

INTERNAL PERIODIC REVIEW 2020-2021

School of Veterinary Science:
POSTGRADUATE TAUGHT PROGRAMMES

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Introduction

The School of Veterinary Science's current PGT programmes have not been previously evaluated. In 2013, only one programme was evaluated in the main report, the Veterinary Science Masters of Science (VSMS).

The VSMS programme suffered from the extensive loss of staff during the restructure of the faculty in 2012 and despite going through re-approval as available 100% online in 2015 ready for the 2015/2016 academic year, there were insufficient staff to continue the programme and it never restarted and was suspended a year or two later and has remained so.

The programmes discussed in the self-evaluation document (SED) represent our four current PGT programmes in the School of Veterinary Science; two blended and two wholly online programmes (although one of these has optional practical workshops).

These are:

Programme name	Programme code	Current enrolments
1. DBR (Diploma in Bovine Reproduction (Masters). Blended	DBRM	11
2. PG Cert Veterinary Business Management (VBSM) 100% Online	VBSM	31
3. PGDip/MSc Veterinary Physiotherapy (VPHY) Blended	VPHY	1 st Years 202021-VETS772: 15 2 nd Years 202021-VETS775: 17 MSc 202021-VETS777: 10
4. PG Cert/PG Diploma/MSc in Veterinary Professional Studies (VPST) 100% online with optional practical workshops	VPST	PgCert 613 PgDip 9 MSc 0
None of our programmes are delivered in partnership with Laureate/Kaplan.		

The SED reflects on the strengths and weakness of our current provision of PGT in the School of Veterinary Science across 5 major areas: our curricula, student support, learning environment, staff development and programme management. It cannot refer back to previous reviews as this is the first time this has happened.

Engagement of the student community has always been difficult in a distance education, fully flexible model of postgraduate taught education. In some programmes, even year cohorts do not exist (VBM and VPS). But the Veterinary Postgraduate Unit has always surveyed every module to account for the method of study and will send this SED out as an announcement for comment on every one of its modules running in the Spring semester 2021.

1) Curricula

We reflect on our curricula and strengths and weaknesses of how they meet the goals of curriculum 2021 and the University's Strategy 2026 under 10 headings as follows:

a) Research-Connected Teaching

Research-connected teaching is addressed in various ways:

- Many academics within the vet school and contributing to the programmes are recognised experts in their field and incorporate the latest clinical and scientific research into their teaching.
- Various staff members are engaged in pedagogic research, and this is often incorporated into curriculum development.
- Students are able to progress to masters level where they can further develop their own research skills and undertake a literature review and a research project. In the research project module students demonstrate their knowledge and skills with a literature review, research presentation and research dissertation written as a scientific publication.

Despite the masters option being available since 2013-14 academic year, the number of practising vets progressing all the way to the MSc is limited. This is likely to reflect the desires of the practising veterinary community and perceived career progression rather than a lack of opportunities presented.

The DBR programme is masters level for all students and the name aligns it to the naming of other qualifications within the veterinary profession. Feedback is that the name has a longstanding reputation which does attract participants and we recommend it is kept. Specialist external speaker are major contributors and the research led interaction is a key part of the programme. All candidates undertake a dissertation and approximately 1/3rd are published in peer-reviewed journals. The limiting factor is duration of the study and thus sample size for publication. Feedback is that a longer programme would be less attractive. For the Veterinary Physiotherapy programme, there is approximately 50% uptake of MSc progression and involvement in research, although we have had problems with students suspending studies before or during their masters and losing momentum. We are modifying the programme to offer the MSc for physiotherapists as a full time option from 2022/23 so this will hopefully mitigate the previous issues.

b) Assessment

A broad range of assessment methods are used to provide students with a variety of opportunities to demonstrate their learning and achievement the learning outcomes. Across all programmes assessments are formatted to enable students to use professional experience as a driver for assessment submissions. Assessments are based upon real world experience, pertinent to the students' professional life and are structured to facilitate the integration of theoretical and academic knowledge and skills with clinical practice. In all programmes assessment tasks involve critical analysis, appraisal, clinical reasoning, reflection and/or critical evaluation of the evidence base supporting practice.

