

**Name of Degree Programme (single-cycle degree) in:** VETERINARY MEDICINE

**Class:** LM-42

**Location:** University of Padova - Campus of Agripolis - Legnaro

**Reference Department:** Animal Medicine, Production and Health - MAPS

**School:** Agricultural Sciences and Veterinary Medicine

**First academic year of activation:** 1992-93

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The GAV met to discuss the topics described in the sections of this Review Report, operating as follows:

- 14<sup>th</sup> November 2014
- 1<sup>st</sup> December 2014
- 8<sup>th</sup> January 2015

and then continued via email.

Presented, discussed and approved by the Council of the Study Programme on 20<sup>th</sup> January 2015

#### **Summary of the outcome of the discussion of the Programme Board.**

*After presenting the 2015 Review Report, the Chairperson opened the discussion. Once the meeting had finished, the Programme Board considered it appropriate to highlight the following:*

*In 2015 the main strengths were:*

- *The modification of the Course structure for Year 1;*
- *The reduction of the course load for Year 3;*
- *The identification of coordinating Professors for each year of course;*
- *The development of a survey on the quality of teaching materials;*
- *A continuous relationship with the labour market.*

*The Council highlights that, among the activities that are planned for the a.y. 2014-15, particular attention should be paid to:*

- *Facilitate the training path;*
- *Verify the educational contents/syllabus;*

- Set up a permanent 'technical table' with the labour market.

The Board **approved**, by majority, the 2015 Review Report of the single-cycle Master Degree Programme in Veterinary Medicine prepared by the Accreditation and Evaluation Group (GAV).

## I - Annual Study Review Report on the Degree Programme

### 1 - ENTRY, ROUTE, EXIT FROM THE DEGREE PROGRAMME

#### 1-a CORRECTIVE ACTIONS ALREADY UNDERTAKEN AND RESULTS

The following corrective actions were identified in the 2015 Review Report:

**Objective no. 1:** Overcome the difficulties regarding the transition between 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> year.

**Actions taken:** In order to overcome the difficulties regarding the transition between 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> year, during the meeting of the Council of the Degree Programme held on February 12, 2014 (see minute), it was decided to modify the 1<sup>st</sup> year Course structure by distributing different courses over several quarters. The new Course structure is as follows:

FIRST QUARTER: Biochemistry (10 ECTS), Molecular biology, zoology, veterinary histology and embryology (13 ECTS)

SECOND QUARTER: Biochemistry (3 ECTS), Veterinary Anatomy 2 (7 CFU), Medical physics and methods for risk analysis (6 ECTS)

THIRD QUARTER: Veterinary Anatomy 1 (9 ECTS), Veterinary Parasitology (4 ECTS).

During the meeting of the Council of the Degree Programme held on September 22, 2014, other than approving the Council's new regulation, it was decided that, in order to overcome the difficulties regarding the transition between 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> year, students are required to pass all subject-specific examinations planned for 1<sup>st</sup> year before being able to enroll in the 2<sup>nd</sup> year courses offered for that specific subject.

**Progress of corrective action:** In the coming years, it will be necessary to monitor the situation to check the effectiveness of the changes adopted.

**Objective no. 2:** Reduce the teaching load for 3<sup>rd</sup> year

**Actions taken:** Following the Assembly held during the 2013 'Week for the Improvement of Teaching', students presented their concerns about the teaching load for 3<sup>rd</sup> year, considering it too excessive. For this reason, in the meeting of the Council of the Degree Programme held on February 12, 2014, it was decided to move the *Course of Infectious Diseases of Animals and Avian Pathology* (13 ECTS) from the third to the fourth year, with a consequent decrease in 3<sup>rd</sup> year's numbers of ECTS. At the same time, the training activities related to *Infectious Diseases* were also moved to the 4<sup>th</sup> year.

**Progress of corrective action:** In the coming years, it will be necessary to monitor the situation to check the effectiveness of the changes adopted.

