



## RE-VISITATION REPORT

**To the University of Sassari, Sassari, Italy**

**On 17 - 19 March, 2025**

**By the Re-Visitation Team**

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### Introduction

The Department of Veterinary Sciences, University of Sassari, Italy, was evaluated by ESEVT on 20 – 24 March 2023.

The previous Visitation team considered that the 24/7 emergency services were missing, the companion animal caseload in the VTH and the number of necropsies in companion and food-producing animals were insufficient and that the number of teaching and support staff in the VTH was insufficient.

These findings led to the identification of three Major Deficiencies:

**Major Deficiency 1:** Non-compliance with Standard 4.4 because of the absence of 24/7 emergency services

**Major Deficiency 2:** Non-compliance with Standard 5.1 because of insufficient caseload of companion animal patients in the VTH and insufficient number of necropsies in companion and food-producing animals.

**Major deficiency 3:** Non-compliance with Standard 9.2 because of an insufficient number of teaching and support staff in the VTH.

Additionally, areas of concern (**minor deficiencies**) were identified by the team:

- 1: Partial compliance with Standard 2.1. because of the suboptimal distribution of funding, resulting in inadequate staffing
- 2: Partial compliance with Standard 3.1.1. because of suboptimal distinction between core, elective and optional activities in the curriculum.
- 3: Partial compliance with Standard 3.1.2. because of suboptimal teaching of some essential basic subjects.
- 4: Partial compliance with Standard 3.1.3. because of suboptimal clinical training in companion animals.
- 5: Partial compliance with Standard 4.2. because of insufficient number of lockers for students and suboptimal onsite food services.
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- 7: Partial compliance with Standard 4.8. because of suboptimal transportation of students to extra-mural facilities.
- 8: Partial compliance with Standard 6.3. because of suboptimal access of students to equipment for the development of procedural skills.
- 9: Partial compliance with Standard 8.1. because of suboptimal strategy to ensure coherence of the overall assessment regime.
- 10: Partial compliance with Standard 9.1. because of non-compulsory training in teaching and assessment for all teaching staff.

The decision by ECOVE, which met on June 7, 2023, was Pending Accreditation status.

The RV Self Evaluation Report was provided to the RV Team on time and contained pertinent facts and figures that were informative, which also included numerous links to support the VEE's corrective activities. The Excel file containing new raw data and the calculated indicators was forwarded along with the RV-SER.

The Re-visitation was well prepared and well organised by the Establishment. It was performed in a cordial working atmosphere, in agreement with the ESEVT SOP 2019 as amended in September 2021.

## **1. Correction of the Major Deficiencies**

### **1.1. Major Deficiency 1: Non-compliance with Standard 4.4 because of the absence of 24/7 emergency services**

#### **1.1.1. Findings**

Based on the findings in the FV report, the VEE decided to divide its activities into short, short/medium and long-term actions to correct this Major deficiency.

In *short term*, in connection with its staff increase policy, in January 2025, the VEE launched a call to hire two veterinarians for the 24/7 service. After their employment, the VEE externalised the 24/7 service by an agreement with "Citta di Sassari" private veterinary clinic, where the students are taught to acquire D1C under the supervision of the two newly hired veterinary staff. This clinic is easily accessible by public transportation (2km from the VEE campus).

The students attend day shifts in emergency care between 8.30 am and 2 pm at the VTH, while day (1) and night (1) shifts of 12.5 h are compulsory for all the students at the Citta di Sassari clinic. The students' activities during the emergency care shifts are recorded in their logbooks and the computerised records at the VTH and at the Citta di Sassari clinic, and are approved by their emergency care supervisors.

For the two veterinarians employed at the Citta di Sassari clinic, the pedagogical training includes the basic course on the VEE's training policy and Day One Competences, as specifically indicated in their contract and in the agreement with the Clinic Città di Sassari, but not in the assessment of the students (Annex 1).

Recently, a new Basic course has been introduced (<https://veterinaria.uniss.it/it/dipartimento/formazione-docenti>, <https://elearning.uniss.it/course/view.php?id=11745>) which is compulsory to be completed by all staff involved in core curriculum (academic staff, non-academic teaching staff, support staff, junior staff - including PhDs, contracted practitioners at the VTH, EPT

providers) by July 2025. Similarly, advanced training courses were made available for all academic staff (<https://elearning.uniss.it/course/view.php?id=11746>), including online modules and on-site seminars, also compulsory by July 2025. For contracted staff, similar courses were provided in a Google form, available on the VEE's site. Certificates of attendance are issued upon course completion. There is a booklet for the training that veterinary practitioners receive, and the link was provided, as well as links to Spotify and Anchor websites. Similarly, an online Manual on pedagogical training of the VEE's staff is available.

In *short/medium terms*, an agreement with the Regional Government of Sardinia (RAS) is active from 2024 to 2026, providing an investment of 1,740,000.00 Euro to the VEE, to support the accreditation and mainly the VTH and 24/7 services.