The VPS and VBM programmes:

In these 100% online programmes assessments have been developed particularly to encourage discussion and peer-peer learning within the module.

As a programme designed for practicing clinicians, the VPS programme focusses on the development and enhancement of evidence-based clinical reasoning, critical reflection and practice development. A main assessment method throughout all modules, the case report, sees the student critically reflecting on their own practice, identifying areas for development using evidence-based veterinary medicine. That this assessment type is used with regularity within this programme means that students can build upon previous efforts to develop and improve on their case report writing skills, while developing skills to successfully mine and evaluate the literature to inform future decisions on their own practice. A variety of other assessment methods to reflect core elements of professional life are used, such as journal critique presentations, clinical protocols, clinical audit and data collection and analysis.

These summative assessments are used formatively, with comprehensive written feedback given on assessments to help and guide development. This is especially true early in the programme in the core modules, where development of these writing skills is more heavily focussed upon.

In the VBM modules this same principle of reflection on practice and evaluation of the literature is applied to assessment. Students are required to apply the principles of learning to their own practice and the data sets from their business experience, to evaluate and develop their own business practice and meet the learning outcomes. Some submissions are shared as an assessed discussion for peer-review, which allow for exposure to many different real-life business models.

Assessments also seek to develop a sense of community within a wholly online programme, where there is potential for students to feel distant and isolated in their learning. Assessed online discussions ask students to share their own experiences, covering topics such as ethics, communication, professional conduct as well as sharing clinical case reports and business practice, developing an ethos of collaborative learning and community of practice.

VPHY (Vet Physio):

As a blended learning course, assessment takes the form of both online assignments and practical exams.

Online assessments are very similar in pedagogy and design to the VPS programme, as the programme is designed for practicing clinicians. Assessments consist of essays, short answer questions, journal critiques and discussion boards, providing the different student learning types a variety of methods in which to excel. All assessments are based on clinical reasoning and evidence based medicine in order to equip the student with the skills needed in practice. The key to this is the transference of skills from their human knowledge to the veterinary environment.

In addition, practical assessment is held throughout the programme. These are delivered during the residential schools that the students attend together as well as external assessed practical placements where the clinician themselves marks the student on a wide range of mandatory skills and well as 20 specific skills. These assessments are very much hands-on in order to test the students' application of their knowledge. They must pass a final practical exam in order to pass the

final module (and therefore programme) overall. The students also have to reflect on all of their practical assessments and all of this documentation is included in the marking system.

DBR:

Assessment for seven of the 9 modules is via MCQ (10%), participation (10%) and two workplace based pieces of work (40% each) typically requiring using the knowledge gained in the module to produce a report addressed to the client including recommendations for business improvement. These are pivotal in adoption of new methods into the professional practice of the participants. The final module has a synoptic examination including clinical and communications skills. The dissertation module includes assessment of study design, literature review, statistical knowledge, and a final submission. There is a presentation and oral defence of study design, literature review and final submission. The modes of assessment allow a broad judgment of relevant professional skills and have been refined after feedback from external examiners and professional bodies.

On all programmes assessments are submitted digitally, and feedback is received digitally. Feedback is designed to be comprehensive to support students working part-time and from a distance. Students are also actively encouraged to liaise with modules leaders to access support and individual feedback during modules.

Feedback is very important to our students and comes up regularly on our module feedback surveys. Feedback primarily comes under 3 areas – timeliness, amount and consistency, with the last area remaining an issue for some of our students. This issue led to a full internal review of grading consistency and circulation of detailed notes for guidance. Video guidance on grading consistency is in production and will be added to our new “assessor training module” which is being produced in CANVAS.

