms are filled in with the supervision of the academic tutor and are signed by all parties. At the end of the EPT students must write a report and elaborate on their experience and the clinical cases that they have witnessed. They are also asked to express their degree of satisfaction with the EPT experience through a survey. There is also an official procedure for complaints which are submitted to the Quality Assurance Unit.

3.7.2. Comments

The evaluation procedure in place for the EPT activities is very thorough on both sides – on behalf of the trainers (tutors) and trainees (students). Monitoring student satisfaction and the complaint procedure in place closes the feed-back loop for the process.

3.7.3. Suggestions for improvement

None.

3.7.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Substandard 3.7.

Standard 4. Facilities and equipment

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

4.1.1. Findings

The Veterinary Faculty at UEx is extensive, covering approximately 420,000 m², with all facilities being in the exact location. The VEE is located in Cáceres, situated 4.5 kilometres to the east of the city centre. The campus is conveniently connected with the city centre by car, bus, or bicycle path. All veterinary teaching and the majority of clinical activities are delivered on campus. Basic and preclinical subjects are taught in several buildings located within the campus. The teaching of clinical subjects in companion animals and horses is carried out at the VTH, which offers the appropriate facilities and equipment such as MRI, CT, scintigraphy, two X-ray machines for large and small animals, and a modern ultrasound scan and a flow cytometer. The VTH offers speciality services in internal medicine, soft tissue surgery, traumatology, reproduction, ophthalmology, dermatology, physiotherapy and rehabilitation.

Teaching on production animals is carried out at the VTF, with approximately 22 ha of terrain divided into four paddocks, all with a water supply system. It comprises several buildings enabling proper teaching on cows, sheep, goats, swine, and poultry, including layers.

VTF also includes learning facilities for Food Technology. The Meat Products Pilot Plant consists of a cold room, a freezing room, and two temperature and humidity-controlled chambers for meat product ripening. It has four rooms with equipment for manufacturing numerous meat products. The Dairy Pilot Plant includes a temperature and humidity-controlled section for cheese maturing and equipment for manufacturing various dairy products.

The maintenance strategy of the buildings and infrastructure program falls under the UEx Vice-Rector's Office of Economic responsibility. Over the last two years, the VEE received an extra-budgetary allocation from the Rector's Office. The VTH, departments, and services submit applications to the technical unit for minor works on their premises. Each department receives an annual budget aimed at general expenses that can be used to pay for specific maintenance requirements. The UEx Research Plan includes a program of grants to repair scientific instruments. In coordination with the European Regional Development Fund, new equipment is purchased by applying to a fund called the State Programme for Knowledge Generation and Scientific and Technological Strengthening of the R&D&I System.

The VEE's Risk Prevention Service has a role in supporting the VEE and providing overall policies that comply with Spanish and European legislation concerning biosecurity, health, and safety. The service coordinates, reviews, and approves the biosecurity and protection protocols applied to the units where its various activities occur.

The campus does have several computer clusters, an internet café, etc. All teaching facilities have accessibility for people with reduced mobility.

4.1.2. Comments

The physical facilities of the VEE were designed and built in a way that allows their best use by the students in a way conducive to learning. The VTH is subject to continuous improvement, equipped with modern imaging devices and sufficient space for the groups during clinical rotations.

The FPPs provide space for the appropriate training in food technologies. Internet access is available on the entire campus. The maintenance program for the buildings is a strategic objective and is supervised by the UEx regularly and upon request from the VEE.

Biosecurity instructions are available at each critical location as QR codes. Entrances to operating theatres and laboratories/clinics of higher risk are marked with appropriate signs on the floor and/or pictograms on the walls. The students and the staff can easily access the Biosecurity manual with provisions for all the premises (laboratories, VTH and VTF) online, outside the specific courses presented by the teachers and before implementing it during each practical activity.

The level of adaptation of VEE facilities to people with disabilities is above optimal.

4.1.3. Suggestions for improvement

The VEE could benefit of an improved QA process to ensure constant adherence to biosecurity principles.

4.1.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Substandard 4.1.

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

Offices, teaching preparation and research laboratories must be sufficient for the needs of the academic and support staff.

4.2.1. Findings

VEE has many well-equipped classrooms, mainly located in the Administration and Classroom Building, and several in the Surgical Area. The biggest one is Aula Ignatio Navarette, designed for 325 students; moreover, there are six principal lecture theatres with a capacity for a full-year group. Furthermore, there are a substantial number of lecture halls with smaller groups, laboratories, self-learning, and seminar rooms. All facilities consist of air-conditioning, wheelchair-accessible, media, and Wi-Fi coverage areas.

Laboratories and rooms for clinical practices are equipped with different multimedia devices.

Biosecurity measures are generally available, and VEE makes them accessible to all students, staff, and others. Moreover, laboratories are compliant and adequately signposted according to the national and regional legislation. Students must observe the biosecurity rules and wear personal biosecurity equipment during each practice.

A faculty library in the Administration and Classroom Building has its workplaces for 108 students and provides access to a comprehensive library base and the support of specialists and consultants. Showers and changing facilities are in different places, including VTH and VTF.

The lockers are distributed between the VTH (72), the VTF (18), and the FPP (4).

The VEE has one cafeteria located in a building close to Classroom Building. It is open at standard times and offers breakfast, snacks, sandwiches in the morning, and various dishes for lunch from 1:00 to 3:45 pm. Vending machines are also available in all buildings. The Department Pavilion I is provided with a lunchroom equipped with two microwave ovens and space for 20 people.

Three places provide accommodation for students on duty: Mario Roso de Luna Residence, located on the Cáceres campus with 120 places, Diego Muñoz Torrero Residence, located 3.9 km from the

VEE with 170 places, Colegio Mayor Universitario San José, located 3.1 km from the VEE with 180 places and University Apartments are situated on the Cáceres campus, with 112 places.

The VEE provides on-campus access to sports and gymnasiums as a sports pavilion, four tennis courts, five paddle courts, one badminton court, one pelota court, one indoor football pitch, outdoor and indoor pool, and sand football pitch.

Staff offices are distributed throughout the Departments involved in the VEE in Pavilions I, II, and III. The research laboratories are located in the Biochemistry Laboratories Building. The number of offices and labs is sufficient for the academic and support staff for teaching and research activities.

4.2.2. Comments

Lecture theatres, teaching laboratories, clinical facilities, and other teaching spaces are adequate in number, size and equipped for instructional purposes. A WiFi network with sufficient data transfer is available throughout the campus.

4.2.3. Suggestions for improvement

None.

4.2.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Substandard 4.2.

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

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

4.3.1. Findings

The VEE has sufficient space for teaching on all major animal species. Furthermore, isolation and quarantine facilities are in place. VTF has an adequate number of rooms for healthy animals for study by students. These rooms include small and large ruminants, equines, and poultry boxes. Laboratory animals are kept depending on their size: rodents are in the Animal Facility Laboratory of the Uex, while large animals and birds are in the VTF.

Hospitalised animals, including dogs, cats, and horses, are handled at the VTH premises. Common areas include customer waiting rooms with separate waiting areas for dogs and cats reception and administration services.

The facilities for small animals have 14 wards overall: Canine Internal Medicine Clinics (2), Feline Internal Medicine Clinics (1), Canine surgery clinics (1), Feline surgery clinics (1), Small animals' reproduction clinics (1), Operating theatres (2), Hospitalisation clinics (2) with a unit for dogs (12 cages) and cats (6 cages), Clinic for infectious animals (2) with one for infectious dogs (7 cages) and infectious cats (6 cages), Ultrasound clinic (1) and pre-anesthesia clinic (2).

The facilities for large animals have 16 wards overall: Animal unloading area (1), Exploration rooms (4), Area for anaesthetised induction and recovery (1), Operating theatre (1) Hospitalisation

clinics (5) with one intensive care unit (2 boxes), one module for orthopaedic horses (4 boxes), a module for horses with colic (4 boxes), 3 stables for stallions and 2 stables for ruminants; Clinic for infectious horses (1), Neonatology horses Reproduction clinics and Horse work area (1).

Hospitals for large and small animals share several units, such as a pharmacy, diagnostic imaging, diagnostic laboratory, and sterilisation unit. The therapeutic and diagnostic equipment of individual parts of the VTH ensures the possibility of conducting all necessary medical procedures.

The FPP located VTF is composed of two independent buildings that house the Meat Products Pilot Plant (MPPP) (360 m²) and the Dairy Pilot Plant (DPP) (250 m²). The number of rooms and the equipment of both MPPP and DPP insure appropriate training conditions in the hygiene field of products of animal origin.

4.3.2. Comments

Most of the core clinical teaching facilities and other premises (livestock facilities, animal housing) used for teaching purposes by the VEE are fit for the purpose, well-maintained and adapted to the number of students enrolled.

The cloakroom in the necropsy unit is suboptimal in size, allowing a limited number of students, independently on gender, to change. Handling of large animal carcasses for necropsy is somewhat difficult, since the hoist stops at the entrance door and the adapted table needs to be moved underneath. Protective measures were stingily applied (shoe covers instead of boots in few students) during necropsies. The possibilities for disinfection are suboptimal in some points of the room (wooden stand used for a refrigerator).

The VEE explained that, according to Spanish regulations, there is no need to build a container to neutralise biological sewage when the sewage treatment plant is a few kilometres away, therefore spill-over of carcass fluids and tissue during a necropsy is discharged into municipal wastewater.

4.3.3. Suggestions for improvement

The students would better benefit of the practical training in large animal necropsy after the hoist track would be prolonged and the appropriate table used. Adapting the changing room to the students' needs could allow an optimised implementation of the biosecurity measures.

The VEE should seek for legal possibilities to implement an adequate collector for the wastewaters from the necropsy room. The permanent control on behalf of a person appointed to monitor biosecurity implementation according to the manual could be beneficial. Appropriate procedures should be in place to best fit the biosecurity applied by students, in case of need.