**Objective no. 3:** Check the teaching loads

**Actions taken:** No actions were taken

**Progress of corrective action:** A detailed analysis of teaching loads has not yet been performed. An Excel electronic register is currently being developed, and will allow for a detailed check of programmes so to highlight any shortcomings and/or overlaps. The GAV had initially planned to implement the electronic register during Spring 2014; however, this action was not completed due to the University's intervention (see point no. 4 - *Student experience*).

#### 1-b ANALYSIS OF THE SITUATION BASED ON DATA

- **Entry**

During the academic year 2014-15, access to the Degree Programme in VM was based on a maximum number of 65 eligible Italian students. In Padova, 800 students applied and 742 were present at the admission test. At the beginning of the first quarter (October 1, 2014), the total number of students enrolled was 57, with a significant improvement compared to the previous year thanks to the introduction of new selection procedures for entry applications.

Almost  $\frac{3}{4}$  of students (75,4%) came from the Veneto region, with a significant predominance of students coming from Lyceums (93%).

The situation related to academic debits (OFA) is similar to that of the previous year, with a predominance of debits in CHEMISTRY (36); the situation was slightly better in PHYSICS-MATHEMATICS (25) and BIOLOGY (25)

- **Route**

The number of working students remains quite low (5 in the a.y. 2013-14, 2 in the a.y. 2013, 6 in the a.y. 2011-12 and 3 in the a.y. 2010-11), as is normal for a Degree Course whose attendance is mandatory.

As of July 2014, the number of students enrolled under the old system, *Vecchio Ordinamento (509/99)*, is 37.

The data related to 'out-of-course' students enrolled under the new system, *Nuovo Ordinamento (270/04)*, is not yet available.

The number of drop-outs in the a.y. 2012-13 was 0. In previous years, drop-outs only occurred towards the end of the first year, with a percentage ranging between 1.7% and 11.7% in the period between 2008-09 and 2011-12. The number of students transferring to other Degree Courses – which, in previous years, had only concerned second-year students, with percentages ranging from 5% to 10% – is currently 0; however, this figure needs to be confirmed. The reasons for such a phenomenon might be related to the fact that students, after completing their first year in Veterinary Medicine, ask to be enrolled in other medical-related Degree Programmes. Drop outs, which occur in all Degree Programmes, ranged from 2% to 6.9% in the a.y. 2012-13, with a downward trend compared to previous years.

From the course-based ECTS trend analysis, important information has emerged:

- **First year:** 67% of students acquired between 46 and 60 ECTS; however, this figure reaches 90% if the percentage of students acquiring between 31 and 45 ECTS (25%) is also taken into account. This data is slightly better than that of the previous year (80%).

- **Second year:** 58% of students acquired between 106 and 120 ECT; however, this figure reaches 70% if the percentage of students acquiring between 91 and 105 ECTS (10%) is also taken into account. This data is in line with that recorded in the 4 previous cohorts.

In future, it will be necessary to evaluate the effectiveness of the measures implemented to overcome the difficulties regarding the transition between 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> year, taking into account:

- The number of ECTS that students acquire by the end of 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> year;
- The number of drop outs/students transfers to another Degree Programmes.

- **Third year:** only 42% of students acquired a no. of ECTS included within the 2 highest levels, confirming that 3<sup>rd</sup> year is particularly challenging as regards the teaching offer. This trend has worsened compared to that of the previous year: indeed, 10% more students acquire less than 120 ECTS.

- **Fourth year:** 50% of students acquired between 181 and 210 ECTS; only 7% acquired more. This year's performance is comparable to that of the previous cohort.

- **Fifth year:** almost 1/3 of students acquired more than 240 ECTS; only 14% of students acquired more than 270 ECTS. More than 60% of students acquired less than 210 ECTS. This trend has worsened compared to previous cohorts.

It is necessary to take note that, in spite of the fact that traineeship-related ECTS are awarded from 2<sup>nd</sup> year, they are validated only once traineeship activities are concluded, that is, during 5<sup>th</sup> Year.

- **Exit**

The available data is not sufficient to objectively assess the average duration of the Degree Programme as it only refers to students belonging to the new system's first three cohorts. It is therefore normal that the data tends to be in line with the legal duration of the Degree Programme, although the trend has increased (5.04 years for the 21 graduates in 2012, 5.66 years for the 47 graduates in 2013, and 5.94 years for the 73 graduates in 2014). On the contrary, the average no. of years necessary to earn a Degree is completely different for students enrolled under the old system, *Vecchio Ordinamento (47/S)*: 10.21 years for the 23 graduates in 2013, and 13.08 years for the 10 graduates in 2014.