The internal review findings did in part support some areas of inconsistency but given the degree of student dissatisfaction it failed to highlight a large number of contradictory comments and indeed numerous examples of consistency in grading were noted. In general, given the degree of student dissatisfaction the reviewers were impressed by the consistency and level of feedback.

In some instances, variation in feedback is useful at this level of study, exposing postgraduate students to feedback from a wide range of clinical specialists. We have made continued efforts to highlight the benefits of multiple views which may result in inconsistency but avoids single grader bias and provides a more global view.

c) Innovative Modes of Delivery

We have a number of ‘innovative delivery methods that promote active learning and are authentic to professional life. The framework of the programmes allow for a more accessible and flexible university award (and concurrent professional qualification in some programmes). The collaborative learning community allows veterinary surgeons and veterinary professionals isolated in the practice setting to interact with colleagues and form learning groups both nationally and internationally benefiting from their shared clinical experience guided by tutors who are specialists in their field. The strong networks built up

between students endure beyond the completion of the programme, supporting the ethos of lifelong learning fostered by the programmes content and structure.

The structure of the programmes offer post graduate professionals opportunities that were previously only available to students in full time education such as support and guidance to perform research in the practice setting creating new research opportunities for both students, clinical and institute staff alike. The VPS programme is also accessible to residents providing a clearly structured training pathway to obtain an MSc.

The programmes create relationships between University of Liverpool academics and practising vets and veterinary health professionals, disseminating good practice and raising the profile of the academic specialists who contribute to the delivery of the modules and the UoL referral hospitals they work from. Many of the veterinary academic staff have taken on module coordination roles and have the opportunity to play a role in developing modules which may be their only opportunity to input into curriculum design. They are also exposed to different teaching methods as the undergraduate curriculum still favours didactic teaching and they can use these opportunities to support their career progression.

d) Learning and Study Skills

- *Online learning can represent a challenge to busy full time professionals learning part-time, but the team have developed a series of learning and study skills aids, built upon over the years based on student feedback from the end of module feedback surveys every semester which help identify the skills required by them*
- Examples of study aids developed in response to student feedback include:
 - Delegates are sent (to their personal email) a video aiding them to log onto their University student page (<https://liverpool.instructuremedia.com/embed/3037e46e-8997-405e-89dd-6627eaba092e>). *This was developed in response to delegate feedback as some delegates did not possess a good 'IT-skill set'.*
 - Delegates are provided with a video on first logging onto the learning platform to help them learn the key elements of the newly introduced learning platform on Canvas (<https://liverpool.instructuremedia.com/embed/a1b65dd9-238a-4f06-a2a4-206a759a9e6c>). *This minimised the time delegates spent on adjusting to the platform so their time might be better focused on acquiring the desired learning outcomes.*
 - Delegates are asked to complete a quiz with the module (<https://liverpool.instructure.com/courses/24548/assignments/45004>) *The assignment is ungraded but ensures delegates rapidly acquire an understanding of the layout of the learning platform so their time might be better focused on acquiring the desired learning outcomes.*
 - Delegates are provided with a video to aid them managing the notifications they receive from the Canvas-learning-platform (<https://liverpool.instructuremedia.com/embed/51454be4-99d8-4c61-bf3c-57b7928ad96c>) *This aids delegates to stay in touch with the module and receive*

important updates so they might better focus their time on acquiring the desired learning outcomes.