4.3.4. Decision

The VEE is partially compliant with Substandard 4.3 because of suboptimal compliance with the biosecurity manual and procedures in some areas, especially during the necropsy activities.

4.4. Core clinical teaching facilities must be provided in a veterinary teaching hospital (VTH) with 24/7 emergency services at least for companion animals and equines. Within the VTH, the VEE must unequivocally demonstrate that standard of education and clinical research are compliant with all ESEVT Standards, e.g. research-based and evidence-based clinical training supervised by academic staff trained to teach and to assess, availability for staff and students of facilities and patients for performing clinical research and relevant QA procedures. For ruminants, on-call service must be available if emergency services do not exist for those species in a VTH. The VEE must ensure state-of-the-art standards of teaching

clinics which remain comparable with or exceeding the best available in the private sector. The VTH and any hospitals, practices and facilities (including EPT) which are involved with the curriculum must meet the relevant national Practice Standards.

4.4.1. Findings

The VEE contains a VTH for companion animals and equines. The primary clinics are species-specific and are mostly referral clinics. Both parts provide 24/7 services. Students participate in diagnostic and treatment processes under the supervision of clinicians.

The practical clinical training on farm animals (cattle, sheep, goats, and pigs) is mainly conducted on an ambulatory basis, taught by three part-time clinicians although they can also be treated at the VTH. Students participate in this practical training under the supervision of a teacher. During the practical training, the students participate in the service as regular clinical practice.

Students receive training in small groups, between 2-7 people.

The general and specialist clinics for small animals are as follows: internal medicine, pre-anesthesia, surgery, operating theatre, dermatology, reproduction, ophthalmology, physiotherapy and rehabilitation, cardiology, chemotherapy, intensive care, hospitalisation for infectious animals.

The equipment at the different units is at a high technical level and for small animals and horses, among others, covering: general surgery, dentistry, radiography, ultrasound, CT, MRI, laparoscopy, arthroscopy, endoscopy, oncology, surgical microscopy, and ophthalmology.

Most clinicians belong to a range of professional associations (AVEPA: The Spanish Association of Veterinary Specialists in Small Animals; AVEE: The Association of Veterinary Specialists in Horses; SECIVE: Spanish Veterinary Surgery Society; Equine Clinic Spanish Certificate). Some professors at the VTH are European Diplomates in different specialties of the veterinary clinical practice: ECEIM (European College of Equine Internal Medicine), ECVS (European College of Veterinary Surgeons), ECAR (European College of Animal Reproduction).

4.4.2. Comments

The VTH and the extramural teaching sites the VEE uses for EMT meet the national requirements as approved by ANECA.

All students participate in clinical activities both in VTH and in Ambulatory Clinic. The number of intra-mural cases seen at the VTH allows the students receive practical training mainly in referral cases but also first opinion cases. In companion animals and in equine, the number of cases seen intramurally compensates the small numbers of the two species seen extramurally. In farm animals, most of the first opinion cases are consulted on the farms thus students are supervised by part time staff during the Ambulatory Clinic. Beneficial for the students is the status of “reference centre” of the VEE, due to the presence of diplomates mainly in equine medicine. The farm and small animal practice visitation program was impeded by the COVID-19 pandemic, thus the students went for visits only in the first semester of the academic year 2019/20, but the number of cases stayed high.

4.4.3. Suggestions for improvement

None.

4.4.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Substandard 4.4.

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

4.5.1. Findings

Students have access to diagnostic and therapeutic facilities under the academic supervision in charge of the practice groups. Students are also permitted to access the clinical records of the VTH databases upon request by applying to staff in charge of each service.

4.5.2. Comments

During the clinical rotations, the students are able to follow a case from the initial examination and sampling to the final diagnosis and implementation of the therapy. The equipment students have access to is suitable for monitoring and treatment. Cases requiring intensive care are handled on the premises of the hospital. During their therapeutic protocols, the students are able to monitor the tracks of various drugs, from the pharmacy to the patient and become familiar with the recording and management procedures in the pharmacy.

4.5.3. Suggestions for improvement

An upgrade and re-thinking of the setup in the ICU room would be beneficial for the students.

4.5.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Substandard 4.5.

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

4.6.1. Findings

VTH has isolation cages for dogs (7), cats (6), and three boxes for horses suffering from infectious diseases.

Within the VTF, one enclosed cattle shed for isolation of cows and two enclosed sheds for isolation of small ruminants are present.

4.6.2. Comments

The declarable diseases in farmed animals are managed by the state authorities, at the level of Cáceres and Badajoz provinces. The legal provisions do not include dog and cat infectious diseases, but measures are taken to protect the patients and the VTH environment, with a clear separation between the canine and feline isolation areas.

One of the equine isolation boxes is fit for a standard horse, the others for ponies. As equine only represent first opinion cases in 15%, the VEE did not often confront with notifiable diseases.

The biosecurity manual provide precise measures for biosecurity and biocontainment under such circumstances.

4.6.3. Suggestions for improvement

The implementation of the biosecurity and biocontainment measures at the level of the isolation facilities should be regarded as a continuous process, thus encouraging the students to develop a culture for biosecurity.

4.6.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Substandard 4.6.

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

4.7.1. Findings

The ambulatory clinic for farm animals is carried out on private farms outside the VTH. These farms include all types of production animals. The academic staff consists of one Associate Professor who coordinates the subject and three part-time lecturers, who are veterinary practitioners. A group of 7 students is assigned to the Associate Professor, and three groups of seven students each are assigned to each part-time lecturer. Students accompany the teaching staff in small groups, from 1 to 3 students per teacher. During these visits, the students examine individual patients but also acquire competences in Herd Health Management.

One of the vehicles used for the ambulatory clinic belongs to the VTH, and the three belong to the part-time lecturers. All vehicles have the necessary equipment for diagnostic and therapeutic purposes.

4.7.2. Comments

The caseload seen within the ambulatory service is large, compensating for the small number of cases seen intramurally.

4.7.3. Suggestions for improvement

It is suggested that the VEE increases the time spent by students for this kind of rotations.

4.7.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Substandard 4.7.

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

4.8.1. Findings

Two vehicles are provided for the transportation of students in small groups to practical training or visits to livestock farms.

The VTH has one van to transport live animals while cadavers are transported out of the faculty and disposed of by a specialized company.

4.8.2. Comments

The transportation means are adequate for the purposes.

4.8.3. Suggestions for improvement

None.

4.8.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Substandard 4.8.

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

4.9.1. Findings

The UEx has a specific department for biosecurity and health protection, within the Risk Prevention Service. This Service undertakes activities leading to the procurement of a healthy and safe environment. There are manuals and procedures for the prevention of occupational hazards. This Service is responsible for carrying out risk assessments of every department/service, and it consequently determines the steps or procedures to be taken as needed.

The VEE has its biosecurity plan that includes the security measures needed to reduce risk in teaching and care activities. Anyone interested can access the biosecurity plan and program via the website. The security measures are available for the staff, as well as the students, by QR codes located in the VEE.

4.9.2. Comments

The biosecurity's supervising department, indicated by VEE, is a general department dedicated to the entire university as the occupational health and safety department.

4.9.3. Suggestions for improvement

The permanent control on behalf of a person appointed to monitor biosecurity implementation according to the manual could be beneficial.

4.9.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Substandard 4.9.

Standard 5. Animal resources and teaching material of animal origin

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

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

5.1.1. Findings

Animal materials for pre-clinical training are provided through agreements with external parties.

From the ratios, the numbers of animals used for necropsies appear low for all animal species.

Usage of animals for procedures (research and educational) where clinical needs are not necessary, is regulated as in all of Europe by Directive 2010/63/EU.

Clinical training and animal resources are provided by the VEE through the VTH and specifically for farm animals through the farm animal ambulatory clinic. From the ratios for clinical cases, ruminants and pig cases intramurally, rabbits, rodents, birds and exotics intramurally, extramural companion animal and equine cases are all low. Table 5.1.3 also shows almost no intramural cases for cattle and pigs, with only modest numbers of small ruminants.

Table 5.1.1 lists cadavers and materials of animal origin used for practical anatomical teaching. It is noted that for most species only body parts and skeleton pieces are included. There are 4 dog cadavers per year listed, 25 hen cadavers per year and 50 rat cadavers per year listed.

Numbers of healthy animals used for preclinical training are presented in Table 5.1.2 of the SER. There are very low numbers of cattle (6), pigs (none), companion animals (1) and exotics (none) reported. Visits to herds and flocks for animal production and herd health management were provided in Table 5.1.7. In 2019/20 the numbers of visits to cattle and sheep units were negatively affected by COVID-19.

There does not appear to be any dairy animals at the veterinary teaching farm. The Extremadura region has only very limited dairy cattle production and so this creates a challenge for the teaching of dairy cattle production.

The numbers of animals available for companion animal necropsies, ruminant and pig necropsies, equine necropsies and rodent / bird / exotic pet necropsies in the SER were all below the ESVET indicators, resulting in negative balances for all 4 necropsy indicators.

FSQ visits to slaughter houses were not permitted during 2020/21 due to COVID-19 restrictions. PROVET cloud is the computer software used for recording clinical cases.

5.1.2. Comments

While the use of animals for conduct of procedures when not indicated clinically falls under the Directive 2010/63/EU, its interpretation and implementation in Spain may be less stringent than in many other EU member states. Currently procedures such as rectal palpation on teaching animals by the students at the VEE is considered outside the requirements of Directive 2010/63/EU in terms of ethical approval and licensing as a procedure.

There are some farm animal necropsies carried out by the ambulatory clinic in the field (cattle, sheep and pigs). When these numbers were added to the necropsy numbers for these species, it brings the necropsy number for ruminants and pigs above the minimal threshold as follows. The revised figures have been included in the indicators table.

In animal production, dairy (cattle) production teaching is achieved through the various animal production modules and projects conducted by the students. Low numbers of dairy cows in the region mean that students only get very limited training with dairy cattle. However this is compensated by the fact that the ambulatory clinic works with beef cattle and also with dairy goat herds.

