

UNIVERSITY OF GLASGOW

Academic Standards Committee - Wednesday 7 May 2008

**Departmental Programmes of Teaching, Learning and Assessment:
Responses to the Recommendations Arising from the Review of
Veterinary Medicine held on 17 November 2006**

Mr Jim Craig, Clerk to the Review Panel

May 2008

Conclusions and recommendations

Despite most unfavourable weather, members of the Panel enjoyed their visit to the Faculty where arrangements made for their comfort and the conduct of meetings was exemplary. The documentation prepared for them was helpful, particularly the Self Evaluation Report which followed Senate Office guidance and contained evidence of critical evaluation of the Faculty's undergraduate provision. The attitude of the staff whom the Panel met was positive, constructive and helpful. The students were well prepared for their meetings with Panel members, and were thoughtful and lively.

The Review Panel was impressed by the way the Faculty had responded to various challenges and, particularly in the face of resource constraints, had maximised student recruitment and undergraduate fees income. The Panel was impressed also by the fact that a very high proportion of recruits was retained through a long and demanding programme to graduation.

The Review Panel commended the Faculty for innovations already introduced to the curriculum, and for the direction in which it was proposed future developments should take. It recognised that not all staff were convinced of the merit of some of the proposals but was itself satisfied that the principles (a) that a secure foundation in the traditional disciplines was a prerequisite for clinical practice and (b) that learning throughout the programme should become more self-directed and practical, were capable of being reconciled.

The recommendations interspersed throughout this report and summarised below are made in the spirit of support and encouragement to the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine. They are ranked below in order of priority and include references back to the sections from which they are derived.

Recommendation 1

The Panel recommended that the Curriculum Working Group should, as a matter of urgency, seek to translate the principles driving reform into sound and workable proposals while, as far as possible, addressing the concerns of colleagues who did not share their enthusiasm for change. [Section C.4.1]

For the attention of the **Associate Dean**

Response

With the change of Associate Dean in March 2007 there was an opportunity for reflection on the progress towards curricular review and the impact on the Faculty of introducing a new programme (MSci/BSc(Hons)/BSc Veterinary Biosciences). The approach to the process of curricular review will be informed by the restructuring of faculty education committees (see response 8). The Faculty remain committed to review of the BVMS professional programme.

Recommendation 3

In view of reported stress levels among students in Years 4 and 5 and comments from the BVA on the high suicide rate among veterinary surgeons and the responsibilities of vet schools, the Panel recommended that the Faculty consider seeking professional assistance, perhaps requesting that colleagues from the Department of Public Health might provide some teaching in 'coping skills' and achieving a healthy 'work-life balance'. [Section C.5.2]

For the attention of the **Associate Dean**

Response

Two members of the Faculty (Faculty Human Resources Manager and Student Services Manager) have undertaken a 2 day workshop in ASIST (Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training) organised by the University Chaplaincy. ASIST is a key part of the Scottish Executive Choose Life strategy. Students and staff have been made aware of these contacts. From a curricular perspective, the Faculty strategy is to include these topics in a "preparation for employment" symposium planned for the 4th year of the BVMS programme in 2008-09.

Recommendation 4

The Panel recommended that all new staff should formally be assigned a mentor. [Section C.6.1]

For the attention of the **Associate Dean**

Response

The Faculty are aware that this is a requirement of probation, as set out in the University's probation policy for academic staff (lecturers and university teachers and exceptionally senior lecturers/university teachers). This requirement has been emphasised to the Heads of Division, the individuals responsible for managing probation, through discussion at the Faculty Management Group and HoDivs now ensure that staff on probation are assigned a mentor.

Two other developments, the introduction of a clinical track and the P&DR scheme, should help to address the issues raised by the panel in this section of their report.

Recommendation 5

In the context of provision of lecture notes by staff to students, the Panel recommended that rules which are published to the students should be applied consistently by all staff, and that, should these rules be reconsidered, the Panel recommended that the Faculty take into account the cost inefficiency of standard network printers relative to that of high volume photocopiers. [Section F.2]

For the attention of the **Associate Dean**

Response

The Faculty policy remains unchanged with course material being made available on Moodle for students to print what they feel relevant to their own learning requirements (with the exception of 1st year). Many students are now attending lectures with laptops and amending their learning materials without the requirement for printing. The application of the rules on what material should be presented on Moodle lies with individual course leaders and is applied in the context of the individual courses within the BVMS programme.

The introduction of a new computer centre with increased printing power and throughput (4 monochrome printers @ 43 ppm and 1 colour printer @ 30 ppm) has almost eliminated voiced student concerns (evidenced by no longer being an issue at SSLC and a subject of communication to the Information Service team and Associate Dean).

Recommendation 6

The Panel recommended that statements of Intended Learning Outcomes occurring in course documents should be revisited and revised in accordance with the advice provided by the Learning and Teaching Centre and the Senate Office. [Section C.2]

For the attention of the **Associate Dean**

Response

This has been completed.

Recommendation 8

The Panel recommended that, in the matter of determining an appropriate procedure for considering student progress cases, the Faculty seek advice from the Clerk to the Faculties of Science, and from colleagues in Undergraduate Medicine. [Section C.5.2]

For the attention of the **Associate Dean**

Response

In the consideration of the organisation of the management of taught programmes within the Faculty precipitated by the introduction of the BSc programme (see response recommendation 1) the remit and reporting lines of the relevant Faculty committees are being addressed. As part of this process advice over the procedure for consideration of student progress has been sought from other cognate faculties and will inform the final committee structure.

The following recommendations were assigned, in the main, to the Director of Estates and Buildings. A Faculty commentary on progress, which has been agreed with the Director, is provided below.

Recommendation 2

The Panel recommended that the University's Estates and Buildings Department address as a matter of high priority the problems at the Farm Animal Teaching facilities, including the Ilay Lecture Theatre for which a budget has been secured but no date determined when the work may be carried out.

For the attention of the **Director of Estates and Buildings**

Refurbishment of the Ilay lecture theatre was completed for the beginning of session 2007/08. This teaching facility is now watertight with appropriate temperature control. Work will commence in May 2008 on a new £2.4M food animal facility with an expected completion date of spring 2009. Given the basis on which the American Veterinary Medical Association granted accreditation in May 2006, namely imminent provision of new accommodation, the Faculty has sought reassurances from Estates and Buildings that the completion schedule will not slip further.

Response Director of Estates and Buildings

Awaited

Recommendation 7

The Panel recommended that the Faculty discuss the perceived inadequacy of female toilets with the Department of Estates and Buildings. [Section C.6.2]

For the attention of the **Dean of the Faculty** and **Director of Estates and Buildings**

Response Dean of Faculty:

With the introduction in 2007/08 of budget allocations to faculties for refurbishment/minor works, the expectation is that faculties, rather than Estates and Buildings, fund refurbishment of the space they occupy. The first phase of upgrading works was built into the Faculty's minor works programme for 2007/08. However, the estimated cost of the works was far higher than expected and exceeded the allocation for this project. The Faculty is hoping to make savings elsewhere so that this project can go ahead in the current financial year. Should the Faculty receive an allocation for such activities in 2008/09, further works will be planned.

Response Director of Estates and Buildings:

Awaited

Prepared by: Janet Fleming, Senate Office

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