

University of Glasgow

Academic Standards Committee – Tuesday 15 April 2014

Periodic Subject Review: Responses to the Recommendations Arising from the Periodic Subject Review of Veterinary Medicine (Undergraduate provision) held on 4 and 5 December 2012

Mrs Ruth Cole, Clerk to the Review Panel

Conclusion

The members of the Review Panel very much enjoyed their engagement with the School of Veterinary Medicine. The students demonstrated enthusiasm for their studies and for their learning environment. This enthusiasm was the more impressive for coming at a time when School staff were juggling many demands in preparing for the new curriculum and accreditation, and when the campus was experiencing significant disruption from building works and student social space had recently been demolished. The Review came at an exciting time for the School as it was building for the future on its past and present success, in response to external drivers. The commitment and hard work of staff was evident to the Panel and was strongly praised by the Head of School. The Panel commends the School for its provision of a dynamic and positive learning environment where innovative methods of teaching and assessment are employed.

Commendations

The following commendations are highlighted in the report.

Commendation 1

The Review Panel **commends** the School on its broad range of forms of assessment, particularly interactive formative assessment which made innovative use of technology. [*paragraph 3.3.3*]

Commendation 2

In the new BVMS curriculum each new unit would last for a four-week period, with teaching delivered in weeks one to three, leaving week four clear for consolidation. The aim was to move away from such heavy reliance on lectures and to incorporate more problems to which the students (either in small groups or on their own) would be expected, with appropriate support, to seek answers themselves, promoting deeper learning and independence. The Review Panel **commends** this approach. [*paragraph 3.4.3*]

Commendation 3

The Review Panel **commends** the School for the successful introduction of the new programme of study, the BSc/MSci Veterinary Biosciences, and the integration of its students into the life of the School. [*paragraph 3.7.1*]

Commendation 4

The Review Panel **commends** the evident commitment and hard work of staff, reflected not only in their high aspirations but in the achievements of the School and in the positive reflections of the students. [*paragraph 3.8.1*]

Commendation 5

The Review Panel noted that there had been a recent redesigning of an old operating theatre complex to create a clinical skills facility, which was now supported by a full-time member of staff. This represented a very welcome enhancement of teaching facilities and was **commended** by the Panel. [paragraph 3.8.19]

Commendation 6

External Examiner reports indicated a subject area of good standing nationally and internationally. The Review Panel **commends** the School on this marker of positive esteem. [paragraph 4.1]

Commendation 7

Comments from students highlighted the important role of focus groups within the School. It was clear to the Review Panel that the students felt that their views were listened to and taken into account. Staff confirmed that they valued the immediate nature of feedback from focus groups. The Panel **commends** the School's use of these groups. [paragraph 5.2]

Summary of Perceived Strengths and Areas for Improvement in Learning and Teaching

Key Strengths

- Highly committed and aspiring staff who offer a positive and supportive learning environment for students
- Enthusiastic and high achieving students with strong cohort identities
- A nationally and internationally esteemed professional programme
- Innovative use of technology particularly in formative assessment tools

Areas for Improvement

- A Masters award that does not currently satisfy the relevant SCQF requirements
- IT provision and IT support in the School
- Inconsistent mentoring support

Recommendations

The recommendations interspersed in the preceding report are summarised below. They have been cross referenced to the paragraphs to which they refer in the text of the report. The first three recommendations have highest priority and the remaining recommendations are listed in the order in which they appear in the report.

Recommendation 1

The Review Panel noted that BSc (Hons) Veterinary Biosciences students who completed a work placement year graduated with an MSci. The content of the four years of academic study at the University was the same for both BSc (Hons) and MSci students. The award of a Masters level degree could, therefore, only be justified if the placement year satisfied the requirements of SCQF Level 11 study, and the Panel concluded from the information provided that this was not currently the case. The Panel recommends that, as a matter of urgency, the School revises the content of the final taught year of the MSci to ensure that the requirements of the QAA and of

the University Calendar in relation to the award of Masters degrees are satisfied. [Paragraph 3.2.3].