The numbers of ruminant and pig cases seen by the VTH are very low. This is compensated by the fact that the extra mural farm animal cases seen by the ambulatory clinic are well above median figures for approved VEEs.

The numbers of equine cases seen as extramural cases are very low. This is compensated by the fact that the intramural cases seen by the VTH are above median figures for approved VEEs.

The numbers of whole animal cadavers used for anatomical teaching are low. While it is desirable to increase cadaver numbers available for practical dissection work, the team believes that this is

compensated by the overall caseload and the teaching methods used (that includes abattoir derived organs and 3-D printed models of various organs).

Within the VTH the numbers of small animal patients are good and compensates to some degree for the low numbers of rabbits, rodents, birds and exotics that are seen intramurally by the VTH.

Due to COVID-19 restrictions in 2021, food safety and quality visits to abattoirs were not possible. They were substituted by having official veterinarians who delivered courses based on Power point presentations and short movies.

5.1.3. Suggestions for improvement

The VEE will need to find ways to improve the numbers of necropsies for all animal species that are seen intramurally. The VEE also needs to formally include the necropsy numbers for ruminants and pigs that are seen by the ambulatory clinic, into the numbers that are recorded for this purpose. It will also be desirable to endeavour to increase the numbers of exotic cases seen in the VTH.

5.1.4. Decision

The VEE is partially compliant with Substandard 5.1 because the number of rabbits, rodents, birds and exotic patients is not adequate for the number of students involved and the number of companion animal (including equine and exotics) necropsies provided to the students is suboptimal.

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

5.2.1. Findings

Farm animal cases are seen extramurally as part of the ambulatory clinic. The ambulatory clinic is organised under the direct supervision of academics from the faculty. The ambulatory clinic includes substantial numbers of cattle (2,054 individuals; 31,724 collective), Small ruminants (2,656 individuals; 64,402 collective), pigs (307 individuals; 20,628 collective), Equine (1 individuals), Poultry and rabbits (53 individuals; 10,000 collective). Additional training related to farm animals is via EPT.

5.2.2. Comments

The training by the VEE in the farm animal species that is achieved by the ambulatory clinic is to be commended. With good student to staff ratios (between 1 and 3 students per 1 staff member).

5.2.3. Suggestions for improvement

Further expansion of the ambulatory clinic to include more staff and therefore facilitate increased hours by students in the farm animal ambulatory clinic is desirable.

5.2.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Substandard 5.2.

5.3. The VTH must provide nursing care skills and instruction in nursing procedures. Under all situations students must be active participants in the clinical workup of patients, including problem-oriented diagnostic approach together with diagnostic decision-making.

5.3.1. Findings

Practical nursing care skills are taught as part of clinical courses and while on rotations in the VTH. This takes place in small groups, usually 2 students.

5.3.2. Comments

Nursing skills appear to be taught sufficiently while students are in rotations.

5.3.3. Suggestions for improvement

None.

5.3.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Substandard 5.3.

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

5.4.1. Findings

PROVET cloud is the computer software used for recording clinical cases.

5.4.2. Comments

PROVET cloud is an adequate system for recording the hospital cases. It is searchable, albeit somewhat clumsy, to retrieve data as required.

5.4.3. Suggestions for improvement

A more streamlined clinical case management system would help the faculty further in making it easier for staff and students to conduct research on specific case types for the purpose of producing case reports on historical cases.

5.4.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Substandard 5.4.

Standard 6. Learning resources

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

6.1.1. Findings

Students can access information electronically through a fast and secure connection. The virtual

campus complements the education that students receive in the classrooms and provides teachers, students and support personnel with tools that improve the Teaching and Learning environment. The virtual campus of the UEx (CVUEx, <https://campusvirtual.unex.es/portal/>) allows teachers to offer several kinds of materials on the Internet.

The CVUEx offers centralised access to all its functionalities, including Moodle, that is largely used to deliver teaching material. The CVUEx is used in many ways, amongst others: attendance controls, delivery of tasks, questionnaires, forums and additional repositories are widely used by teachers and students.

6.1.2. Comments

All the courses of the VEE have their corresponding virtual classroom and are commonly used for innovative ways of teaching in lectures and practical sessions, including software outside the usual VLE such as Kahoot, which was positively commented on by students during our visit. Where Moodle is used by all teaching staff to deliver the basics of their teaching material, the uptake of innovative teaching tools available to teachers is used variably by faculty staff. Teachers actively pursuing these techniques were commended by students, as these efforts significantly enhanced their learning.

Learning resources are available in Spanish on all occasions and in English on some occasions. Learning resources are available in time and readily available to students. Instruction for a bibliographical search and for access to databases and learning resources is available to undergraduate students. Students have 24/7 access using their virtual learning environment where the majority of teaching material is delivered.

Instructions for searching scientific literature and databases are available to undergraduate students and are introduced in the welcome week. Following that introduction, in a few areas of the course (Production Animal, Epidemiology & Preventive Vet Medicine) emphasis is placed on correct use of the scientific literature using e.g. appropriate bibliographies and referencing. The use of scientific literature in students' reports is limited, and there is significant variation in the uptake of this between students, as observed in the variability in the use of scientific literature in their reports. The use of Moodle for the delivery of content, timetables, discussion etc. in the undergraduate curriculum is very good. Staff members demonstrate a clear understanding and ability to deliver their material online. In addition to Moodle as the primary VLE, students can consult an on-line catalogue with a list of books recommended by teachers: <https://biblioteca.unex.es/buscar/bibliografia-recomendada.html>. This reading list is not consistently available for all subjects.

There is limited use of peer reviewed literature and e-books in undergraduate teaching, although this is readily available through the online library. Often students are 'spoon-fed' material on Moodle by the teacher and this provides the only viewpoint. This is convenient for students who need to process a lot of information during their course, however, it limits their ability to develop skills to find relevant literature post-graduation. In addition, it makes the information received much dependent on one person (the teacher) delivering the information, instead of providing other (potentially opposing) views. This limits the ability for students to understand the uncertainty often present in case management. The need to decide on the management of a patient using a holistic approach, considering all the evidence available, is an important part of learning how to manage cases in situations where limited evidence exists.

6.1.3. Suggestions for improvement

More consistent use of a reading list indicating for example ‘essential (required for the exam)’, ‘additional (can help with further understanding of the topic)’ and ‘further reading (information to further read around the subject in case of special interest)’ which includes literature sources, that students can also access after graduation, to enhance lifelong learning capabilities. In addition, considering ways to consciously expose students to differing opinions around case management, surgical approaches and treatment choices is important. Providing students with different evidence based resources to learn to understand and manage this uncertainty will help them prepare for practice.

6.1.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Standard 6.1.

6.2. Staff and students must have full access on site to an academic library administered by a qualified librarian, an Information Technology (IT) unit managed by an IT expert, an e-learning platform, and all the relevant human and physical resources necessary for the development of instructional materials by the staff and their use by the students. The relevant electronic information, database and other intranet resources must be easily available for students and staff both in the VEE’s core facilities via wireless connection (Wi-Fi) and from outside the VEE through a hosted secured connection, e.g. Virtual Private Network (VPN).

6.2.1. Findings

The Library of the VEE depends functionally on the Director of the Library of the UEx (BUEx). Users can access from any computer in the VEE or from home, the electronic resources portal of the BUEx, (<https://biblioteca.unex.es/>), which includes databases, e-magazines, e-books, theses, patents, regulations, e-prints, library catalogues, web resources, encyclopaedias and e-dictionaries, press, official bulletins, etc.

The central library has limited books for undergraduate veterinary training, however, there is a library accessible in the faculty that is frequently used for self-study and has more resources.

6.2.2. Comments

Staff and students have full access to an academic library administered by a qualified librarian, an IT expert, an e-learning platform, and relevant resources. There are instructional materials available to staff and students. The relevant database and other intranet resources are easily available for students and staff in the core facilities and from outside the VEE.

6.2.3. Suggestions for improvement

Considering the increase of IT use and a decreased use of paper-based books/journals, it is recommended to review the staffing of resources towards IT and the library, to ensure that further development and use of the VLE and further online teaching development and innovation is not inhibited by under-sourcing this area.

6.2.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Standard 6.2

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

6.3.1. Findings

The Virtual Campus is a space intended to support teaching, communication, and collaboration between university staff and professionals. It allows a complement to the education that students receive in the classrooms and provides teachers, students and support personnel with tools that expand and improve the Teaching-Learning and Coordination of tasks and services processes. The Virtual campus of the UEx (CVUEx, <https://campusvirtual.unex.es/portal/>) allows teachers to offer several kinds of materials on the Internet.

6.3.2. Comments

Students have unlimited access to online learning resources, internet and internal study resources. Equipment for the development of procedural skills (e.g. models) are available in specific teaching sessions or when requested by students, especially in the surgery department. The use of these resources is, in specific areas such as surgery and propaedeutics, aligned with the practical skills and learning outcomes.

6.3.3. Suggestions for improvement

Further development of the use of models in a centralised “clinical skills centre” could enhance the practical skills currently gained, reducing the need of using live animals or post-mortem material.

6.3.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Standard 6.3.

Standard 7. Student admission, progression and welfare

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

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

Formal cooperations with other VEEs must also be clearly advertised.

7.1.1. Findings

The VEE applies the general rules stated by the University of Extremadura regarding student admission, enrolment, progression and certification.

All relevant information about admission, pre-registration and enrolment processes is available on the University website.

Prospective students can also find on the website a guide, supplemented with video tutorials, with detailed information on admission and enrolment (<https://www.unex.es/conoce-la-uex/centros/veterinaria/informacion-academica/normativas>).

The general progression criteria, common to all degrees, are stipulated by the Academic regulations

(Normativa reguladora del progreso y la permanencia de estudiantes en la Universidad de Extremadura.) published on the website by the Vice Rector Office for Students, Employment and mobility of the UEx.

