

The University of Edinburgh

Internal Periodic Review

Year on 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

Date of year on response: 11th July 2023

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.

Recommendation no	Recommendation	Timescale for completion	Comment on progress towards completion and/or identify barriers to completion	Completion date
1	<p>Support for dissertation students 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>Ongoing</p> <p>27 & 28 June 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), dates for the first supervisor events were scheduled for June 2023. At this meeting, we discussed topics, frequency and dates for future supervisor meetings. This was also an opportunity to discuss support available for supervisors including the new Student Support Model as the School is involved in Phase 2. Supervisors appreciated the meeting, requested a “contacts-on-a-page” document to keep a note of support and a session on marking and feedback. External supervisors, in particular, commended the University for supporting them in this way. Three meetings per year, plus annual meeting at the student dissertation seminar series (see next point). In addition, a Learn course will be revised and relaunched to provide a supervisor training space.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>First meetings took place in June 2023; further meetings scheduled three times per year.</p> <p>Online supervisor training course revised and relaunched when Learn Ultra is in place.</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>	Autumn 2023	<p>This type of activity already takes place in most programmes; our aim is to extend this to a cross-programme event. Following discussion with programme teams at PGT LTC, the decision was made to schedule this event as an online seminar series in the autumn after final marks have been ratified and before graduation. A meeting is scheduled with Dr Louise Connelly and the new Student Advisers to identify other methods of building community across all years and programmes.</p>	<p>First meeting will be scheduled for autumn 2023</p>
2	<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>May 2023</p>	<p>Discussion boards were a topic at the postgraduate taught away day in May 2023. This session was limited due to time, so will be returned to in the new year. This will be an ongoing activity.</p> <p>The intention in the 14-week response was to invite the 2022-23 PGT Student Rep to attend a session on discussion boards and to reach out to all postgraduate taught students. While the PGT Student Rep was invited to the learning and teaching meeting at the start of the away day, they were unable to attend. Student reps will be invited to future away days.</p>	<p>Initial meeting May 2023; ongoing activity related to student input, training and Learn Ultra.</p> <p>Two away days per year will be scheduled (winter and summer)</p>
		June 2023	<p>As stated in the 14-week report, our Veterinary Medical Education Division (VMED) liaison, Dr Louise Connelly, has circulated information on the new adapted discussion board sessions that will run over the summer. These are designed to inform staff on the enhanced use of various tools that encourage engagement and discussion. All teaching staff will be encouraged to take part in these training sessions in addition to the Learn Ultra training that is already promoted internally and</p>	June 2023

		Ongoing	externally, and which was included in the May away day. 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.	Ongoing
3	<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 the new student support system with these points in mind.</p>	Ongoing	<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 has been put in place allows the team to monitor allocation and transition to the new Student Support Model in 2023-4.</p> <p>Following on from the transition to the Student Support Model as mentioned in the 14-week report, student advisers (SAs) have now been recruited and assigned to key programmes that required additional support. Further SA recruitment is scheduled for 2023-24 to complete the roll-out of the new model. As part of that model, the vet school has a role of professional mentor that focuses on engaging the students as members of the professional research community. This role focuses on</p>	Ongoing

			professional guidance, it provides a key element of the School model in conjunction with the pastoral support provided by the Student Advisers, academic/programme support provided by the cohort lead, and dissertation support provided by the supervisor(s). The system that was implemented to identify additional PTs will now be employed to identify mentors.	
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 and via the School website: PGT Personal Tutor statement</p> <p>Further discussions are underway to ensure this information is clear and revised regularly as we implement the Student Support Model in Phase 2 (2023-24).</p> <p>Presentation on Wellbeing Service and all support options was included in inductions and information to students at start of 2022-23 year. All support information is also on each programme's Base course and reminders are sent by programme teams as assessments approach.</p> <p>Programmes also run regular live catch-up sessions and Student Advisers are involved in planning events and a PGT newsletter for the new academic year.</p>	<p>September 2022</p> <p>Sessions on the Student Support Model have been run for staff in spring 2023. Student sessions scheduled in autumn 2023.</p>
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</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</p>	<p>6th October 2022 and ongoing.</p> <p>The R(D)SVS will continue to</p>

	<p>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>		<p>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 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. Regular email announcements remind students of upcoming events.</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>work with the IAD Study Skills team to identify popular courses for our 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. This is ongoing.</p>		
<p>For Year on</p>	<p>Any examples of a positive change as a result of the review</p>	<p>The postgraduate taught away day was an effective method of bringing the team together and protecting time for discussion of key topics. Away days will be scheduled for twice per year in winter and summer. In addition, sharing</p>		

response only		<p>best practice across UG and PG contexts will be facilitated by the new summer teaching symposium (Aug2023)</p> <p>In addition to the supervisor meeting, we arranged similar meetings with the external examiners for all programmes. These were very well received by external examiners who appreciated the opportunity to connect with the School and other examiners.</p> <p>Kate Ainsworth and Sharon Boyd participated in a CMVM IPR information event in May 2023 to share their experiences of the IPR process.</p>
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