The VEE allocated the majority of the RAS funding on staffing (265.000,00 euros/year over a total of 565.000,00 euros/year, i.e. 47% of yearly budget) and consumables (70.000,00 euros per year, i.e. 12.4% of yearly budget). Within this agreement, in April 2024, a call was open to hire veterinarians to cover the 24/7 service, and as a result, in August 2024, 2 practitioners in emergency room and critical care, 1 in anaesthesiology, and 2 in internal medicine were admitted. Two more new permanent staff members need to be employed (one anaesthetist and one internal medicine person) to support the 24/7 services provided by the VTH. Similarly, the opening hours have been extended from Monday to Friday and from 08:30 to 20:30 (regular clinical activity from 8.30 am to 2.30 pm and by appointment from 2.30 pm to 8.30 pm), with emergency service from 8.30 am until 2 pm, with student participation. By the first month of 2025, the VEE is able to provide 24/7 hospitalisations and critical care services at the VTH. For the students, starting from the second semester of the academic year 2024/2025, 5 hours of Clinical rounds are allocated to the emergency service in the VTH (5 h x 7 groups x 6 students), in addition to the 25 h that students perform at Clinica Città di Sassari (revised Table 2.4.2 RSER\_R1 page 24).

In the near future, when the 24/7 unit will be fully operational, all emergency training during clinical rounds will be covered at the VTH, financially supported by the university, thus gradually decreasing the level of exposure of students in external structures.

In the *long term*, the VEE envisages opening on July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2025, the fully operational VTH (including 24/7 emergency care) once the new staff is hired. The VEE has also postponed to 2025, setting up a new plan to further sustainably manage the VTH.

### **1.1.2. Analysis of the findings/Comments**

Both students and the veterinary practitioners provided good feedback on the training in the “Città di Sassari” during 24/7 and emergency care activities. Therefore, the VEE considered expanding and approved the renewal of the 2021 agreement until 28 February 2028. To confront the scarcity of veterinarians and to ensure the employment of a complete staff at the VTH, the VEE had its meetings between the head, VTH manager and communication officers and campaigned on social networks and on the web.

Coverage of different positions which need to be covered in the near future by personnel to support the full functioning of the 24/7 is limited by Italian law (i.e., personnel who works within a timeframe, 8.30 am to 2.30 pm, cannot be hired except as a “service provider”).

Although funds were allocated to make the 24/7 unit functional, improving facilities is not foreseen in the RAS budget, since it is covered by the central university budget.

### **1.1.3. Suggestions**

The VEE should more clearly define its future action plan related to the functioning of the 24/7 emergency care unit at the VTH, by specifically defining the period and responsibilities, and continue its efforts to improve the timeframe of the VTH-provided emergency care.

### **1.1.4. Decision**

The Major deficiency 1 has been corrected.

## **1.2. Major Deficiency 2: Non-compliance with Standard 5.1 because of insufficient caseload of companion animal patients in the VTH and insufficient number of necropsies in companion and food-producing animals.**

### **1.2.1. Findings**

Shortly after the EAEVE visitation, the VEE analysed the situation, addressing the problem of the insufficient caseload of companion animals in conjunction with the insufficient number of teaching and support staff in the VTH and the absence of a 24/7 service, providing hospitalisation.

From 2023 to 2025, various measures were taken with the objective of opening the hospital for longer periods (from 8.30 am to 8.30 pm) and including 24/7 hospitalisation.

New contracts were signed, partly to cover the emergency services (see above Major Deficiency 1) and additionally, the following:

- Two associate professors in internal medicine and infectious diseases
- One veterinary anaesthesiologist
- One researcher specialist in small animal reproduction
- Five veterinarians specialised in Exotic Animals, Oncology, Dermatology, Ophthalmology and Neurology

Each specialist is scheduled to work at the VTH once a week, providing high-quality specialised teaching to students while attracting new clinical cases due to their expertise.

Additionally, the agreement with the Municipality of Sassari for the health management of the municipal kennel, which hosts an average of 200 dogs, has been extended until December 2025.

A supplementary agreement is also in place with the Health Ministry Local Unit (ASL of Sassari) for sterilisation services for stray dogs (300) and cats (100) in the municipality of Sassari and neighbouring municipalities. The agreement was initiated in August 2023 and was renewed in 2025.

To improve the participation of the students in the VTH activities, an online calendar has been created where all clinical acts are scheduled. Through this system, the students can register for the activities they wish to attend.

Finally, the new VTH timetable and specialised services are being advertised to the public in various ways, mostly social networks and on the web, increasing the interest of the population of the Sassari region.

Therefore, the number of companion animal clinical cases has increased, as shown in the indicators (from -21,7 in the 2022 SER to -0,9 in the 2025 RVSER).

To increase the caseload of necropsies, several actions were taken by the VEE. A revised teaching responsibility and organizational framework was established to manage the necropsy caseload, involving agreements with the Istituto Zooprofilattico Sperimentale della Sardegna (IZSS) to enhance collaboration for necropsy as provided by an inter-institutional agreement, and with the

Health Ministry's local unit (Azienda Sanitaria Locale) to define a collaboration for necropsy, which is to become operational in the first semester of 2025.

Additionally, efforts were made to enhance collaboration with veterinary practitioners for extramural necropsies.

Other measures were taken to increase the exposure of students to necropsies within the teaching calendar:

- 1 ECTS module (18 hrs) on necropsy was introduced as part of the new Core Clinical Training (CCT) in 2024.
- A necropsy module was included in the organisation of clinical rounds from 2023/2024 at IV (3,5 hrs) and V (3,5 hrs) years, with a total of 7 hours of full practice in the necropsy room per student.