For the attention of: **Head of School**

Response:

The issues identified are also pertinent to a related programme run by the School of Life Sciences. A joint exercise to address these has been undertaken between the BSc Veterinary Biosciences programme board and SLS (in conjunction with Dr Iain Johnstone). A proposal for Level 4 (work placement year) will be submitted to the Semester 2 Programme Approval round to allow implementation in session 2014/15. A proposal for Level 5 will be made in session 14/15 for implementation in 2015/16.

Extract from MSci/BSc Programme Board minutes (Wednesday 22nd January 2014)

BSC/2013/15 Changes to MSc

15.1 Work Placement Year Proposal

A new course will be created by SLS for the work placement year. It was decided that the Veterinary Bioscience students will enroll on the SLS course code.

(Clerks Note: Following the meeting it came to light that due to the Student Load and Income Distribution (SLID) mechanism, the School of Veterinary Medicine wouldn't receive the half fee from their students on the Work Placement. Therefore, SVM students won't enroll on SLS WP courses, instead they will enroll on the SVM WP course).

It was raised that there is a requirement for more mentors for the work placement year. Tony Page stated that he is happy to be a mentor for the MSci year.

ACTION: MR

15.2 Final Year Proposal

The decision was made to follow the SLS solution as closely as possible. Potential solutions are to introduce an additional piece of work to the final year project at SCQF 11.

ACTION: MR

A new course code is to be created.

ACTION:MR/AWM

Recommendation 2

The Panel **recommends** that the School ensures that the documentation prepared in connection with the forthcoming accreditation visit clearly communicates the rationale for BVMS curriculum change and reflects the careful process of consultation undertaken as well as giving detailed information on the timetable for implementation and on the process of trialling new features of the curriculum. [Paragraph 3.4.13].

For the attention of: **Head of School**

Response:

This was achieved by editing the draft submission document and providing additional synopses of the programme phases and the new approach to assessment across the whole programme.

The accrediting visitors were highly satisfied with the planning and preparation of the new curriculum. This resulted in the following commendation.

The School is commended for developing an innovative, vertically and horizontally integrated curriculum mapped to established learning objectives based on RCVS, AVBC, and AVMA COE clinical competences

Recommendation 3

The Panel **recommends** that before a decision is taken to accelerate the implementation of BVMS3, the School reflects very carefully on the risks attendant on effecting too much change at one time, particularly given that BVMS3 students will not have taken the revised form of BVMS1 and 2. [Paragraph 3.4.15].

For the attention of: **Head of School**

Response:

The School has taken the decision not to accelerate the introduction of the Clinical Phase of the 2013 curriculum.

Recommendation 4

The Review Panel's view was that the current Veterinary Biosciences Knowledge ILOs were insufficiently rigorous, particularly at Level 4, and **recommends** that they would benefit from review in consultation with the Learning and Teaching Centre. [Paragraph 3.2.1].

For the attention of: **Head of School**

Response:

The BSc Veterinary Biosciences programme board has expressed a commitment to urgently rewrite level 4 ILOs and course leaders of courses at other levels to review course ILOs in relation to the rigour of their description.

BSC/2013/14 Response to the Periodic Subject Review (PSR)

It was decided that all ILO's would be looked at across the course. SM to send an email to all course leaders to ask them to review the ILO's for their course at both course and lecture level. The CID's will be updated for the start of the 14-15 session.

ACTION:SM/ALL

BSC/2013/16 BB-4 ILO's

IAJ to send updated ILO's to SM

ACTION:IAJ

MMcL to send Guide to Writing ILO's to SM for distribution.

ACTION:SM/MMcL

Recommendation 5

The Panel **recommends** that the School considers how best to engage students in an understanding of assessment criteria applying to the demonstration of ILOs, whether through clearer dissemination of information or through the structuring of the instruments of assessment themselves. *[Paragraph 3.3.2].*

For the attention of: **Head of School**

Response:

Better student understanding and linkage of ILOs and assessments was engineered into the new BVMS curriculum and this has already improved this aspect of the programme. Teaching design in the new curriculum has been led by outcomes and assessment and the students are now more engaged in the learning outcomes and making greater use of instruments such as Peerwise and Aropa. With regard to the old curriculum the programme board has noted the recommendation and will review this issue on an ongoing basis with relevant course leaders.

