



## **RE-VISITATION REPORT**

**To the University of Thessaly, Karditsa, Greece**

**On 8 -10 April 2025**

**By the Re-Visitation Team**

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## Introduction

An ESEVT team evaluated the VEE of the University of Thessaly in Karditsa in October 2022. In December 2022, ECOVE concluded that:

Eight Major Deficiencies had been identified, i.e.:

- Non-compliance with Substandard 3.1.3 because the current design of the curriculum is insufficient in allowing the students to equally acquire Day One Competences.
- Non-compliance with Standard 4.1 because of inadequate compliance of the VEE with the EU legislation on the safe handling of chemicals.
- Non-compliance with Standard 4.2 because of inadequate maintenance of some teaching laboratories and clinical facilities.
- Non-compliance with Standard 4.3 because of insufficient capacity of the livestock facilities, animal housing, core clinical teaching facilities and equipment to enhance learning.
- Non-compliance with Standard 4.4 because of insufficient exposure of the students to 24/7 emergency services.
- Non-compliance with Standard 4.6 because of inadequate isolation facilities for companion and farm animal species.
- Non-compliance with Standard 5.1 because of an insufficient number and variety of healthy and diseased animals and cadavers.
- Non-compliance with Standard 9.2 because of insufficient numbers of permanent technical and support staff dedicated to clinical and practical education.

Five Minor Deficiencies had been identified, i.e.:

- Partial compliance with Standard 1.3 because the operating plan, including timeframe and implementation indicators, has suboptimal reference to the SWOT analysis.
- Partial compliance with Standard 2.1 because of suboptimal provision of funding to sustain the requirements for the VEE to achieve its objectives.
- Partial compliance with Standard 3.1 because the current design of the curriculum is suboptimal in the provision of equal training to all students.
- Partial compliance with Standard 7.2 because the resources allocated are suboptimal relative to the number of students.

- Partial compliance with Standard 9.3 because of the suboptimal use of opportunities by academic staff to develop and extend their teaching, research and assessment knowledge.

Following the European System of Evaluation of Veterinary Training (ESEVT) and the 2019 ESEVT SOP as amended in September 2021, the status of the VEE is Pending Accreditation.

Because of the Force Majeure events and in agreement with ECOVE, the Re-visitation (RV) was postponed and finally planned for April 2025. The RV Self-Evaluation Report (RV-SER) was submitted to EAEVE and the team one month before the RV and was slightly amended after the RV due to correction of errors and clarification.

The RV was well prepared and organised and in full agreement with the SOP, with several preparatory webinars.

The 2019 ESEVT SOP, as amended in September 2021, is valid for this RV.

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

**1.1. Major Deficiency 1:** Non-compliance with Standard 3.1.3 because the current design of the curriculum is insufficient in allowing the students to equally acquire Day One Competences (D1C).

### **1.1.1. Findings**

To enhance and standardise students' practical training in companion animal veterinary medicine, the VEE has reorganised student practice in Affiliated Clinical Training Centres (ACTCs) in Larissa. The Karditsa area has an insufficient number of companion animals to provide the necessary caseload for the Veterinary Teaching Hospital (VTH) of the VEE. Larissa, the largest regional city, is located approximately 60 km (60 minutes) from Karditsa.

In June 2024, the Senate of the University of Thessaly issued a decision regulating undergraduate students' training at ACTCs and established the principles and requirements for accepted centres (Annex 2).

The Municipal Dog Shelter of Larissa, as well as approved private veterinary clinics or practices in Larissa, can apply to serve as an ACTC. As of April 2025, there are three accepted ACTCs with around 244 weekly patients, of which 45 are emergency patients.

Since September 2024, each student has been required to complete two weeks of training at an ACTC in Larissa. Typically, two students are assigned to each ACTC at the same time. Students practice with 3-4 cases per day, with approximately 42 cases reported per student in two weeks of training. They also take the health status of animals in the Municipal Dog Shelter and complete preventive and curative treatments and castrations.

The University of Thessaly provides students with accommodation and meals in its student housing in Larissa for the duration of the training and arranges transportation between Karditsa and Larissa, using the VEE's bus.