- Delegates are provided with a video to provide further information on the KnowHow site provided by the University.
(<https://liverpool.instructuremedia.com/embed/29a3fe8b-2969-4722-88b1-6b170bdd5b18>) *This aids delegates to rapidly assimilate what the KnowHow provides and determine if it is appropriate to their needs so they might better focus their time on acquiring the desired learning outcomes.*
- Delegates are provided with a video to aid them on the process involved in logging onto the Team platform
(<https://liverpool.instructuremedia.com/embed/59b56ff5-727c-4d05-bdc4-f675f003bae7>) *The Teams platform is used to host Journal clubs but given the increased use of Teams delegates are paradoxically having issues logging out of their work-based Teams application and logging into the site hosted by the University. This aids the delegates rapidly overcome any issues so they might better focus their time and efforts on the learning outcomes/aspects of the Journal club itself.*
- Delegates are provided with a video to acquire the skills required to best use the Discussion area on the module
(<https://liverpool.instructuremedia.com/embed/c0c28a8f-71db-4b68-9998-57f77f8ed9d4>) *Delegates need to use the discussion area on the module to fully benefit from the teaching and learning opportunities on the module. This video helps them to acquire those skills.*
- Delegates are provided with a video to demonstrate how to share topic choices on the module. (<https://liverpool.instructuremedia.com/embed/699a5426-f88d-4582-bdee-850b12358bc5>) *Delegates need to be able to share certain topic choices as part of their learning experience. This video helps them to acquire those skills.*
- Delegates are provided with a video to take them through the steps involved in submitting case reports on the module.
(<https://liverpool.instructuremedia.com/embed/afab5245-723b-4fa6-9896-4e01d8f10e88>). *A key part of the learning and assessment environment this video takes delegates through the steps involved in the technical aspects of the submission process so they might better focus on the learning and assessment aspects of the task.*
- *Study skills are a continual work in progress but are backed up by staff and peer connections despite the distance environment. Each module has a module co-ordinator assigned and they stay in contact with delegates through regular communication via the learning platform and directly as they progress through the semester identifying any additional skills which delegates need to acquire*
- *In Vet Physiotherapy, one to one online student sessions are also run with Programme coordinators to discuss students' progress, the programme overall and any personal issues relating to the programme the student may have.*

e. e-Learning

The postgraduate programmes are formed on the basis of active online learning which by definition is e-learning and our assessment and delivery encourage e-learning and digital fluency in a highly developed and highly supportive environment. The modules were designed to be worked through by a cohort of students, to encourage peer-peer interaction and a sense of community, whilst enabling students to share their practice experiences and learn from each other. Using this format we are able to reach a cohort of fully employed professional students for whom postgraduate degrees would otherwise mean leaving their place of work and potentially moving significant distances.

Digital fluency is further developed as follows:

- Virtual Learning Environment (Blackboard, almost completely replaced by Canvas)
- Microsoft Office
- Online delivery via Zoom / Teams
- Data analysis software in Master's programmes

We were therefore not affected by COVID at all in the 100% online programmes.

The blended programmes had a solid basis on which to develop online responses including final exams and practical residential period adaptations to the online environment.

Changes in veterinary physiotherapy:

- *Residential practical weeks were delivered as a combination of online live sessions, recorded practical sessions and face to face local (own country) mentoring sessions to ensure this element of the teaching was not delayed.*
- *This involved the development of new online resources such as multiple short video "bites" for anatomy dissections; the use of active video streaming during practical sessions and an innovative practical examination system involving a remote zoomed in examiner and local animal handler, camera person and student.*

The Physiotherapy final exams were such a success that they were commended by the external examiner, Stuart Porter, had excellent feedback from the candidates and internal examiners and we were looking into keeping this examination format to reduce travel and improve sustainability for international students in the future.

The DBR responded to COVID by adding in more e-learning and dissertation monitoring channels in Teams so that all supervision is recorded and can be tracked by the programme director to ensure deadlines were being met. The greater acceptance of online delivery will allow speakers from a wider geographical area to be included. This had already begun in 2018-20 cohort and has been accelerated.

f. Employability

All four programmes are universally studied by working professionals due to the prerequisites for the professionally accredited programmes, the vast majority of those working full time.

While employability has reached university targets annually, we have been interested in the career enhancing effects of our PGT programmes and undertaken pedagogic research to study this. A recent survey was performed by Liverpool academic staff on CertAVP

graduates; the CertAVP is the professional qualification aligned with Liverpool's dual-accredited certificate in VPS. Of 104 respondents, 84% undertook their postgraduate studies at Liverpool.