The relevant minute of Programme Board meeting is below.

BVMS Programme Board Minute (15 January 2014)

BVMS/2013/

224.2

PSR Recommendations

New approaches had been introduced with the Foundation and Professional phases. The board agreed that the next step would be to understand how these were working and use as a basis for further development of assessment.

ACTION:MS

Recommendation 6

The Panel **recommends** that the School considers how best to ensure that feedback on assessment is available for all students – those who perform well in assessments as well as for those who do less well – and considers how to ensure that students recognize and make best use of that feedback, thus supporting them in their wish to further strengthen their performance and respond effectively to areas of weakness, and also promoting an across-the-board culture of continuing development, which is essential in the context of professional training. *[Paragraph 3.3.7].*

For the attention of: **Head of School**

Response:

The BVMS 5 now receive mandatory written feedback from staff as well as formative oral feedback through each rotation. It is stressed to the students that any discussion with regard to case material or performance is feedback and should be understood as such. Moodle is being used in the BVMS 1 to provide staff and peer feedback. It has been drawn to staff attention in other parts of the programme that they may now annotate scripts with comments to complement post assessment feedback sessions. All scripts are available to students once the assessment procedure is complete and one-to-one meetings are offered.

Recommendation 7

While the nature of assessment of performance would be changing in the new curriculum, the

Panel **recommends** that the School considers how best to feedback to students on their progress throughout the full programme of clinical rotations. *[Paragraph 3.3.12].*

For the attention of: **Head of School**

Response:

As noted by the review team the nature and consistency of feedback to students on clinical rotations (professional phase – BVMS 5) has changed substantially with the new professional phase course. These changes were implemented in May 2013. Significant changes have been made to the expectations of the nature and consistency of feedback that is to be delivered along with the introduction of continuous assessment of clinical skills, which also delivers continuous personal and specific feedback. The impact of these changes is being assessed on a rolling basis and the feedback will be used to inform the development of appropriate and appreciated feedback.

Although 13/14 session has not finished feedback to date from final year suggests that consistency of feedback has shown a marked improvement. The GUVMA Co-President reports that

“I think that as a final year I've received a tremendous amount of feedback - in varying formats - throughout my rotations and I'm definitely given the impression that our feedback about rotation feedback is taken on board.”

Recommendation 8

In the context of the increasing importance of the professional portfolio on the BVMS, the Panel **recommends** that the School carefully considers the future operation of the mentoring system, so that, firstly, its purpose and, secondly, the respective responsibilities of both staff and students, are clearly articulated and properly implemented. This may involve training and personal development for staff acting as mentors. *[Paragraph 3.6.7].*

For the attention of: **Head of School**

Response:

The mentoring system has been altered to recognize that fact that the Portfolio is now an integral part of the BVMS programme as far as progression is concerned. Additional training has been put in place and available to all staff members. Timetabled sessions are now integrated into the programme.

Recommendation 9

The Panel **recommends** that, in discussion with areas such as the Learning and Teaching Centre and Human Resources, the School considers how best to promote the hosting of training, development and networking events for staff at the Garscube campus. *[Paragraph 3.8.6].*

For the attention of: **Head of School**

Response:

The Garscube Facilitator has discussed the scheduling of PGCAP and GTA training with the Learning and Teaching Centre. While the nature of the PG CAP training program precludes the possibility of this program being delivered at Garscube, GTA training sessions will be offered at Garscube in the fall of 2014, subject to demand. Discussions have also taken place with SDS

regarding the scope for HR training to be delivered here. Arrangements are already in progress for SDS training courses to be delivered at Garscube, with the sustainability of ongoing courses depending on uptake of this service by staff. A networking event between clinicians and research staff has taken place and a monthly joint seminar/discussion series in the SAH is being arranged. Similar events for farm animal staff will be pursued. A series of social/networking events has also taken place. All events on site are actively promoted across the Garscube community through a campus-specific emailing list. Although a number of regular seminars already take place on the Campus a new “Garscube” series has been established with a veterinary and animal science research focus.

