
ENQA AGENCY REVIEW: EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION OF ESTABLISHMENTS FOR VETERINARY EDUCATION (EAEVE)

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report analyses the compliance of the European Association of Establishments for Veterinary Education (EAEVE) with the *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area* (ESG). It is based on an external review conducted from May 2017 until April 2018.

The site visit took place from November 27 till November 29, 2017. The analysis of the self-assessment report and the agency website, together with interviews held during the site visit, provided evidence as to which extent EAEVE meets the ENQA, i.e. ESG 2015 standards, and also, in which way EAEVE has amended its processes and procedures in response to the recommendations for improvement formulated in the previous ENQA evaluation of 2013.

The panel wants to stress its appreciation for the significant progress that EAEVE has made since its former evaluation. The panel commends EAEVE for the way the organisation communicates and interacts with its members and stakeholders. EAEVE has many different stakeholders with different perspectives, including the student, academic, legislative and professional perspectives. The panel commends that EAEVE succeeds in being an independent organization while being both a membership driven and independent quality assurance agency. In addition, EAEVE has taken a lot of action to improve its quality assessments methodologies to make them fit for purpose.

After the previous ENQA evaluation and the introduction of the ESG 2015, EAEVE undertook a complete overhaul of its standard operation procedures (SOP), which involved a series of iterations with input from stakeholders; the revised SOPs were agreed in 2016 at the annual General Assembly in Uppsala. The panel acknowledges and strongly commends the significant work that EAEVE has undertaken and major changes implemented, and in essence successfully so, to address and fulfil the recommendations given in the ENQA report of 2013. Nevertheless, the panel noted that EAEVE tends to underestimate the purpose and, therefore, scope of the ESG Part 1. EAEVE sees the ESG rather as an additional chapter of its quality assurance practices, predominantly focusing on checking ex-post quality assurance operations of higher education institutions. In effect, therefore, EAEVE's approach – as described in the current (May 2016) Manual of Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) – to combine the professional standards, which are essentially prescribed by the relevant EU directive on veterinary education ("chapters 1 to 10" of the EAEVE SOP), with the standards described in ESG Part 1 by adding the latter as a final, add-on chapter ("chapter 11" of the EAEVE SOP) to the aforesaid professional standards creates segregation of issues. This assessment methodology can confuse both panel members and higher education institutions, tends to lead to overlaps of issues and may be an impediment to developing an integral quality concept. EAEVE is therefore advised to ensure that the issues covered by ESG 2015 Part 1 are traceable in all its reports while integrating these issues holistically and directly in all items considered in its assessment of the academic and professional validity of programmes.

Nevertheless, in light of the documentary and oral evidence considered by it, the review panel believes that, in the performance of its functions, EAEVE is substantially compliant overall with the ESG. In reaching this overall judgement, the review team has also taken note of the fact that its judgements concerning ESG 2.1 and ESG 2.5 are essentially based on only one and the same deficiency.

INTRODUCTION

This report analyses the compliance of the European Association of Establishments for Veterinary Education (EAEVE) with the *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area* (ESG). It is based on an external review conducted from May 2017 until April 2018 (from self-analysis until the finalisation of the review report).

BACKGROUND OF THE REVIEW AND OUTLINE OF THE REVIEW PROCESS

BACKGROUND OF THE REVIEW

ENQA's regulations require all member agencies to undergo an external cyclical review at least once every five years, in order to verify that they act in substantial compliance with the ESG as adopted at the Yerevan ministerial conference of the Bologna Process in 2015.

As this is EAEVE's second review, the panel is expected to provide clear evidence of results in all areas and also to acknowledge progress from the previous review. The panel has adopted a developmental approach, as the *Guidelines for ENQA Agency Reviews* aim at constant enhancement of agencies.

MAIN FINDINGS OF THE 2013 REVIEW

The 2013 panel stated:

EAEVE has been involved in evaluations of teaching establishments in Veterinary Medicine since 1988, and thus it has been one of the European HE forerunners in this field. Virtually all European veterinary HEIs are its members. It is performing two kinds of evaluations/accreditations, namely Stage 1 which is mostly concerned with the compliance of the EU Directive, and Stage 2 which mostly deals with issues related to Quality Assurance and management, among others. So far, EAEVE has done only relatively few Stage 2 evaluations. Admittedly, EAEVE has had a considerable impact on harmonisation of the veterinary field in Europe, it has contributed to the common standards, and apparently it has also been a motivational factor towards further development. Yet in terms of meeting the criteria of ESG and ENQA membership, EAEVE is still facing a number of challenges, though it already has taken many good steps in the right direction.

Consequently, the main findings of the 2013 review panel are the following:

- In relation to the ESG criteria, it is apparent that EAEVE needs to strengthen its links with the internal and external stakeholders, also in their involvement in the preparatory phase of the evaluation process and in the formulation of the periodic summary reports and analyses for the long-term strategy of EAEVE.
- The selection of the experts by EAEVE for the evaluation teams is confined to the veterinarians only, and the student members are hand-picked rather than elected by their representative bodies. The impression of the Review Panel was that the evaluation system is rather closed, and operates within the veterinary sciences only, and there is clear need to open it to include outside partners, and not only to related academic fields but to the European HE system at large.
- There is virtually no training for the team members, and the system rather is based on-the-job training.

- The follow-up system is still under development, though the evaluation reports themselves are clear and professional, and also forward-looking.
- A clear and transparent Code of Conduct is needed for all EAEVE functions.
- Although EAEVE evaluations aim at including the developmental or enhancement aspects, a serious missing point is that EAEVE is not conducting any summary reports or analyses of its evaluations and activities, which would serve it to develop its overall policies and contribute to quality enhancement at large in Europe in the veterinary field.

The 2013 panel stated:

Financially EAEVE appeared to be a rather solid organisation. EAEVE itself and its member HEIs clearly recognised the value of QA for their future, and there seemed to be strong motivation to work towards that goal. Also, it became apparent that EAEVE was committed to become a member of ENQA, sooner or later.

Nevertheless, the 2013 Review Panel was of the opinion that EAEVE did not yet meet the ESG criteria sufficiently for the membership of ENQA.

The ENQA Board received and considered the EAEVE's review report and agreed that the final report provided sufficient evidence to conclude that EAEVE did not adequately comply with the ENQA membership criteria. The review panel has assessed compliance with the ESG.¹ In particular, the ENQA Board was concerned with the fact that most of the standards in both parts II and III of the ESG were not satisfactorily met. As substantial compliance with the membership criteria was required to be Associate member of ENQA, the Board could not grant EAEVE Associate membership in its meeting on 23 October 2013.

On 23 January 2014, EAEVE lodged an appeal against the ENQA Board's decision of 23 October 2013 to reject EAEVE's application for full membership of ENQA. The ENQA Appeals and Complaints Committee passed its assessment of the appeal to the ENQA Board on 12 June 2014, stating that the committee rejected the appeal and confirmed the ENQA Board's decision that EAEVE should not be granted full membership in ENQA. Following this, the ENQA Board took a decision at its meeting on 18 June 2014, confirming that, in view of the panel report and the recommendation of the appeals committee, EAEVE should not be granted full membership of ENQA.

However, the ENQA Board raised some issues to be considered in relation to the review of EAEVE although the final report was not to be amended. These issues follow from the appeals and Complaints committee's viewpoints.²

REVIEW PROCESS

The 2017 external review of EAEVE was conducted in accordance with the process described in the *Guidelines for ENQA Agency Reviews* and in accordance with the timeline set out in the Terms of Reference. The panel for the external review of EAEVE was appointed by ENQA and composed of the following members:

¹ All judgements of the 2013 peer review panel are listed in Annex 5.

² See also ANNEX 6: ADVICE OF THE APPEALS AND COMPLAINTS COMMITTEE (12 JUNE 2014)

- Jürgen Kohler, Professor of private law and private litigation, Greifswald University, Former chair of the German Akkreditierungsrat (Accreditation Council), Germany – chair, academic and quality assurance professional (EUA nominee)
- Patrick Van den Bosch, Quality Assurance advisor, Quality Assurance Unit of the Flemish Higher Education Council (VLUHR QA), Belgium – Secretary, quality assurance professional (ENQA nominee)
- Andrea Nolan, Professor of Veterinary Pharmacology, Principal & Vice Chancellor of Edinburgh Napier University, United Kingdom – Academic (ENQA nominee)
- Inguna Zariņa, Master student at University of Latvia, Latvia – Student (ESU nominee)

Agnė Grajauskienė, ENQA's reviews manager, acted as a process coordinator for the review.

From summer 2017 onwards, the secretary had regular e-mail exchanges with the chair, the coordinator and the EAEVE review coordinator. On 9 August 2017, the panel received the self-assessment report; work on the review started immediately thereafter. On September 27, the panel had a telephone conference. In this conference, panel members shared their preliminary impressions. Following a proposal by the chair, specific ESG standards were allocated to the different panel members as specific focus points. During this meeting, the panel also discussed practical details for the review and the proposed time schedule. The secretary started filling in a mapping grid. The chairman and the other members completed the grid with their questions and comments.

On November 26, the panel met in Vienna for a preparatory meeting. The panel decided that an individual panel member can have a lead responsibility for bringing up topics related to his specific focus points. Thus, while there were assignments of first-hand responsibilities along topical lines, there would be no specific lead-person per session, apart from the chair. The site visit took place from November 27 till November 29.³

Self-assessment report

The self-assessment report (SAR) is a 74 pages document. According to the SAR, it is a collaborative effort between members of EAEVE Executive committee (ExCom), the General Assembly (GA) and stakeholders, particularly the Federation of Veterinarians of Europe (FVE) and its branch organisations of the Union of European Veterinary Practitioners (UEVP), European Association of State Veterinary Officers (EASVO), European Veterinarians in Education, Research and Industry (EVERI), Union of European Veterinary Hygienists (UEVH) and European Board of Veterinary Specialisation (EBVS). In addition, input was sought from the International Veterinary Students' Association (IVSA). Input from stakeholders and iterations between EAEVE, i.e. the team responsible for drafting the SAR, and the aforesaid units, stakeholders, and partners led to final amendments and subsequent approval by ExCom.⁴

Prior to the stakeholders receiving the draft SAR, an update of the EAEVE Strategic Plan for 2015-2020 had been sent to all establishments⁵ and to all stakeholders, before final amendments and approval by the ExCom in May 2017. In addition, all establishments received the updated SWOT analysis.

³ See annex 1 for the visit schedule.

⁴ EAEVE's organisation structure is explained below.

⁵ EAEVE uses the word 'establishment' to denominate its member organisations / institutions that organise veterinary education.

The self-assessment report was accurate and informative. It served as a valuable source of information to the panel. The electronic links to policies, procedures and guidelines were very useful. The SAR showed a clear willingness of EAEVE to analyse the organisation and its relevant operations critically and to move forward in continuously enhancing EAEVE's quality assurance policies and practices.

Site visit

The site visit took place from November 27 till November 29 according to the time schedule in Annex

1. Interviewees were the President of EAEVE and Director of ESEVT, the team responsible for preparation of the self-assessment report, representatives from the ESEVT coordinators' group, EAEVE Office staff, ESEVT Experts, ESEVT Student Experts, representatives of the Executive committee (ExCom), heads of reviewed establishments, representatives of the Federation of Veterinarians of Europe (FVE) and the International Veterinary Students' Association (IVSA), representatives of the European committee of Veterinary Education (ECOVE), representatives of the committee on Internal Quality Assessment (CIQA), representatives of the local veterinary establishment, a representative of the European Board of Veterinary Specialisation (EBVS) and a private employer of graduate veterinarians. The staff of the agency provided excellent assistance to the panel regarding all matters.

During the site visit, the panel had various internal consensus-forming discussions. At the end of the site visit, the panel held an internal meeting in the course of which it agreed on the preliminary conclusions related to the level of compliance of EAEVE on each of the standards. The secretary of the panel then drafted the report in cooperation with the rest of the panel. A final version of the draft was sent to the ENQA process coordinator. The draft report was submitted to EAEVE for factual verification in February 2018. With reference to ENQA standards, EAEVE was given two weeks to comment on the report. The final report was sent to the ENQA Board for consideration in March 2018.

HIGHER EDUCATION AND QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM OF THE AGENCY

HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM

EAEVE is a transnational non-governmental accrediting organisation for veterinary medicine in Europe. EAEVE is active in all EU countries, each with a different higher education system. Within the 28 EU Member States, there are presently 75 veterinary teaching establishments in 25 countries. All are members of EAEVE. Those establishments teach nearly 60.000 students and graduate every year approximately 9.000 veterinarians. Of those 75 establishments, 63 fulfil European minimum standards according to the EU Directives as established by the European System of Evaluation of Veterinary Training (ESEVT) operated by EAEVE. The EU Directives are at the basis and core of the evaluation criteria of EAEVE, as laid down and published in the ESEVT Standard Operating Procedures (SOP).⁶ EAEVE's activities are not limited to EU countries only. EAEVE also carries out quality assurance processes and provides consultative services in non-EU countries, including countries outside Europe.

⁶ Directive 2005/36/EC as amended by Directive 2013/55/EU are the legislative basis for automatic recognition of 7 regulated professions, setting a common framework for knowledge, skills, competence and common minimum standards for training in veterinary medicine. Time wise, the minimum training requirement for veterinarians is 5 years of full time study, corresponding to a minimum of 300 ECTS credits; furthermore, Directive 2005/36/EC lists required study subjects in Annex V.4.1 and defines minimum competences (some of them amended by Directive 2013/55/EU), which students are expected to have acquired by the time they graduate; the concept of continued professional development and the Bologna concept are endorsed as well.

QUALITY ASSURANCE

ESEVT

EAEVE manages the 'European System of Evaluation of Veterinary Training' (ESEVT), a profession-specific accreditation system which aims to evaluate, promote and further develop the quality and standard of veterinary teaching establishments and their teaching within, but not limited to, the member states of the European Union (EU). The main objective of the ESEVT is to monitor the harmonization of the minimum standards in the study programmes for veterinarians as prescribed in the EU Directives. These directives regulate the mutual recognition of qualification of graduates in Health degrees, including veterinarians. The Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) is the document that describes the implementation of ESEVT.⁷

As a result of the former ENQA evaluation and the introduction of the ESG 2015 thereafter, EAEVE undertook a complete overhaul of its SOP which involved a series of iterations (seven in total) with input from stakeholders. The 7th and final version of the SOP was formally adopted by the EAEVE GA in Uppsala in May 2016 and is termed the "Uppsala SOP", which is now used on all visitations to veterinary teaching establishments.