Job roles among respondents included small animal vets (40.4%), equine vets (38.5%), production animal vets (6.7%), vets working in academia (6.7%), mixed practice vets (5.8%), vets working in pharmaceuticals (3.8%), and vets with 'other' jobs – pathology, regulation, charity work. Cumulative percentages exceed 100 due to individuals noting multiple job roles. There was no reported unemployment. Part-time vs full-time work was not included in the survey.

The same graduate survey investigated the effect of the CertAVP on career progression and professional practice among graduates. An overwhelmingly positive effect was seen by graduates relating to the effect of the CertAVP on their professional practice – which links well with the Curriculum 2021 graduate attribute of confidence. However, the effect on career progression was more evenly spread over a range of responses, and a future avenue for investigation prior to the next periodic review includes defining the effect of gaining Advanced Practitioner status on graduates' perceptions of career progression, as this potential sequela of the CertAVP course is likely to represent a seminal career point for many vets, and lacking this information in the recent graduate survey may have been a confounding factor.

Veterinary Physiotherapy

All students who pass either work for themselves or a private Animal Physiotherapy practice as an employee or in a self-employed capacity. Most students already work in the NHS so tend to work there part-time and then build their animal physio practice over a number of years. There is maximal scope for all students as they are qualified in all animal species.

We do not provide formal business development training as this is an additional burden on the learning for the graduates and as the Animal/Veterinary Physiotherapy industry has continued to grow over the last 35 years, there is a natural open market for our students to join.

All students are able to provide clinical placement training once they have been qualified and in practice for 2 years and we have many previous students on our list of clinical Placement Providers showing how successful their Animal Physiotherapy career has been.

All DBR participants are in full time clinical practice. Many choose the programme to allow further employment specialisation. Practices which employ DBR holders are now using this in adverts for both farm client and veterinary surgeon recruitment. Many of these practices enrol a new employee on sequential programme cohorts.

g. Work Placements

All programmes are based around full or part time working professionals who reflect on their own practice. Therefore, the entirety of all 4 programmes could be seen as "work placements". However, there are also options for specific work placements, including two clinical placement modules in the DipVPS. While undertaking these clinical placement modules,

students observe models of practice in a discipline of their choosing, upon which they can benchmark their own skill set and identify personal objectives for development. Similarly, clinical educator training consists of placements with different providers in the Veterinary Physiotherapy Profession, where learning different approaches from the different placement opportunities is one of the intended outcomes.

h. International Study

Growing a diverse student body is both a goal and a result of our programme design. The tools we use to help us achieve this aim are largely derived from the structure and pedagogy of our programmes and modules. A few examples are listed below:

- Flexibility – our PGT programmes are designed to allow students to study around work and family commitments at a time suitable for them across different time zones.
- The learning is structured according to students own needs and asynchronous aspects of the modules can be tailored to the requirements of individuals (time on task varies depending on previous level of knowledge/experience)
- The highly developed and navigable online platform provides a collaborative learning environment for students who are geographically remote.

The accessibility and flexibility of our online programmes have led to enrolments from all over the world (Denmark, South Africa, Australia, Spain, Italy, New Zealand, Sweden, Belgium, Norway, Singapore, Germany, France, Canada, Portugal, USA, Malta, Netherlands, Qatar, Switzerland, Israel, Finland, Greece, Brazil, Cyprus, Turkey and Hong Kong). In addition to this we provide structured ongoing CPD for our alumni which has fostered relationships with academics from other higher education institutions both in the UK and the USA.

One of the limitations we face to increasing our diversity is that all our students are either from within the veterinary profession and those with RCVS registrable degrees or for the Veterinary Physiotherapy programme the student body is limited to Chartered Physiotherapists.