- **Internationalization**

After the 2013 revision that involved the elimination of 2 Erasmus Plus locations (Berne and Zurich), the new locations of Budapest and Toulouse were added. Student's level of satisfaction for the new locations will have to be assessed. The available data on ECTS acquired refers to 2013, with 341 ECTS acquired by incoming students and 146 ECTS by outgoing students (for a total of 14).

In July 2014, the first four-year cycle of the exchange program known as VILP (Veterinary International Leadership Program), which involves the University of Texas A&M (USA) and Tufts University (USA) and allows Italian students to participate in educational activities in the USA, was completed.

During summer 2014, a two-year project with the University of Texas A&M was launched. It involved 8 American students, who participated in the Food Safety and Public Health workshop that took place in June 2014 at the Campus of Agripolis, and 8 Italian students, who will participate in the Clinical Rotations workshop taking place during summer 2015 at the University of Texas A&M. The project was funded by both the University of Padova and the Departments of MAPS and BCA.

## 1-c CORRECTIVE INTERVENTIONS

**Objective no. 1:** *Facilitate the training path*

**Actions to take:**

Recent changes in the Degree Programme structure have allowed students to enroll in the second year, regardless

of the fact they had completed all exams planned for 1<sup>st</sup> year or not. The only condition to be fulfilled is they must pass all subject-specific examinations planned for 1<sup>st</sup> year before being able to enroll in the 2<sup>nd</sup> year courses offered for that specific subject, as provided for by the Degree Programme Regulation. A quarter-based calendar was also adopted for the first time during the a.y.2014-15. It will be necessary to continue monitoring the situation to evaluate whether such changes produce a beneficial effect on the no. of ECTS acquired by students at the end of the first year or not.

**Modalities, resources, deadlines, responsibilities:**

The above data will be monitored by the GAV and reported in the next Review Report.

**Objective no. 2:** *Encourage participation in the Erasmus programme*

**Actions to take:**

The number of outgoing students has decreased in recent years. It is necessary to provide more information on the possibilities students have to study abroad (Erasmus+, Erasmus Placement, etc.), other than encouraging students' participation through making the procedures regarding the recognition of the educational activities undertaken abroad simpler and clearer.

**Modalities, resources, deadlines, responsibilities:**

During 2015, meeting with both students and the representatives of mobility flows will be held in order to gather as much information as possible on the issue.

## **2 – STUDENT'S EXPERIENCE**

### **2 – a CORRECTIVE ACTIONS ALREADY UNDERTAKEN AND RESULTS**

**Objective no. 1:** *identification of coordinating Professors for each year of course*

**Actions taken:** During the meeting of the Council of the Degree Programme held on January 20, 2014, the coordinating Professors for each year of course were appointed. They will act as contact persons for both students and Professors. The Coordinators are:

FIRST YEAR: Prof. Marco Patruno; SECOND YEAR: Prof. Valentina Zappulli; THIRD YEAR: Prof. Ilaria Iacopetti; FOURTH YEAR: Prof. Antonio Mollo; FIFTH YEAR: Prof. Alessandro Zotti.

Subsequently, during a meeting of the GAV, their role was further investigated. One of the first activities they were involved in was carefully analyze teaching materials used by Professors (see point 5 – *Student's experience*)

**Objective no. 2:** *Improve information flow*

**Actions taken:** It was decided to add further information on the Degree Programme on the website of the School of Agricultural Sciences and Veterinary Medicine (→ Single Cycle Degree Programme in Veterinary Medicine).

**Actions to take:** This action needs to be further improved.

**Objective no. 3:** *Syllabus*

**Actions taken:** Provided that the Syllabus prepared by the University and included in the 'Scheda Unica Annuale' (Single annual report) does not constitute a real Syllabus, the GAV decided to develop an Excel electronic register, which should facilitate the entire completion process, other than making it possible to compare data with other Degree Programmes to assess their content.