The external quality assurance criteria used by EAEVE are defined and publicly available on the EAEVE website. The criteria are summarised in the SOP and are based on the requirements of the European Directives 2005/36/EC and 2013/55/EU, as well as the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG 2015).

International perspective of Quality Assurance

EAEVE is the only international or EU transnational non-governmental accrediting organisation for veterinary medicine within Europe. Based on the yearly number of assessments, it is the largest one in this field in the world. EAEVE membership is voluntary. Currently EAEVE has 96 member establishments, of which 75 are located within the EU. Admission into EAEVE for veterinary teaching establishments within the EU is based on a simple request. On the other hand, membership candidates from outside the EU have to undergo a screening procedure including a consultative on-site assessment before being admitted. All new members, both EU and non-EU, are encouraged by EAEVE to undergo a full on-site visitation and evaluation within 3 years of admission.

⁷ The original evaluation system operated through ACVT was governed by the EU Commission Document II3I/D/5056/5/89, which became the first working paper of EAEVE. Under ACVT it was amended and published as an SOP in EU Doc XV/E/8488/2/98. Following the dissolution of ACVT in 2000, this SOP document was adopted by EAEVE and applied exclusively as of 2002. Since then, the SOP has been thoroughly revised and progressively updated under approval of the respective annual GA's. Important amendments to the SOP were the adaptation to EU Directive 2005/36/EC and then EU Directive 2013/55/EU. Initially, this led to the introduction of Stage 2 visitations in 2009 that concentrated on quality assessment procedures. These Stage 2 QA visitations utilised two QA experts and were combined with Stage 1 visitations (evaluation of quality of training). After a relatively small number of combined Stage 1 and 2 visitations to different establishments were undertaken, doubts were raised in ECOVE as to whether this separation was the correct approach. This concern was then both justified and supported by the ENQA report on EAEVE after their visitation in 2013 who came to the conclusion that EAEVE should "immediately consider revising both the evaluation methodology and the site-visitation agenda for stage 2 evaluations in order to include a general review of the HEI and not just QA documents and not just meeting the people responsible for quality assurance".

Mutual recognition of veterinary degrees and free movement within the EU of graduates from establishments that are not accredited by EAEVE are not prohibited. There are, however, legal consequences on the national level in some Member States (Italy for instance) where competent authorities have decided not to assign students to non-EAEVE approved/non-accredited establishments.

Competent national authorities within the veterinary profession that are simultaneously the accrediting agency as well as the licensing body are uncommon in Europe, with the exception of the Anglo-Saxon area. Examples are the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS) in the UK and the Irish Veterinary Council. Overseas, there are similar joint accrediting agencies, such as the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA), the Australasian Veterinary Boards Council (AVBC) and the South African Veterinary Council (SAVC). The SAR states that EAEVE is cooperating closely with these latter organisations, especially in striving for reciprocity.

EAEVE also participates in the International Accreditors' Working Group, which is formed by these organisations aiming at harmonising global accreditation standards for veterinary medicine. Full joint evaluations are being already conducted regularly with the RCVS and AVMA.

The panel learned from the SAR that cooperation with the national academic quality assurance agencies is developing and intensifying, in particular in EU member states. In several EU member countries, EAEVE is closely collaborating. This is the case in Austria, Italy, France and Switzerland. In the latter country for example, the European System of Evaluation of Veterinary Training (ESEVT) and national visitations are already well coordinated. However, national academic quality assurance agencies are not always specialised in the field of veterinary medicine and during their accreditation process tend to – as EAEVE describes their approach in its SAR – apply more general principles of academic quality assurance and management, with a reduced emphasis on the professional competences of veterinary graduates. In Austria and Hungary, for instance, EAEVE accreditation of veterinary training establishments is being accepted instead of governmental quality assessment procedures. It is anticipated by the agency, and this is endorsed by the DG GROW and DG SANTE, that such agreements will be extended to all member state authorities and that national veterinary licensing agencies could instigate consequences of any non-approved/non-accredited status of veterinary training establishments under their jurisdiction.

EAEVE

Mission, vision and objectives

The mission of EAEVE is: to evaluate, promote and further develop the quality and standard of veterinary teaching establishments within, but not limited to, the member states of the European Union (EU).

The vision for EAEVE is: the harmonisation and improvement of quality within all establishments for Veterinary Education in agreement with the EU Directive 2005/36/EC as amended by Directive 2013/55/EU and to be the official accreditation authority for veterinary education establishments within Europe.

The primary objective is: to monitor the harmonisation of the minimum standards set down in the study programmes for veterinarians in the EU Directive 2005/36/EC as amended by Directive

2013/55/EU, as well as monitoring the levels of quality assurance within these standards. This is enacted through the European System of Evaluation of Veterinary Training (ESEVT), which is managed by the EAEVE in cooperation with the Federation of Veterinarians of Europe (FVE).

Other objectives are:

- To reinforce cooperation between member establishments and to act as a forum for discussion in order to improve and harmonise veterinary education;
- To facilitate information exchange, staff exchange, student exchange and also exchange of teaching materials between members.

EAEVE states that the latter objectives are especially effectuated during and around the General Assemblies (GA). These are held annually at a different European city at an establishment, and offer a wide variety of educational and scientific topics in veterinary education.

Organisational Development – History and Current State

The European Association of Establishments for Veterinary Education (EAEVE) was founded in 1988 in Paris, France, as a European Accrediting Organization and registered under the French law. Offices were first based in Paris, then in Brussels; since 2007, the office has been in Vienna, Austria. The formation of the organisation was based on a 3-year cross-national peer assessment, which started in 1985 on the initiative of, and financed by, the EU Commission's Advisory committee on Veterinary Training (ACVT). Consequently, and upon recommendation of the study, ACVT installed a permanent evaluation system for European veterinary teaching establishments and recognised EAEVE as the evaluating agency.

In 1993, the EU Commission withdrew its financial support, and ACVT mandated EAEVE to continue managing the evaluation system independently and with its own budget. The EAEVE Member establishments decided to maintain the system by paying membership and evaluation fees, as they recognised the benefits of such a Europe-wide profession-specific evaluation system.

In 2000, based on the EU-ACVT mandate, a Joint Educational Committee (now European Committee of Veterinary Education, ECOVE) was formed. ECOVE acts as an independent decision making Evaluation/Accreditation-Board. ECOVE decisions are based on quality assurance processes and quality criteria which are defined in and made operational by means of EAEVE's 'European System of Evaluation of Veterinary Training' (ESEVT) scheme – EAEVE calls ESEVT its 'accrediting arm' – and their concrete formulation in the EAEVE SOP, at present the 'Uppsala SOP' of May 2016. After each assessment, ECOVE takes the final decision. From an organizational perspective, ECOVE is managed by EAEVE, working in close cooperation with the Federation of Veterinarians of Europe (FVE), with the European System of Evaluation of Veterinary Training (ESEVT).

The EAEVE staff operates as supporting staff for all ESEVT activities. The staff is coordinated by the ESEVT director. The panel members carrying out the assessments are called 'ESEVT-experts'.

EAEVE'S ORGANISATION/STRUCTURE

The Organisational Structure of EAEVE involves:

1. The General Assembly (GA)
2. The Executive Committee (ExCom)
3. The European Committee of Veterinary Education (ECOVE)
4. The Committee on Internal Quality Assessment (CIQA)

1. The General Assembly (GA)

The GA is composed of the deans (or equivalents) or their nominated representatives of the member establishments. In case of voting, each member establishment with voting rights has a single vote. An ordinary session of the GA is called once a year, at the initiative of the President who chairs and determines the agenda in collaboration with ExCom. The GA is the supreme body of the association which has at its disposal all powers necessary for running and governing the association.⁸ With the exception of amendments to the statutes, which requires a two-thirds majority, decisions are adopted by a simple majority vote of those members with voting rights present or validly represented by delegation of voting right. In the case of a tied vote, the President's vote is decisive.

2. The Executive Committee (ExCom)

The ExCom is responsible for the running of the association. It is composed of the President and the representatives of 8 geographical area groups defined by EAEVE.⁹ ExCom members, each representing one of the 8 regions, are nominated by the members of the respective geographical groups; rotation amongst different countries is encouraged.¹⁰ ExCom meetings take place on average 3 to 4 times a year.

Only representatives of approved or conditionally approved establishments are eligible for office in the ExCom. ExCom members are nominated for two years and the mandate is renewable only once. All ExCom members of EAEVE must have current employment at an EAEVE-evaluated veterinary teaching establishment. Any EAEVE committee membership ends with retirement from academic employment and after completing the mandate at EAEVE. One of the ExCom members is elected as Treasurer of the Association by the ExCom; one ExCom member is proposed by the President to be the Vice-President, and elected by the GA.

⁸ The GA tasks are: 1. Electing the president by secret ballot, 2. Electing the Vice-president by secret ballot, after a proposal from the president, 3. Defining the geographical groups within the association, 4. Confirming the members of the ExCom (as nominated by the regional representatives), 5. Defining the responsibilities of the ExCom, 6. Defining and adopting its own rules of procedure and those of the ExCom, 7. Adopting proposed modifications to the statutes by a two-thirds majority of members with a voting right present, 8. Creating or deactivating working groups in order to realise any of the objectives as stated in Article 3 of the statutes, 9. Setting and adopting the budget and the annual membership fee.

⁹ These 8 groups are (as of February 2017): Group 1: Ireland, the Netherlands and UK; Group 2: Portugal and Spain; Group 3: Albania, Greece, Israel, Italy and Romania; Group 4: Belgium and France; Group 5: Austria, Germany and Switzerland; Group 6: Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway and Sweden; Group 7: Croatia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Slovak Republic and Slovenia; Group 8: Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, FYROM, Serbia and Turkey.

¹⁰ The role and responsibilities of the ExCom members (regional representatives) are: To represent the establishments of the region in the ExCom, To keep contact with the establishments, to keep an up-to-date database, to inform the EAEVE office on changes, To inform the establishments on matters discussed in the ExCom and to collect their opinion, To initiate discussions on the matters arisen by the member establishments, To attend the ExCom meetings and participate actively in its work, to comment on the topics from a regional point of view, To prepare the agenda for the sessions of the GA, the programme of activities and the budget, To propose the annual membership fee, To implement the decisions of the GA, To ensure the smooth running of the Association between the sessions of the GA, To nominate the EAEVE members of any working group, To maintain the list of evaluated and approved/accredited establishments, Present proposals to the meetings of the ExCom, To participate in working groups and to promote the work of the ExCom and EAEVE.

3. European Committee of Veterinary Education (ECOVE)

The European Committee of Veterinary Education (ECOVE) is an independent decision maker within EAEVE. It is the decision making body in the ESEVT framework. The office of ECOVE operates under the umbrella of EAEVE. The ECOVE office site is the same as the office of the EAEVE, in Vienna, Austria. The ESEVT Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) serves as the decision making basis for the activities of ECOVE. While EAEVE is the “parent owner” of ECOVE, the decision making process is entirely independent.

ECOVE consists of 7 members coming from 7 different countries; all have to be experts who were active in at least 2 on-site visitations of veterinary teaching establishments within the past 5 years before taking office. 4 members are appointed by the ExCom of EAEVE; 3 members are nominated by the Board of the Federation of Veterinarians of Europe (FVE). The chair and vice chair of ECOVE are elected by its members from among its members for a 2-year term, renewable once. While serving on the committee, members do not act as team members in any full on-site visitation.

EAEVE and FVE nominate one alternate member each, who will be called upon in case of conflict of interest of a full member. Where conflict of interest arises, e.g. in discussions of visitation reports with one of the members being a national of the country in which the establishment in question is located or currently working in that country or having worked or studied at the establishment in question for a significant period of time, the member in question may not participate in the evaluation, has no voting rights and shall leave the room. He/she will be replaced by an alternate member.

The primary tasks of ECOVE are:

- Approving the visitation Programmes of Veterinary Educational establishments for Evaluation,
- Approving the selection of both chair and members of visiting teams,
- Making the final decision on the visitation report, giving full justice to the suggestions made by the chair and his/her visiting team, and based thereupon, decide whether “Accreditation”, “Conditional Accreditation or “Non-Accreditation” should be assigned to the establishment, or any other approval status, as defined in the SOP.

Decisions concerning the results of evaluations and accreditations are based on the suggestions made by the visiting team in the visitation report, the SAR and on the verbal report given by the chair of the visiting team. In the case of voting, each full member has one vote; a simple majority prevails; the chair has a casting vote.

Meetings are held as frequently as deemed necessary. However, a minimum of 2 meetings take place per year.

4. Committee on Internal Quality Assessment (CIQA)

The committee on Internal Quality Assessment (CIQA) was founded in 2009. CIQA consists of five members not involved in any other EAEVE governance bodies. While “owned” by EAEVE, CIQA is independent in formulating its opinion. CIQA’s main responsibilities are:

- To direct the development, implementation, revision and improvement of quality in the ESEVT
- To present to the EAEVE GA an annual report on the fulfilment of the policies and objectives of quality, the follow up system and the proposals for improvement
- To control the effective management of the office
- To control the effective management of the post-on-site-visitation questionnaire
- To perform a critical review on the development, results and personnel involved in all the steps of the annual evaluation processes, including the final decisions taken by ECOVE, looking

for the equal application of the system to all the members without any type of discrimination, and controlling absence of conflict of interest. The review should include as a minimum an evaluation of the procedures followed at the site visitations

- The composition and quality of the site visitation reports
- The quality assurance feed-back from faculties and team members
- To meet at least 2 times a year
- To inform the ExCom, the ESEVT Director and the EAEVE President about the outcome of the meetings
- To evaluate the composition of the visiting groups.