There is an open call for ACTCs. A three-member VEE committee evaluates applications based on predefined weighted criteria (see Annex 11) and ranks them for approval by the VEE Assembly. The ACTC status for selected centres is valid for three years.

Each ACTC must have a designated Scientific Supervisor, who must be a permanently employed veterinarian with at least one year of specialisation in small animal clinical medicine or ten years of professional experience. Scientific supervisors have a three-year contract with the VEE, which includes variable payment and free second-hand opinions from the VEE clinical professors. Annual pedagogy training is offered to the Scientific Supervisors. Some clinics use their ACTC status for their marketing (<https://www.kthniatrikhlarisas.gr/>).

The Scientific Supervisor monitors students' progress, records their daily attendance at clinical rotations, and evaluates their performance on tasks related to the required D1C. The teaching staff reviews the logbook before students are permitted to sit for their final examinations.

After completing training at an ACTC, students must submit their completed case reports and personal medical procedure logbooks. Students also provide the teaching staff with a self-evaluation of their training experience at the ACTC (see Annex 12).

At the VEE, a monitoring committee supervises students during their ACTC training. Students must communicate weekly with the monitoring committee via phone or email.

Students' equal training opportunities in production animal practice are ensured by recently implemented procedures:

- To ensure an equivalent patient load, students are divided into five groups, which rotate in the final two years;
- Twice a week, students doing practical training in ACTC participate in training at the University farm in Larissa where they get acquainted with healthy sheep, goats, dairy cows, and pigs;
- Each training activity has predefined learning outcomes;
- Students keep logbooks throughout pre-clinical and clinical training. Supervisors regularly review logbooks.

#### **1.1.2. Comments**

The practical training done in the ACTCs and University Farm now allows equal clinical training and therefore the acquisition of the related D1C by all students. This has been confirmed by the analysis of the new curriculum and interviews of 4 final-year students.

#### **1.1.3. Suggestions**

None.

#### **1.1.4. Decision**

The deficiency has been corrected.

**1.2. Major Deficiency 2:** Non-compliance with Standard 4.1 because of inadequate compliance of the VEE with the EU legislation on the safe handling of chemicals.

#### **1.2.1. Findings**

On February 20, 2025, TÜV HELLAS (TÜV NORD) awarded the VEE a certification for the Management of Chemical Laboratory Safety in Academic Institutions (see Annex 4). TÜV HELLAS is a third-party inspection, certification, and training company.

Healthcare hazardous waste is transported to the sanitary landfill of the Larisa prefecture by an authorised company. During February 2025, a total of 207 kg of such material was handled by the

Ecostar Company (see Annex 4). The relatively low quantity is explained by the recording time being during the examination period with no active teaching and training of students.

Different waste types are colour-coded for handling in three categories: no special processing, incineration, or sterilisation.

The VEE ordered special containers and equipment for the proper and safe handling of chemicals. These containers are included in a national equipment tender procurement (see Annex 6).

All new staff have to follow specific training based on the knowledge of the biosecurity manual, and an annual continuous training session is planned for all staff members.

Biosecurity instructions are posted with QR codes and implemented in laboratory, clinical areas and on farms.

#### **1.2.2. Comments**

Procedures for handling chemicals and waste materials and for training new staff members are in place. Training, supervision, and control allowing for safe daily routines have been developed and consistently implemented.

#### **1.2.3. Suggestions**

None.

#### **1.2.4. Decision**

The deficiency has been corrected.

**1.3. Major Deficiency 3:** Non-compliance with Standard 4.2 because of inadequate maintenance of some teaching laboratories and clinical facilities.

#### **1.3.1. Findings**

Maintenance has been developed in cooperation with the Vice-Rector for Financial Planning and Development. The University staff of the Technical Infrastructure visits the VEE at 3-4 months intervals and also reacts to Force Majeure events. For example, the September 2023 cyclone disrupted the electricity supply of the VEE and caused serious flooding of underground areas with disastrous outcomes. The situation was stabilised and upgraded to sustain future natural challenges (e.g. flood protection, UPSs to guarantee electricity supply).