Teaching and non-teaching staff were reinforced. Since January 2025 a new contract was signed with an external practitioner/tutor (300 hours) to support the teaching staff in necropsy.

Additionally, a support staff position has been fulfilled with the purpose of improving the workflow and coordinating the recovery of cadavers and their transportation to the VEE.

### **1.2.2. Analysis of the findings/Comments**

Although the indicator I8 is still in the negative range (I8= -0.927), the number of companion animal clinical cases has substantially increased, from its 2022 SER value (I8= -21.7) standing for the VEE's substantial efforts to improve the student exposure to small animal caseload.

The total number of necropsies has significantly increased, except for horses, although these were not considered critically low.

The I15 indicator was below minimal values in 2022, and this led to the major deficiency. Numbers increased from 16 in 21/22 to 36 in 23/24. The IZSS implemented a fee to perform ruminant necropsies; this measure was reversed due to the dissatisfaction amongst farmers in general. Finally, the necropsy costs were reduced, and the number of necropsies is constantly increasing. Similarly, the number of necropsies of small ruminants available for teaching was affected by an epidemic of Blue tongue, which prevented cadavers from being transported to the VEE. The measures put in place to correct this deficiency could have led to higher numbers if not hampered by IZSS fees and Blue tongue outbreak.

The efforts to increase the number of necropsies seem adequate, but better numbers will take time to be achieved.

### **1.2.3. Suggestions**

Considering that part of the measures taken are yet to be proven useful to achieve the objectives, the VEE is advised to closely monitor the situation and its dynamics.

### **1.2.4. Decision**

The Major deficiency 2 has been corrected.

## **1.3. Major deficiency 3: Non-compliance with Standard 9.2 because of insufficient number of teaching and support staff in the VTH.**

### **1.3.1. Findings**

Since the last ESEVT visitation in March 2023, a total of 9.4 FTE support staff and 9.6 FTE teaching staff (academic and non-academic) have been employed. To complete the number of academic staff, which was found insufficient during the previous EAEVE visitation, the VEE hired in the last one and a half year, one associate professor in internal medicine, one type B researcher in obstetrics and gynaecology and one associate professor in infectious disease. Further, the participation of contracted veterinary practitioners to students' training increased to 8 and 10 contracts for the academic years 2023/2024 and 2024/2025, respectively, which added further 1000 hours of clinical training to the student education as for 2025. The VEE plans to further employ 16 other veterinarians by summer of 2025 within RAS VTH framework project: 5 contracts (veterinary practitioners) for week nights + 24h rotations, 5 contracts (veterinary practitioners) for non-working days and 24 hours' rotations, 3 contracts for the 24h emergency surgery team: Anaesthesiologist (1); Surgeon (1); Ultrasonography expert (1) and 3 contracts for specialists.

Since the EAEVE FV in 2023, the VEE employed: student tutors (2- clinical rounds, 1- necropsy), administrative staff (1- project manager, 1- teaching organization, 1- QA manager, 1- communication), VTH support personnel (2 front office and administration), 4 veterinary technicians, 3 at the VTH (anaesthesiology (1); internal medicine (1); nurse (1)) and one in Necropsy. Two support staff from the Sassari University were assigned to the VEE to be responsible for administrative issues. Further, 5 veterinary practitioners were hired for the VTH and emergency care (2023/2024) and another 5 positions (Emergency care practitioners (2); Internal medicine (2); VTH anaesthesiology (1)) are in place or planned for 2024/2025.

The VEE expects to open a call to increase the number of support clinical staff at the VTH with an anaesthetist and internal medicine support personnel. The call for these positions is expected to open in 2025.

### **1.3.2. Analysis of the findings/Comments**

The VEE is to be commended for the efforts to cover the open positions in order to improve the student training, not only in emergency care but in the VTH in general. Nevertheless, due to the limitations imposed by the Italian employment law, this process is quite slow and very difficult, different types of contracts being needed (i.e., those veterinarians who work in the VTH by a fixed timeframe, from 8.30 am to 2 pm, can only be hired as "service providers"). Similarly, the VEE can use RAS projects funds to occupy various positions, but this is limited to the duration of the project (3 years).

### **1.3.3. Suggestions**

The VEE is encouraged to look for possibilities to further improve its staff numbers in the future.

### **1.3.4. Decision**

The Major deficiency 3 has been corrected.

## **2. Correction of the Minor Deficiencies**

### **2.1. Minor Deficiency 1: Partial compliance with Standard 2.1. because of suboptimal distribution of funding resulting in inadequate staffing**

#### **2.1.1. Findings**

The Italian Ministry of University and Research (previously the Ministry of Education) through the University of Sassari, funds the VEE constituting a Fondo Funzionamento Ordinario. To overcome the inadequate staffing due to financial difficulties, the VEE signed with Sardinia Region and implemented a three-year project (Progetto di sviluppo integrato per l'accreditamento della formazione dei medici veterinari della Sardegna (missione 13 - programma 07 - titolo 1)), receiving 1,740,000 euro, autonomously managed by the VEE mainly to recruit additional personnel.

### **2.1.2. Analysis of the findings/Comments**

The funds provided by the project signed with the regional authority allowed the VEE to improve its academic staff status in all its segments, including the VTH.