7.1.2. Comments

All regulations regarding the delivery of the educational programme as well as criteria applied for students' admission, progression and certification are clearly advertised through the websites, guaranteeing the respect of the general principles of transparency and openness.

7.1.3. Suggestions for improvement

None.

7.1.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Substandard 7.1

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

7.2.1. Findings

The number of students to be admitted each year is proposed by the VEE to UEx taking into consideration both the needs of the labour market and the resources available on the Campus.

On an average of 800 applicants per year, only 95 students are admitted to the veterinary programme at the VEE.

During the last three years 76.6 students graduated annually, but only 36% of them graduated in the due time, whereas on average it takes more than 6 years to obtain the Degree.

The numbers of intern and resident students is quite low (12 and 3 respectively).

7.2.2. Comments

The VEE benefits from a sufficient number of academic and support staff, the teaching facilities are well equipped and adequate to the number of admitted students. Nevertheless, in the last years the VEE continuously proposed to reduce the number of newly accepted students.

Despite the *numerus clausus*, the percentage of students graduating within the allotted time is low and 31% of the population needs 7 or more years to graduate. The VEE is aware of the problem and has identified student's workload as one of the main reasons causing delay in graduation. During the Visitation it was confirmed that all the VEEs in Spain are working to increase the length of the programme from 300 to 360 ETCs.

7.2.3. Suggestions for improvement

The VEE would benefit from the support of the University in reducing the number of admitted students in order to guarantee a better fruition of the practical activities and an adequate exposure to the clinical cases.

Increasing the length of the programme would offer students more chances to graduate in the due time.

The VEE should encourage and support graduated students to undertake residencies programmes.

7.2.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with the Substandard 7.2.

7.3. The selection and progression criteria must be clearly defined, consistent, and defensible, be free of discrimination or bias, and take into account the fact that students are admitted with a view to their entry to the veterinary profession in due course. The VEE must regularly review and reflect on the selection processes to ensure they are appropriate for students to complete the programme successfully. If the selection processes are decided by another authority, the latter must regularly receive feedback from the VEE. Adequate training (including periodic refresher training) must be provided for those involved in the selection process to ensure applicants are evaluated fairly and consistently.

7.3.1. Findings

The admission process is regulated by the Royal Decree 412/2014 and organised by the UEx. Relevant regulation and procedure are available on the University website. The selection process takes place in two sections. The selection criteria are common to all degrees and are based on a general score, calculated taking into account the main score of the baccalaureate exam (60%) and the score of an entrance exam based on four subjects (40%). Possession of skills in Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, and Biology is recommended to prospective students. Students can appeal against decisions to the Vice Rector's Office for Students, Employment and Mobility. A portion of admissible students is reserved for: over 25 (2%), over 45 years of age (1%), disabled students (5%), high performing athletes (3%).

7.3.2. Comments

The selection criteria are clearly defined and stated on the relevant websites, ensuring the transparency of the whole process of admission and progression of the students.

7.3.3. Suggestions for improvement

None.

7.3.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with the Substandard 7.3.

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

7.4.1. Findings

A dedicated unit (SAU) has been set up at the university level, aiming to support the integration of students with disabilities or with specific educational needs. In each centre a coordinator of SAU is present, appointed by the Rector. They collect information about disabilities, inform and orientate students and their families about the access and admission processes, evaluate the need for possible curriculum adaptation, offer advice about possible pedagogic strategies that could be used, contact the teachers to analyse the theoretical-practical training and propose the adaptation required. The VEE has planned to acquire mannequins to facilitate the development of practical skills in the case of students with disabilities. Priority in choosing and awarding internships is given

to students with disabilities.

7.4.2. Comments

A particular attention and commitment is devoted to meeting the needs of the students with physical and psychological disabilities, with a dedicated unit well supported by qualified professionals.

A lot of work and money has been invested into making facilities accessible to students with disabilities, which, although deeply admirable, requires the consideration of further aspects. The VEE should guarantee to all admitted students to safely carry out all physical tasks required in veterinary training in order to acquire the DOC, and therefore graduate. Otherwise, the VEE needs to be able to amend their admission criteria, keeping in mind the welfare of such students, as well as the financial ramifications to the faculty.

7.4.3. Suggestions for improvement

None.

7.4.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with the Substandard 7.4.

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

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

7.5.1. Findings

The general progression criteria are common to all degrees and are stipulated by the Academic regulations (Normativa reguladora del progreso y la permanencia de estudiantes en la Universidad de Extremadura.) published on the website by the Vice Rector Office for Students, Employment and mobility of the UEx. These state among others:

- in the first year students must enrol 60 credits;
- to continue their studies, they must pass at least 6 credits;
- in case of not passing in any subject, the student can request a new opportunity;
- in the next years the students can enrol no more than 90 credits;
- students have six opportunities to pass each subject;
- there are no formal prerequisites to enrol subjects;
- students that fail subjects, must choose in the next year 50% of their outstanding credits before selecting new subjects.

The VEE supports students that are not performing adequately with tutorials, with six extra-hours a week offered by teaching staff, and with individual support plans on students' request.

The University Student Statute states the rights and duties of the students.

7.5.2. Comments

The progression criteria are clearly defined and communicated to the students together with the mechanisms for remediation. The exams' success rate and the dropout rate are carefully monitored

by the FQAC and a comprehensive analysis is discussed in the annual self-evaluation report, including the identification of the areas of improvement. The VEE is aware of the cause of attrition and, in an attempt to reduce the attrition rate, assures services like academic, pedagogical, psychological and social counselling. Tutor systems can be set up at the request of the student.

7.5.3. Suggestions for improvement

The VEE should further strengthen the efforts to reduce the actual dropout rate (7%).

7.5.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with the Substandard 7.5.

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

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

7.6.1. Findings

During the first year the students must pass at least six credits to remain in the degree. Otherwise they will be excluded from the current programme but can ask to pass in another degree of the UEx. In the next years, students have six opportunities to pass a subject and it is not required to have passed a specific subject in order to enrol in others. If a student fails all the calls, she/he will be excluded from the UEx.

The mechanism for exclusion, as well as the policy for claims are fully described (Normativa reguladora del progreso y la permanencia de estudiantes en la Universidad de Extremadura.) and published on the UEx website.

7.6.2. Comments

The VEE is equipped with explicit policies for managing appeals, however this is a very rare occurrence.

7.6.3. Suggestions for improvement

None.

7.6.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with the Substandard 7.6

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

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

7.7.1. Findings

The Secretariat is the main structure providing administrative support to students. Whereas SAU offers a psycho-pedagogical counselling service and psycho-social support for students who present exceptional personal situations, besides supporting students with disability or with specific educational needs. A specific protocol, involving the Rector, is adopted in case of interpersonal harassment. The full protocol is available on the website. Well-equipped sports facilities are easily accessible on the campus.

7.7.2. Comments

A strong support is provided by the teaching staff to the students. The excellent interaction between staff and students and the concern for student welfare expressed by the academic staff are noteworthy. This willingness to help students was confirmed by the students themselves. There are a number of support systems for students with personal problems and those in need of counselling. In general the attention and assistance provided by Uex and Faculty to student welfare and support is excellent.

7.7.3. Suggestions for improvement

None.

7.7.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with the Substandard 7.7.

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

7.8.1. Findings

There are three different ways in which students can convey their needs and wishes to the VEE. First of all, the student of each year and each course, elects a delegate and a sub-delegate who act as liaison between teaching staff and students. They sit in the faculty board and in many committees and are in charge of directing the proposals and complaints from the group they represent. Secondly, students can fill up a complaint model downloaded from the website. Finally, students can present their complaints or suggestions using a dedicated mailbox accessible through the website.

7.8.2. Comments

The VEE adopts numerous formal mechanisms for collecting students' suggestions, comments and complaints.; in addition students can easily address teachers directly in the framework of a positive interaction driven by mutual respect and resulting in an environment conducive to learning.

7.8.3. Suggestions for improvement

None.

7.8.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with the Substandard 7.8

Standard 8. Student assessment

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

8.1.1. Findings

The general framework guiding assessments is regulated by the University, providing rules on the evaluation tools and criteria, number of exams and definition of the examination periods. The evaluation periods (January, June and July for extraordinary examination period to re-sit exams), as included in the Official Academic Calendar, are yearly approved by UEx GC and then by the Faculty Board. During the exams, neither lectures nor practical classes are held. The QA system of the degree ensures that the evaluation is coherent and complies with requirements established in the curriculum.

In November, there is a specific examination period, regarded as “extraordinary”, which is reserved for students with a maximum of 18 credits left to finish their degree.

A new regulation for the assessment of learning outcomes and skills acquired by students has been recently decided. Students can now choose between final or ongoing evaluation modality during the first quarter of each term and the teachers have to offer both modalities and to ask students about their choice via CVUEx.

In this general context, teachers are free to choose the examination tools, generally separating assessment of theoretical knowledge and practical skills. Theoretical knowledge is assessed through written exams, mostly using multiple choice and/or short answer questions that are widely used. Practical skills are evaluated through a variety of tools, like student reports, problem solving, supervised work assessment etc. Clinical competencies are evaluated through attendance and logbook completion, although in some sectors they are also assessed using student participation in the journal clubs and their management of clinical cases.

External practical training activities are actively monitored with good participation of the receiving structure, through evaluation sheets that are filled, signed, scanned and sent to the VEE. The staff members in charge of EPT organisation and control ensure a strict follow-up of these assessments. The student portfolio is also filled in during EPTs.

Soft skills are also assessed throughout the curriculum, including external practical training and the final Veterinary Degree Dissertation.

8.1.2. Comments

The student’s choice that has been introduced by the new UEx regulation between final or ongoing evaluation modality could be in some extent not adapted to the competency approach but the VEE has little room for adaptation.