The characteristics of the student intake from 20190-20 by programme is shown below:

Programme/ Ethnicity	UK	EU	Home/EU combined	Non-EU
Veterinary Professional Studies	325 (92%)	20 (6%)	345 (98%)	8 (2%)
Veterinary Business Management	46 (90%)	4 (8%)	50 (98%)	1 (2%)
Veterinary Physiotherapy	9 (50%)	3 (17%)	12 (67%)	6 (33%)
Diploma in Bovine Reproduction	8 (89%)	0	(89%)	1 (11%)

The proportion of HEU students is comparable to the previous academic year with a slight decrease in Non-EU students on the VPS and VBM programmes when compared to figures obtained in 2017/18. International students on the Veterinary Physiotherapy programme remains consistently high.

i. Market Intelligence

Our PGT programmes were initially set up after canvassing the profession for gaps in CPD provision and have grown from that point. Word of mouth still remains our key marketing tool. We rely on student feedback to direct new initiative such as the development of mini modules (CPD) following multiple requests for more alumni activities and these have proved very popular.

VPS programme:

- We attend the British Equine Veterinary Association, British Small Animal Veterinary Association and the London Vet Show Annually
- The team provide in house marketing including management of the Website, Twitter and Facebook accounts, email flyers and a calendar of events
- The VPS programme is accredited by the RCVS and one of their providers of training
- We are aware of and work with other providers to ensure we are meeting the needs of the profession.

Vet Physio

- We attend the annual CSP conference in November (virtual conference in 2020 and 2021).
- Active UoL Animal Phototherapy Facebook page which is regularly populated with activity and news by the PS team
- Programme Coordinator has close links to ACPAT and RAMP with appropriate and constructive information exchanges
- The Programme is accredited and linked on their websites, by both the Association of Chartered Physiotherapists in Animal Therapy and the Register of Animal Musculoskeletal Practitioners
- Attend careers evening annually at one local school

DBR

We attend the British Cattle Veterinary Association conference. Every other year coinciding with the end of a cohort of the programme half of the practitioner study presentation slots are taken up by presentation of DBR dissertation projects.

The Cert AVP cattle modules also provide a platform for DBR holders and staff to engage with the profession. CertAVP and then DBR provides a unique lifelong learning pathway for farm animal veterinary surgeons.

The DBR is recognised training programme for the European College of Animal Reproduction and RCVS Advanced practitioner status (with on further module required).s

j. Engagement of Employers / Community

Our engagement with employers includes:

- We actively participate in face-to-face engagement opportunities via large educational congresses (British Equine/ Cattle/ Small Animal Veterinary Association Congress) The Veterinary Postgraduate Unit (VPU) take a trade stand at each of these congresses to promote the education and training offered.
- We utilise social media and traditional advertising avenues to engage with employers.
- Employers seek us out due to reputation and unparalleled PGT offered by the Veterinary Postgraduate Unit (VPU) at the UoL. Employers will encourage employees to enrol on PGT courses with the VPU even to an extent that this is a provision of the employees' contract. They understand and can see the economic benefit of employees who undertake further studies and training to enhance their skills and qualifications. Employees who complete PGT put the employer in a very strong position to offer more specialised treatments and care to clients and their patients. This can give the employer and the practice a competitive edge over other practices in the area through clients seeking out a practice with highly trained employees resulting in increased revenue stream.
- Employers enjoy the fact that employees can participate in the PGT while also continuing to work in clinical practice. Indeed, we try to tailor our courses taking into account that students will be practising clinicians alongside busy personal lives.
- Employees with PGT and further qualification can aid with enrolment of the business in the RCVS Practice Standards Scheme (PSS). The PSS promotes and maintains the highest standard of veterinary care enhancing public perception and confidence in the profession.

Indirectly from our research into career opportunities (see employability above) arising from our VPS programme, we have gained valuable insight into what employers value in our graduates and we plan to continue to research this area and gain more insight to ensure we are meeting the profession's needs.