### **2.1.3. Suggestions**

Since the project reserves are limited to the three years (2022-2025), the VEE should continue to seek additional resources to be able to support the measures already implemented.

## **2.2. Minor Deficiency 2: Partial compliance with Standard 3.1.1. because of suboptimal distinction between core, elective and optional activities in the curriculum.**

### **2.2.1. Findings**

The elective disciplines (also called optional) at the VEE of Sassari are not assigned to a specific year of the course, although not every student may attend any elective course. These are intended for students who have completed a certain part of the curriculum, having acquired the necessary knowledge and skills. In fact, elective courses are intended for students from the 2nd year onwards, but Mycology, for example, may only be selected by 3rd year students, onwards; Anaesthesia and Surgery of Large Animals in Field Conditions may only be chosen by 4th and 5th year students.

For the elective courses proposed in 2021/2022 and 2022/2023 see the table 3.1.5 of SER/2023, page 29.

Each academic year, students receive a list of available elective courses. They cast their votes online for the ones they wish to attend, and the seven most-voted courses are offered. Once a student selects an elective course, its completion becomes mandatory.

The following two tables show the electives made available in the two past years. The courses chosen by the students are shown in **bold**.

Elective courses that were submitted and chosen in 2023/2024			Elective courses that were submitted and chosen in 2024/2025		
ELECTIVE COURSES	SEM	ECTS	ELECTIVE COURSES	SEM	ECTS
Animal Welfare	1°	1	<b>Anatomy of Fish</b>	1°	1
<b>Anatomy of Fish, Cetaceans, and Reptiles</b>	2°	1	<b>Anatomy of Cetaceans, and Reptiles</b>	2°	1
<b>Veterinary Mycology</b>	2°	1	<b>Veterinary Mycology</b>	2°	1
Use of GIS Tools in the study of Infectious Diseases	1°	1	<b>Viral Zoonoses</b>	1°	1
<b>Abdominal Ultrasound in Dogs and Cats</b>	2°	1	<b>Cardiology of Dogs and Cats</b>	2°	1

Cardiology of Companion Animals	2°	1	Diagnostic Imaging Radiology of the Sport Horse	2°	1
Diagnostic Imaging Radiology of the Sport Horse	2°	1	Anaesthesia and Surgery of Large Animals in Field Conditions	2°	1
The Use of New Technologies in Soft Tissue Surgery	2°	1	Clinical Nutrition and Dietetics in Companion Animals	1°	1
Scientific Communication and Public speaking	1°	1	Clinical Procedures for the Diagnosis and Treatment of Ruminant Diseases	2°	1
Genetics of Dogs and Cats Diseases	1°	1	Behavioural Pathology in Dogs and Cats	2°	1
Infectious Diseases in Honeybees	1°	1	Energy Metabolism and Functional Assessment of the Athletic Horse	1°	1
			The Use of New Technologies in Soft Tissue Surgery	1°	1

At present, the *Tirocínio* (apprenticeship), as previously called, includes a Core Clinical Training (CCT) of 28 ECTS in the following areas:

Area 01 - Clinical Care of companion animals (8 ECTS, 40 days): Companion animals, equines, and exotic animals, covering Internal Medicine, Surgery, and Obstetrics.

Area 02 - Veterinary Public Health and Food Safety (7 ECTS, 35 days): Food inspection, veterinary public health, necropsies and cadaver diagnostics.

Area 03- Animal Production and Livestock Medicine (13 ECTS, 65 days): Internal Medicine, Surgery, Obstetrics, and Animal Production.

Additionally, the new regulations include an Elective Practical Training (EPT) of 2 ECTS, equivalent to 36 hours of activities that have to be organised during 10 working days. The students are totally free to decide which subject to include in their individual training plan, provided it is accomplished in any department of the University of Sassari, or in any other university in Italy or abroad.

At the end of the CCT+EPT, students must pass a Practical Assessment Test (PAT), which can be taken after completing the 9th semester and must precede the thesis discussion.

### 2.2.2. Analysis of the findings/Comments

The distinction between core, elective and optional activities in the curriculum is now completely clear.

The reference to elective training may also be found in the curriculum in its adaptation to the new regulations imposed by Italian law to all veterinary courses by an Interministerial Decree No. 652 of July 5, 2022.

Being offered as elective courses, subjects like Veterinary Mycology and Veterinary Zoonoses were not excluded from the core curriculum. Instead, these electives were considered as “advanced studies” created to provide an opportunity for students who wish to deepen their knowledge in those areas.

### 2.2.3. Suggestions

None.

**2.3. Minor Deficiency 3: Partial compliance with Standard 3.1.2. because of suboptimal teaching of some essential basic subjects.**

**2.3.1. Findings**

The Basic Subjects tuition in the new curriculum was revised, leading to the removal of Plant Biology. This decision was justified by its integration into the Animal Nutrition course, covering aspects relevant to Veterinary Medicine.

The new curriculum and a thorough revision of the data inserted in Table 3.1.2 of the SER of 2022 have resulted in a new Table significantly changed. Basic Sciences that were missing in the Table in the 2022 SER were filled in, such as Animal Welfare and Information Literacy and data management. Some changes were also introduced regarding Parasitology, as part of the teaching hours were allocated to Zoonoses and Parasitic Diseases. Animal Nutrition fused with “Animal Feeding” and “Livestock Feed” in an integrated discipline of “Animal Nutrition and Feeding” at the end of the 4th semester.