8.1.3. Suggestions for improvement

Increasing the student clinical activities (see Substandard 3.1.3) will allow a better organisation of the evaluation of clinical competencies.

8.1.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Substandard 8.1.

8.2. The assessment tasks and grading criteria for each unit of study in the programme must be published, applied consistently, clearly identified and available to students in a timely manner well in advance of the assessment. Requirements to pass must be explicit. The VEE must properly document the results of assessment and provide the students with timely feedback on their assessments. Mechanisms for students to appeal against assessment outcomes must be explicit.

8.2.1. Findings

The assessment policy, grading criteria, examination periods, guidelines of the exams etc. are published on the VEE website before the enrolment period begins. Grades are expressed as numbers, to which their corresponding qualitative grading is added: (Fail: 0-4.9; Pass: 5.0-6.9; Merit: 7.0-8.9; Distinction: 9.0-10). The cut-off score is 5. A Distinction with Honours (Matrícula de Honor) is awarded to those students that have obtained a grade equal to or higher than 9, provided that the total number of such distinctions does not exceed 5% of students enrolled in a subject.

According to the UEx regulation for evaluation, each relevant teacher must organise a review of their exams within 10 days for intermediate evaluation and 2 days for final exams. The justification of the assigned grades to any interested student must be delivered. For failing students, individual remediation is offered through specific sessions that are compulsorily offered by the teachers.

The students can complain about their grades before the Dean over the next 5 days after the publication of the results. The appeal process is analysed by a specific commission composed by the Dean, the IQAS coordinator and the VQC coordinator. A representative of the Students Council is also invited. The issue must be resolved within 20 days and the decision is binding.

8.2.2. Comments

Students' satisfaction about the exam system is quite good, due the fact that all modalities are known of them in advance. Therefore, the student's consider that the process is fair and that they can easily interact with the academic staff.

8.2.3. Suggestions for improvement

None.

8.2.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Substandard 8.2.

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

8.3.1. Findings

All assessment procedures follow the Regulation for the evaluation of learning outcomes and skills acquired by students in the official degrees of the UEx. The evaluation procedures are proposed by the relevant teachers, reviewed and approved by the Department councils. The description of the assessment procedures and criteria is provided in the teaching guidelines. The evaluation methods and the accuracy of their descriptions are examined by the VQC to ensure that it is consistent with the UEx policies and with the legislation. Finally, the teaching guide and the evaluation criteria contained in it are approved by the Faculty Board.

FINAL REPORT AS ISSUED BY ECOVE ON 8 JUNE 2022

All evaluation procedures are reviewed annually within each department, then reviewed by the VQC and finally approved by the Faculty Board. The Degree Quality Annual Report (see 8.4) is providing an analysis on how the evaluation systems fit the achievement of the expected learning outcomes.

8.3.2. Comments

The assessment tasks and grading criteria in the programme are published in a timely manner, and requirements for passing are explicit.

Assessment results are centrally documented and evaluated, and students have predefined options to appeal against assessment outcomes.

8.3.3. Suggestions for improvement

None.

8.3.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Substandard 8.3.

8.4. Assessment strategies must allow the VEE to certify student achievement of learning objectives at the level of the programme and individual units of study. The VEE must ensure that the programmes are delivered in a way that encourages students to take an active role in creating the learning process, and that the assessment of students reflects this approach.

8.4.1. Findings

The VQC prepares and approves the annual report of the degree in November, according to a model proposed by the Vice-Rector's office with competence in quality matters, in which the performance rates of the subjects and the evaluation results are analysed. Thus, the Degree Quality Annual Report includes the following indicators: success rate (by subject and by course), dropout rate, performance rate and graduation rate. These indicators are analysed and commented on. The annual reports are published on the VEE website.

8.4.2. Comments

The assessment and grading process enables the VEE to certify student achievement of learning objectives both at the level of the programme and individual units of study.

Student representatives are involved at various levels in the assessment-related QA processes.

8.4.3. Suggestions for improvement

None.

8.4.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Substandard 8.4.

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

8.5.1. Findings

Assessment of knowledge, skills and attitudes is valid and reliable (see 8.1.). The implementation of student logbooks and portfolios allows a better follow-up of the acquisition of practical and clinical competencies and these tools are regularly monitored.

The final veterinary degree dissertation is the final opportunity to assess computer and communication skills, synthesis and organisational capability and clarity of responses.

8.5.2. Comments

Based on paper, the logbooks and portfolios do not allow a statistical computation of student progression, learning curves, and difficulties at the group level. During EPTs, this makes the management of these documents and their circuit more complicated.

8.5.3. Suggestions for improvement

The VEE could consider computerisation of the logbooks and portfolios, allowing the easy production of statistics on student's progression and simplification of their fill-in by partners in EPT structures.

Any potential decrease of the total number of students and any increase of the duration of clinical rotations (see 3.1.3) will help to improve the outcomes assessment.

8.5.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Substandard 8.5.

Standard 9. Academic and support staff

9.1. The VEE must ensure that all staff are appropriately qualified and prepared for their roles, in agreement with national and EU regulations and must apply fair and transparent processes for the recruitment and development of staff.

A formal training (including good teaching and evaluation practices, learning and elearning resources, biosecurity and QA procedures) must be in place for all staff involved with teaching. Most academic staff (calculated as FTE) involved in veterinary training must be veterinarians. It is expected that more than 2/3 of the instruction that the students receive, as determined by student teaching hours, is delivered by qualified veterinarians.

9.1.1. Findings

Within the ratios data the numbers of academic staff and numbers of Veterinarians per numbers of students and per numbers of students graduating appear low. The percentage of veterinarians in the academic staff cohort is 73% for permanent staff and 77 to 85% for temporary staff.

In the SER there is mention of biosecurity training being included. There is also mention of the system for student evaluation of teaching staff.

9.1.2. Comments

The VEE is to be commended on a number of excellent points around staff. There is excellent commitment and enthusiasm by the staff and students to veterinary education at the VEE. There are very positive interactions between students and staff, to ensure an environment that is conducive to excellent learning. There is very strong support provided by the teaching staff to the students. The VEE appears to operate in a way that ensures transparency and openness. There is an aspiration to comply with national and ESEVT accreditation standards.

9.1.3. Suggestions for improvement

None.

9.1.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Substandard 9.1.

9.2. The total number, qualifications and skills of all staff involved with the programme, including teaching staff, ‘adjunct’ staff, technical, administrative and support staff, must be sufficient and appropriate to deliver the educational programme and fulfil the VEE’s mission. A procedure must be in place to assess if the staff involved with teaching display competence and effective teaching skills in all relevant aspects of the curriculum that they teach, regardless of whether they are full or part time, residents, interns or other postgraduate students, adjuncts or off-campus contracted teachers.

9.2.1. Findings

Within the ratios data, the numbers of academic staff and numbers of Veterinarians per number of students and per number of students graduating is sufficient. The percentage of veterinarians in the academic staff cohort is 73% for permanent staff and 77 to 85% for temporary staff.

In the SER there is mention of biosecurity training being included.

There are adequate support staff (administrative, technical and nursing staff).

Assessment of teaching staff occurs at the end of each semester.

9.2.2. Comments

None.

9.2.3. Suggestions for improvement

None.

9.2.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Substandard 9.2.

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

Academic positions must offer the security and benefits necessary to maintain stability, continuity, and competence of the academic staff. They must have a balanced workload of

teaching, research and service depending on their role. They must have reasonable opportunities and resources for participation in scholarly activities.

9.3.1. Findings

Formal training on good teaching and evaluation practices (for didactic and pedagogical training) are available within the VEE. These are not compulsory, but most staff take the opportunities to attend training courses. Specialisation training through European College for which the VEE has recognised training programmes is available. The number of European specialists (Diplomates) within the VEE is low (now 4).

The academic posts are permanent and provide good job security within the VEE.

9.3.2. Comments

None.

9.3.3. Suggestions for improvement

The VEE should explore possibilities to recruit and secure more European Diplomate specialists into the staff. This would allow greater recognition of the Faculty internationally and would facilitate a greater number of specialist residency training programmes to be developed.

9.3.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Substandard 9.3.

9.4. The VEE must provide evidence that it utilises a well-defined, comprehensive and publicised programme for the professional growth and development of academic and support staff, including formal appraisal and informal mentoring procedures. Staff must have the opportunity to contribute to the VEE's direction and decision-making processes. Promotion criteria for academic and support staff must be clear and explicit. Promotions for teaching staff must recognise excellence in, and (if permitted by the national or university law) place equal emphasis on all aspects of teaching (including clinical teaching), research, service and other scholarly activities.

9.4.1. Findings

The academic staff members are satisfied with their workload and their opportunities for promotion, professional growth and development. The promotion criteria for academic staff and support staff are clear and explicit.

9.4.2. Comments

None.

9.4.3. Suggestions for improvement

None.

9.4.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Substandard 9.4.

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

9.5.1. Findings

There is formal appraisal of academic staff by students with direct student evaluation of staff.

9.5.2. Comments

The formal appraisal of academic staff is carried out at the end of the semester using a paper based system. Response rates are often low.

9.5.3. Suggestions for improvement

It should be possible to improve response rate for student feedback within the VEE. Rather than using a paper based system within class it may be possible to get better response rates by using online alternatives. This should be possible through use of feedback possibilities that can be provided through the virtual learning environment used by the University (eg through Moodle).

9.5.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Substandard 9.5.

Standard 10. Research programmes, continuing and postgraduate education

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

10.1.1. Findings

The research activities of the VEE are funded by the Government of Extremadura and national research funding organisations according to their scientific merit. Staff members work in 26 different research groups. The main research areas are biochemistry, molecular biology, agriculture, zoology, veterinary sciences, chemistry and food technology. The number of citations per year has increased rapidly in the last 7 years. VEE staff members are also involved in several international research collaborations. The students are involved in research while carrying out the experiments for their graduation paper.