EAEVE'S FUNCTIONS, ACTIVITIES, PROCEDURES

EAEVE has, as a membership organisation, an independent body named ECOVE that is exclusively responsible for decisions concerning the assessments. These assessments, called visitations, are carried out by expert panels pursuant to the European System of Evaluation of Veterinary Training (ESEVT).

The ESEVT evaluation process has been in place for more than 32 years, with adaptations introduced from time to time. Periodic evaluation is compulsory for EAEVE members every 7 years. Four types of evaluation are organised by the ESEVT, i.e.:

1. Full visitation;
2. Re-visitation;
3. Consultative visitation;
4. Interim Report.

To be accredited, a veterinary establishment must apply for full visitation and must demonstrate that the establishment and the curriculum it provides meet all the standards set out in the ESEVT Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) and are compliant with the EU Directives on the recognition of professional qualifications (for veterinarians and other Health professions) and the ESG 2015.

Review of an establishment (full visitation)

An establishment has to apply for an assessment at least one year before expiry of the current term for accreditation, or similarly at least one year in advance for a first visitation. Consequently, a mutually acceptable date is chosen and an agreement is signed between the establishment and EAEVE. The first step of the evaluation is the Self-Assessment Report (SAR) written by the establishment due to be evaluated. During this initial period of time a panel of experts (from accredited establishments) are selected by ECOVE through the EAEVE office to be part of the visiting team. In addition, an experienced expert is appointed as the chair, and a coordinator is also appointed.

At present, EAEVE has 4 coordinators, including the director. These coordinators are academics with a part time appointment as an EAEVE staff member. They must have wide experience in the process of ESEVT visitations. A senior individual from the establishment (with good knowledge of written and spoken English) is selected to be the Liaison Officer between the establishment and the panel of experts.

The panel members are asked to confirm their independence from any links with the establishment to be visited by signing the conflict of interest form. The establishment is consulted on the composition of the panel, in particular in order to be made aware of possible conflicts of interest or any other substantiated objections to appointing specific persons to the panel.

At least 2 months before the on-site visitation, the establishment submits the SAR to all members of the panel and to the EAEVE Office. On receipt of the SAR, the chair assigns one or more standards

within the SOP to individual panel members. After reading the SAR, panel members are expected to submit a brief summary of additional evidence they wish to obtain during the visitation. The chair coordinates these requests. He has the right to inform the establishment in the case of major gaps in the SAR that could require the establishment to gather additional information before the visitation itself.

The panel consists of six experts, including the chair, plus one student proposed by the International Veterinary Students' Association (IVSA) and plus one of the ESEVT coordinators. The students from IVSA are chosen from final year students or recent graduates within one year of graduating from an accredited European establishment.

The team of experts are chosen to represent experience in the following areas:

- Basic Sciences
- Companion animals Clinical Sciences [academic]
- Food-producing animals Clinical Sciences [academic]
- Professional knowledge [practitioner]
- Food Safety and Quality and Veterinary Public Health
- Quality Assurance

The visitation takes 5 working days. It involves meetings with senior and junior teaching staff, administrative and support staff and students, together with an evaluation of all teaching facilities and equipment. There are also meetings with external stakeholders and recent graduates of the establishment. In a preparatory meeting on the initial day (usually a Monday), the panel discusses the SAR and decides on the day to day logistics of the visitation. To provide a level of uniformity amongst the team experts and to produce a similar level of uniformity amongst other ESEVT visitations, the coordinator holds a briefing session at this time.

The first day at the establishment itself is designed to allow the combined group to gather a general impression of the establishment by visiting as many of the facilities as possible; during these tours the establishments are requested beforehand to include as many areas as possible where students are being actively taught or actively learning. The next 2 to 3 days are then set aside for meetings and visits based on the 11 Standards foreseen in the SOP. To provide uniformity the format of the week follows an established pattern. An 'open consultation hour' is part of the site visit, allowing anonymous access to the panel for any member of the establishment, including students. The site visit concludes with a short presentation of the key findings and provisional judgements by the panel chair.

The report is drafted by the team both during and immediately after the visitation; there is no rapporteur who is responsible for writing a first draft of the report. The report utilises a standard format. Each chapter ends with a paragraph of "Suggestions" in which any deficiencies are specifically analysed and highlighted. After bundling all sections, the coordinator sends the draft report to the establishment for clarification of any factual errors.

A summary of the different levels of decisions that the team can make for a standard or substandard are:

- Comments: Data obtained by comparing the information collected from the SAR together with the on-site visits and discussions with staff, students and stakeholders. Comments could also include areas that the visiting team felt are worthy of praise.
- Suggestions: These are proposals from the experts on how enhancing the quality of education could be achieved by correcting minor deficiencies.
- Minor deficiency: A deficiency that does not significantly affect the quality of education and

the establishment's compliance with the ESEVT Standards (i.e. partial compliance with an ESEVT Standard).

- Major deficiency: A deficiency that significantly affects the quality of education and the establishment's compliance with the ESEVT Standards (i.e. noncompliance with an ESEVT Standard).

The report is then sent to the Establishment for factual corrections. After correcting any factual corrections, the completed report is then sent to ECOVE for evaluation and deliberation at their next meeting. This process usually involves a real-time interview of the chair of the visitation. ECOVE bases its decision on the SAR, the report of the review team and the meeting with the chair. The evaluation outcome is sent to the establishment within hours.

The final evaluation report remains the property of EAEVE and the establishment involved. Visited establishments have to publish their SAR and the evaluation report on their web site. They must agree in the visitation contract that the entire evaluation report and the SAR are also published on the EAEVE website.

Decisions by ECOVE on evaluations are:

- Accreditation, meaning accreditation in case of no major deficiency, i.e. absence of noncompliance with any standard;
- Conditional accreditation in case of a single major deficiency;
- Non-accreditation in case of several major deficiencies.

Conditional accreditation of an establishment implies that within a defined period (a maximum of 5 years, in practice usually 3 years) all major deficiencies have been rectified and that a re-visitation will take place to check such rectification. Non-accredited establishments may also request a re-visitation but not before all major deficiencies had been rectified, which usually takes a longer period of time. In the case of non-accreditation or conditional accreditation of establishments, ECOVE asks for regular follow-up reports to be sent to EAEVE for information on the progress of rectifying the major deficiencies.

Re-visitation

Teams re-visiting establishments with non-accreditation or conditional accreditation status are required to consist of members with expertise in all areas of the major deficiencies identified. The extent of such a re-visitation will depend upon the complexity of the major deficiencies previously identified and will be decided upon by ECOVE. It can range from a small group consisting of the chair of the former visitation plus an ESEVT coordinator, to a full 8-member panel. All expenses for re-visitations have to be borne by the establishment involved.

Consultative visitation

The purpose of a consultative visitation is an appraisal of the overall compliance of an establishment with ESEVT Standards. The visitation is advisory in nature and the result is not listed nor made public. A consultative visitation is a prerequisite for granting membership in EAEVE, as stated in the EAEVE statutes. Consultative visitations are an additional step in the procedure for full visitations, applied only for membership candidates from outside the EU to avoid non-deliberate applications. In this way it is an additional but not a separate quality assurance procedure apart from full visitations.

The team is composed of 2 experts with complementary expertise. One of the experts is designated by ECOVE as chairperson. Experts and coordinator for consultative and consequently a full visitation are never the same people. The programme is scheduled to take 2 full days on site, the first one mainly

devoted to visiting the facilities and the second one to meeting the relevant people.

One month after the end of a consultative visitation at the latest, the EAEVE Office sends the final consultative visitation report to the establishment and presents it for confidential information to the next ECOVE meeting. Usually 3 years after a consultative visitation, a full visitation is organised.

Interim report

3.5 years after the (full) visitation, all establishments that are members of EAEVE must send a concise Interim Report to the EAEVE Office.

It must include:

- The name and details of the current establishment's Head;
- Any major changes in each ESEVT Standard since the previous SAR;
- Progress in the correction of deficiencies (if any) and plans for the near future;
- The expected date of the next evaluation (consultative visitation, visitation or Re- visitation);
- Updated list of Indicators.

After being reviewed by an ESEVT coordinator designated by ECOVE, the Interim Report is sent by the EAEVE Office to ECOVE for consideration during its next meeting. In case of a lack of Interim Report or evidences in the Interim Report of the occurrence of potential major issues, ECOVE may send a warning to the establishment.

Appeal Procedure

For the establishments not agreeing with or not accepting the decision of ECOVE, a formal appeal mechanism is in place. Any establishment may appeal an ECOVE decision. If ECOVE rejects the appeal, an independent appeal panel will be set up whose decision will be final.

Limited approval status

As EAEVE wants to foster globalized standards in veterinary medicine education and, with these, international recognition of degrees, it has supplemented its SOP by a "limited approval status". That status is intended to allow veterinary HEI's outside the EU to be assessed under well-defined circumstances, despite an a priori incompatibility in one major area which is due to specific legal or factual, namely cultural circumstances, such as, for instance, the lack of adequate teaching in the porcine species or the sole teaching of slaughter procedures not commonly used in Europe. In such case, insufficiency in only one area may be acceptable, whereas all other quality parameters will be evaluated by, and gauged against, the complete EAEVE standards (SOP). As a guideline, any incompatibility area will be clearly defined, and graduates originating from foreign faculties with "limited approval" would have to complete additional training in a specific field should they apply for recognition of their degree within EU.

Joint assessments

Since 2014, ESEVT has conducted 5 joint visitations with the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS) and the American veterinary Medical Association (AVMA). For this the ESEVT SOP was used. In addition, during the same time frame, ESEVT has accepted observers in another 5 visitations. Some of those assessments carried out by ESEVT experts are approved by EQAR-registered agencies.

EAEVE'S FUNDING

EAEVE has a regular and sustainable income from membership and evaluation fees together with sufficient bank deposits.

FINDINGS: COMPLIANCE OF THE EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION OF ESTABLISHMENTS FOR VETERINARY EDUCATION (EAEVE) WITH THE STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE IN THE EUROPEAN HIGHER EDUCATION AREA (ESG)

ESG PART 3: QUALITY ASSURANCE AGENCIES

ESG 3.1 ACTIVITIES, POLICY, AND PROCESSES FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE

Standard:

Agencies should undertake external quality assurance activities as defined in Part 2 of the ESG on a regular basis. They should have clear and explicit goals and objectives that are part of their publicly available mission statement. These should translate into the daily work of the agency. Agencies should ensure the involvement of stakeholders in their governance and work.

2013 review recommendation

The Review Panel suggests that EAEVE will discuss both internally and externally its role and revises its mission and vision accordingly. Actually, this should also be a continuation of the ESG 2.8 where it is advised that EAEVE develops a policy of periodic system-wide analyses of the veterinary education in Europe. These analyses could be an important and even crucial tool in developing the veterinary field in Europe at large (and even outside Europe), and also a way of developing the evaluation/accreditation processes and practices of EAEVE itself, including its own long-term strategy and mission. Particular recommendations are given at each standard of ESG Part 2.

Evidence

As mentioned in the introduction, EAEVE's mission and vision emphasise the evaluation, promotion and further development of the quality of veterinary teaching establishments within, but not limited to, the member states of the European Union (EU). It is EAEVE's vision to harmonise and improve educational quality within all establishments for Veterinary Education in agreement with the EU Directive 2005/36/EC as amended by Directive 2013/55/EU. EAEVE wants to be the official accreditation authority for veterinary education establishments in Europe. The primary objective is to monitor the harmonisation of the minimum standards set down in the study programme for veterinarians in the EU Directive 2005/36/EC as amended by Directive 2013/55/EU, as well as monitoring the levels of quality assurance within these standards. This is enacted through the European System of Evaluation of Veterinary Training (ESEVT) and the European Committee of Veterinary Education (ECOVE) as the body responsible for accreditation decisions in the ESEVT system, which is managed by the EAEVE in cooperation with its main stakeholder the Federation of Veterinarians of Europe (FVE).

EAEVE, through its organisational units responsible for quality assurance operations, has been active uninterruptedly for approximately three decades in matters of quality assurance in veterinary medicine programmes. EAEVE thereby qualifies as one of the agencies in Europe which can show among the longest track record in external quality assurance.

The ESEVT is the framework that is used for the EAEVE assessments, called visitations. The current ESEVT Standard Operating Procedures (SOP)¹¹ was approved in 2016 by the EAEVE GA after 7 rounds of adjustments by a large group of stakeholders. The panel noted that this new SOP was driven by the recommendations of the former ENQA panel and the ESG 2015. The ESEVT SOP 2016 is a merger of the Directives and the ESG. All 90 sub-standards in the ESEVT SOP 2016 have to be checked by the panel members. To ensure that all involved work as prescribed in the ESEVT SOP 2016, all panel members have to sign a 'declaration stating the lack of conflicts of interest with the visited establishment and the commitment to strictly respect the ESEVT SOP and the EAEVE Code of Conduct'.

To ensure a clear distinction between EAEVE as a membership organisation and a quality assurance agency, the European Committee of Veterinary Education ECOVE was established. As elaborated in the introduction, ECOVE is an independent decision maker within EAEVE and the decision making body in the ESEVT framework. The ESEVT Manual of Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) serves as the decision making basis, both in terms of procedure and of quality criteria, for the activities of ECOVE. ECOVE consists of 7 members coming from 7 different countries. 4 members are appointed by the ExCom of EAEVE and 3 members are nominated by the Board of the FVE. The primary tasks of ECOVE are approving the visitation programmes of veterinary educational establishments for evaluation; approving the selection of both chair and members of visiting teams and making the final decision on the visitation report.

The panel learned from the EAEVE representatives that EAEVE's primary objective is to achieve compliance with the ESG 2015 so that their accreditation would be recognised by other (national) quality assurance agencies and accreditation bodies. Based on the EAEVE assessment reports analysed, the panel noticed improvement in achieving this objective but still there are some issues to be further considered. The panel noted a narrow interpretation of the ESG Part 1 (see ESG 2.1) where the ESG Part 1 guidelines seem to be partially and in some reports (see ESG 2.5) not taken into account. Panel members noted that the results of consultative visitations are not published (see ESG 2.6) and are not approved by ECOVE (see ESG 2.2.), however they recognised the value of such visits.