**2.3.2. Analysis of the findings/Comments**

In general, all Basic Subjects and Basic Sciences are now covered.

**2.3.3. Suggestions**

None.

**2.4. Minor Deficiency 4: Partial compliance with Standard 3.1.3. because of suboptimal clinical training in companion animals.**

**2.4.1. Findings**

The number of companion animals (I8) and exotic animals' cases (I13) examined increased.

To increase the caseload in companion animals, the VEE implemented simultaneously common measures linked with the correction of the 24/7 service and the insufficient number of teaching and support staff in the VTH.

- further staff (one anaesthesiologist and two internal medicine veterinarians) were employed;
- two emergency veterinarians were contracted to allow the extension of the VTH functioning hours to 12/day (8:30 to 20:30);
- new clinical cases were brought to the VEE by contracted companion animal specialists (an oncologist, an ophthalmologist, and one ECVD dermatologist), working at the VTH once a week each.

The 24/7 VEE service improvement is in progress, enhancing student participation in emergency cases along with persistence of the contracts with external clinics (Clinica Città di Sassari, and two new contracts added to that since January 2025).

An electronic calendar was set up, scheduling all clinical visits for students' information and allowing the students to book the activities of their interest; there are links provided which explain the use of this calendar.

**2.4.2. Analysis of the findings/Comments**

Increasing the number of companion animal cases is a continuing process which helps the VEE to cover the clinical training of the students. Nevertheless, the balance still remains negative (I8). The measures adopted by the VEE (increase in employed staff, contracts with specialists, the possibility

for the students to book clinical activities in the calendar, recording of the cases seen extramurally on a special form) led to an increase in caseload up to 2000 in the academic year 2023/2024 and a diversity of the caseload was ensured by the specialized veterinarians, improving the quality of the students' clinical training.

#### **2.4.3. Suggestions**

The VEE is encouraged to pursue the increasing trend in the companion animal caseload.

### **2.5. Minor Deficiency 5: Partial compliance with Standard 4.2. because of insufficient number of lockers for students and suboptimal onsite food services.**

#### **2.5.1. Findings**

Since the last ESEVT visitation, ninety new lockers were distributed throughout four floors; in 2025, the VEE will re-evaluate if there is a need for more lockers. It is planned that within a two-to-three-year timeframe, the need for lockers for all students will be fully addressed, funded by the University. Following the 2023 EAEVE visitation, in order to create on-site food service facilities, the VEE addressed various requests to the central bodies of the University (Student Council, Academic Senate, and Administrative Council), but no significant measures have been taken so far.

However, the students have access to a large student's "Mensa" within 15-20 minutes walking distance from the VEE. The students' lunch break is two hours. The food is varied, well presented and abundant at a cost that varies from nil to 4 Euros maximum. It is open from Monday to Saturday for lunch and dinner. Students can receive a lunchbox with the Sunday meals upon request. The dining room is large and easily accommodates the high number of students.

#### **2.5.2. Analysis of the findings/Comments**

In whatever regard the lockers the measures seem to be addressing the problem adequately.

It seems that the food services provided are sufficient, making it unnecessary to provide other solutions for the moment. The only problem arises if the bad weather does not allow the students to get easily to the "Mensa". It should also be taken into consideration that it is important for veterinary medicine students to meet colleagues from other schools.

#### **2.5.3. Suggestions**

The VEE is encouraged to also consider some simple on-site solutions such as automatic distributors or vending machines.

### **2.6. Minor Deficiency 6: Partial compliance with Standard 4.3. because of suboptimal organisation of the hospitalisation spaces for companion animals.**

#### **2.6.1. Findings**

Since the last EAEVE FV, the VEE made changes to its hospital, separating the isolation units for dogs and cats. Similarly, the intensive care and hospitalization areas are separated for dogs and cats. The exotic animals' hospital is located in another area. For wildlife, hospitalization is agreed with the official Sardinian wildlife rescue agency (Fo. Re. S.T.A.S, the Bonassai Rescue Centre) which accepts students during their clinical rounds and EPT.

#### **2.6.2. Analysis of the findings/Comments**

For exotic pets, the hospitalization area was chosen and it is planned to be functional by July 2025.

### **2.6.3. Suggestions**

None.

## **2.7. Minor Deficiency 7: Partial compliance with Standard 4.8. because of suboptimal transportation of students to extra-mural facilities.**

### **2.7.1. Findings**

To address this minor deficiency, two mini-buses were rented (long-term contract from December 2024 to December 2026) with adequate capacity (9 seats each - 8 passengers + 1 driver). The buses rental was financed by the Autonomous Region of Sardinia which supported practical extramural activities with a total budget of €1,740,000. These funds permitted a long-term rental of the two minibuses that can be driven solely by the personnel of the VEE. For each extra-mural practical activity and visit, a total of 16 students can be transported.

The VEE developed an internal operation manual for the correct booking and operation of the minibuses, and for scheduling the practical activities by the teaching staff. The administrative office of the VEE oversees routine and extraordinary maintenance, manages re-fuelling with fuel cards, and conducts periodic checks to ensure the vehicles' optimal functionality.