The University considered the initiative extremely interesting and proposed that the Degree Course should manage a *pilot project* that will eventually lead all professors of the University to adopt this tool.

**Progress of corrective action:** The progress of the aforementioned action largely depends on the timeframe established by the University.

**Objective no. 4:** *Improve the quality of the teaching material*

During 2014, a survey aimed at evaluating the characteristics and modalities through which the teaching material was made available was administered to all Professors of the Degree Programme.

**Progress of corrective action:** Results of the survey will be discussed during the "Week for the improvement of Teaching".

### **2 – b ANALYSIS OF THE SITUATION ON THE BASIS OF DATA, WARNINGS AND OBSERVATIONS**

The results of student satisfaction questionnaires were presented in an aggregate form and discussed on November 27, 2014, during the "Week for the improvement of Teaching".

Data to be considered (questionnaires proposed to students in the a.y. 2013-14):

- *Completion of the questionnaires.* There was a moderate student participation in the expression of evaluations, which achieved 79%. The figure is in line with the university's average (78%). However, the response rate is variable among the different programmes and tends to decrease starting from the third year.
- *Level of satisfaction based on courses.* The general satisfaction of students on the Degree Programme for each course is in line with the average of the university (7.6). The score average is equal to 7.69, with 92.6% positive evaluations, of which 42% with marks above 8.
- *Level of satisfaction based on organisational aspects.* The teaching organisation offered by the Degree Programme is positively evaluated by students (average score: 8.02). Negative evaluations are 1%. There are still some critical issues concerning the adequacy of the recommended teaching material, which was scored lower than 7 in 25.9% of courses.
- *Level of satisfaction based on the educational action.* The teaching action is evaluated positively by students, with an average score of 7.82, which is higher than that of the University (7.62). The percentage of positive evaluations is 93.6%, of which 50.6% with scores higher than 8.
- *Fair balance between study load and assigned credits.* Once again this year, a significant percentage of teaching units (34.6%) received a score lower than 7.
- *Traineeship activities.* From the a.y. 2013-14, the evaluation of both students and professors (internal and/or external) is active. The student response rate was 52.7%. This figure remains at levels lower than those of the course evaluation.

Analysing the evaluations collected by the "Graduates' Profile - 2012" published on the Alma Laurea Consortium website, it emerges that 70% of the interviewees consider the teaching load of the Degree Programme feasible (75% university average), 90% are satisfied with the Degree (university 89), 89% are satisfied with the relationship with professors. As concerns teaching facilities, the level of satisfaction of interviewees is good, although there were complaints regarding the number of computers stations available.

Further observations surfaced from the presentation prepared by the student representatives during the Assembly of November 11, 2014, held as part of the "Week for the Improvement of Teaching". In particular, students stressed the importance of performing cross-checks against the programmes offered by the different courses so to avoid unnecessary repetitions (as is already the case with some specific topics, traineeship and exercise activities). A detailed analysis of the programmes will favour the inclusion of untreated topics. Furthermore, other critical issues that emerged regarded some of the Traineeship activities offered, which, in some cases, were not consistent with the 'hands on' attitude of the Programme (e.g. theoretical activities, individual study, etc.).

## 2 - c CORRECTIVE INTERVENTIONS

### **Objective no. 1:** *Improve information flow*

**Actions to take:** The identification of Coordinating Professors for each year of course, as well as of new student representatives, should have positive effects with regard to this objective. Relationships with students will be established, and mediated by the GAV, thus creating another means through which new procedures to improve the information flow can be identified.

#### **Modalities, resources, deadlines, responsibilities:**

In order for these actions to be implemented, 2 more meetings will be scheduled. All proposals will be implemented in the a.y. 2015-16

### **Objective no. 2:** *Verification of the educational contents/syllabus*

#### **Actions to take:**

The tools to be used to verify the adequacy of course contents will be:

- Use of the register/syllabus at experimental level
- On-going discussions with both students and coordinating Professors to clarify the details concerning this aspect
- Targeted meetings between Professors to detect any programme overlapping

#### **Modalities, resources, deadlines, responsibilities:**

Being these actions particularly significant, they will be carried out throughout the entire academic year. Professors will be asked to complete the register/Syllabus by providing a detailed description of the content and no. of hours allocated, and the intended educational objective for each topic. The data is entered using an Excel tabular format, divided into subjects and no. of hours allocated, and will serve as a database for further analysis (topics treated in more courses, consistency between programs and content, confirmation of content by students, etc.).