Other objectives of EAEVE are to strengthen cooperation between member establishments and to act as a forum for discussion in order to improve and harmonise veterinary education and to facilitate information exchange, staff exchange, student exchange and also exchange of teaching materials between members. The panel noted, based on its meetings and the publicly available information on the EAEVE website, that EAEVE actively meets the latter objectives. These are especially effectuated during and around the General Assemblies (GA). Topics related to quality assurance are always on the agenda of the Education Conference which is a consistent part of the annual General Assemblies. The minutes of the meetings show that all member establishments are invited to share their ideas on the development of quality assurance, with all suggestions and improvements being welcomed for the benefit of ESEVT and the profession in general. Besides, EAEVE is also an active member of the European Coordination Committee on Veterinary Training (ECCVT) where EAEVE meets with its stakeholders. Also, all stakeholders are invited to attend the EAEVE GA.

¹¹ http://www.eave.org/fileadmin/downloads/SOP/ESEVT_Uppsala_SOP_May_2016_amended_Annex_813_Rubrics_approved_by_ExCom_on_25Jan2017.pdf

Students are actively involved in the panels. The students are proposed by the International Veterinary Students' Association (IVSA). ECOVE, the independent decision-making body of EAEVE has no student members, and there are also no student members in the appeal panel. EAEVE is aware of these facts. However, students are not requesting to be represented in the appeal panel or in ECOVE. The panel learned from the student representatives that this would take too much time for the students, and that students in IVSA change every year. They therefore doubt whether IVSA is currently capable to invest that much time in ECOVE and the appeal panel.

Practitioners are involved in EAEVE in consultation processes and by integration in evaluation panels. Close institutional cooperation in particular with FVE, which is represented in EAEVE's ESEVT and which also nominates three full members and 1 Alternate member to serve in ECOVE, ensures that EAEVE and its quality assurance units permanently and thoroughly consider practitioners' views with regard to ensuring quality in veterinary programmes. There must be at least one practitioner or official veterinarian in each evaluation panel.

All documents and results of the evaluations done by EAEVE are publicly available on the homepage. This includes, among other things, the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP), the self-evaluation reports, the final reports and the results.

Analysis

EAEVE has a clear and explicit, publicly available mission, vision, and goals. These are without any doubt translated into its daily work. In particular, the ESEVT SOP is a solid document that carries out the agency's mission. EAEVE has a considerable track record in the field of external quality assurance.

EAEVE is a membership organization that takes care of its members, and its stakeholders. The involvement of all stakeholders in both the professional as well as the academic field is a good practice. FVE appoints for instance almost half of the ECOVE members. Students are not full partners of EAEVE in an institutionalised understanding, but EAEVE is very open to students' views and their involvement as full members of evaluation panels.

The establishment and operation of ECOVE assures clear distinction between the agencies' activities as a membership organisation and as a quality assurance agency.

Since the panel noted a narrow interpretation of the ESG Part 1 (see ESG 2.1) where the ESG Part 1 guidelines seems to be partially and in some reports (see ESG 2.5) not taken into account and the results of consultative visitations are not published (2.6). However, these features will be considered in the context of the aforesaid specific ESG standards, and therefore – also in order not to duplicate critical elements in the panel's assessment – these aspects may not interfere with the panel's judgement on EAEVE's matching of standard ESG 3.1.

Panel commendations

The way EAEVE deals with its members and stakeholders is commendable. They have many different stakeholders with different perspectives including student perspective, academic, legislative and professional perspective. These different stakeholder perspectives are listened to and taken on board attentively.

Panel suggestions for further improvement

Although, students do not request membership of ECOVE and the appeal panel, EAEVE may consider to take the students on board.

Panel conclusion: fully compliant

ESG 3.2 OFFICIAL STATUS

Standard:

Agencies should have an established legal basis and should be formally recognised as quality assurance agencies by competent public authorities.

2013 review recommendation

The results and recommendations of EAEVE evaluations may not be 'binding' in a number of European countries, and it appears that it is mostly up to the individual HEIs to react (or not to react) to them. This is all dependent on national policies, over which EAEVE itself does not have any direct power, except maybe through publicity and by keeping its findings as public and accessible as possible.

Evidence

EAEVE is a private legal entity established and subject to French law. Having maintained this legal nature after moving to Austria, it also matches legal requirements which Austrian law foresees for operations of private legal entities established under the law of another EU country.

EAEVE is composed of members which are establishments for higher education in veterinary sciences which lead to an academic degree, permitting application for a professional status allowing the exercise of veterinary medicine. Establishments are eligible for membership on condition they adhere to the present statutes, pay the annual membership fee and comply with the Association's evaluation system, as published in the SOP. Establishments from outside the EU have to agree to undergo a consultative visitation at the discretion of the ExCom before applying to become a member of EAEVE. Although all European establishments are members of EAEVE, membership is voluntary. The panel learned that evaluation is obligatory.

The panel learned from the SAR and its meetings with EAEVE's members that EAEVE has no legal mechanisms to ensure that recommendations of the review teams and deficiencies concerning non-compliance with requirements of the EU Directives, are acted upon. Members of EAEVE agree that control mechanisms such as those applied by EAEVE must be recognised to guarantee that the level of the training is comparable throughout the EU. They want EAEVE to reassure veterinary employers and the public at large about the quality of the veterinary training.

The existing EAEVE evaluation system, ESEVT, which was established in collaboration with the FVE, is thereby endorsed by many competent authorities such as the Directorate General Internal Market and Services (DG GROW) and Directorate General for Health and Consumers (DG SANTE) of the European Commission. The ECOVE interviewees indicate however that it remains unclear which effect these measures may have in the future on automatic recognition and free movement of graduates from non-approved establishments.

The panel learned from the SAR that an increasing number of national authorities in Europe recognise EAEVE decisions and act accordingly, for example in Austria where EAEVE is recognised as the legitimate accrediting agency for veterinary science. As another example the SAR mentions Italy, where the veterinary teaching establishments that are not accredited by EAEVE may not enrol first year students. EAEVE cooperates with other national quality assurance agencies as well in order to contribute to the quality of the national HE systems (e.g. in the UK and the Netherlands). Outside the EU, in Australia for example, EAEVE works with the AVBC (Australasian Veterinary Boards Council). The EAEVE president informed the panel that EAEVE want to further develop such cooperation with national authorities in the future.

After an evaluation, the results and recommendations are often not 'legally binding'. As mentioned above, it is up to the individual HEI's to react (or not to react) to these results. This is dependent on national policies, especially in terms of recognition and licensing of veterinarians, over which EAEVE itself does not have any direct power.

According to the SAR, the decisions on the accreditation status by ECOVE have an increasing level of influence through the widespread publicity of such decisions. The public availability of the findings associated with a veterinary teaching establishment, has an increasing effect and far reaching consequences on the ability of graduates from such establishments to find a suitable career. The panel learned that this is especially of importance for those veterinary establishments in the EU who are actively establishing courses with the prime intent to attract and train overseas applicants in veterinary science. Establishments are well aware of the risks involved in being a "non-approved" school and are therefore incentivised to move as quickly as possible towards remedying both the major and minor deficiencies.

Analysis

EAEVE is a membership organisation formally established as a private legal entity under French law, operating within the specific legal requirements of Austria. Its quality assurance system is recognized by all members, which are 75 veterinary establishments in the EU that are all subjected to a cyclic evaluation. EAEVE's evaluation system ESEVT is endorsed by the relevant EU institutions, which were in fact main stakeholders at the onset of EAEVE. Although, EAEVE accreditation is obliged for veterinary teaching establishments in some countries, EAEVE has no legal mechanism that establishments get started with the recommendations and the indicated deficiencies. However, it is not a requirement for an international Quality Assurance Agency that its mandate is legally embedded in all countries in which it operates.

Panel conclusion: fully compliant

ESG 3.3 INDEPENDENCE

Standard:

Agencies should be independent and act autonomously. They should have full responsibility for their operations and the outcomes of those operations without third party influence.

2013 review recommendation

It is recommended that EAEVE opens up more its evaluation and accreditation processes and procedures, involving also stakeholders, and also relying on experts who come from outside the veterinary field, especially in matters related to Quality Assurance. It would strengthen the credibility of EAEVE's evaluation/accreditation work despite the fact that it formally is autonomous and independent in its decision-making.

Evidence

Organisational independence

EAEVE is an international organisation subject to private law that, as a consequence, does not depend on national governments, neither in a legal sense nor in terms of funding. As a membership driven organisation, EAEVE's statutes focus on the independent character of the ESEVT evaluations. This especially applies to the European Committee of Veterinary Education (ECOVE), the independent body overseeing and deciding on the outcomes of assessment procedures.

As explained in detail in the introduction of this report, the ECOVE consists of 7 members originating from 7 different countries. All ECOVE members must have served as experts in at least 2 on-site visitations of veterinary teaching establishments within the past 5 years before becoming ECOVE member. 4 members of ECOVE are appointed by the ExCom of EAEVE and 3 members are nominated by the Board of the FVE.

Operational independence

The ESEVT is clearly defined. The current version of the ESEVT SOP was approved by the General Assembly on 12 May 2016.¹² It defines all tasks of the EAEVE bodies, including ECOVE's responsibilities in assuring an independent quality assurance process. All members were involved in the design of the current ESEVT SOP, as well as a large group of stakeholders. As soon as the SOP was approved, i.e. in terms of applying the SOP in concrete processes, members have no influence on the evaluation process and the criteria applied.

The nomination and appointment of external experts are undertaken by ECOVE, independently from third parties. As a follow up of the 2013 panel's recommendation, nominations for team experts are sought independently of the establishments.¹³ The student team members are appointed by the International Veterinary Students' Association (IVSA).

All experts engaged in visitations sign a declaration of confidentiality and independence, the latter covering a statement on absence of any conflict of interest, before the start of the procedure. This practice is mentioned explicitly in the guidelines for the composition of expert panels. Panel members cannot have any relevant links with the establishment being visited. The ENQA panel learned from its meeting with the EAEVE staff that a check for independence is a standard procedure in the assessment and approval of all panels. A separate Code of Conduct for panel members also outlines the requirements for independence.

Members of ECOVE cannot take part in the handling of or decision making on applications from establishments in which they are currently employed or had substantial links with.

Independence of formal outcomes

As stated above, EAEVE is an international and autonomous organisation, not influenced by governments or other national accrediting agencies. Although it is a membership organisation (consisting of veterinary teaching establishments), the EAEVE structure assures that members do not influence the work of ECOVE, which is the sole decision-making body for accreditations.

¹²http://www.eaeve.org/fileadmin/downloads/SOP/ESEVT_Uppsala_SOP_May_2016_amended_Annex_8_13_Rubrics_approved_by_ExCom_on_25Jan2017.pdf

¹³ See ESG 2.4.

Analysis

The ESEVT, designed by EAEVE and its partners, guarantees that EAEVE, operating through ECOVE, has full responsibility for its operations, methods and procedures. ECOVE is an independent body which is endowed with the task to approve the programmes that will be evaluated, and to approve the selection of both the chair and members of visiting teams. Additionally, ECOVE makes the final decision on the visitation report, giving full justice to the suggestions made by the chair and the visiting panel, as defined in the SOP. All panel members are demonstrably independent.

From this perspective, EAEVE has succeeded involving a large amount of stakeholders in the evaluation and accreditation processes and procedures (see standard 3.1.). EAEVE can nevertheless still increase the number of experts who come from outside the veterinary field, especially in matters related to Quality Assurance.

Panel commendations

The panel commends that EAEVE succeeds in being an independent organisation. EAEVE accomplishes to be membership driven, to involve a large amount of stakeholders (see standard 3.1) and to be a quality assurance agency. It is on this background that the panel particularly commends that EAEVE has made full provision for ensuring independence as regards steering of concrete evaluation processes and taking decisions on accreditation.

Panel conclusion: fully compliant

ESG 3.4 THEMATIC ANALYSIS

Standard:

Agencies should regularly publish reports that describe and analyse the general findings of their external quality assurance activities.

2013 review recommendation

It is advised that EAEVE develops a policy of periodic system-wide analyses of the veterinary education in Europe. These analyses could be important and even crucial tools in developing the veterinary field in Europe at large (and even outside Europe), and also a way of developing the evaluation/accreditation processes and practices of EAEVE itself, including its own long-term strategy and mission.

Evidence

As a result of the recommendation of the 2013 ENQA panel, EAEVE commissioned a team to cover the recent five-year period for a structured analysis across the higher education system in veterinary teaching establishments. The objective of this report was to complete a system-wide analysis of ESEVT for the period 2011-2015. The report proposes recommendations for improvement of ESEVT in general and of veterinary education in Europe in particular. Even so, it identified the main challenges for the future. This system-wide analysis 2011 – 2015 contains, among other things, a list of the major deficiencies identified by ECOVE for the period 2011-2015.

The panel learned from its interviews that the findings from this report certainly contributed to the reflection on and the improvement of quality assurance policies and processes in the new ESEVT SOP visitations. During the meeting with CIQA, the panel was informed that EAEVE plans after some years a new system-wide evaluation.

The CIQA presents to the EAEVE GA an annual report on the fulfilment of the policies and objectives of quality, the follow up system and the proposals for improvement.

Analysis

The panel appreciates that EAEVE has made a reasonably solid start to implement the recommendation of the 2013 ENQA panel to do a system-wide analysis. The analysis contributed to the current SOP. However, since the analysis is not very deep yet but rather descriptive, EAEVE should go further in future in order to analyse the system instead of mainly listing the factual major deficiencies in its analysis. EAEVE and its members would benefit from defining topics, eventually based on this system-wide analysis and the annual report of the CIQA to analyse the general findings of their quality assurance activities.

Panel recommendations

EAEVE is recommended to strengthen its thematic analysis by selecting specific themes, eventually proposed by its members and stakeholders, such as for example: 'student centred learning', 'development of academic staff', 'recognition' or other relevant themes. A thorough and careful analysis of the information can show more developments, trends and areas of good practice or persistent difficulty.

EAEVE has to define a cyclic period for its thematic analyses.