### **2.7.2. Analysis of the findings/Comments**

It should be noted that legal constraints do not allow the VEE to acquire vehicles. The situation has significantly improved since 2023.

### **2.7.3. Suggestions**

The minor deficiency was, for the time being, minimised/corrected. If the Italian legal constraints persist, prohibiting the purchase of new vehicles by VEE and only long-term rental is possible, it will be accomplished with the provision of external funds.

## **2.8. Minor Deficiency 8: Partial compliance with Standard 6.3. because of suboptimal access of students to equipment for the development of procedural skills.**

### **2.8.1. Findings**

Following the ESEVT visitation, the VEE Council identified a room that is to be dedicated to the Clinical Skills Lab (CSL) and related services, with approximately 210 square meters, and a €200,000 budget has been allocated for equipment, which is part of the Uniss grant dedicated to enhancing the VEE teaching infrastructures. The room is not yet fully ready but well under being finished in a short time – maybe a couple of months.

A CSL committee was designated, consisting of six teachers and one students' representative. All staff members and students' representatives were invited to contribute to the CSL creation and various proposals were received. A program for eight stations to be installed was presented, based on the equipment already existing and those items that were ordered.

Additionally, the CSL committee acquired competences in various ways, such as sharing experience with other Italian schools (Bari, Padua, Bologna) or with establishments abroad (Dublin, Turin, Milan). An initial expenditure of €75 000 was approved in November 2024, which was used in ordering the following equipment: eight simulators, two computer programs (BIOSFERA and IMAIOS) and various models to develop competences on animal handling (horse, cattle, dog, mouse, rat), venipuncture (horse, sheep, dog, cat), IM injection (horse), artificial insemination

(horse, cattle), calving assistance, pregnancy diagnosis (cattle), resuscitation (dog), leg bandages (dog), surgical preparation and suturing, dissection. A good number of models for practising venepuncture in dogs, sheep and horses were made “in-house” from simple materials, and more are expected to be prepared in the near future.

The remaining budget (approximately €125,000) will be employed to purchase further equipment, based on the experience gained from using the first set of products and from the feedback received from students.

Presently, the Skills Lab is open Monday and Wednesday from 9 am to 4 pm and Tuesday, Thursday and Friday from 9 am to 1 pm. Teachers can also book it for other practical teaching activities in small groups by emailing the responsible teachers.

### **2.8.2. Analysis of the findings/Comments**

The efforts of the VEE to follow the EAEVE recommendations for improving the CSL facilities are sustained and commendable. Before the previous EAEVE visitation, albeit models to train students on invasive procedures were present, located in various areas of the VEE, where free access was not continuously permitted, should students wish to practice techniques at times of their choice.

At the time of the writing of the RE-SER and of the re-visitation, the renovation of the CSL is still in progress, and the equipment has not yet been fully supplied. The VEE is expecting to open the new room for students' use in the first semester of 2025. In the future, with the new room, it is expected that the students will have a broader timeframe to use the Skills Lab.

In general, the minor deficiency was corrected and will improve in the future.

### **2.8.3. Suggestions**

The VEE is encouraged to continue its progress in improving the students' training in the CSL facilities.

## **2.9. Minor Deficiency 9: Partial compliance with Standard 8.1. because of suboptimal strategy to ensure coherence of the overall assessment regime.**

### **2.9.1. Findings**

A new policy concerning the assessment procedures was approved in November 2024 by the Course Council and the Department Council. This describes in detail the types of examinations in place for the various disciplines of the course, including examination of both theoretical and practical knowledge of the students (D1C). Specific requirements (responsibilities of the students, teachers and prerequisites to take the exams) are detailed with partial tests and *in itinere* examinations explained. A complaint procedure was set for the students when the assessment procedures deviate from the rules. Students' self-assessment questionnaires are used to improve the QA at the level of the assessment process (regularity of the assessment, adherence to procedures).

### **2.9.2. Analysis of the findings/Comments**

The adoption of the *in itinere* (written) exams along with the favoured oral examinations allowed the students to lower their workload during the assessment period. The oral examinations, always public in order to ensure transparency and equal treatment of the candidates, are preceded in several disciplines (i.e., Anatomy, Histology, Pathological Anatomy, Food Inspection, etc.) by practical examinations. For each discipline, the examination form (oral, written, mixed) is clearly specified, and students are aware of the entire procedure beforehand.

### **2.9.3. Suggestions**

The VEE should proceed with the accomplishment of the video tutorial on the use of the assessment policy.

### **2.10. Minor Deficiency 10: Partial compliance with Standard 9.1. because of non-compulsory training in teaching and assessment for all teaching staff.**

#### **2.10.1. Findings**

The VEE has a new teaching staff training policy, approved in February 2024. Further to the training of teaching staff (academic, technical-administrative, junior staff - post-doctoral and postgraduate students), this includes freelancers and extramural tutors on contract at the VTH or responsible for providing EPT. This training can be accomplished through both online and face-to-face courses, also benefiting from a course repository adjusted to the operational area (general, sector-specific), available for training the newly recruited staff. Training activities are included in a yearly calendar, submitted for approval to the Department Council.

Examples for 2024 include, at the VEE and University level:

- Scientific communication and public speaking course IV ed.; for academics, students, junior and support staff. 20/04/2024 – 23/03/2024 (general, online);
- Training course aimed at acquiring skills to support students with Specific Learning Disorders (SLD) for academics and Support Staff (Italian dyslexia society – UNISS) (general, online), etc. The new courses, based on the achievement of the training objectives, are issued by the working group, based on DVMSS and UNISS requirements.