Recommendation 10

The Panel **recommends** that consideration be given to how transport between Garscube and Gilmorehill campuses can be improved, including possible approaches to the local bus operator and the SRC.¹ [*Paragraph 3.8.7*].

For the attention of: **Secretary of Court**

For information: **Head of School**

Response: provided by Town Planning Manager, Estates and Buildings on behalf of Secretary of Court

Estates & Buildings have been involved in a number of initiatives over the last couple of years relating to transport and travel between Gilmorehill and Garscube and I provide a brief summary below:

The Strategic Travel Plan

An identified action of the current Travel Plan is to investigate the option of a shuttle bus between the main campuses. E&B has progressed this, in part, by carrying out a study on Inter Campus Travel in 2013.

The Inter campus Travel study (led by SKM consultants) in 2013 reviewed the existing accessibility situation between Gilmorehill and Garscube. This report provided an accessibility analysis and provided recommendations for improving travel based on identified unmet needs.

The conclusions of this report were not definitive as to whether a shuttle bus is feasible and it was recommended that a more detailed options appraisal is required to review cost-effective solutions for improving inter-campus travel. This would include investigating if the SRC bus could be extended to serve Garscube as well as the halls of residences. The forecast of demand was proving difficult to ascertain at the time of the study as the vet school timetables were undergoing a significant change and the redevelopment of both Garscube and Gilmorehill may or may not increase demand for inter-campus travel.

The report did suggest that there is some demand for staff and students to make inter-campus journeys but again the data was unclear as an analysis of the then current timetables for vet

¹ Subsequent to the Review visit, the Panel learned that an inter-campus travel demand analysis was being carried out under the Action Plan of the University’s Strategic Travel Plan, and that this would be followed by a detailed investigation into the options for addressing the demand (e.g. introduction of a shuttle bus or subsidising existing bus services). The inclusion of the recommendation in this report reflects the issues raised during the Review visit and will ensure that there is an opportunity to consider the outcome of the study specifically in relation to the School of Veterinary Medicine.

students indicated that students often did not require to make the return trip back to Garscube if they had been to Gilmorehill. The data for staff was less accessible and therefore difficult to determine how many staff require to make a return journey as part of business. The main demand profile seemed to be;

- Need to travel between campuses for lectures
- Travel not directly related to teaching but for using facilities such as the library, unions or meetings
- Travel for extracurricular activities e.g. socialising or using sports centre
- Travel between home and campuses i.e. commuting

The feasibility of providing a shuttle bus would be dependent on the demand profile and which journeys the University would be willing to support. Issues such as the frequency of a shuttle bus and the size of bus also need to be considered. As part of the CVR/GLASS external works we hope to install some infrastructure to support a mini-bus should this materialise in the future – we aim to install a bus turning circle and bus waiting point/shelter at Garscube.

Travel Surveys

The most recent staff and student travel surveys took place in October/November 2013 and this covered all University locations. I am in the process of commissioning a more detailed analysis of the results specifically for Garscube and I hope to have this in draft by the end of March. I have been liaising with Sarah Chiodetto and Mary Ryan to help provide them with a more detailed report specifically on survey results based on students and staff based at Garscube.

Some of the key questions which will help will be how many people travel between campuses and how frequently. The report will hopefully identify some recommendations and actions which could be considered going forward.

Public Transport Improvements

I assisted my colleague Viola, our Travel Planning Officer, together with Sarah Chiodetto in 2012 in a series of meetings with First Bus and SPT to lobby for better bus services serving Gilmorehill and Garscube. This was also supported by colleagues in the Beatson and Campus Services.

Our lobbying did appear to have a positive outcome as SPT tendered for a commercial bus service to serve Garscube and this is now being operated by Glasgow Citybus.

The Glasgow City Bus service has been operating since summer of 2013 and provides a direct connection between Garscube (Switchback Road) and Gilmorehill (University Avenue).