Panel conclusion: substantially compliant

ESG 3.5 RESOURCES

Standard:

Agencies should have adequate and appropriate resources, both human and financial, to carry out their work.

2013 review recommendation

It appears that EAEVE is managed adequately with the current human and financial resources. Its financial basis rests solely on the membership fees, and apparently, the members appreciate greatly the membership and the benefits they obtain. There have been no member dropouts so far. But to continue this, it should be necessary that EAEVE keeps opening up not only within the veterinary medicine field itself but also more towards other related academic fields, also and especially in terms of quality assurance.

Evidence

Financial resources

EAEVE delivered a detailed financial plan to the panel. The panel noted that EAEVE has a regular and sustainable income from membership fees; this has been a steady situation throughout EAEVE's existence even after withdrawal of EU supportive funding several years ago. The EAEVE president guaranteed to the panel that in the unlikely case of financial deficit, membership fees can be increased. The current membership fee is 2000 Euro. Besides, EAEVE has sufficient bank deposits. Establishments pay an additional fee for their evaluation. A consultative visitation for instance costs 3000 Euro and a full visitation costs 8000 Euro.

Panel members in EAEVE visitations are not paid for their participation. EAEVE thus relies on a large number of "volunteers" both for acting pro bono as committee members and as experts on the visitation panels. Their expenses are reimbursed. With regards to the practitioner appointed by FVE

as one of the panel experts, considering that he loses money for staying outside of their place for one week during on site visitations, the Union of European Veterinary Practitioners (UEVP) and, in some countries, the Veterinary Union or Chamber, finance the professional with daily allowances. Because most panel members participate without financial compensation, it is difficult to find QA experts outside the area of veterinary medicine.

Human resources

Since 2007 the office of EAEVE has been situated in Vienna, Austria, where EAEVE is duly registered, employing local staff. EAEVE has a Director of ESEVT who handles the planning of the visitations, the timetables. He selects and proposes the visiting teams. He also accompanies many of the visiting teams as one of the coordinators. With respect to the administrative tasks, he works hand in hand with an office manager as well as an assistant in the EAEVE office (both have an academic background in Business Administration), and a Secretary to the EAEVE office (contracted one month before the external review, therefore this person could not be mentioned in the SAR).

The office executes the handling of payments and the daily account keeping, quarterly budgeting, preparations for auditing, writing the Treasurer's report on behalf of and under supervision of the treasurer. Both the Office Manager and the Assistant to the EAEVE Office attend GA, ExCom, ECOVE, CIQA and working group meetings ex officio. They have no voting rights, but are responsible for arranging meetings, for generating the minutes and for the correspondence with the members of the different committees. They may also act as rapporteur for selected evaluation visitations, collaborating with the coordinator and chair with respect to assembling and timely distribution of evaluation reports. In addition, there are 3 part-time deputy coordinators who also accompany on-site visitations. Except for the Director and the three part time Deputy coordinators, the staff has not any involvement in the making of the SOP.

Analysis

EAEVE proves that they have a stable membership base. Next to the membership fees, which have been a stable source of funding, the establishments under review pay a visitation fee. The EAEVE director and president convinced the panel that, if necessary, membership fees can be raised. Panel members are volunteers and working free of charge. Nevertheless, the resources do not limit EAEVE to reflect on its practice or to inform the public about its activities. The income covers all the expenses accrued such as office costs and any committee business of EAEVE.

The current amount of staff is sufficient for their current operation practices in line with the ESG. Most of the panel experts are not paid. This in no way hinders EAEVE's activities. The panel noted that apart from the director and the 3 Deputy coordinators, the office staff has no specifically profound quality assurance experience.

The panel wonders if it would be an added value if EAEVE were to employ a person qualified particularly in quality assurance matters (outside Veterinarian Education) in the organisation. This can be someone who is in the back office, doing concept work, follow up of quality assurance processes, and more intense system-wide analysis, as well as provision of input and support to the EAEVE presidency, ExCom, ECOVE, staff and expert trainings. It became evident from the discussion with the ExCom that they do not see a specific added value of a quality assurance person in the office as, in their view, the director already plays an important role in quality assurance matters. Nevertheless, the panel thinks that strengthening the quality assurance expertise would be an added value for EAEVE.

The current QA experts are working academics and professional support staff, and while they have

developed expertise through their practice, drawing in expertise from the professional QA community would, in the panel's view, have enabled EAEVE to implement the previous ENQA report recommendations more robustly and would position EAEVE well for the future in driving and embedding a quality culture.

Panel suggestions for further improvement

While the director and the 3 deputy coordinators are essentially sufficient to meet operational needs, EAEVE may consider the added value gained by having a member of staff who is professionally experienced in the current quality assurance policies and practices in the European Higher Education Area and could be a useful resource person for developing EAEVE activities further.

A financial compensation of team members would strengthen the possibility of attracting QA experts outside Veterinary establishments.

Panel conclusion: fully compliant.

ESG 3.6 INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE AND PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

Standard:

Agencies should have in place processes for internal quality assurance related to defining, assuring and enhancing the quality and integrity of their activities.

2013 review recommendation

It is advisable that EAEVE develops a clear and consistent Code of Conduct, for use in all its evaluation/accreditation processes.

Evidence

EAEVE has introduced various procedures and measures to assess and improve the quality of its own processes. EAEVE has, for example, regular discussions of existing procedures and regulations at the weekly staff meetings.

In the different EAEVE bodies there are discussions concerning issues that have arisen during preparations for visitations, during the visitations themselves or in the production of reports. On occasions, the panel noted in the minutes of meetings of different EAEVE bodies that such discussions have led to revisions of existing procedures. All people involved in EAEVE's external evaluations have to sign the code of conduct.¹⁴

Every year the Committee on Internal Quality Assurance (CIQA) makes an evaluation of the agency and the ESEVT. The CIQA report is presented to all members at the GA and discussed by the ExCom to develop procedures aimed at improving the QA loop. As mentioned in the introduction, CIQA was founded in 2009. CIQA consists of five members not involved in any other EAEVE governance bodies. CIQA is independent in formulating its opinion.

¹⁴ http://www.eaeve.org/fileadmin/downloads/SOP/EAEVE_Code_of_Conduct_approved_ExCom_30-10-2014.pdf

CIQA aggregates and analyses the post-on-site-visitation questionnaires, they analyse quality assurance feed-back from faculties and team members. They also check the effectivity of office management. The panel was able to view the results presented by CIQA to the GA. These show that CIQA succeeds in being a positive critical voice to the other actors within EAEVE. In its meeting with the panel, the CIQA members elaborated that the feedback system enables them to pass all feedback to the relevant authorities inside EAEVE. The changes in the ESEVT SOP that lead to the current ESEVT SOP 2016 are mainly based on improvement measures from EAEVE's internal quality assurance and stakeholders.

In its meetings with the heads of the reviewed establishments, with the student panel members and the ESEVT experts in the review panels, the ENQA panel learned that the interviewees are very positive about the indicated effective means of communication regarding reviews and assessments.

Analysis

EAEVE has a strong commitment to internal quality assurance. The panel found the professional attitude of EAEVE's staff laudable. The panel was convinced by the consistency with which interviewees described the activities of EAEVE. EAEVE fulfils the requirements for internal quality assurance as set out in the ESG. Stakeholders are regularly consulted and opinions are recorded by CIQA and taken into account in future planning of activities. The current ESEVT SOP proves that EAEVE has taken serious account of results of its own internal quality assurance system. The code of conduct ensures that all involved act as stated in the ESEVT SOP.

Panel conclusion: fully compliant

ESG 3.7 CYCLICAL EXTERNAL REVIEW OF AGENCIES

Standard:

Agencies should undergo an external review at least once every five years in order to demonstrate their compliance with the ESG.

Evidence

EAEVE was assessed by an ENQA review panel in 2013. As a result of this review, a number of suggestions were made by the ENQA panel. The ENQA Board decided that the final report provided sufficient evidence to conclude that EAEVE did not adequately comply with the ENQA membership criteria at that time.

The panel noted from the interviews, the SAR, the EAEVE strategic plan 2015 – 2020 and the system-wide analysis of ESEVT 2011 – 2015 that improvement measures were taken up by EAEVE in both its internal working as well as in its accreditation processes. Consequently, EAEVE prepared for the current external review by ENQA. Even though there is no formal requirement for EAEVE to undergo a periodic external review, EAEVE considers it vital to demonstrate that its activities comply with international standards such as the ESG.

EAEVE members would like that the EAEVE visitation could replace programme evaluation by national quality assurance agencies. In order to be able to realize this, EAEVE's assessment must be carried out in accordance with the ESG.

Analysis

The panel learned that EAEVE, supported by its Member establishments, is eager to undergo an external review in order to demonstrate their compliance with the ESG. In this way, EAEVE wants evaluations by EAEVE to be declared equivalent to programme evaluation by national QA agencies. Recommendations from the previous review are taken seriously and contribute significantly to the further development of the agency. It is in this light that EAEVE has undergone the ENQA evaluation in 2013, is undergoing the current ENQA evaluation, and has stated that it intends to continue cyclical ENQA reviews.

Panel conclusion: fully compliant

ESG PART 2: EXTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE

ESG 2.1 CONSIDERATION OF INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE

Standard:

External quality assurance should address the effectiveness of the internal quality assurance processes described in Part 1 of the ESG.

2013 review recommendation

The Panel recommends for EAEVE to immediately consider revising both the evaluation methodology and the site-visitation agenda for Stage 2 evaluations in order to include a general review of the HEI and not just QA documents and not just meeting the people responsible for quality assurance. Furthermore, we suggest developing the pool of students and their full inclusion in the evaluation process.

Evidence

As a result of the former ENQA evaluation and thereafter the ESG 2015, EAEVE undertook a complete overhaul of the ESEVT SOP which involved a series of iterations with input from stakeholders. The final version of the SOP was formally adopted by the GA in May 2016, which is now used on all visitations to veterinary teaching establishments.

The standards and guidelines of Part 1 of ESG 2015 are embedded in the ESEVT SOP. The 11 standards (especially standard 11) assessed during ESEVT visitations link with the ESG framework. The panel noted that the SOP consist in fact of standards 1-10 where elements of the ESG are intermittently added, while standard 11 is a replicate of the ESG 2015 Part 1 standards. This practice is driven by EAEVE's endeavour to, on the one hand, ensure incorporation of the ESG 2015 while also, on the other hand, safeguard observance of specific professional quality standards, in particular as prescribed by relevant EU regulations.

Establishments are made aware of their responsibility for implementing the elements of ESG 2015 Part 1 in their vision and policies on education and quality management. Eight QA training courses have been held in early 2017 for each of the EAEVE regions. The constituent veterinary teaching establishments within each region sent not only senior management, but also staff responsible for developing QA in the particular establishment. The panel looked into these training materials.

The SAR states that whilst aspects of an ESEVT visitation will necessarily be assessing areas such as physical facilities and clinical training, and therefore not prescriptively parts of the ESG, many of the 11 Standards have QA processes woven into their policies and deliverables. This was illustrated in the

SAR in a tabular form:

**Comparison of the 10 ESG Standards
and the 11 ESEVT Standards**

1.1 Policy for quality assurance	Standard 1: Objectives and Organisation Standard 11: Outcome Assessment and Quality Assurance
1.2 Design and approval of programmes	Standard 3: Curriculum Standard 11: Outcome Assessment and Quality Assurance
1.3 Student-centred learning, teaching and assessment	Standard 3: Curriculum Standard 8: Student assessment Standard 11: Outcome Assessment and Quality Assurance
1.4 Student admission, progression, recognition and certification	Standard 7: Student admission, progression and welfare Standard 11: Outcome assessment and Quality Assurance
1.5 Teaching staff	Standard 9: Academic and support staff Standard 11: Outcome Assessment and Quality Assurance
1.6 Learning resources and student support	Standard 2: Finances Standard 4: Facilities and equipment Standard 5: Animal resources and teaching material of animal origin Standard 6: Learning Resources Standard 10: Research programmes, continuing and postgraduate education Standard 11: Outcome Assessment and Quality Assurance
1.7 Information management	Standard 1: Objectives and Organisation Standard 3: Curriculum Standard 6: Learning resources Standard 11: Outcome Assessment and Quality Assurance
1.8 Public information	Standard 1: Objectives and Organisation Standard 3: Curriculum Standard 6: Learning resources Standard 11: Outcome Assessment and Quality Assurance
1.9 On-going monitoring and periodic review of programmes	Standard 1: Objectives and Organisation Standard 3: Curriculum Standard 6: Learning resources Standard 8: Students assessment Standard 11: Outcome Assessment and Quality Assurance
1.10 Cyclical external quality assurance	Standard 1: Objectives and Organisation Standard 11: Outcome Assessment and Quality Assurance

The ESEVT SOP (Standard 11) states that establishments have to demonstrate ‘that they operate ad hoc, cyclical, sustainable and transparent outcome assessment, QA and quality enhancement mechanisms’. The panel wondered why the SOP attenuates Quality assurance to ‘ad hoc’. In the meetings, the ENQA panel learned that a lot of establishments in Eastern Europe and Russia are just starting in developing quality assurance mechanisms. On the other hand ESEVT SOP (Standard 1) states that ‘The establishment must have a strategic plan, which includes a SWOT analysis of its current activities, a list of objectives, and an operating plan with timeframe and indicators for its implementation.’ This standard seems to contradict the ‘ad hoc’ requirements. EAEVE interviewees realised this fact in the interviews during the site visit, stating that the term ‘ad hoc’ was to be interpreted in that respect and that this phrasing was to be considered as not fitting.

The establishments draft a self-evaluation report based on a template: 'Template and Guidelines for Writing a SER. In its standard 11 (which intends to cover the whole Part 1 of the ESG 2015 specifically), this template mentions that writers have to take care of all sub-standards but focuses on some of the criteria, a predefined list with points of interest. In that way, the evidence in the SER does not match the ESG 2015 Part 1 standards. The panel had the opportunity to have a thorough insight into SER's written by the establishments according to the ESEVT SOP 2016. These SAR's did not provide full evidence on Standard 11 in its corresponding chapter for standard 11 or in the other chapter for other standards.