10.1.2. Comments

The University of Extremadura benefits of a global strategic plan and integration of the VEE in the guidelines of two strategic plans. The first is divided into excellence in human resources and research infrastructures, completion and dissemination of research, development, innovation and excellence in transfer. The variety of research is further stimulated by the second strategic plan, developed by the Government of Extremadura which includes five different priority areas: Agriculture and Food, Clean Energy, Tourism, Health, and Information and Communication Technology.

10.1.3. Suggestions for improvement

None.

10.1.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Substandard 10.1.

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

10.2.1. Findings

All students must complete a research work in basic science, public veterinary services, pathobiology, and/or clinical sciences. This work is an assignment that is an independently written manuscript and its public defence. The assignment is completed under the guidance and supervision of a mentor. The goal for each student is to be able to write a professional manuscript and defend its contents in a public presentation.

10.2.2. Comments

Up to 60 percent of the research assignments are based on “active research”, the rest are based on bibliographic research/review. Students are free to choose the topic, but spaces are limited for each research area. It is important to know that each dissertation in the Department of Veterinary Medicine is supervised by one or two researchers.

10.2.3. Suggestions for improvement

It is suggested that the VEE, although dependent on external funding for research (EU, National or regional projects), develops its own research strategy focused on tools and measures to continuously increase and improve its research activities.

10.2.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Substandard 10.2.

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

10.3.1. Findings

VTH offers several clinical postgraduate programs with a limited number of positions each year. During their studies, postgraduates participate in practical training of students in various subjects, especially in the 5th academic year during clinical rotations at VTH.

The formal postgraduate research programs are administered by the UEx International Postgraduate School (PIS).

The doctoral programs developed primarily at the VEE are the Doctoral Program in Public Health and Animal Health, the Doctoral Program in Food Science, and the Doctoral Program in Biomarkers in Health and Disease.

For veterinary graduates, there are two official master's programs: a master's in meat science and technology and a master's in endoscopy and minimally invasive surgery in small animals.

In addition, the VEE offers four educational programs: informal master's degrees, training courses, college professional courses, and training courses for professionals and companies.

The VEE is closely associated with public and private veterinary institutions and veterinary associations. One of its goals is to promote seminars and continuing education courses focused on

the needs of society and professional groups. These activities are attended by a large number of students.

10.3.2. Comments

The term "unofficial masters" refers to university masters that are not accredited by the Spanish Agency for Quality Assessment and Accreditation (ANECA). These "Unofficial Masters" are usually the first step for the homologation of a future Master's degree.

The unofficial master provides highly specialised training in a specific area, for example, in the field of small animal and equine specialisation.

Undergraduate and graduate students may participate in continuing education activities, with the exception of the internship in companion animal medicine and surgery, which is developed for graduate students.

10.3.3. Suggestions for improvement

None.

10.3.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Substandard 10.3.

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

10.4.1. Findings

The quality assessment of the research itself is based on the collaboration between undergraduate and graduate students developed by the different research groups. The VEE does not have a research committee, but there are several other committees that cover the research area. PhD programmes are governed by a quality assurance and quality control plan.

10.4.2. Comments

None.

10.4.3. Suggestions for improvement

None.

10.4.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Substandard 10.4.

11. ESEVT Indicators

Raw data of the VEE for the last three academic years

		18/19	19/20	20/21	Mean
1	n° of FTE academic staff involved in veterinary training	104.5	103.6	101.8	103.3
2	n° of undergraduate students	598.0	607.0	604.0	603.0
3	n° of FTE veterinarians involved in veterinary training	75.8	75.9	74.0	75.2
4	n° of students graduating annually	70.0	90.0	70.0	76.7
5	n° of FTE support staff involved in veterinary training	89.0	87.0	86.0	87.3
6	n° of hours of practical (non-clinical) training	744.8	744.8	744.8	744.8
7	n° of hours of clinical training	696.5	696.5	696.5	696.5
8	n° of hours of FSQ & VPH training	586.8	586.8	586.8	586.8
9	n° of hours of extra-mural practical training in FSQ & VPH	50.0	50.0	50.0	50.0
10	n° of companion animal patients seen intra-murally	6028.0	7094.0	10098.0	7740.0
11	n° of ruminant and pig patients seen intra-murally	8.0	13.0	45.0	22.0
12	n° of equine patients seen intra-murally	354.0	369.0	564.0	429.0
13	n° of rabbit, rodent, bird and exotic patients seen intra-murally	9.0	25.0	40.0	24.7
14	n° of companion animal patients seen extra-murally	10.0	-	1.0	5.5
15	n° of individual ruminants and pig patients seen extra-murally	5017.0	6486.0	5367.0	5623.3
16	n° of equine patients seen extra-murally	47.0	5.0	1.0	17.7
17	n° of visits to ruminant and pig herds	647.0	284.0	516.0	482.3
18	n° of visits of poultry and farmed rabbit units	101.0	113.0	38.0	84.0
19	n° of companion animal necropsies	47.0	54.0	67.0	56.0
20	n° of ruminant and pig necropsies	54.0	96.0	92.0	80.7
21	n° of equine necropsies	4.0	5.0	8.0	5.7
22	n° of rabbit, rodent, bird and exotic pet necropsies	12.0	28.0	74.0	38.0
23	n° of FTE specialised veterinarians involved in veterinary training	7.0	7.0	7.0	7.0
24	n° of PhD graduating annually	6.0	4.0	9.0	6.3

Indicators calculated from the raw data

		Faculty values	Median Values	Minimal values	Balance
I1	n° of FTE academic staff involved in veterinary training / n° of undergraduate students	0.171	0.16	0.13	0.045
I2	n° of FTE veterinarians involved in veterinary training / n° of students graduating annually	0.981	0.87	0.59	0.391
I3	n° of FTE support staff involved in veterinary training / n° of students graduating annually	1.139	0.94	0.57	0.573
I4	n° of hours of practical (non-clinical) training	744.75	905.67	595.00	149.75
I5	n° of hours of clinical training	696.50	932.92	670.00	26.500

FINAL REPORT AS ISSUED BY ECOVE ON 8 JUNE 2022

I6	n° of hours of FSQ & VPH training	586.80	287.00	174.40	412.40
I7	n° of hours of extra-mural practical training in FSQ & VPH	50.00	68.00	28.80	21.200
I8	n° of companion animal patients seen intra-murally / n° of students graduating annually	100.957	70.48	42.01	58.947
I9	n° of ruminant and pig patients seen intra-murally / n° of students graduating annually	0.287	2.69	0.46	-0.177
I10	n° of equine patients seen intra-murally / n° of students graduating annually	5.596	5.05	1.30	4.298
I11	n° of rabbit, rodent, bird and exotic seen intra-murally / n° of students graduating annually	0.322	3.35	1.55	-1.223
I12	n° of companion animal patients seen extra-murally / n° of students graduating annually	0.072	6.80	0.22	-0.152
I13	n° of individual ruminants and pig patients seen extra-murally / n° of students graduating annually	73.348	15.95	6.29	67.053
I14	n° of equine patients seen extra-murally / n° of students graduating annually	0.230	2.11	0.60	-0.365
I15	n° of visits to ruminant and pig herds / n° of students graduating annually	6.291	1.33	0.55	5.744
I16	n° of visits of poultry and farmed rabbit units / n° of students graduating annually	1.096	0.12	0.04	1.051
I17	n° of companion animal necropsies / n° of students graduating annually	0.730	2.07	1.40	-0.670
I18	n° of ruminant and pig necropsies / n° of students graduating annually	1.052	2.32	0.97	0.082
I19	n° of equine necropsies / n° of students graduating annually	0.074	0.30	0.09	-0.019
I20	n° of rabbit, rodent, bird and exotic pet necropsies / n° of students graduating annually	0.496	2.05	0.69	-0.197
I21*	n° of FTE specialised veterinarians involved in veterinary training / n° of students graduating annually	0.091	0.20	0.06	0.028
I22* *	n° of PhD graduating annually / n° of students graduating annually	0.083	0.15	0.09	-0.005

The academic years included in the calculation of the Indicators were 2018/19, 2019/20 and 2020/2021. During 2019/2020 and 2020/2021 adjustments were made in the learning process due to the exceptional situation of COVID-19, when the COVID-19 pandemic has affected the possibility of visiting farms.

Some of the indicators such as I9 (n° of ruminant and pig patients seen intramurally/ n° of students graduating annually), I12 (n° of companion animal patients seen extra-murally/ n° of students graduating annually), and I14 (n° of equine patients seen extra-murally/ n° of students graduating annually) are in the negative range but a strong compensation in numbers can be seen during either intramural or extramural activities (I13 - n° of individual ruminants and pig patients seen extra-murally/ n° of students graduating annually compensating I9: 67.053 versus -0.177, I8 - n° of companion animal patients seen intramurally/ n° of students graduating annually as compensation for I12: 58.947 versus -0.152 and I10 - n° of equine patients seen intramurally/ n° of students graduating annually as a compensation for I14: 4.298 versus -0.365).

Nevertheless, the number of necropsies stays low except ruminants and pigs. The VEE put effort in solving this problem and implemented the use of viscera from slaughterhouses for necropsy purposes. Similarly, the numbers of rabbit, rodent, bird and exotic pet necropsies almost tripled in 2020/2021 (raw data table), but I11 remains very low due to the numbers of animals seen by the students in the previous academic years.

FINAL REPORT AS ISSUED BY ECOVE ON 8 JUNE 2022

The Indicators for the ruminant and pig necropsies were revised at the Visitation because the ambulatory service for farm animals carries out necropsies in the field/farms. These were not included in the Excel file from the SER provided by the VEE initially, but were addressed during the Visitation and included into the calculation of I18.