**Objective no. 3:** *Improve the quality of the teaching material*

**Actions to take:**

According to the results deriving from the analysis of recommended teaching materials and the modalities through which they can be disseminated, it is recommended to:

- Set up an ongoing discussion with both students and coordinating Professors to clarify those aspects than can be further improved;
- Identify guidelines for Professors concerning the type of teaching materials to be used and the modalities through which they can be disseminated.

**Modalities, resources, deadlines, responsibilities:**

Being these actions particularly significant, they will be carried out throughout the entire academic year. Results of these actions will be available from the a.y. 2015-16.

### **3 – TRANSITION INTO THE LABOUR MARKET**

#### **3 – a CORRECTIVE ACTIONS ALREADY UNDERTAKEN AND RESULTS**

**Objective no. 1:** *Correct information on the labour market*

**Actions taken:** Once again this year, students were provided with correct information on the labour market. This activity began during the orientation days "Choose your Tomorrow" thanks to the screening of the film "Life as a Veterinarian" produced by the Italian National Association of Veterinarians (FNOVI), which illustrated in what the work of the veterinarian consists.

For students enrolled in the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> year, the activity then continued with the meeting 'The future of the veterinary profession: an encounter between Veterinary Medicine students and the FNOVI' (November 21, 2014). Another meeting entitled 'The veterinarian and the Veterinary industry' (the program has not yet been defined) is to take place in December.

**Objective no. 2:** *Relationship with the professional world*

**Actions taken:** The relationship with the professional world has continued on a number of levels; however, it is now necessary to implement such initiatives.

On October 4, 2014, within the workshop 'What future will the Veterinary Public Health have in the Veneto Region?' organised by the Regional Federation of the Veterinarians' Association (FROV), it was proposed to establish a permanent round-table with all members of the veterinary profession for the Veneto region.

During another meeting with the President of the FROV and other members of the Council of the Association of Veterinarians for the Province of Padova, the basis for the setting up of the round-table were laid. The appointment is postponed until early 2015, once the governing boards of the Associations of Veterinarians for each province are renewed.

Furthermore, during the information meetings with students (November 21 and December 2014), there was (and there will be) an active participation of professionals from the labour market (FNOVI, veterinary industry, etc.).

**Actions to take:** A technical table with veterinary professionals will be established from 2015 onwards.

**Objective no. 3:** *Specialisation Schools*

**Actions taken:** As concerns Specialisation Schools, no further developments have taken place because the University has not approved their activation.

The problem was brought to the attention of the 'Board of Directors of the Specialisation Schools in Healthcare', without any positive results.

**Objective no. 4:** *Identification of facilities for Post-Lauream Traineeship activities*

As of today, there are no facilities available for graduates to carry out Post-Lauream Traineeship activities. Unfortunately, specific law provisions establishing that "...the trainee must receive a minimum allowance of €400.00 gross per month" have led to a significant decrease in the number of requests being made.

**Objective no. 5: Creation of a 'notice board'**

This initiative has not yet been implemented.

**3 – b ANALYSIS OF THE SITUATION, COMMENT ON DATA**

The data is taken from the "*Graduates' Profile - 2013*" published on the Alma Laurea Consortium website.

To capture the "*Employment situation of graduates*" (data updated in March 2014) interviews were conducted with graduates after 1 year (67 out of 76 graduates), 3 years (63 out of 79 graduates) and 5 years (46 out of 56 graduates) of completing their program.

The results indicate that, at one year post graduation, 66% are in work, while after 3 and 5 years 82% and 94% are employed, respectively. This percentage is higher than that reported in the 2012 survey (according to which, at 1 year post-graduation, 61% of the interviewees were in work), but it still remains lower if compared to that of graduates at 3 and 5 years post-graduation (97%). Overall, these scores are below the university average at 1 year (69%) and 3 years (88%) post-graduation, and perfectly in line at 5 years (94%) post-graduation.