The ENQA panel read all published reports (and also the reports waiting for approval by ECOVE that have not been published yet) based on the SOP 2016 thoroughly. The panel could determine that each panel scored all of the rubrics, each corresponding to a substandard of the ESEVT SOP 2016. Amongst them, the 10 sub-standards of standards 11, which are the 10 standards of ESG 2015 Part 1, are listed. These rubrics are clear. Surprisingly, these reports showed throughout that scores in the rubrics, especially concerning ESG part 1 are not well elaborated in some texts while in some cases they cannot be traced at all.¹⁵

Analysis

As a result of the recommendation by the previous ENQA panel, EAEVE decided to adjust the criteria of the Stage 1 and Stage 2 evaluations. The current ESEVT SOP 2016 criteria are a result of the merger of these Stage 1 and Stage 2 evaluations. The panel recognises that the ESEVT SOP contains in its standard 11 all standards of ESG 2015 Part 1. In a formalistic sense, the current SOP has taken part 1 fully on board as an additional standard next to 10 other standards. Additionally, in the other 10 standards of the ESEVT SOP 2016 quality assurance elements are added as for instance in the ESEVT standard 3 'Curriculum'. EAEVE wanted to integrate quality assurance in all of the standards. The standards must be ticked off in the rubric, thus due process would guarantee that these standards are covered by all external quality assurance processes.

However, the panel detected a certain mismatch between the standards 1-11 and the annex 6 of the SOP, which provides a template on how to write a SAR, and also the annex 8 of the SOP, which provides a template on how to write a report. In a formal sense, there is no problem with the annexes: these annexes, i.e. those templates provided in these annexes, refer to the numbers of the sub-standards in brackets in their respective headlines, and in addition to that the respective templates provide specific elements for consideration, while the so-called ESEVT rubrics list the ESG standards holistically in their respective 'standard 11'. But in fact, the panel noted that in implementing the standards the SAR and the evaluation reports often only focus on the 'elements for consideration' and not on the sub-standards as such. In that way, the templates seem to be more confusing than helpful as they limit the evidence in the reports to some of the sub-standards only.

Standard 11 of the ESEVT SOP – in substance, rightly so – attempts, and in a formal sense ensures, the holistic integration of the ESG Part 1 as regards quality standards to be met by higher education institutions which undergo an EAEVE quality assessment process pursuant to EAEVE's ESEVT SOP. However, EAEVE's concept to implement the ESG 2015 Part 1 standards in EAEVE's quality assessment practices by means of formal attachment of the ESG 2015 Part 1 standards to the ESEVT SOP as an add-on, separate standard 11 is inappropriate.

¹⁵ See also ESG 2.2., 2.5. and 2.6.

This approach appears to be a misunderstanding of the integral quality concept pursued by the ESG. Moreover, in practice this approach results in being a source of misguidance to higher education institutions and to evaluation panels: It leads to understanding and applying ESG Part 1 (both in HEI reporting and in evaluation panel assessments) as a matter concerned with in-house quality assurance focusing on 'check' and 'act', i.e. mainly on ex- post quality assessment and quality improvement applied to existing programmes, while neglecting the initial elements of a 'PDCA cycle', i.e. those aspects of 'ex ante' quality assurance which relate to 'planning' and implementing ('doing') new, innovative programmes.

In that sense, the comparison schedule of the ESEVT standards as mentioned above and the ESG 2015 Part 1 is unbalanced. The ESG 2015 Part 1 guidelines are not mentioned anywhere. The panel understood that the guidelines of the ESG 2015 Part 1, which are the main source of their interpretation, are not mentioned in the ESEVT standards and their explanations.

The add-on methodology used in the ESEVT SOP leads to undue overlaps, hence to either repetition or else to omission in actual reporting. For instance, ESEVT Standard 3: Curriculum, sub-standard 3.4 lists a major number of sub-points that are essentially identical with items mentioned in ESG 2015 Part 1 and which, therefore, reappear in ESEVT standard 11; at the same time, these points are not coherently reflected in the evaluation reports.

Another example where this can be shown is 'student centred learning'. It can be interpreted that it is somehow mentioned in ESEVT Standard 3: Curriculum, sub-standard 3.4 and in ESEVT Standard 11: Outcome Assessment and Quality Assurance, sub-standard 11.3 since this sub-standard is in fact ESG 2015 1.3 'Student-Centred Learning Teaching and Assessment'. Nevertheless, in the meetings with the decision-making body there was no evidence that the term 'student centred learning' was sufficiently understood and scrutinized. The ENQA panel members were therefore unclear that EAEVE members have a shared understanding of the concepts underpinning the ESG 2015 standards.

Some of the ESG Part 1 are not evidenced in the final reports, though they are checked in the rubrics (see Standard 2.5.) For instance, the reports do not pay attention to the issue of 'recognition'. Also, the aspect of 'learning resources and student support' is not fully covered in most of the reports because only those aspects that are also in the EU directive are highlighted in the reports.

Panel commendations

EAEVE relies on consistent judgement of the panels thanks to the coordinators and the training for experts. EAEVE supports consistency and strives for completeness and substantiation in drafting the SER's and in writing the reports by providing templates and guidelines in annexes to the ESEVT SOP, taking heed of both the relevant professional regulations and, in a formal sense, the ESG 2015.

Panel recommendations

The technique suggested and provided by the ESEVT SOP for assessing the ESG 2015 Part 1 should be reviewed to make it more fit for purpose and in order to avoid misconceptions and either overlaps or omissions. Instead of seeing the ESG 2015 Part 1 as an add-on feature of quality assurance, it is recommended to integrate the ESG 2015 Part 1 standards and guidelines holistically and directly into the other standards provided in the ESEVT SOP concepts and hands-on templates for writing SER's and evaluation reports. This may render better services to developing and assessing quality and quality assurance policies and practices of higher education institutions.

Panel conclusion: partially compliant

ESG 2.2 DESIGNING METHODOLOGIES FIT FOR PURPOSE

Standard:

External quality assurance should be defined and designed specifically to ensure its fitness to achieve the aims and objectives set for it, while taking into account relevant regulations. Stakeholders should be involved in its design and continuous improvement.

2013 review recommendation

It is suggested that EAEVE still strengthens its relations with its internal and external stakeholders, regarding policies, procedures, criteria and the entire evaluation system, in a systematic way. This would apply in particular to the process of producing periodic summary analyses as part of the strategy of EAEVE. Cooperation with FVE appears good but could be strengthened in the future. In addition, student members seem to be only handpicked as participants in evaluations, also using somewhat vague and inconsistent criteria. Apparently, there is no general cooperation with the student representative bodies like the International Veterinary Students' Association (IVSA).

We recommend EAEVE to take measures so that all members of evaluation teams undergo an adequate training. Moreover, we advise EAEVE to consider that all members of the evaluation teams are nominated through the same processes, including the student as well as suggested more openly, e.g. beyond the dean's office.

Evidence

As a result of the former ENQA review and the revised ESG 2015, EAEVE has promulgated a new ESEVT SOP.¹⁶ As mentioned before, this SOP was approved by EAEVE in May 2016. Before approval, the SOP involved a series of iterations (seven in total) with detailed input from stakeholders such as EAEVE members, committee members, and FVE, EBVS and IVSA. Over 20 veterinary teaching establishments made an extensive number of useful comments after they were given this opportunity to study the draft SOP.

The ENQA panel met representatives of most of the stakeholders. The stakeholders were very satisfied with their level of involvement in the ESEVT. EAEVE reflects on QA with its stakeholders during its GA's, in The European Coordination Committee on Veterinary Training (ECCVT) where EAEVE meets multiple stakeholders and through the surveys conducted by EAEVE's Committee on Internal Quality Assurance (CIQA).¹⁷

The ESEVT SOP 2016 is a 108 pages document that describes in detail the 4 forms of visitations, and the 11 standards. It has a lot of annexes, including templates for drafting the SAR and the reports, timetables and guidelines. While the ESEVT SOP 2016 was clear to the panel (within the limits described under ESG 2.1. above), the term 'consultative visitation' turned out to be confusing. It can be understood as a consultancy activity. In fact, it is a first visitation to check if an establishment meets the threshold level to become an EAEVE member.

¹⁶ http://www.eave.org/fileadmin/downloads/SOP/ESEVT_Uppsala_SOP_May_2016_amended_Annex_8_13_Rubrics_approved_by_ExCom_on_25Jan2017.pdf

¹⁷ See also ESG 3.6.

Experts and coordinator for consultative and consequently a full visitation are never the same people. Usually 3 years after the consultative visitation, a full visitation is organised.

The ESEVT standards make sure that the relevant regulations set by the EU which define the minimum standards and core competencies to be developed as a result of a veterinary programme are met, and that expert teams check any such requirements accordingly.

Since October 30th 2014, EAEVE has a code of conduct.¹⁸ The panel noted that this code of conduct is in line with the ESG requirements. This code of conduct is signed by all EAEVE members and by all involved in EAEVE's quality assurance activities.

Analysis

The panel is convinced by the quality of the documentation presented by the agency. This is confirmed in interviews with agency staff and other stakeholders. EAEVE takes its responsibility for the development and implementation of procedures that are fit for purpose and apply their methodologies very thoroughly. The panel was impressed by the commitment to improve the procedures and by the willingness of the agency to listen to the views of all stakeholders and to incorporate suggestions, into the current procedures were EAEVE tries to integrate the EU directive and the ESG.

Although evidence shows that most of the procedures are fit for purpose, there are certain shortcomings (as mentioned above under ESG 2.1. and will be specified later under ESG 2.5 and 2.6). The latter relate to narrow or misleading interpretation and placement of the ESG 2015 Part 1 in the ESEVT SOP methodology and subsequent templates for SAR's and reports (see ESG 2.1.), the absence of some of the ESG 2015 Part 1 features in the reports (see ESG 2.5.), and the fact that the results of consultative visitations are not published (see ESG 2.6.).

Since the aforementioned issues have been, and will be, covered under the aforementioned sections of this report, the panel believes that these may not weigh doubly negative and must therefore not be considered here. Instead, here the panel focuses its judgement on the fitness for purpose of the ESEVT SOP evaluation processes as such, on EAEVE's respect to safeguard implementation of regulatory, professional expectations, and on due involvement of partners and stakeholders in developing EAEVE's quality policies and processes.

Panel commendations

EAEVE has taken praiseworthy action to improve its methodologies to make it fit for purpose in terms of procedures. It has fully taken its partners and stakeholders on board. Regulatory requirements established by the profession are fully observed.

Panel conclusion: fully compliant

¹⁸ http://www.eaeve.org/fileadmin/downloads/SOP/EAEVE_Code_of_Conduct_approved_ExCom_30-10-2014.pdf

ESG 2.3 IMPLEMENTING PROCESSES

Standard:

External quality assurance processes should be reliable, useful, pre-defined, implemented consistently and published. They include:

- a self-assessment or equivalent
- an external assessment normally including a site visit
- a report resulting from the external assessment
- a consistent follow-up

2013 review recommendation

It is advisable that EAEVE takes steps towards a continuous and effective system of follow-ups after institutional evaluations/accreditations, according to the guidelines in ESG 2.6. Admittedly, the situation is not fully in the control of EAEVE as it is dependent also on national policies, but also on the voluntary nature of the entire evaluation/accreditation system which also complicates the matter.

The Stage 1 and Stage 2 evaluations differ in many ways and also by their purposes, and especially in terms of the QA process (mostly Stage 2) there exist features that do not fully conform to the ESG procedures, including also the follow-up practice. Possible merging of the two stages will be a challenge for EAEVE, first by addressing the EU Directive and then conforming fully to ESG.

Evidence

At least two months before the site visit, an establishment under review provides a SER to EAEVE. The Stage 1 and Stage 2 evaluations are integrated since 2016. The panel noted that SERs are by and large written according to the ESEVT standards. The onsite visit takes 5 days and involves meetings with senior and junior teaching staff, administrative and support staff and students, together with a detailed evaluation of all teaching facilities and equipment. There are also meetings with external stakeholders and recent graduates of the establishments.

In a preparatory meeting on the first day of the visit, the panel discusses the SER and decides on the day to day logistics of the visitation. To provide a level of uniformity amongst the experts on the team and also to produce a similar level of uniformity amongst other ESEVT visitations, the coordinator holds a briefing session. The visit schedules of all establishments follow all an established pattern.

The report is drafted by the panel members, both during and immediately after the visitation. The report utilises a standard format. Each chapter ends with a paragraph of 'suggestions' in which any deficiencies are specifically analysed and highlighted. After collation of all the sections by the coordinator the draft report is sent back to the establishment for verification of any factual errors. As stated in the introduction, the team can make comments and suggestions for each standard or substandard. Even so, the panel can indicate minor or major deficiencies. The panel learned from the interviews that there is and must be always a unanimous decision of the visiting team on the grade of compliance. ECOVE takes a final accreditation decision. All final reports that the ENQA panel looked into, provide clear guidance for action. Since 2016, EAEVE has a follow up system in place: an interim report.¹⁹

¹⁹ See ESG 2.6.

In case of a consultative visitation, the follow up is in fact a first (full) visitation. As mentioned in the introduction, consultative visitations are in fact an additional step in the same procedure applied only for membership candidates from outside the EU. It is not a separate quality assurance procedure as such. Consultative visitations have to ensure that the criteria are understood correctly by non EU candidates and have to avoid non-deliberate applications. As a consultative visitation is an additional step in the quality assurance process, a full visitation, three years after a consultative visitation is sufficient instead of a follow-up. 3.5 years after a (full) visitation, all establishments that are members of EAEVE must send a concise Interim Report to the EAEVE Office. In this report, they describe, for instance, the major changes in each ESEVT Standard since the previous SER, their progress in the correction of deficiencies and their plans for the near future. After being reviewed by an ESEVT coordinator designated by ECOVE, the Interim Report is sent to ECOVE for consideration during its next meeting. In case of failure to provide an Interim Report or of evidence in the Interim Report of the occurrence of potential major issues, ECOVE may send a warning to the establishment. The panel learned that some EAEVE members want a stronger substantiated and more binding Interim Report. It is EAEVE's opinion that the current Interim Report is already a strong step forward. In the case of conditional accreditation of establishments, ECOVE asks for regular follow-up reports to be sent to EAEVE for information on the progress of rectifying the major deficiencies.