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

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

<p>framework for higher education and, consequently, to the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area.</p> <p>The VEE must provide proof of a QA system that promotes and monitors the presence of an academic environment highly conducive to learning including self-learning. Details of the type, provision and updating of appropriate learning opportunities for the students must be clearly described, as well as the involvement of students.</p> <p>The VEE must also describe how it encourages and prepares students for self-learning and lifelong learning.</p>			
<p>3.3 Programme learning outcomes must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensure the effective alignment of all content, teaching, learning and assessment activities of the degree programme to form a cohesive framework • include a description of Day One Competences • form the basis for explicit statements of the objectives and learning outcomes of individual units of study • be communicated to staff and students • be regularly reviewed, managed and updated to ensure they remain relevant, adequate and are effectively achieved. 	X		
<p>3.4 The VEE must have a formally constituted committee structure (which includes effective student representation), with clear and empowered reporting lines, to oversee and manage the curriculum and its delivery. The committee(s) must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • determine the pedagogical basis, design, delivery methods and assessment methods of the curriculum • oversee QA of the curriculum, particularly gathering, evaluating, making change and responding to feedback from stakeholders, peer reviewers and external assessors, and data from examination/assessment outcomes • perform ongoing and periodic review of the curriculum at least every seven years by involving staff, students and stakeholders; these reviews must lead to continuous improvement. Any action taken or planned as a result of such a review must be communicated to all those concerned • identify and meet training needs for all types of staff, maintaining and enhancing their competence for the ongoing curriculum development. 	X		
<p>3.5 External Practical Training (EPT) is compulsory training activities organised outside the VEE, the student being under the direct supervision of a non-academic person (e.g. a practitioner). EPT cannot replace the core intramural training nor the extramural training under the close supervision of academic staff (e.g. ambulatory clinics, herd health management, practical training in FSQ and VPH).</p> <p>Since the veterinary degree is a professional qualification with Day One Competences, EPT must complement and strengthen the academic education inter alia by enhancing student's professional knowledge.</p>	X		
<p>3.6 The EPT providers must have an agreement with the VEE and the student (in order to state their respective rights and duties, including insurance matters), provide a standardised evaluation of the performance of the student during their EPT and be allowed to provide feedback to the VEE on the EPT programme.</p> <p>There must be a member of the academic staff responsible for the overall supervision of the EPT, including liaison with EPT providers.</p>	X		
<p>3.7 Students must take responsibility for their own learning during EPT. This includes preparing properly before each placement, keeping a proper record of their experience during EPT by using a logbook provided by the VEE and evaluating the EPT. Students must be allowed to complain officially and/or anonymously about issues occurring during EPT. The VEE must have a system of QA to monitor the implementation, progress and then feedback within the EPT activities.</p>	X		
Standard 4: Facilities and equipment			
<p>4.1 All aspects of the physical facilities must provide an environment conducive to learning, including internet access. The veterinary VEE must have a clear strategy and programme for maintaining and upgrading its buildings and equipment. Facilities must comply with all relevant legislation including health, safety, biosecurity, accessibility to people with reduced mobility, and EU animal welfare and care standards.</p>	X		
<p>4.2 Lecture theatres, teaching laboratories, tutorial rooms, clinical facilities and other teaching spaces must be adequate in number, size and equipped for the instructional purposes and must be well maintained. The facilities must be adapted for the number of students enrolled. Students must have ready access to adequate and sufficient study, self-learning, recreation, locker, sanitary and food service facilities.</p> <p>Offices, teaching preparation and research laboratories must be sufficient for the needs of the academic and support staff.</p>	X		
<p>4.3 The livestock facilities, animal housing, core clinical teaching facilities and equipment used by the VEE for teaching purposes must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be sufficient in capacity and adapted for the number of students enrolled in order to allow safe hands-on training for all students • be of a high standard, well maintained and fit for the purpose • promote best husbandry, welfare and management practices • ensure relevant biosecurity and bio-containment • be designed to enhance learning. 		X	
<p>4.4 Core clinical teaching facilities must be provided in a veterinary teaching hospital (VTH) with 24/7 emergency services at least for companion animals and equines. Within the VTH, the VEE must unequivocally demonstrate that standard of education and clinical research are compliant with all ESEVT Standards, e.g. research-based and evidence-based clinical training supervised by academic staff trained to teach and to assess, availability for staff and students of facilities and patients for performing clinical research and relevant QA procedures.</p> <p>For ruminants, on-call service must be available if emergency services do not exist for those species in a VTH. The VEE must ensure state-of-the-art standards of teaching clinics which remain comparable with or exceeding the best available in the private sector.</p>	X		

FINAL REPORT AS ISSUED BY ECOVE ON 8 JUNE 2022

The VTH and any hospitals, practices and facilities (including EPT) which are involved with the curriculum must meet the relevant national Practice Standards.			
4.5 The VEE must ensure that students have access to a broad range of diagnostic and therapeutic facilities, including but not limited to: diagnostic imaging, anaesthesia, clinical pathology, intensive/critical care, surgeries and treatment facilities, ambulatory services, pharmacy and necropsy facilities.	X		
4.6 Appropriate isolation facilities must be provided to meet the need for the isolation and containment of animals with communicable diseases. Such isolation facilities must be properly constructed, ventilated, maintained and operated to provide for animal care and for prevention of spread of infectious agents. They must be adapted to all animal species commonly handled in the VTH.	X		
4.7 The VEE must have an ambulatory clinic for production animals or equivalent facilities so that students can practise field veterinary medicine and Herd Health Management under academic supervision.	X		
4.8 The transport of students, live animals, cadavers, materials from animal origin and other teaching materials must be done in agreement with national and EU standards, to ensure the safety of students and staff and to prevent the spread of infectious agents.	X		
4.9 Operational policies and procedures (including e.g. biosecurity, good laboratory practice and good clinical practice) must be taught and posted for students, staff and visitors and a Biosafety manual must be available. The VEE must demonstrate a clear commitment for the delivery of biosafety and biosecurity, e.g. by a specific committee structure. The VEE must have a system of QA to monitor and assure clinical, laboratory and farm services, including a regular monitoring of the feedback from students, staff and clients.	X		
Standard 5: Animal resources and teaching material of animal origin			
5.1 The number and variety of healthy and diseased animals, cadavers, and material of animal origin must be adequate for providing the practical and safe hands-on training (in the areas of Basic Sciences, Clinical Sciences, Pathology, Animal Production, Food Safety and Quality) and adapted to the number of students enrolled. Evidence must be provided that these data are regularly recorded and that procedures are in place for correcting any deficiencies.		X	
5.2 In addition to the training provided in the VEE, experience can include practical training at external sites, provided this training is organised under direct academic supervision and following the same standards as those applied in the VEE.	X		
5.3 The VTH must provide nursing care skills and instruction in nursing procedures. Under all situations students must be active participants in the clinical workup of patients, including problem-oriented diagnostic approach together with diagnostic decision-making.	X		
5.4 Medical records must be comprehensive and maintained in an effective retrieval system (preferably an electronic patient record system) to efficiently support the teaching, research, and service programmes of the VEE.	X		
Standard 6: Learning resources			
6.1 State-of-the-art learning resources must be adequate and available to support veterinary education, research, services and continuing education. When the study programme is provided in several tracks/languages, the learning resources must be available in all used languages. Timely access to learning resources, whether through print, electronic media or other means, must be available to students and staff and, when appropriate, to stakeholders. State-of-the-art procedures for bibliographical search and for access to databases and learning resources must be taught to undergraduate students.	X		
6.2 Staff and students must have full access on site to an academic library administered by a qualified librarian, an Information Technology (IT) unit managed by an IT expert, an e-learning platform, and all the relevant human and physical resources necessary for the development of instructional materials by the staff and their use by the students. The relevant electronic information, database and other intranet resources must be easily available for students and staff both in the VEE's core facilities via wireless connection (Wi-Fi) and from outside the VEE through a hosted secured connection, e.g. Virtual Private Network (VPN).	X		
6.3 The VEE must provide students with unimpeded access to learning resources, internet and internal study resources, and equipment for the development of procedural skills (e.g. models). The use of these resources must be aligned with the pedagogical environment and learning outcomes within the programme and have mechanisms in place to evaluate the teaching value of changes in learning resources.	X		
Standard 7: Student admission, progression and welfare			
7.1 The VEE must consistently apply pre-defined and published regulations covering all phases of the student "life cycle", e.g. student admission, progression and certification. In relation to enrolment, the VEE must provide accurate and complete information regarding all aspects of the educational programme in all advertisements for prospective national and international students. Formal cooperations with other VEEs must also be clearly advertised.	X		
7.2 The number of students admitted must be consistent with the resources available at the VEE for staff, buildings, equipment, healthy and diseased animals, and materials of animal origin.	X		
7.3 The selection and progression criteria must be clearly defined, consistent, and defensible, be free of discrimination or bias, and take into account the fact that students are admitted with a view to their entry to the veterinary profession in due course. The VEE must regularly review and reflect on the selection processes to ensure they are appropriate for students to complete the programme successfully. If the selection processes are decided by another authority, the latter must regularly receive feedback from the VEE. Adequate training (including periodic refresher training) must be provided for those involved in the selection process to ensure applicants are evaluated fairly and consistently.	X		