#### **1.3.2. Comments**

The maintenance of teaching laboratories and clinical facilities has now reached the requested level for ensuring safe teaching and research activities.

#### **1.3.3. Suggestions**

None.

#### **1.3.4. Decision**

The deficiency has been corrected.

**1.4. Major Deficiency 4:** Non-compliance with Standard 4.3 because of insufficient capacity of the livestock facilities, animal housing, core clinical teaching facilities, and equipment to enhance

learning.

#### **1.4.1. Findings**

The VEE has received external funding from various instances and has built or established some new facilities (isolation unit for farm and companion animals, teaching and hospitalisation for farm animals, new skills lab), renovated existing facilities (poultry experimental unit, and anatomy buildings), upgraded classrooms and library.

Additional changes have been implemented, i.e. dispensing booth in the Histology Lab building, new anti-flood equipment to protect the Faculty's central electrical substation, renovation and new facilities in the experimental poultry unit (Poultry Department), establishment of a combined microscopy and skills laboratory for students, new Video Conferencing System and Equipment, new bus for farm visits.

In addition, new pieces of equipment have been purchased for clinical training purposes (see annexes 6 and 7 of the RV-SER).

Moreover, utilising ACTCs for companion animals, VEE's teaching facilities and equipment have been enhanced without a direct burden on the VEE budget.

#### **1.4.2. Comments**

Using external and University funding, the capacity of facilities and equipment has been developed to a sufficient level.

#### **1.4.3. Suggestions**

It is suggested to continue to increase the equipment of the clinical skill lab and its use by students.

#### **1.4.4. Decision**

The deficiency has been corrected.

**1.5. Major Deficiency 5:** Non-compliance with Standard 4.4 because of insufficient exposure of the students to 24/7 emergency services.

#### **1.5.1. Findings**

In the VTH, there is a teaching staff for companion animals on 24/7 service.

The students in ACTCs participate in the emergency services with a much higher caseload than seen in VTH. Production animal training is 13 weeks in both semesters. Two students from the clinic rotation are assigned to be trained in each after-hours case.

Ambulatory clinics do both routine and emergency cases on visited farms. The mobile clinics in 2023-24 treated 1555 cases with 167 emergencies and, in 2022-23, 1560 cases with 162 emergencies.

Equine emergency service is organised, and cases are seen by students. Interviewing the last year students confirmed indeed that students have been exposed to companion and food-producing animals, and equine emergencies.

#### **1.5.2. Comments**

The emergency caseload of companion animals in the intramural VTH is rather low: 8 cases so far in 2024-2025. However, this is compensated by emergency cases seen in ACTCs during evening and

night duties (222). Also, it was reported that the number of VTH emergencies is currently on a growing curve also from the Karditsa area.

Production animal emergencies are seen as a part of ambulatory clinic activities, as confirmed by final-year students.

#### **1.5.3. Suggestions**

None.

#### **1.5.4. Decision**

The deficiency has been corrected.

**1.6. Major Deficiency 6:** Non-compliance with Standard 4.6 because of inadequate isolation facilities for companion and food-producing animal species.

#### **1.6.1. Findings**

New isolation facilities have been built and are in use (see also items 1.3 and 1.4).

#### **1.6.2. Comments**

The new isolation facilities are now in agreement with the SOP requirements.

#### **1.6.3. Suggestions**

None.

#### **1.6.4. Decision**

The deficiency has been corrected.

**1.7. Major Deficiency 7:** Non-compliance with Standard 5.1 because of an insufficient number and variety of healthy and diseased animals and cadavers.

#### **1.7.1. Findings**

The utilisation of ACTCs and the University farm in Larissa has increased companion animal patients and healthy farm animals in teaching. Also, the number of individual ruminants and pig patients seen extra-murally has increased from 2022, although restrictions due to small ruminant epidemics have temporarily limited the increase.

Recruiting a new pathologist and technician has made it possible to open a necropsy diagnostic and forensic service every weekday, and this has contributed to an increase in the number of cadavers.

Also, for teaching purposes, cadavers of stray companion animals are collected from the Municipality of Karditsa and local animal welfare organisations.