This bus service takes 20 -25mins between campuses and operates half hourly at peak times and hourly during the day. This was not operating when we carried out the Inter Campus Travel report and it should hopefully be providing a good option for students and staff. I actually use this service myself and I notice a number of University staff and students using it to commute at peak times.

Response: School

It is noted that this recommendation is for the attention of the Secretary of Court. The School's

perspective on this issue is detailed below.

The challenges of moving between the Garscube and Gilmorehill campuses are recognised by the School of Veterinary Medicine and the College of Medical, Veterinary and Life Sciences and several initiatives have been launched to understand the specific issues and collect the necessary data to develop a comprehensive travel strategy. A Garscube campus travel survey conducted in the summer of 2013 identified some key areas and informed the questions contained in the University-wide travel survey conducted in the Autumn of 2013. We are still awaiting the data from this but it is hoped that this can be used to develop a proposal for a comprehensive University of Glasgow travel strategy.

Recommendation 11

The Panel **recommends** that the College and School develops a future vision for the Small Animal Hospital that recognises its role in teaching, clinical research and income generation and that is shared and understood by all staff in the School. *[Paragraph 3.8.14].*

For the attention of: **Head of School**

For information: **Head of College**

Joint Response:

The School is acutely aware of the pressures on staff simultaneously engaged in providing both a high quality teaching experience whilst servicing the client led demands of a referral hospital. We disagree that the vision is not clear but recognise that an appropriate balance has to be achieved between different but interdependent activities. To this end we have established a SAH Board to take oversight and plan future investments. Since the time of the PSR we have further invested in support staff (mainly nurses) to take the pressure of academic staff. This includes the appointment of a practice manager. A strategic plan for the Small Animal Hospital is in preparation.

Recommendation 12

Noting the strong negative impact of inadequate IT on the student experience, the Panel **recommends** that the College undertakes a review of IT and IT support within the School, to identify: the range of difficulties being encountered by staff and students; possible process improvements for the use of current IT resources and the realistic level of staffing required to support these; and any possible further efficiencies to be achieved in the use of the resources shared by the School and Research Institute at Garscube. *[Paragraph 3.8.17].*

For the attention of: **Head of College**

For information: **Head of School**

Joint response:

The College replaced all of the PCs in the student clusters (106 machines in total) in the summer of 2013. At the subsequent SSLC meeting in October students noted significant improvements in these facilities. In the long-term printing will be addressed by the University's rolling implementation of multi-functional devices (MFDs). In the short-term 3 printers have been replaced. Wireless access issues for students and staff in the Henry Wellcome Complex and the Weipers Equine Hospital are being addressed and an order has been placed for installation of several ports.

The standard of AV equipment in the lectures theatres has also been an issue, with one lecture theatre in particular causing significant problems. However funding sources and specified equipment have now been identified and this issue will be addressed in the near future. A new electronic patient records system has recently been installed in the Small Animal Hospital and there is ongoing dialogue between School and IT staff to properly embed the system and ensure optimal functionality.

Recommendation 13

The Review Panel **recommends** that action be taken to address the temperature control problems experienced in the Ilay and Jarrett Lecture Theatres which result in an environment which is not conducive to effective learning and teaching. *[Paragraph 3.8.18].*

For the attention of: **Vice Principal (Learning and Teaching)**

For information: **Director of Estates and Buildings**

Response: Vice Principal (Learning and Teaching)

Estates and Buildings have carried out remedial works on the air handling systems of the Ilay and Jarret lecture theatres. These works appear to have resolved the temperature control issues but Estates and Buildings are continuing to monitor the situation with the lecture theatre users.

Response: School

It is noted that this recommendation is for the attention of the Vice Principal (Learning and Teaching). The School's perspective on this issue is detailed below.

The School has pursued the temperature control problems in the Ilay lecture theatre with E&B and notes that as of January 2014 the problem appears to be resolved. There is a similar issue in the Jarrett lecture theatre and E&B expects this to be resolved by the end of February 2014. E&B has indicated that there is a possibility that the system in the Ilay lecture theatre may not be able to handle sudden drops in temperature but weather patterns have been such that this has not been an issue so far.