

The University of Edinburgh

Internal Periodic Review

14-week response report

Internal Periodic Review of: The Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies Postgraduate Taught provision

Date of review: 19th and 20th May 2022

Date of 14-week response: 25th October 2022

The School/Subject Area is responsible for reporting on progress with all recommendations, including those remitted to other areas of the University for action. If any recommendation has been fully addressed please record the action taken and date completed. Any barriers to progress should be highlighted on this report.

Recomm endation no	Recommendation	Timescale for completion	Comment on progress towards completion and/or identify barriers to completion	Completion date
1	<p>Support for dissertation students</p> <p>The review team recommends that the School reflect on flexibility of dissertation topics, and monitor its ability to provide appropriate supervisor allocation in view of the promised flexibility and diversity of projects.</p> <p>The review team recognises that different supervisory approaches are the norm, and that there is no single “best practice” method. The review team recommends that the School consider ways to have an annual event for dissertation supervisors to meet and share practices so supervisors can discuss their approaches and gain insight into those used by others.</p> <p>The review team recommends that the School consider an opportunity for dissertation students to meet to share progress (for example a poster presentation), to help mitigate feelings of isolation during the dissertation year (particularly for online students).</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Spring 2023</p> <p>February-March 2023</p>	<p>Discussions have begun regarding dissertation topics, and these will continue. This will be an ongoing activity, ensuring it remains flexible as programmes develop and staffing levels change.</p> <p>Following discussion with programme teams at the autumn Postgraduate Learning and Teaching Committee (PGT LTC), a date for an annual supervisor event will be scheduled. It is expected this may be in the early spring, prior to the April-June busy write-up period for most programmes.</p> <p>This type of activity already takes place in most programmes; our aim is to extend this to a cross-programme event. This will also be discussed with programme teams at PGT LTC and a date identified that sits within the dissertation year. It is expected this may be early in the new year. A barrier to completion may be finding a time that is suitable for all programmes. If that is the case, it may be necessary to arrange more than one event.</p>	

<p>2</p>	<p>Discussion board interactions by staff with students The review team recommends that the School consider facilitating a focused session on discussion boards for staff to share practice, consider the discussion boards' intended use, student demographic and time dimension of tools that may limit engagement. It is important to clarify expectations of what discussions boards are for to both students and staff. The School may also wish to encourage student-led activity with student reps where different tools may be used.</p>	<p>November-December 2022</p>	<p>Our Veterinary Medical Education Division (VMED) liaison, Dr Louise Connelly, has agreed to adapt discussion board sessions that currently run to provide a number of sessions for staff to attend and discuss enhanced use of various tools that encourage engagement and discussion. All teaching staff will be encouraged to take part in these training sessions.</p> <p>Once the 2022-23 PGT Student Rep is confirmed, they will be invited to attend and to reach out to all postgraduate taught students.</p> <p>A short-life working group focusing on Group and Peer Assessment has included some consideration about the use of discussion boards and other tools for building a sense of community and developing a range of academic skills. This group is in the process of organising a panel session with colleagues from within and outwith the School to discuss methods of engaging with students in groups. In addition, the group is reviewing funding opportunities (SPA/PTAS) to support a student-led review of the proposals from the group.</p>	
<p>3</p>	<p>Personal Tutor System The review team recommends that the School management team considers the ratio of tutees to staff and how tutors are supported in managing expectations of the tutor role; some staff feel overwhelmed and this in turn leads to an impact on student experience.</p> <p>The review team recommends that the School management team monitors implementation of</p>	<p>Underway and ongoing</p>	<p>The Director and Deputy of Postgraduate Taught Studies have been working with the Student Support Manager, Gillian MacDonald, to identify additional staff to take on the role of personal tutor. The training and PT handbook have been revised, and a new role of PGT Senior Tutor has been put in place to provide additional support. This is expected to be an ongoing activity. The new process that</p>	

	the new student support system with these points in mind.		has been put in place allows the team to monitor allocation and transition to the new Student Support Model in 2023-4.	
4	<p>Communication</p> <p>The review team recommends that the School considers having a single, named, point of contact for postgraduate students. This contact should be clearly visible so that all students know where to go to ask for advice or be directed towards the appropriate service for the student's enquiry.</p>	Complete	<p>Named contacts provided in handbooks</p> <p>PGT Personal Tutor statement</p> <p>Further discussions are underway to ensure this information is clear as we move towards implementing the Student Support Model in Phase 2 (2023-24).</p> <p>Presentation on Wellbeing Service included in inductions and information to students at start of year.</p>	September 2022
5	<p>Centrally provided digital learning</p> <p>The review team heard from School staff that the pandemic response to moving centrally provided courses online, such as Data Management provided by the Institute for Academic Development, had been beneficial for their online students. However, they thought that with the focus on moving such courses back to on-campus provision only, this would restrict access for both online students and students and staff based at the Easter Bush campus. The review team recommends that the Institute for Academic Development considers whether there are opportunities to retain some of the access, provided by the pandemic response, to its courses.</p>	Complete	<p>The School notes with thanks that the IAD will continue to offer a range of online sessions in addition to the return of the on-campus events.</p> <p>The team have been in contact with the IAD to discuss the provision of recordings. A popular question from students at the start of term relates to recordings of IAD sessions. Our students are familiar with our School approach of recording at least one session, excluding the student Q&A, so they can catch up if unable to attend. As a result, they are surprised that recordings of IAD events are not available, though we understand that some sessions are recorded and links available to those who register to attend.</p> <p>We appreciate that the events are interactive, so separating out the student input might not be possible. This was</p>	<p>6th October 2022, though further developments and resources will be promoted through the year.</p> <p>The R(D)SVS will continue to work with the IAD Study Skills team to identify popular courses for our</p>

			<p>confirmed following discussion with the IAD Study Skills team.</p> <p>We asked if there might be an opportunity to create a channel/set of videos similar to those created by the IS team for the dissertation festival and making the most of IT resources. The IAD team confirmed that videos are being developed for the Study Hub learning resources channel. This, together with links to other resources, were circulated to all PGT students on the 6th October 2022 and included on the Academic Study Skills course.</p> <p>Students were also asked to contact the R(D)SVS team if there were any particular areas they wanted additional resources for, so this can be shared with the IAD. A regular reminder will be sent out.</p>	<p>students which may help prioritise future developments.</p>
	<p>Please report on steps taken to feedback to students on the outcomes of the review</p>	<p>As the IPR report was received after the end of the academic year, students have not yet been informed of the outcomes of the review. As the actions above are implemented, students will be notified. An example of this is seen with the announcements sent regarding the IAD resources.</p>		