Moreover, free-of-charge necropsies are completed extra-murally on small ruminants, zoo animals and equines by teaching staff and students, with the same level of biosecurity as in the VEE necropsy room.

#### **1.7.2. Comments**

The number and variety of healthy and diseased animals and cadavers are now in agreement with the Standards and ESEVT Indicators, considering the low number of students who graduate annually, i.e. around 60.

#### **1.7.3. Suggestions**

None.

#### **1.7.4. Decision**

The deficiency has been corrected.

**1.8. Major Deficiency 8:** Non-compliance with Standard 9.2 because of insufficient numbers of permanent technical and support staff dedicated to clinical and practical education.

#### **1.8.1. Findings**

The VEE has used the state programme to increase both support staff and veterinarians involved in teaching (see ESEVT Indicators).

Four full-time and six part-time support staff will be employed soon, as confirmed by a written statement from the Rectorate.

The utilisation of ACTCs and the University farm also contributes to increasing the number of support staff, partly linked to students' training.

#### **1.8.2. Comments**

The number of support staff has significantly increased and is now above the minimal value (see Indicator 3).

#### **1.8.3. Suggestions**

None.

#### **1.8.4. Decision**

The deficiency has been corrected.

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

**2.1. Minor Deficiency 1:** Partial compliance with Standard 1.3 because the operating plan, including timeframe and implementation indicators, has suboptimal reference to the SWOT analysis.

#### **2.1.1. Findings**

Currently, the SWOT analysis has not changed from the Full Visitation.

In the strategic plan, values, mission, and vision are intermingled with strategic goals. The timeframe is taken from the curriculum and ESEVT Indicators.

The facilities of the VEE have recently suffered twice from flooding and this vulnerability is not seen in the SWOT analysis or operational plan, although maintenance actions have been taken and grant money obtained for the project "Assessment of flood risks after the unforeseen events of September 2023 - analysis of the prospects for taking flood protection measures".

The interview with staff demonstrated an interest in developing a more structured strategic plan with actualised SWOT and SWOT-based short and long-term strategies with responsible bodies and realistic time frames to keep up with educational objectives.



### **2.1.2. Comments**

There is an ongoing process to update the SWOT analysis and the strategic plan, with milestones and indicators of achievement.

### **2.1.3. Suggestions**

It is suggested that the strategic plan and its monitoring continue to be enhanced to better adapt them to the SWOT analysis and the evolution of the ESEVT Indicators.

**2.2. Minor Deficiency 2:** Partial compliance with Standard 2.1 because of suboptimal provision of funding to sustain the requirements for the VEE to achieve its objectives.

### **2.2.1. Findings**

The VEE's research funding from external sources has developed positively, although core funding for running costs is less than annual inflation.

VEE core funding does not show staff salary and maintenance costs, which are included in the University budget. This explains why positively developed funding is not seen in the variable in the RV-SER.

### **2.2.2. Comments**

The use by the VEE of different state calls, research funding, innovative fundraising and financial support from the University now allows the implementation of its strategic plan and the achievement of its objectives.

### **2.2.3. Suggestions**

None.

**2.3. Minor Deficiency 3:** Partial compliance with Standard 3.1 because the current design of the curriculum is suboptimal in the provision of equal training to all students.

### **2.3.1. Findings**

The ACTC programme and clinical rotation equalise companion animal training. The VEE is developing the logbooks, in agreement with the suggestions made by the EAEVE e-logbook working group.

### **2.3.2. Comments**

Mandatory core clinical rotations at ACTCs with formal teaching staff involvement have equalised the clinical training to allow the acquisition of D1C by all students.

### **2.3.3. Suggestions**

None.

**2.4. Minor Deficiency 4:** Partial compliance with Standard 7.2 because the resources allocated are suboptimal relative to the number of students.

#### **2.4.1. Findings**

The number of new students is fixed by the Ministry, and the VEE cannot adapt student numbers to available resources. External research funding has been successful in recent years. Some new positions are opened, but salaries are paid out of the core funding. Although the development of core funding does not cover the annual inflation rate, the other resources balance the allocation. Moreover, the support letter of the Rector indicates the University's strong commitment to developing the VEE on a sustainable basis.