Interviewees said that they extensively use the skills acquired during their studies. However, the data indicates that the profession generally guarantees rather low average monthly earnings, although slightly higher than those of the previous year: 773 Euros net per month at 1 year post-graduation, and 892 and 1140 Euros net per month at 3 and 5 years post-graduation, respectively. The values are significantly lower than the average graduates of the University of Padova, who earn 1.181; 1.309 and 1.635 Euros, at 1, 3 and 5 years post-graduation.

During the Assembly held on November 27, 2014, during the 'Week for the Improvement of Teaching', three recent graduates were given the floor to talk about their professional experience in three different fields (one cattle specialist, one companion animals specialist and one food safety specialist). Their interventions should be carefully taken into account, especially as they highlighted both strengths and weaknesses of their university training.

During 2014 it was not possible to further improve recent graduates' participation in Post-lauream Traineeship activities following the entry into force of Law No. 92/2012 that establishes that trainees must receive a minimum allowance of 400 Euros.

Further difficulties concerning the integration of recent graduates into the public sector stem from the non-activation, upon a decision by the University, of Specialization Schools, which represent an important step for graduates to enter and/or engage in activities with the National Health Service. It is necessary to explore the feasibility of stipulating an agreement (the guidelines have just been published) between the Zooprophyllactic Institute and the Departments of Veterinary Medicine in order to try to set up at least one School.

**3 – c CORRECTIVE INTERVENTIONS**

**Objective no.1: Correct information on the labour market**

**Actions to take:**

During the a.y. 2014-15, it will be necessary to continue with the organisation of meetings with veterinary professionals, to provide students in their last years of Degree with the correct information on prospective work and information on sectors in which graduates can find further opportunities.

To this end, student representatives proposed an initiative entitled 'On the boundaries of didactic', which includes a series of meetings on different aspects of Veterinary Medicine and the veterinary profession that are not treated in depth within the Degree Programme. During these meetings, information on post-lauream training opportunities (e.g. PhDs, Colleges, Specialisation Schools, etc.) will also be provided.

Furthermore, a FAQ section on the veterinary profession was created in collaboration with stakeholders and will be soon added to the website of the School of Agricultural Sciences and Veterinary Medicine.

**Modalities, resources, deadlines, responsibilities:**

This action will be promoted and implemented by the President of the Degree Programme, in collaboration with the GAV, the Association of Veterinarians for the province of Padova and the Regional Federation of the Veterinarians' Association (FROV). The outcome of these actions will be reported in the next Review Report. It is expected that at least 5-6 more meetings will be held between February and June. The GAV will also be responsible for making sure that the FAQs are prepared and uploaded on the School's website, if possible before the end of March 2015 so that they can be consulted before the admission test planned for April.

**Objective no. 2: Relationship with the Professional world**

**Actions to take:**

During the a.y. 2014-15 it will be necessary to continue the activities in collaboration with the Veterinary Professional world. In particular, the objective is to establish a permanent round-table to discuss the training of future veterinarians and the veterinary profession. The basis for such an initiative have already been laid.

**Modalities, resources, deadlines, responsibilities:**

This action will be coordinated by the President of the Degree Programme and by the President of the FROV, in agreement with the GAV. The outcome of these actions will be reported in the next Review Report.

**Objective no. 3: *Specialisation Schools***

**Actions to take:**

Contacts with the Director of the Experimental Zooprophyllactic Institute for the Venezie will be initiated in order to assess the feasibility of establishing a Specialisation School in accordance with the guidelines issued by the Italian Ministry of Health.

The Degree Programme will become an active part in the interaction with the highest institutional positions of the University to reiterate the importance of post-graduate training for graduates in Veterinary Medicine.

**Modalities, resources, deadlines, responsibilities:**

This action will be promoted and implemented by the President of the Degree Programme, in collaboration with the GAV. The outcome of these actions will be reported in the next Review Report. Unfortunately, it is not yet possible to establish a deadline before which this action must be implemented as it largely depends on the will of persons from outside the University.