FINAL REPORT AS ISSUED BY ECOVE ON 8 JUNE 2022

7.4	There must be clear policies and procedures on how applicants with disabilities or illnesses are considered and, if appropriate, accommodated in the programme, taking into account the requirement that all students must be capable of meeting the ESEVT Day One Competences by the time they graduate.	X		
7.5	The basis for decisions on progression (including academic progression and professional fitness to practise) must be explicit and readily available to the students. The VEE must provide evidence that it has mechanisms in place to identify and provide remediation and appropriate support (including termination) for students who are not performing adequately. The VEE must have mechanisms in place to monitor attrition and progression and be able to respond and amend admission selection criteria (if permitted by national or university law) and student support if required.	X		
7.6	Mechanisms for the exclusion of students from the programme for any reason must be explicit. The VEE's policies for managing appeals against decisions, including admissions, academic and progression decisions and exclusion, must be transparent and publicly available.	X		
7.7	Provisions must be made by the VEE to support the physical, emotional and welfare needs of students. This includes, but is not limited to, learning support and counselling services, career advice, and fair and transparent mechanisms for dealing with student illness, impairment and disability during the programme. This shall include provision of reasonable adjustments for disabled students, consistent with all relevant equality and/or human rights legislation. There must be effective mechanisms for resolution of student grievances (e.g. interpersonal conflict or harassment).	X		
7.8	Mechanisms must be in place by which students can convey their needs and wants to the VEE. The VEE must provide students with a mechanism, anonymously if they wish, to offer suggestions, comments and complaints regarding compliance of the VEE with national and international legislation and the ESEVT standards.	X		
Standard 8: Student assessment				
8.1	The VEE must ensure that there is a clearly identified structure within the VEE showing lines of responsibility for the assessment strategy to ensure coherence of the overall assessment regime and to allow the demonstration of progressive development across the programme towards entry-level competence.	X		
8.2	The assessment tasks and grading criteria for each unit of study in the programme must be published, applied consistently, clearly identified and available to students in a timely manner well in advance of the assessment. Requirements to pass must be explicit. The VEE must properly document the results of assessment and provide the students with timely feedback on their assessments. Mechanisms for students to appeal against assessment outcomes must be explicit.	X		
8.3	The VEE must have a process in place to review assessment outcomes, to change assessment strategies and to ensure the accuracy of the procedures when required. Programme learning outcomes covering the full range of professional knowledge, skills, competences and attributes must form the basis for assessment design and underpin decisions on progression.	X		
8.4	Assessment strategies must allow the VEE to certify student achievement of learning objectives at the level of the programme and individual units of study. The VEE must ensure that the programmes are delivered in a way that encourages students to take an active role in creating the learning process, and that the assessment of students reflects this approach.	X		
8.5	Methods of formative and summative assessment must be valid and reliable and comprise a variety of approaches. Direct assessment of clinical skills and Day One Competences (some of which may be on simulated patients), must form a significant component of the overall process of assessment. It must also include the quality control of the student logbooks in order to ensure that all clinical procedures, practical and hands-on training planned in the study programme have been fully completed by each individual student.	X		
Standard 9: Academic and support staff				
9.1	The VEE must ensure that all staff are appropriately qualified and prepared for their roles, in agreement with national and EU regulations and must apply fair and transparent processes for the recruitment and development of staff. A formal training (including good teaching and evaluation practices, learning and e-learning resources, biosecurity and QA procedures) must be in place for all staff involved with teaching. Most academic staff (calculated as FTE) involved in veterinary training must be veterinarians. It is expected that more than 2/3 of the instruction that the students receive, as determined by student teaching hours, is delivered by qualified veterinarians.	X		
9.2	The total number, qualifications and skills of all staff involved with the programme, including teaching staff, 'adjunct' staff, technical, administrative and support staff, must be sufficient and appropriate to deliver the educational programme and fulfil the VEE's mission. A procedure must be in place to assess if they display competence and effective teaching skills in all relevant aspects of the curriculum that they teach, regardless of whether they are full or part time, residents, interns or other postgraduate students, adjuncts or off-campus contracted teachers.	X		
9.3	Staff must be given opportunities to develop and extend their teaching and assessment knowledge and must be encouraged to improve their skills. Opportunities for didactic and pedagogic training and specialisation must be available. The VEE must clearly define systems of reward for teaching excellence in operation. Academic positions must offer the security and benefits necessary to maintain stability, continuity, and competence of the academic staff. Academic staff must have a balanced workload of teaching, research and service depending on their role. They must have reasonable opportunities and resources for participation in scholarly activities.	X		

FINAL REPORT AS ISSUED BY ECOVE ON 8 JUNE 2022

<p>9.4 The VEE must provide evidence that it utilises a well-defined, comprehensive and publicised programme for the professional growth and development of academic and support staff, including formal appraisal and informal mentoring procedures. Staff must have the opportunity to contribute to the VEE's direction and decision-making processes. Promotion criteria for academic and support staff must be clear and explicit. Promotions for teaching staff must recognise excellence in, and (if permitted by the national or university law) place equal emphasis on all aspects of teaching (including clinical teaching), research, service and other scholarly activities.</p>	X		
<p>9.5 A system for assessment of teaching staff must be in operation and must include student participation. Results must be available to those undertaking external reviews and commented upon in reports.</p>	X		
Standard 10: Research programmes, continuing and postgraduate education			
<p>10.1 The VEE must demonstrate significant and broad research activities of staff that integrate with and strengthen the veterinary degree programme through research-based teaching.</p>	X		
<p>10.2 All students must be trained in scientific method and research techniques relevant to evidence-based veterinary medicine and must have opportunities to participate in research programmes.</p>	X		
<p>10.3 The VEE must provide advanced postgraduate degree programmes, e.g. PhD, internships, residencies and continuing education programmes that complement and strengthen the veterinary degree programme and are relevant to the needs of the profession and society.</p>	X		
<p>10.4 The VEE must have a system of QA to evaluate how research activities provide opportunities for student training and staff promotion, and how research approaches, methods and results are integrated into the veterinary teaching programmes.</p>	X		
<p><i>C: (total or substantial) compliance; PC: partial compliance (Minor Deficiency); NC: non-compliance (Major Deficiency)</i></p>			

Executive Summary

Brief history of the VEE and its previous EAEVE Visitations

The Faculty of Veterinary Medicine of the University of Extremadura (FVUEX) was established in 1983, in an intensive farming community.

Its infrastructure (including the Administration, classrooms, and the Departments) opened in 1990, while the VTH, the Teaching Farm (VTF), and the Food Pilot Plants (FPP) started functioning later, in 2002 (VTH) and 2003 (VTF, FPP). The VEE offers veterinary education, but also services and research activities in an area where farming generates the most income.

The VEE offers two curricula, one in Veterinary Medicine and another in Biochemistry.

The VEE underwent two EAEVE Visitations, the first in 1995 and the second in 2010. This last Visitation identified 3 category I deficiencies, which were corrected till April 2012, when, after the re-visitation, it received the “Approval” status.

Brief comment on the SER

An extended SER was provided on time to the Visitation Team along with the Appendices. This document is a little too long (145 pages, 118 pages when excluding the divider pages) and makes an abundant use of links, sometimes redundant, leading to information in Spanish. The approach to some of the Standards indicated gaps which needed clarifications and raised questions; those were clearly and on time answered by the VEE, ahead of the Visitation. All the information and the documents asked for during the Visitation were willingly provided and were explanatory. A substantial amount of information was provided in the “Annexes and other documents” ahead of the Visitation, and well-supported, where it was needed by explanations in English.

Brief comment on the Visitation

The Visitation was very well prepared, well organised and carried out in a cordial and professional atmosphere. The Liaison Officer was very efficient, diligent and always helpful. The programme of the Visitation was designed ahead of the Visitation, in constant agreement with the Chairperson and the Coordinator, some minor changes being made on the spot and easily implemented upon request of the Visitation Team.

The VEE implemented strict measures to overcome the difficulties caused by the COVID-19 pandemic during the whole Visitation, according to the “Exceptional rules for ESEVT Visitations planned in 2022 considering the extraordinary circumstances linked to the COVID-19 pandemic” ensuring the safety of the team members at all times.

The Visitors were greeted with enthusiasm and given all courtesy and assistance needed, had full access to all the information, facilities and individuals they asked for in a very transparent manner.

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

- The commitment and enthusiasm of staff and students
- Positive interaction between students and staff, in an environment conducive to learning
- The strong support provided by the teaching staff to the students
- Transparency and openness
- Aspiration to comply with national and ESEVT accreditation standards
- Well-developed research culture and commitment
- Willingness to further improve the quality of student training

FINAL REPORT AS ISSUED BY ECOVE ON 8 JUNE 2022

- Positive attitude and commitment of the University QA Vice-Rector and the entire team towards the continuous development of quality culture
- The excellent services provided to students and staff by the Uex and Faculty IT team
- The excellent attention and assistance provided by Uex and Faculty to student welfare and support

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

- Partial compliance with Substandard 3.1.4 because of suboptimal time spent in farm animal clinical training to achieve day one competencies for each individual student.
- Partial compliance with Substandard 4.3 because of suboptimal compliance with the biosecurity manual and procedures in some areas, especially during the necropsy activities.
- Partial compliance with Substandard 5.1 because the number of rabbits, rodents, birds and exotic patients is not adequate for the number of students involved and the number of companion animal (including equine and exotics) necropsies provided to the students is suboptimal.

Items of non-compliance with the ESEVT Standards (i.e. Major Deficiencies)

- Non-compliance with Substandard 3.1.3 for Clinical Sciences in companion animals because of insufficient number of hours of hands-on clinical training on real patients under the supervision of academic staff in order to achieve Day One Competences for each individual student.

Glossary

ANECA: Spanish Agency for Quality Assessment and Accreditation
D1C: ESEVT Day One Competences
EAEVE: European Association of Establishments for Veterinary Education
EBVS: European Board of Veterinary Specialisation
ECOVE: European Committee on Veterinary Education
EPT: External Practical Training
ESEVT: European System of Evaluation of Veterinary Training
ESG: Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area
FSQ: Food Safety and Quality
FTE: Full-Time Equivalent
IT: Information Technology
OSCE: Objective Structured Clinical Examination
PDCA: Plan Do Check Adjust
QA: Quality Assurance
SER: Self Evaluation Report
SOP: Standard Operating Procedure
VEE: Veterinary Education Establishment
VPH: Veterinary Public Health
VTH: Veterinary Teaching Hospital
UEx: University of Extremadura

Decision of ECOVE

The Committee concluded that the following Major Deficiency had been identified:

1. Non-compliance with Substandard 3.1.2 for Clinical Sciences in companion animals because of insufficient number of hours of hands-on clinical training on real patients under the supervision of academic staff in order to achieve Day One Competences for each individual student.

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