In case of major deficiencies, an establishment does not have to write an interim report but must undergo a re-visitation between 2 and 3 years after the negative accreditation decision. At least 2 experts will be involved in the Re-visitation. This depends on the amount and content areas of the deficiencies. In most countries, there are no legal consequences in case of failure in a re-visitation.

Analysis

In recent years, the implementation of processes as practiced by EAEVE have come fully in line with the relevant ESG.

This applies, for instance, with regard to the introduction of an Interim Report as a follow-up device, linked with further quality investigation if deemed necessary as a consequence of the Interim Report. EAEVE makes every effort possible to ensure that establishments fully engage with it, to ensure that the full benefits of the process may be gained. At the same time, it remains unclear what EAEVE can do, in case that recommendations are not followed up by the establishments. However, the panel believes that EAEVE, being a private institution not endowed with enforcement rights, can barely be expected to operate a thoroughly robust enforcement scheme. EAEVE will be limited to warning, cautioning, and making deficits public through its own publication channels; EAEVE is prepared to apply these tools if such necessity arises, which has not been the case yet.

All visitations are conducted by a chair with regular experience in EAEVE's assessments and one of the four coordinators. The coordinator is making sure that all evaluations gauge cases at equal level. The coordinators are a very useful means since they are essential to calibrate and to take into account some possible discrepancies between different panels in different countries. This, apart from clear definition of processes and criteria, which is the case in general (for limits, see ESG 2.1. above), balanced choice of panel members in terms of their professional and quality assurance competencies, and schooling of experts, both of which EAEVE takes great pain in safeguarding (see under ESG 2.4. below), contributes to the fact that EAEVE's processes are reliable, useful and consistent. Stakeholders interviewed all confirmed that the process is worthwhile and thorough.

The establishments do use the outcomes to improve their processes, systems and the education provided. The new Interim Report can be an additional stimulating factor.

Panel commendations

EAEVE has undertaken strong action to address safeguarding consistency of judgements by introducing a series of fit-for-purpose measures. These stretch from updating and clear communication of its processes in the SOP via introduction of substantial expert made training and accompanying experts' site visits by in-house staff to using ECOVE as a decision-making institution, which is in a position to calibrate levels of judgement across the entire range of assessments. In accomplishing due process in these ways, EAEVE has come a long way in taking up recommendations voiced in the 2013 ENQ evaluation.

Panel conclusion: fully compliant

ESG 2.4 PEER-REVIEW EXPERTS

Standard:

External quality assurance should be carried out by groups of external experts that include (a) student member(s).

2013 review recommendation

Student members seem to be only handpicked as participants in evaluations, also using somewhat vague and inconsistent criteria. Apparently, there is no general cooperation with the student representative bodies like the International Veterinary Students' Association (IVSA).

Evidence

The wide range of expertise provided by peer experts, who contribute to the work of EAEVE through input from various perspectives, is at the core of the external quality assurance. The panel consists of eight experts, including the chair, a student proposed by the International Veterinary Students' Association (IVSA) and one of the ESEVT coordinators.

The experience, selection and training of the panel members are described in the ESEVT Expert Application and Acceptance Procedure. The team is fully international, chosen predominately but not exclusively from member states of the EU. A mandatory requirement for membership of the team, and a full and valued member, is a student chosen from a group of volunteer final year students by the International Veterinary Students' Association (IVSA).

The team of experts are chosen to represent experience in the following areas:

- Basic Sciences
- Companion animals Clinical Sciences [academic]
- Food-producing animals Clinical Sciences [academic]
- Professional knowledge [practitioner]
- Food Safety and Quality and Veterinary Public Health
- Quality Assurance

Expert lists are the basis for the compilation of the visitation expert teams. All expert lists are continuously up-dated and are published on the EAEVE website. Presently there are nearly 100 experts available and listed. All experts sign the Code of Conduct.

ECOVE finally decides on the composition of the review teams. Based on previous good and bad practices, CIQA added new criteria for the assembling of visiting teams:

- No expert from the same country as the visited establishment

- Previous experience of the expert in the evaluation system linked to positive post-visitation feedback (based on questionnaires filled in by the dean (or equivalent), the chair and the coordinator)
- No more than two novel experts in any team, to guarantee sufficient cumulative experience
- At least one female expert per team
- Experts from at least 3 officially recognized geographical groups
- At least one practitioner or official veterinarian as nominated by FVE
- Rotation amongst listed experts, in general no more than 1-2 visitations per year
- Of the two experts in Clinical Sciences, one is to be expert in companion animals and the other one in food-producing animals
- No conflict of interest (no direct connection to personal interest in the establishment to be visited; not having studied at or having been employed by the establishment; none of the close family are studying at or being employed by the establishment; that the expert has neither received nor been promised any gifts or benefits of any nature by the establishment; that the expert is not a citizen of the country where the establishment to be visited is situated in)
- The participating student shall be a final year undergraduate student from an accredited European Veterinary establishment or an individual who has graduated within the last 12 months from such an establishment.

The agency has a number of team chairs who are appointed to 1 to 2 visitations per year and whose position as a chair is dependent on the confidential reports from team members on previous visitations. These reports are mandatory following a visitation, and they allow continuing and confidential assessment of both chair and individual team members.

An area under active consideration involves the expert member of the team with significant QA experience. Following the recent eight regional QA training exercises, EAEVE is in the process of recruiting additional experts with proven QA experience. However, such individuals are predominantly from veterinary teaching establishments themselves. Further recruitment is recommended to attract QA experts who are not necessarily qualified in veterinary medicine. The panel learned from the SAR that a drawback to recruiting such experts is that there is currently no financial payment to individual experts other than their travel and accommodation expenses covered by the visited establishment. The experts from a university continue to receive their salary, while other team members, namely practitioners, may suffer financially since their loss of income incurred by participating in the evaluation process is not fully compensated.

The presence of a student as a full member of review teams is beneficial, according to the interviews with Heads of establishments, the panel experts, and last but not least the students themselves. Nevertheless, there are some potential drawbacks to the current link with the International Veterinary Students' Association (IVSA). For example, the president and senior members of the IVSA will often come from outside European veterinary teaching establishments and as a result often have only limited knowledge of such establishments, their teaching methods and their professional environment, including the relevant professional regulations. This situation could influence the selection of an individual from IVSA to be appointed on review teams. In the few cases when there is no student from the student organisation, an ESEVT expert can recommend a student panel member. In the past, the student wrote his own report. Sometimes, this caused contradictions between the reports. Currently the student is responsible for co-writing some chapters of the report. In that way, interviewees stressed that students are now vital in the current ESEVT SOP. Students do not participate in the consultative visitations. As explained above, consultative visitations are an additional step, applied only for membership candidates from outside the EU, before becoming a member and

undergoing a full visitation. Consultative visitations have to ensure the criteria are understood correctly by non EU candidates and to avoid non-deliberate applications. Therefore student participation in the panels is not essential as they participate in the subsequent full visitation.

All panel members are trained. EAEVE uses an internet application for the training of its panels. Though the training of panel members is not shaped as a training session on a single location, the panel understood from the panel members that they consider their training to be very extensive and intensive. It takes them several hours to complete the online training.

Analysis

EAEVE makes use of a wide range of experts with different perspectives, including those of institutions, academics, students and professional practitioners. There is a considerable number of experts in the panels. The expert panels are also very international. ECOVE carefully selects the panel members and pays close attention to avoid conflicts of interests. All the experts sign the Code of Conduct.²⁰ With his/her expertise, the coordinator plays an important role in the expert team. Students are included as full members, and it is standard practice now to have IVSA-nominated students as full expert team members. The views expressed by students are listened by the entire expert panel and taken into account in decisions. All stakeholders interviewed expressed their confidence in the system of choosing and training EAEVE's expert panel members.

The panel was able to have a look at the internet application for training panel members. It judges this to be sufficient. Ideally, a daylong training session in a single location would be beneficial; however, with experts drawn from throughout Europe and at times beyond, the expense would presently be prohibitive. Other than the current online training, a more electronically visual and real time training programme might nonetheless be beneficial.

Panel suggestions for further improvement

In the few cases when there is no student from the student organisation, an ESEVT expert can recommend a student panel member. The formulation in the ESEVT SOP 2016 suggests that all student members need a recommendation by an ESEVT expert, which is not the case. The panel suggest to clarify this in the current SOP.

The panel learned that students are now vital in the current ESEVT SOP. Nevertheless, students do not participate in the consultative visitations. The panel encourages EAEVE to involve students in the consultative visitations.

A daylong training session for panel members in a single location would be beneficial. With experts drawn from throughout Europe and at times beyond, the expense would presently be prohibitive. Other than the current online training, a more electronically visual and real time training programme might nonetheless be beneficial. EAEVE may consider linking a face-to-face-training the annual GA for all attendees.

Panel conclusion: fully compliant

²⁰ See also Standard 2.3.

ESG 2.5 CRITERIA FOR OUTCOMES

Standard:

Any outcomes or judgements made as the result of external quality assurance should be based on explicit and published criteria that are applied consistently, irrespective of whether the process leads to a formal decision.

2013 review recommendation

A future challenge might be the possible merging of Stage 1 and Stage 2 evaluations so that the processes and criteria also meet the requirements of ESG.

Evidence

The outcomes are all based on explicit criteria. These criteria were discussed with all members and with different stakeholders before approval in 2016. Those ESEVT SOP 2016 criteria were a result of the merger of Stage 1 and Stage 2 evaluations. Based on these criteria, every report has rubrics that have to be scored. Each rubric corresponds with one of the criteria, called sub standards.

With respect to the consistency of the application of the standards by the panel members, the whole team (8 members) must reach a unanimous decision on the grade of compliance of the standards. For each visited establishment, ECOVE analyses and discusses the visitation report and decides to confirm or amend the recommendations of the review team. The chair and/or the coordinator must be available to ECOVE for discussing the visitation Report and for answering any questions that may arise. In the decision from ECOVE, the major deficiencies must be clearly listed in agreement with a standardised terminology and the establishment's status clearly identified, i.e.:

- Accreditation in case of no major deficiency;
- Conditional accreditation in case of a single major deficiency;
- Non-accreditation in case of several major deficiencies.

In case a sub-standard is not compliant, the whole standard is not compliant. In case of minor deficiencies (partially compliant), the team gives a recommendation to ECOVE. The team can decide that a few 'minor deficiencies' make together a 'major deficiency'. Then ECOVE analyses the decision of the team. ECOVE cannot create or adjust a new deficiency.

Accreditation is valid for 7 years from the date of the (full) visitation. Conditional accreditation is valid for 3 years from the date of the (full) visitation. When the validity period is exceeded, the establishment automatically reverts to non-accreditation status. As ECOVE only meets twice a year, this can sometimes lead to quite a delay.²¹

The decision by ECOVE is based on the report of the expert panel. The ENQA panel read all reports based on the SOP 2016 thoroughly. The panel could determine that each panel scored all of the rubrics, each corresponding to a sub-standard of the ESEVT SOP 2016. Amongst them the 10 sub-standards of standard 11, which are the 10 standards of ESG 2015 Part 1. Surprisingly, scores in the rubrics, especially concerning ESG Part 1 are not well elaborated in all reports or in some cases not traceable at all. The panel believes that the reason for this lies in the deficiency of the provided template for reporting and a possible misunderstanding of the ESG Part 1²², which may in turn be influenced by the fact that current reporting is essentially based on a template that was used in the former stage 1 evaluations.

²¹ See also ESG 2.7.

²² for detail, see under ESG 2.1. above.

The panel learned from the meetings with panel members that they experience disturbing overlap between the standards because of the partial integration of the ESG in standards 1 – 10²³. This is sometimes a source of discussion between the team members.

Analysis

EAEVE has clear criteria that are predefined and published. EAEVE has a clear policy for accreditation and conditional accreditation. As such, the rubrics in the reports are clear. The actual reporting is nevertheless based on a template that was used in the former stage 1 evaluations. There is a mismatch between the rubrics, which are correctly defined, save the issue of certain overlaps caused by the add-on technique in standard 11, and the template for writing reports. While this template refers to the criteria and is itself not contradictory, it is confusing for the writers since it focuses on some of the criteria while referring to other without mentioning them explicitly. Moreover, the partial integration of the ESG in standards 1 – 10 combined with standard 11 creates an overlap that can confuse both panel members and establishments. In effect, therefore, the evidence in the text does not always match the conclusion. Furthermore, it is not always possible to track all the information required by the standards in the text in the reports.

Panel recommendations

The panel iterates the recommendation given under ESG 2.1 above. EAEVE is strongly advised to review its template for experts' reporting, in addition to reviewing its template for drafting the SERs, in order to align the template content to the quality criteria (rubrics) laid out in the SOP chapters, and to do so by integrating ESG 2015 Part 1 (standard 11 of the SOP 2016) holistically into the quality assessment criteria presented in standards 1 – 10 of the SOP 2016 in order to both avoid undue overlap and promulgate better understanding of the quality concepts fostered by ESG 2015 Part 1.

While the panel is convinced that having done so will suffice to make sure that all reports explicitly cover all quality parameters in a more holistic and systematic way, the panel advises to check more intensely that this is in fact the case.

Panel conclusion: partially compliant

ESG 2.6 REPORTING

Standard:

Full reports by the experts should be published, clear and accessible to the academic community, external partners and other interested individuals. If the agency takes any formal decision based on the reports, the decision should be published together with the report.

2013 review recommendation

EAEVE should ensure that its evaluation reports are constantly available and public on its web site.

²³ for detail, see under ESG 2.1. above.

2.1 and 2.5 above, the structure is the same in all ESEVT SOP 2016 reports.²⁴ All panels use the 'Template and Guidelines for writing the Self Evaluation Report'.