The new training procedures for both teaching and support staff were also presented under correction of Major Deficiencies 1 and 3.

#### **2.10.2. Analysis of the findings/Comments**

The new Basic course that has been introduced became compulsory to be completed by all categories of staff involved in the core including the EPT providers, by July 2025, as well as the online modules and on-site seminars. For that, Google Forms, tutorials and a Manual were made available on the VEE's site. The certificates of attendance issued upon course completion are motivating for the VEE staff and also for the veterinary practitioners.

#### **2.10.3. Suggestions**

The VEE is encouraged to complete the requirements for initial and continuous training of the trainers, with requirements for students' assessment.

### **3. ESEVT Indicators**

#### **3.1. Findings**

All the indicators provided in the RSER are within or in some cases (I4, I5, I6, I7) well above the mean, except I8 (n° of companion animal patients seen intra-murally and extra-murally / n° of students graduating annually, I8=-0.927) and I15 (n° of ruminant and pig necropsies / n° of students graduating annually, I15=-0.004), the last with a very slight difference to the mean. The VEE took several measures to improve both these indicators. Since the last EAEVE visit, the VEE corrected I9, I10, I11, I17, I18, and I20, which are now in a positive range.

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<b>Name of the VEE: Dipartimento di Medicina Veterinaria - Università degli Studi di Sassari, Italy</b>				
<b>Name &amp; mail of the VEE's Head: Prof. Enrico Pietro Luigi De Santis - vtpres@uniss.it</b>				
<b>Date of the form filling: December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2024</b>				
<b>Raw data from the last 3 complete academic years</b>	<b>21/22</b>	<b>22/23</b>	<b>23/24</b>	<b>Mean</b>
<b>1</b> n° of FTE teaching staff involved in veterinary training	60	54	57	57.0
<b>2</b> n° of undergraduate students	233	251	259	247.7
<b>3</b> n° of FTE veterinarians involved in veterinary training	46	42	46	44.7
<b>4</b> n° of students graduating annually	29	31	36	32
<b>5</b> n° of FTE support staff involved in veterinary training	30	28	35	31
<b>6</b> n° of hours of practical (non-clinical) training	995	911	868	924.7
<b>7</b> n° of hours of Core Clinical Training (CCT)	941	763	801	835.0
<b>8</b> n° of hours of VPH (including FSQ) training	454	640	646	580
<b>9</b> n° of hours of extra-mural practical training in VPH (including FSQ)	56	209	204	156.3
<b>10</b> n° of companion animal patients seen intra-murally	689	1330	1940	1319.7
<b>11</b> n° of individual ruminant and pig patients seen intra-murally	7	9	7	7.7
<b>12</b> n° of equine patients seen intra-murally	23	54	57	44.7
<b>13</b> n° of rabbit, rodent, bird and exotic patients seen intra-murally	30	86	95	70.3
<b>14</b> n° of companion animal patients seen extra-murally	68	47	62	59.0
<b>15</b> n° of individual ruminants and pig patients seen extra-murally	756	686	1227	889.7
<b>16</b> n° of equine patients seen extra-murally	157	188	80	141.7
<b>17</b> n° of rabbit, rodent, bird and exotic patients seen extra-murally	3	44	25	24.0
<b>18</b> n° of visits to ruminant and pig herds	35	22	33	30.0
<b>19</b> n° of visits to poultry and farmed rabbit units	5	5	2	4.0
<b>20</b> n° of companion animal necropsies	42	76	117	78.3
<b>21</b> n° of ruminant and pig necropsies	16	34	36	28.7
<b>22</b> n° of equine necropsies	10	6	4	6.7
<b>23</b> n° of rabbit, rodent, bird and exotic pet necropsies	39	47	53	46.3
<b>24</b> n° of FTE specialised veterinarians involved in veterinary training	3	3	3	3.0
<b>25</b> n° of PhD graduating annually	12	7	8	9.0

<b>Name of the VEE:</b>		<b>Dipartimento di Medicina Veterinaria - Università degli Studi di Sassari, Italy</b>		
<b>Date of the form filling:</b>		<b>December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2024</b>		
<b>Calculated Indicators from raw data</b>		<b>VEE values</b>	<b>Median values<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Minima l values<sup>2</sup></b>
<b>I1</b>	n° of FTE teaching staff involved in veterinary training / n° of undergraduate students	0.230	0.15	0.13
<b>I2</b>	n° of FTE veterinarians involved in veterinary training / n° of students graduating annually	1.396	0.84	0.63
				<b>Balance<sup>3</sup></b>
				0.104
				0.766