2) Student Support

Pastoral and academic support are provided by the module coordinator as well as extensive, consistent and highly regarded administrative support. Module coordinators are available throughout the module period to help students with any specific requests regarding academic support or other. Students are professionals, frequently juggling work, and family commitments alongside their study. The academic and administrative team are sympathetic to these conflicts and provide support and guidance to help students manage their study in a way that suits them. The flexible nature of the two wholly online programmes allows for breaks between modules, making the programme more accessible to busy professionals. Extenuating circumstances are managed quickly by the administrative team to allow some flexibility to assessment deadlines where professional or personal commitments get in the way of meeting original deadlines. Programme suspensions are also used where necessary. All these are managed by a well-trained administrative student support team who consistently receive high praise from students for their speed and level of support.

Students requiring extra educational support are directed to Student Disability Support for development of a learning support plan. Any special learning needs are circulated to the relevant module coordinator at the start of the module period, so they are aware where additional support is required.

The core modules for each programme contain well developed induction material, directing students to locate where to go for support, and facilities and services available to them as a student. The core modules contain numerous induction videos and documents, aiming to orientate students quickly and easily. Student surveys consistently show high satisfaction with accessing and navigating the online platform. Module coordinators of these core modules are particularly good at following individual students progress to help pick up early students who have not engaged or seem to be struggling to access course material or feedback.

Feedback on progress is supplied in the form of extensive feedback on written assessments. These summative assessments are used formatively, with comprehensive written feedback given on assessments to help and guide development. Students are actively encouraged to seek further individual support from module coordinators where required. Students whose performance has been poor are particularly directed to seek this support.

Vet Physio - Additional student support is provided on an individual basis at both academic and pastoral levels. This has been increased during the Covid pandemic as the practical elements of the programme have been delayed.

The DBR offer similar support but the programme needs to be completed in order so suspension of studies until the next cohort may be needed in some, rare, circumstances. All participants are assigned two dissertations supervisors who also support.

3) Learning Environment

The primary learning environment for the 100% online programmes and the online component of the blended programmes is the virtual learning environment (VLE) which has already been discussed extensively in section 1.

While the Veterinary Postgraduate Unit are University leaders in online learning, we are also unusual in being wholly online and not partnered with an external company such as Kaplan. This means many of the decisions about the VLE technology are based around the majority of university programmes that are primarily didactic. This was recently highlighted with the University's switch to CANVAS from Blackboard (VITAL). Fortunately, we were able to get ahead of the game and were 12 months ahead in our move to CANVAS and, with some trial and tribulation, were able to translate all of our pedagogy to the new platform.

The facilities for the two blended programmes are shared with the undergraduates and use of the facilities has to work around the clinical rotation teaching which is until the end of July each year, with no Easter holiday period. This impacts the Residential schools for the Vet

Physios which can really only be done when the Vet students are not on the Leahurst campus and restricts our timetable delivery. The DBR use the Leahurst campus learning environment with attendance weeks coinciding with absence of clinical rotation teaching to maximise utilisation as well.

The blended programmes use the following areas of the:

- Leahurst Lecture Theatre (capacity 181) for didactic lectures
- Leahurst Library (capacity 20) for private study
- Henry Edwards Learning Centre (3 tutorial rooms + clinical skills lab)
- Leahurst House (4 tutorial rooms capacity 20 to 40)
- Wood Park Dairy Farm including visitor centre teaching rooms
- Ness Heath Beef and Sheep Farm
- The equine hospital facilities
- The Small Animal Teaching Hospital facilities
- The Student laboratory adjacent the main lecture theatre (capacity 16 for small group live animal work).

On the whole facilities for DBR teaching, especially HELC, are good, and clashes are rare as the same team teach the undergraduate and PGT programme.

4) Staff Development

Induction of new staff is performed by the Veterinary Postgraduate Unit Director(s) or a relevant senior member of staff.

Mentoring of academic staff is performed by the relevant Director or Programme lead.

All staff are required to have a teaching qualification with staff expected to achieve a minimum of FHEA, either by undertaking the CIE or PGCAP.

All staff undergo an annual PDR with their line manager and for the unit Directors this will also include the Head of Veterinary Education.

The unit provides multiple unique opportunities for clinical and non-clinical academic staff.

