

External Examiner Report Template (ONLINE)

The following details will continue to be captured via the online reporting process:

- Name(s) of External Examiner(s) contributing to a collaborative or individual report: Laura Green and Jeroen Dewulf
- Programme Title and Award: MSc Veterinary Epidemiology
- Collaborative partner and location (if applicable): LSHTM
- Year of Examination: 2012-13
- Examination (only applicable to BVetMed)
- Date(s) of attendance at the RVC:

The online system will capture agreed sign-off by each collaborating external examiner or individual where necessary.

Instructions for completion:

1. For sections 1 - 4 please type your comments in the spaces provided. You are asked to indicate if you expect to receive a response from the College.
2. For section 5, please delete as appropriate (Yes, No or N/A). You are asked to provide additional comments, particularly if you answered 'No'.
3. Names of all students and staff should be omitted from external examiners' reports, to maintain appropriate confidentiality.
4. Unless comments are returned within three weeks of completion of the Exam Board meeting, it may not be possible to act upon these comments in the forthcoming academic year.
5. Please return expense claims with receipts attached by post to the Academic Quality Manager, The Royal Veterinary College, Hawkshead Lane, North Mymms, Hatfield, AL9 7TA.

Thank you!

Please comment on the areas detailed below, highlighting the appropriateness and strengths and/or weaknesses.

1. Programme	External Examiner comments: For Publication	A response from the College is required, if yes, please check the box [✓]	College Response: (Where the response requires action(s), each action must be outlined, a completion date given and a responsible individual named)
1.1. Course content	The content is appropriate for an MSc	[]	Response: Action (if any) date & name:
1.2. Learning objectives	These are clearly laid out for the students	[]	Response: Action (if any) date & name:
1.3. Teaching methods	There are a variety of teaching methods that should engage all the students	[]	Response: Action (if any) date & name:
1.4. Resources (in so far as they affected the assessment)	We were not made aware of resources used	[]	Response: Action (if any) date & name:
Please provide any additional comments and recommendations regarding the Programme:	It would be sensible to give this form to examiners at the start of the first day of examination to ensure they have a list of areas to cover in the examination of the course and students	[✓]	Response: Action (if any) date & name: Exams office to provide the "External Examiner Report Template" to examiners when they arrive on the day before the orals and Exam Board meeting, so that examiners know which areas they will be required to comment upon.

Please comment on the areas detailed below, highlighting strengths and/or weaknesses.

2. Student performance	External Examiner comments: For Publication	A response from the College is required, if yes, please check the box [✓]	College Response: (Where the response requires action(s), each action must be outlined, a completion date given and a responsible individual named)
2.1. Students' performance in relation to those at a similar stage on comparable courses in other institutions, where this is known to you	The course is a good quality and similar to MScs in other institutions in Europe.	[]	Response: Action (if any) date & name:
2.2. Quality of candidates' knowledge and skills, with particular reference to those at the top, middle or bottom of the range	The students performance varies as would be expected and the exam results facilitate a wide range of performance to reflect students interest and ability	[]	Response: Action (if any) date & name:
Please provide any additional comments and recommendations regarding the students' performance:	The current requirement to get 75% for a distinction is a very high boundary given the rigorous exams and the fact that the 8 week project accounts for 1/3of the marks. It is likely that some years no student will reach 75% overall. This pass mark has changed from the previous 70% and the course directors might want to reflect on how material is marked to	[✓]	Response: We take on board the examiners' comments and agree that students who are clearly at distinction level should be able to obtain a mark reflecting their ability. It was unfortunate that on this occasion one particular student who had performed extremely well throughout the year submitted a project report that was not of distinction standard which affected the student's overall mark. Clear descriptors are provided in the 17-point

	ensure that students who are at distinction level can achieve 75%		marking scheme to indicate what constitutes distinction-level work and thus should be awarded 75% or more. To our knowledge this mark has not changed from 70% in recent years. The marking scheme is applied on a College-wide basis and cannot be amended for individual courses. The marking scheme is available to students at the start of the academic year and thus they should know what they need to do to obtain a merit or distinction on the course. Action (if any) date & name: No specific action needed; see also response to comment 4.2 below.
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Please comment on the areas detailed below, highlighting appropriateness and strengths and/or weaknesses.

3. Assessment Process	External Examiner comments: For Publication	A response from the College is required, if yes, please check the box [✓]	College Response: (Where the response requires action(s), each action must be outlined, a completion date given and a responsible individual named)
3.1. Assessment methods (relevance to learning objectives and curriculum)	A variety of assessment methods are used and this is to be commended	[]	Response: Action (if any) date & name:
3.2. Extent to which assessment processes are rigorous	The processes appear rigorous. It is good that there are now always model answers to exam questions. We recommend that markers provide a breakdown of marks within each question (preferably noted on the exam papers) that reflects the breakdown of marks provided in the model answers to that the external examiners can more easily check for consistency in marking	[✓]	Response: This is a valuable comment and we will try to ensure that breakdown of marks awarded is provided with the exam scripts, either annotated on the scripts themselves or provided in a separate file. Action (if any) date & name: Exams Office will provide verbal instruction to examiners to annotate exam scripts and clearly provide breakdown of marks for each question, either on the script or separately.
3.3. Consistency of the level of assessment with the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ)		[]	Response: Action (if any) date & name:

3.4. Standard of marking	The marking appears to be fair and objective	[]	Response: Action (if any) date & name:
3.5. Opinion on changes to the assessment process from previous years in which you have examined	See comment at end of section 2	[]	Response: Action (if any) date & name:
Please provide any additional comments and recommendations regarding the assessment process:		[]	Response: Action (if any) date & name:

Please comment on the areas detailed below, highlighting strengths and/or weaknesses.