#### **2.4.2. Comments**

Although reaching a sufficient level of funding needs constant work from the Dean's office and teaching staff, the allocated resources allow the education of the number of admitted students, i.e. around 60-70/class.

#### **2.4.3. Suggestions**

It is suggested to continue an active search for additional research funding.

**2.5. Minor Deficiency 5:** Partial compliance with Standard 9.3 because of the suboptimal use of opportunities by academic staff to develop and extend their teaching, research, and assessment knowledge.

#### **2.5.1. Findings**

Teaching mobility and research collaboration have increased.

Sabbatical leaves in foreign universities are in use for several teaching staff.

Continuous training on teaching and assessment and on biosecurity is proposed by the University.

#### **2.5.2. Comments**

The opportunities for the teaching staff to enhance their knowledge and skills have significantly increased during the last 2 years.

#### **2.5.3. Suggestions**

None.

### 3. ESEVT Indicators

#### 3.1. Indicators calculated based on the last 3 completed academic years



#### ESEVT Indicators

<b>Name of the VEE:</b>		<b>Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, University of Thessaly, Greece</b>			
<b>Date of the form filling:</b>		<b>28.02.25</b>			
<b>Calculated Indicators from raw data</b>		<b>VEE values</b>	<b>Median values<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Minimal values<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>Balance<sup>3</sup></b>
<b>I1</b>	n° of FTE teaching staff involved in veterinary training / n° of undergraduate students	0,154	0,15	0,13	0,028
<b>I2</b>	n° of FTE veterinarians involved in veterinary training / n° of students graduating annually	0,945	0,84	0,63	0,315
<b>I3</b>	n° of FTE support staff involved in veterinary training / n° of students graduating annually	0,431	0,88	0,54	-0,109
<b>I4</b>	n° of hours of practical (non-clinical) training	1395,000	953,50	700,59	694,4
<b>I5</b>	n° of hours of Core Clinical Training (CCT)	834,000	941,58	704,80	129,2
<b>I6</b>	n° of hours of VPH (including FSQ) training	448,000	293,50	191,80	256,2
<b>I7</b>	n° of hours of extra-mural practical training in VPH (including FSQ)	178,000	75,00	31,80	146,2
<b>I8</b>	n° of companion animal patients seen intra-murally and extra-murally / n° of students graduating annually	76,398	67,37	44,01	32,39
<b>I9</b>	n° of individual ruminants and pig patients seen intra-murally and extra-murally / n° of students graduating annually	26,448	18,75	9,74	16,71
<b>I10</b>	n° of equine patients seen intra-murally and extra-murally / n° of students graduating annually	1,972	5,96	2,15	-0,178
<b>I11</b>	n° of rabbit, rodent, bird and exotic seen intra-murally and extra-murally / n° of students graduating annually	1,674	3,11	1,16	0,514
<b>I12</b>	n° of visits to ruminant and pig herds / n° of students graduating annually	1,199	1,29	0,54	0,659
<b>I13</b>	n° of visits of poultry and farmed rabbit units / n° of students graduating annually	0,055	0,11	0,04	0,011
<b>I14</b>	n° of companion animal necropsies / n° of students graduating annually	0,884	2,11	1,40	-0,516
<b>I15</b>	n° of ruminant and pig necropsies / n° of students graduating annually	1,221	1,36	0,90	0,321
<b>I16</b>	n° of equine necropsies / n° of students graduating annually	0,017	0,18	0,10	-0,083
<b>I17</b>	n° of rabbit, rodent, bird and exotic pet necropsies / n° of students graduating annually	1,547	2,65	0,88	0,667
<b>I18</b>	n° of FTE specialised veterinarians involved in veterinary training / n° of students graduating annually	0,133	0,27	0,06	0,073
<b>I19</b>	n° of PhD graduating annually / n° of students graduating annually	0,099	0,15	0,07	0,029
<sup>1</sup> Median values defined by data from VEEs with Accreditation/Approval status in May 2019					
<sup>2</sup> Recommended minimal values calculated as the 20th percentile of data from VEEs with Accreditation/Approval status in May 2019					
<sup>3</sup> A negative balance indicates that the Indicator is below the recommended minimal value					
* Indicators used only for statistical purpose					