The international audience afforded by the online programmes allows staff to increase their professional profile. At the opposite end of the spectrum, the interaction with UK based PGT students allows clinical staff to foster relationships with referring vets.

Teaching on online PGT programmes has helped to develop digital literacies amongst all staff which has been a huge advantage for those staff involved in PGT in transitioning to online learning for undergraduate teaching in the face of the current global pandemic.

Academic staff who take on roles as module coordinators have the opportunity to play a role in developing modules which can be advantageous for those staff who may otherwise have very little input into curriculum. The use of online programmes also offers exposure to

different teaching methods and many staff will utilise their involvement with PGT to contribute to their career progression and PDR.

The Masters programmes also provide opportunities for clinical research for clinical staff and institute staff with postgraduate professionals with Masters Projects (plus seed funding of £500)

Student feedback on teaching and taught content is collected via end of module surveys and focus groups (Veterinary Physiotherapy). The focus of this feedback is on specific modules rather than individual teachers. This allows us to collect module specific feedback, as well as providing an overview of how the programme is perceived as a whole.

Feedback from this survey is analysed by each module coordinator at the end of every semester and is presented at a meeting of module and programme coordinators and administration staff three times every academic year.

This system also allows us to react quickly to any specific issues and repeatedly evaluate our performance. In addition, by joining as a group to discuss feedback, module coordinators and academic staff can keep track of any emerging, persistent or widespread programme-wide issues.

The module surveys have moved to Evasys in 2020/21 academic year and (due to the structure of the UG teaching in yearlong 'courses') this is the only opportunity for many academic staff to have feedback on courses they are directly and solely responsible for.

We believe that a teacher-specific feedback system is being developed by the University that will then feed into PDRs but we are not sure when / if that will be introduced.

There is also a 'Veterinary Education Research Group' that enables staff to keep up to date with the latest pedagogic research, and stimulates the sharing of good practice.

Most staff contributing to the DBR have post graduate qualifications, some have the DBR and RCVS Specialist status. All have PDRs with the Programme Director, who is also Head of Department and contribution to DBR lectures, assessment and supervision is taken into account in workload and CPD allocation.

5) Programme Management

Apart from standard module review and examination boards, the main student-focused education committees comprise:

- Module coordinators' meetings: these occur three times annually and are when all (internal and external) module coordinators meet to discuss the feedback in the end of module surveys. Good practice is shared and problems in one module shared – where solutions or prevention can often be implemented across many areas.

There are standard practices by the Unit required of module coordinators around student communication around these meetings. Students are informed of the survey taking place both by administrative emails, but also a personal announcement by their module coordinator who also informs them that we will respond to their feedback. Following the survey and meeting, the students have feedback on the responses – for example

explanations, instructions, apologies about things that may have not gone well or thank you about what went well. As mentioned above in learning and study skills (Curriculum d.), these surveys and the meetings have frequently translated in the development of new instructional materials to guide students better.

- Core academics' meeting: this is a smaller group where issues relating to programmes and modules can be raised, good practice shared, information shared and projects implemented.

The core academics meeting has been the major forum for sharing good practice and implementing the CANVAS project.

- PGT curriculum subcommittee, with responsibility for assessment and progression. The committee provides oversight of whole programme and responsibility for approval of education committee proposals. If proposals require a programme change, they are sent to Curriculum Board.
- PGT curriculum Board, with responsibility for quality assurance and to interface with FAQSC and SSP.
- DBR has a committee of all staff involved in supervision which meets before the residential / online week associated with each module. The PG Assessment Officer attends. This provides a forum for feedback from staff and includes a review of feedback from participants in each module. It is administrated by a part-time member of PS staff dedicated to the programme and supported within VPU.

We collate data from these meetings which is fed through the various committees to further enhance our programme:

- *The annual programme monitoring process and internal periodic review is co-ordinated by the Head of Veterinary Postgraduate Education and Programme Directors.*
- *The University's strategic plan and policies are maintained by the Curriculum Subcommittee and Board.*