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<b>I3</b>	nº of FTE support staff involved in veterinary training / nº of students graduating annually	0.969	0.88	0.54	0.429
<b>I4</b>	nº of hours of practical (non-clinical) training	924.667	953.50	700.59	224.077
<b>I5</b>	nº of hours of Core Clinical Training (CCT)	835.000	941.58	704.80	130.200
<b>I6</b>	nº of hours of VPH (including FSQ) training	580.000	293.50	191.80	388.200
<b>I7</b>	nº of hours of extra-mural practical training in VPH (including FSQ)	156.333	75.00	31.80	124.533
<b>I8</b>	nº of companion animal patients seen intra-murally and extra-murally / nº of students graduating annually	43.083	67.37	44.01	-0.927
<b>I9</b>	nº of individual ruminants and pig patients seen intra-murally and extra-murally / nº of students graduating annually	28.042	18.75	9.74	18.302
<b>I10</b>	nº of equine patients seen intra-murally and extra-murally / nº of students graduating annually	5.823	5.96	2.15	3.673
<b>I11</b>	nº of rabbit, rodent, bird and exotic seen intra-murally and extra-murally/ nº of students graduating annually	2.948	3.11	1.16	1.788
<b>I12</b>	nº of visits to ruminant and pig herds / nº of students graduating annually	0.938	1.29	0.54	0.398
<b>I13</b>	nº of visits of poultry and farmed rabbit units / nº of students graduating annually	0.125	0.11	0.04	0.080
<b>I14</b>	nº of companion animal necropsies / nº of students graduating annually	2.448	2.11	1.40	1.048
<b>I15</b>	nº of ruminant and pig necropsies / nº of students graduating annually	0.896	1.36	0.90	-0.004
<b>I16</b>	nº of equine necropsies / nº of students graduating annually	0.208	0.18	0.10	0.108
<b>I17</b>	nº of rabbit, rodent, bird and exotic pet necropsies / nº of students graduating annually	1.448	2.65	0.88	0.568
<b>I18</b>	nº of FTE specialised veterinarians involved in veterinary training / nº of students graduating annually	0.094	0.27	0.06	0.034
<b>I19</b>	nº of PhD graduating annually / nº of students graduating annually	0.281	0.15	0.07	0.211

1 Median values defined by data from VEEs with Accreditation/Approval status in May 2019

2 Recommended minimal values calculated as the 20th percentile of data from VEEs with Accreditation/Approval status in May 2019

3 A negative balance indicates that the Indicator is below the recommended minimal value

\*Indicators used only for statistical purpose

### **3.2. Analysis of the findings/Comments**

There was a substantial increase in I8 (from -21.751 to -0.927), showing the involvement of the VEE in solving the problem of low caseload in companion animals and student exposure to clinical cases in these species.

### **3.3. Suggestions**

The VEE is encouraged to continue implementing the measures that led to the increase of the companion animal caseload and the collaborations which enhanced the exposure of the students to a higher number of necropsies.

#### **4. Conclusions**

The VEE is to be commended for significant improvements implemented in a very short timeframe, which were noticed by the team in all areas of concern. The Establishment is committed to continuing the process of improvement in all fields of their activity.

The Re-visitation Team considered that the Major Deficiencies identified during the Visitation done on 20 – 24 March 2023:

**1.1. Major Deficiency 1: Non-compliance with Standard 4.4 because of the absence of 24/7**

**1.2. Major Deficiency 2: Non-compliance with Standard 5.1 because of insufficient caseload of companion animal patients in the VTH and insufficient number of necropsies in companion and food-producing animals**

**1.3. Major deficiency 3: Non-compliance with Standard 9.2 because of insufficient number of teaching and support staff in the VTH**

All 3 Major Deficiencies have been addressed and corrected by the VEE.

#### **Correction of Minor Deficiencies:**

2.1. Minor Deficiency 1: Partial compliance with Standard 2.1. because of suboptimal distribution of funding, resulting in inadequate staffing - corrected

2.2. Minor Deficiency 2: Partial compliance with Standard 3.1.1. because of suboptimal distinction between core, elective and optional activities in the curriculum - corrected

2.3. Minor Deficiency 3: Partial compliance with Standard 3.1.2. because of suboptimal teaching of some essential basic subjects - corrected

2.4. Minor Deficiency 4: Partial compliance with Standard 3.1.3. because of suboptimal clinical training in companion animals - corrected

2.5. Minor Deficiency 5: Partial compliance with Standard 4.2. because of insufficient number of lockers for students and suboptimal onsite food services - in substantial progress

2.6. Minor Deficiency 6: Partial compliance with Standard 4.3. because of suboptimal organisation of the hospitalisation spaces for companion animals - corrected

2.7. Minor Deficiency 7: Partial compliance with Standard 4.8. because of suboptimal transportation of students to extra-mural facilities - corrected

2.8. Minor Deficiency 8: Partial compliance with Standard 6.3. because of suboptimal access of students to equipment for the development of procedural skills – in substantial progress

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2.9. Minor Deficiency 9: Partial compliance with Standard 8.1. because of a suboptimal strategy to ensure coherence of the overall assessment regime - corrected

2.10. Minor Deficiency 10: Partial compliance with Standard 9.1. because of non-compulsory training in teaching and assessment for all teaching staff- corrected

4. Conclusions (recommendations to ECOVE, i.e. Accreditation if all Major Deficiencies have been fully corrected or Non-Accreditation if all Major Deficiencies have not been fully corrected)

The VEE is encouraged to continue its improvement efforts.

## **Decision of ECOVE**

The Committee concluded that all the Major Deficiencies identified after the Full Visitation on 20 – 24 March 2023 have been corrected.

The Veterinary Education Establishment (VEE) of the University of Sassari is therefore classified as holding the status of: ACCREDITATION.