4. Procedures	External Examiner comments: For Publication	A response from the College is required, if yes, please check the box [✓]	College Response: (Where the response requires action(s), each action must be outlined, a completion date given and a responsible individual named)
4.1. In your view, are the processes for assessment and the determination of awards sound and fairly conducted? (e.g. Briefing, Exam administration, marking arrangements, Board of Examiners, participation by External examiners)	Yes. We would recommend that the course directors or appointed other academic read the final projects so that there is more consistent standardisation of marks. In addition, if projects could be made available to the examiners well before the examination days this would facilitate reading them. They probably do not need a mark from markers for this to be useful.	[✓]	Response: We aim to spread the marking load of projects evenly across academics and it is not clear to what extent it would be possible and/or appropriate for Course Directors (or another academic), if they were to read all reports, to moderate marks awarded by colleagues (noting the projects are double-marked and a mark agreed between examiners). This would essentially mean that the Course Directors mark all the projects, which is not ideal considering time constraints (project marks need to be turned around in a short space of time) but also in terms of expertise, when some projects may benefit from being marked by examiner(s) with appropriate expertise in the subject area. It should however not be a problem to send the project reports to external examiners ahead of the examination days. Action (if any) date & name: Maria Johnson to send project reports to externals examiners shortly after submission and well ahead of the oral examinations.

<p>4.2. Opinion on changes to the procedures from previous years in which you have examined</p>	<p>Each year the process for external examiners has improved, this year the meeting of the board of examiners was much more organised and smooth and this is to be commended. Also the availability of the evaluation report of the internal examiners on the projects is very helpful</p>	<p>[]</p>	<p>Response: Action (if any) date & name:</p>
<p>Please provide any additional comments and recommendations regarding the procedures:</p>	<p>One suggestion was that students should be able to be upgraded e.g. to a merit or distinction without having to have their exam mark artificially raised. We recommend that this be considered across the MSc courses.</p>	<p>[✓]</p>	<p>Response: We agree that this should be possible and will take this comment forward to be considered on a wider basis than just for this course, as it will not be possible to “upgrade” students on this course but not on other courses. Action (if any) date & name: Course Directors to take this comment to the Masters Courses Coordinating Committee for consideration, explaining the situation that gave rise to this comment (see also response to comment 2.2. above)</p>

5. General Statements	[YES] [NO] [N/A] check as appropriate	Additional comments, particularly if your answer was no:	A response from the College is required, if yes, please check the box [✓]	College Response: (All responses leading to an action must note an identified timeframe and responsible individual. Please outline the action and a date by which the action will be taken)
5.1. Comments I have made in previous years have been addressed to my satisfaction	[YES]		[]	Response: Action (if any) date & name:
5.2. An acceptable response has been made	[YES]		[]	Response: Action (if any) date & name:
5.3. I approved the papers for the Examination	[YES]		[]	Response: Action (if any) date & name:
5.4. I was able to scrutinise an adequate sample of students' work and marks to enable me to carry out my duties	[YES]		[]	Response: Action (if any) date & name:
5.5. I attended the meeting of the Board of Examiners held to approve the results of the Examination	[YES]		[]	Response: Action (if any) date & name:
5.6. Candidates were considered impartially and fairly	[YES]		[]	Response: Action (if any) date & name:
5.7. The standards set for the awards are appropriate for qualifications at this level, in this subject	[YES]		[]	Response: Action (if any) date & name:
5.8. The standards of student performance are comparable with similar programmes or subjects in other UK institutions with which I am familiar	[YES]		[]	Response: Action (if any) date & name:
5.9. I have received enough support to carry out my role	[YES]		[]	Response: Action (if any) date & name:
5.10. I have received sufficient information to carry out my role (where information was insufficient, please give details)	[YES]		[]	Response: Action (if any) date & name:
5.11. Appropriate procedures and processes have been followed	[YES]		[]	Response: Action (if any) date & name:
5.12. The processes for assessment and the determination of awards are sound	[YES]		[]	Response: Action (if any) date & name:

If you have identified any areas of good practice, please comment more fully here. We may use information provided in our annual external examining report:

Do you have any suggestions for improvements based on experience at other institutes? We may use information provided in our annual external examining report:

It is much easier to evaluate marking if the scripts contain comments and marks for sub sections that tally with the model answers. We recommend that this is a standard procedure for all those marking exam scripts.

RVC response: It is standard procedure to annotate scripts, please refer to the response provided in item 3.2.

External Examiner comments: For College information only (Responses to External Examiners are published on the College's website. Please only use this box to add any comments that you wish to remain confidential, if any)

Thank you for completing this annual report!

All External Examiner reports will be responded to via the following process [<http://www.rvc.ac.uk/Examiners/documents/ExternalExaminerReports.pdf>] and in time for the annual RVC Inset Day on Assessment.