### 3.2. Indicators calculated based on the current academic year



#### ESEVT Indicators

Name of the VEE:		Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, University of Thessaly, Greece			
Date of the form filling:		28.02.25			
Calculated Indicators from raw data		VEE	Median	Minimal	Balance <sup>3</sup>
		values	values <sup>1</sup>	values <sup>2</sup>	
I1	n° of FTE teaching staff involved in veterinary training / n° of undergraduate students	0,164	0,15	0,13	0,038
I2	n° of FTE veterinarians involved in veterinary training / n° of students graduating annually	0,877	0,84	0,63	0,247
I3	n° of FTE support staff involved in veterinary training / n° of students graduating annually	0,554	0,88	0,54	0,014
I4	n° of hours of practical (non-clinical) training	1395,000	953,50	700,59	694,4
I5	n° of hours of Core Clinical Training (CCT)	834,000	941,58	704,80	129,2
I6	n° of hours of VPH (including FSQ) training	448,000	293,50	191,80	256,2
I7	n° of hours of extra-mural practical training in VPH (including FSQ)	178,000	75,00	31,80	146,2
I8	n° of companion animal patients seen intra-murally and extra-murally / n° of students graduating annually	143,662	67,37	44,01	99,65
I9	n° of individual ruminants and pig patients seen intra-murally and extra-murally / n° of students graduating annually	25,277	18,75	9,74	15,54
I10	n° of equine patients seen intra-murally and extra-murally / n° of students graduating annually	2,246	5,96	2,15	0,096
I11	n° of rabbit, rodent, bird and exotic seen intra-murally and extra-murally / n° of students graduating annually	4,492	3,11	1,16	3,332
I12	n° of visits to ruminant and pig herds / n° of students graduating annually	0,923	1,29	0,54	0,383
I13	n° of visits of poultry and farmed rabbit units / n° of students graduating annually	0,154	0,11	0,04	0,109
I14	n° of companion animal necropsies / n° of students graduating annually	2,000	2,11	1,40	0,600
I15	n° of ruminant and pig necropsies / n° of students graduating annually	1,169	1,36	0,90	0,269
I16	n° of equine necropsies / n° of students graduating annually	0,154	0,18	0,10	0,054
I17	n° of rabbit, rodent, bird and exotic pet necropsies / n° of students graduating annually	4,462	2,65	0,88	3,582
I18	n° of FTE specialised veterinarians involved in veterinary training / n° of students graduating annually	0,092	0,27	0,06	0,032
I19	n° of PhD graduating annually / n° of students graduating annually	0,092	0,15	0,07	0,022
<sup>1</sup> Median values defined by data from VEEs with Accreditation/Approval status in May 2019					
<sup>2</sup> Recommended minimal values calculated as the 20th percentile of data from VEEs with Accreditation/Approval status in May 2019					
<sup>3</sup> A negative balance indicates that the Indicator is below the recommended minimal value					
* Indicators used only for statistical purpose					

### 3.3. Findings

The Indicators calculated based on the last 3 completed academic years are above the minimal values except I3, I10, I14 and I16.

Indicators calculated based on the current academic year are all above the minimum values.

### 3.4. Comments

The improvements implemented recently after the Ful Visitation and the natural disaster were able to correct the Indicators with a negative balance by significantly increasing the number of support staff, equine patients, companion animal necropsies and equine necropsies.

### 3.5. Suggestions

None.

#### **4. Conclusions**

All Major Deficiencies and most Minor Deficiencies have been corrected, and an ongoing process is in place for the correction of the remaining Minor Deficiencies.

This was made possible by the strong support from the Ministry, Rectorate and Dean's Office, as well as a high level of staff involvement.

## **Decision of ECOVE**

The Committee concluded that the Major Deficiencies identified after the Full Visitation on 17 – 21 October 2022 have been corrected.

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