A first draft is based on the input of each panel member, 2 weeks before the start of the Visitation at the latest. The input is assembled by the coordinator. A list of questions and issues for clarification during the visitation are added to the findings and comments. The coordinator asks the establishment to answer the questions before the start of the visitation. A second draft based on findings, comments, suggestions and identification of potential deficiencies must be completed before the end of the Visitation.

The Visitation Team is responsible for making an independent assessment and proposing an unambiguous statement on the adequacy of the establishment against each ESEVT Standard. After a proofreading by the chair and the coordinator and a final agreement by all members of the panel, the draft is issued 14 days after the end of the visitation at the latest and sent to the establishment for the identification of potential factual errors with a two weeks' notice.

In agreement with the chair, the coordinator corrects the factual errors and sends the final draft to the EAEVE Office for a final proofreading before the EAEVE Office presents the Report for the next ECOVE meeting.

ECOVE approves the reports. It is not very common to adjust the decisions of the panel. ECOVE reads the reports and checks whether all reports contain equivalent content. The director and the president of EAEVE and director of FVE are ex officio present at ECOVE meetings. During the meeting of ECOVE, the chair is invited. ECOVE will never change results without consultation of the chair. The panel learned from the ECOVE representants that only few reports have so far been adjusted by ECOVE.

A list of all evaluated, approved and accredited establishments is maintained on the EAEVE website. This list contains also all SERs and the final assessment reports.²⁵ The results of the consultative visitations are not published. Consultative visitations are compulsory for new members outside the EU. The EAEVE President and EAEVE Director argue that these evaluations are in fact a check to see if an establishment is ready for membership and a full visitation to avoid non-deliberate applications.

Analysis

The panel noted that all reports have a context description, a description of the individual procedure, including the experts involved, evidence, analysis and finding, conclusions, some elements of good practices demonstrated by the establishments and recommendations for follow-up actions. All reports are made accessible on the EAEVE website, except for the consultative reports.

²⁴ The structure of the visitation reports is in all reports the same: Introduction; 1. Objectives and Organisation; 2. Finances; 3. Curriculum; 4. Facilities and equipment; 5. Animal resources and teaching material of animal origin; 6. Learning resources; 7. Student admission, progression and welfare; 8. Student assessment; 9. Academic and support staff; 10. Research programmes, continuing and postgraduate education; 11. Outcome Assessment and Quality Assurance; 12. ESEVT Indicators; 13. ESEVT Rubrics; Executive Summary; Glossary

²⁵ <http://www.eaeve.org/easevt/ser-and-visitation-report-of-visited-establishments.html>

The idea behind the consultative reports is to detect if the establishment reaches the threshold level for membership. Considering this particular focus, the panel understands – and sees valid reason behind the fact – that EAEVE prefers not to publish this category of reports. Nevertheless, the ESG 2.6 states clearly that full reports should be published.

Panel recommendations

Although the panel can understand the reasons behind the EAEVE's choice not to publish the consultative visitation reports that detect if the establishment reaches the threshold level for membership, the ESG 2.6 states clearly that full reports by the experts should be published. The panel acknowledges that consultative visitations are not a separate quality assurance activity of EAEVE but a part of the same ESEVT procedure (applied in some predefined cases), but for full transparency, the panel recommends publishing also the reports resulting from this part.

Panel conclusion: substantially compliant

ESG 2.7 COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS

Standard:

Complaints and appeals processes should be clearly defined as part of the design of external quality assurance processes and communicated to the institutions.

Evidence

Appeals

When an establishment believes that the decision by ECOVE is not justified by the findings in the visitation report, it must inform the ECOVE chair through the EAEVE Office of its intention to appeal the ECOVE decision within 2 weeks after receiving the Final Report as issued by ECOVE. That notification and the arguments for the appeal must be made 2 months after the receipt of the ECOVE decision and final visitation Report by the establishment.

The first stage of the appeal process involves a reconsideration by the ECOVE during its next meeting. The chair and the coordinator of the relevant review team may be asked to participate in the reconsideration process. The appeal may be accepted or dismissed.

If the ECOVE dismisses the appeal and if the establishment intends to continue the appeal process, it is then considered formally by an appeal panel. The panel is summoned on an ad-hoc basis, in consideration of the object and argument of the concrete appeal. It consists of three members, all of whom should preferably have chaired a review team. The appointment of the panel is coordinated by the President of EAEVE or her nominee in the event that she is ineligible through other considerations. One member each is appointed by the EAEVE and the FVE, with the appealing establishment having the right to nominate a third member. At least one member must have expertise relating to the subject area(s) under dispute. The panel selects its own chair. All three members must sign a declaration confirming that they have no conflict of interest with the visited establishment. They also sign a commitment to strictly follow the ESEVT SOP and the Code of Conduct.

The appeal is carried out by correspondence. If a decision cannot be reached by this means, the chair of the appeal panel may consider that a meeting is necessary between the members of the panel, representatives of the establishment and the chair and/or coordinator of the review team. In this case, all expenses must be paid by the establishment.

Once the appeal panel has reached a decision, by majority if necessary, its chair will inform the ECOVE of its decision by submitting an adjudicating statement. The EAEVE Office is responsible for informing the establishment of the appeal panel's decision in writing. The decision of the Panel is final.

Until the end of the appeal process, the visitation Report is not published and the appealing establishment holds its current status. The report of the appeal panel is confidential and is not publicly available.

Complaints

Post visitation questionnaires are part of the quality assurance tools utilised for internal quality assurance in EAEVE. The questionnaires are filled in by both the visited establishment and the members of the team. The questionnaire involves critique of the team, individuals and procedures, and invites the visited establishment to suggest improvements. All evaluation forms are collected by the EAEVE office for analysis (internal feedback mechanism) and final evaluation by CIQA. CIQA reports outcomes and makes suggestions for changes and improvements. A feedback evaluation system has been implemented and is used on a regular basis.

CIQA has the responsibility of analysing and then reporting the various feedback from both the review team members as well as from the establishment. The ENQA panel looked at the questionnaire and noted that this questionnaire deals with complaints on the process level and the level of the people involved. For example in 2016 - 2017 CIQA analysed 31 separate feedback forms from establishments and 58 separate feedback forms from individual team members. As a result of this analysis, CIQA has recommended feedback from establishments is compulsory. If an establishment does not give feedback, ECOVE will not consider reports pertaining to them until sufficient feedback is obtained. In addition, CIQA has recommended that team members who fail to provide feedback should not be considered for future team membership. Recommendations and statements of CIQA are thoroughly discussed by ExCom and at the GA.

Analysis

The panel is satisfied with the well-developed procedures on appeals against decisions. These procedures can take a lot of time due to fact that ECOVE meets only twice a year.

Complaints are taken up by CIQA, as a result of post visitation Questionnaires. All interviewees emphasised that complaints are taken seriously by CIQA and by the EAEVE President and Director. This convinces the panel that EAEVE has an adequate solution to complaints, though in the ESEVT SOP 2016, the complaints procedure is not indicated.

Panel suggestions for further improvement

EAEVE should consider to bear cost, at least its own, in cases of successful appeals and complaints if these have led to a change in judgement in the given case.

Panel recommendations

EAEVE should make the complaints procedure (concerning procedural faults, as contrasted by appeals concerning flaws of judgement) explicit by explaining its existence and its procedures, e.g. in the SOP. Whether or not the complaints procedure can be integrated into the same framework as the appeals procedures, thus creating only one type of process, is a matter of judgement open to EAEVE policy.

Since the appeal procedures can take a lot of time due to fact that ECOVE meets only twice a year, abbreviations in process should be considered, e.g. by using telephone conferences or Skype meetings.

Panel conclusion: substantially compliant

ADDITIONAL OBSERVATIONS

The panel could detect: EAEVE has shown a highly positive attitude in going through this evaluation process. EAEVE has gone a long way in meeting the recommendations made in the ENQA evaluation of 2013. EAEVE shows 'quality culture' in the double sense of, first, personal and institutional aspiration to understand, conceptualize, and provide 'quality' and quality assurance in veterinary medicine, as well as, second, personal and institutional development of competences, skills, and tools to match this aspiration de facto. With quality culture goes commitment. The panel appreciates the dedication and competence of staff and other responsible people in the secretariat and in EAEVE's leadership and its various internal units, such as ECOVE and CIQA.

The panel also felt EAEVE is doing a good job in getting support from its stakeholders: Trying to have both the professional field and the establishments incorporated. From a political perspective, but also from the viewpoint of safeguarding acceptance of quality assurance both in higher education institutions and in the profession, accomplishing this is very important. EAEVE is very ambitious in trying to get also other organisations on board in other continents. These aspirations on the global level are laudable.

EAEVE has to combine two worlds: the ESG and the Directives. Some elements of strictness in the Directives do not give EAEVE a tremendous space to move, due through their prescriptive nature. On the other hand, there are academic expectancies by the ESG. This is a huge challenge, especially as a membership organisation which succeeds in involving all stakeholders.

This evaluation is happening in challenging times. The directives changed a couple of years ago, and so did the ESG. In view of these factors, and also in view of the fact that EAEVE has succeeded in addressing the core of the recommendations made in the ENQA evaluation of 2013, EAEVE has come a long way.

Bearing this in mind, readers of this report are reminded that the core deficiency identified in this report (see ESG 2.1, 2.5 and 2.6 above) is essentially just one and the same (though reappearing under several ESG standards), and that, while this issue does carry weight, can essentially be rectified without much delay. The panel believes that EAEVE is in a position, and is prepared, to do so to a sufficient degree within a short span of time.

CONCLUSION

SUMMARY OF COMMENDATIONS

ESG 3.1: The way EAEVE deals with its members and stakeholders is commendable. They have many different stakeholders with different perspectives including student perspective, academic, legislative and professional perspective.

ESG 3.3: The panel commends that EAEVE succeeds in being an independent organisation. EAEVE accomplishes to be membership driven, to involve a large amount of stakeholders (see standard 3.1.) and to be a quality assurance agency. It is on this background that the panel particularly commends that EAEVE has made full provision for ensuring independence as regards steerage of concrete evaluation processes and taking decisions on accreditation.

ESG 2.1: EAEVE relies on consistent judgement of the panels thanks to the coordinators and the training for experts. EAEVE supports consistency and strives for completeness and substantiation in drafting the SERs and in writing the reports by providing templates and guidelines in annexes to the ESEVT SOP, taking heed of both the relevant professional regulations and, in a formal sense, the ESG 2015.

ESG 2.2: EAEVE has taken praiseworthy action to improve its methodologies to make it fit-for-purpose in terms of procedures. It has fully taken its partners and stakeholders on board. Regulatory requirements established by the profession are fully observed.

ESG 2.3: EAEVE has undertaken strong action to address safeguarding consistency of judgements by introducing a series of fit-for-purpose measures. These stretch from updating and clear communication of its processes in the SOP via introduction of substantial expert made training and accompanying experts' site visits by in-house staff to using ECOVE as a decision-making institution, which is in a position to calibrate levels of judgement across the entire range of assessments. In accomplishing due process in these ways, EAEVE has come a long way in taking up recommendations voiced in the 2013 ENQ evaluation.

OVERVIEW OF JUDGEMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

ESG 3.1 Fully compliant

ESG 3.2 Fully compliant

ESG 3.3 Fully compliant

ESG 3.4 Substantially compliant

EAEVE is recommended to strengthen its thematic analysis by selecting specific themes, eventually proposed by its members and stakeholders, such as for example: 'student centred learning', 'development of academic staff', 'recognition' or other relevant themes. A thorough and careful analysis of the information can show more developments, trends and areas of good practice or persistent difficulty. EAEVE has to define a cyclic period for its thematic analyses.

ESG 3.5 Fully compliant

ESG 3.6 Fully compliant

ESG 3.7 Fully compliant

ESG 2.1 Partially compliant

The technique suggested and provided by the ESEVT SOP for assessing the ESG 2015 Part 1 should be reviewed to make it more fit for purpose and in order to avoid misconceptions and either overlaps or omissions. Instead of seeing the ESG 2015 Part 1 as an add-on feature of quality assurance, it is recommended to integrate the ESG 2015 Part 1 standards and guidelines holistically and directly into the other standards provided in the ESEVT SOP concepts and hands-on templates for writing SERs and evaluation reports. This may render better services to developing and assessing quality and quality assurance policies and practices of higher education institutions.

ESG 2.2 Fully compliant

ESG 2.3 Fully compliant

ESG 2.4 Fully compliant

ESG 2.5 Partially compliant

The panel iterates the recommendation given under ESG 2.1 above. EAEVE is strongly advised to review its template for experts' reporting, in addition to reviewing its template for drafting the SERs, in order to align the template content to the quality criteria (rubrics) laid out in the SOP chapters, and to do so by integrating ESG 2015 Part 1 (standard 11 of the SOP 2016) holistically into the quality assessment criteria presented in standards 1 – 10 of the SOP 2016 in order to both avoid undue overlap and promulgate better understanding of the quality concepts fostered by ESG 2015 Part 1.

While the panel is convinced that having done so will suffice to make sure that all reports explicitly cover all quality parameters in a more holistic and systematic way, the panel advises to check more intensely that this is in fact the case.

ESG 2.6 Substantially compliant

Although the panel can understand the reasons behind the EAEVE's choice not to publish the consultative visitation reports that detect if the establishment reaches the threshold level for membership, the ESG 2.6 states clearly that full reports by the experts should be published. The panel acknowledges that consultative visitations are not a separate quality assurance activity of EAEVE but a part of the same ESEVT procedure (applied in some predefined cases), but for full transparency, the panel recommends publishing also the reports resulting from this part.

ESG 2.7 Substantially compliant

EAEVE should make the complaints procedure (concerning procedural faults, as contrasted by appeals concerning flaws of judgement) explicit by explaining its existence and its procedures, e.g. in the SOP. Whether or not the complaints procedure can be integrated into the same framework as the appeals procedures, thus creating only one type of process, is a matter of judgement open to EAEVE policy.

Since the appeal procedures can take a lot of time due to fact that ECOVE meets only twice a year, abbreviations in process should be considered, e.g. by using telephone conferences or Skype meetings.

In light of the documentary and oral evidence considered by it, the review panel believes that, in the performance of its functions, EAEVE is substantially compliant overall with the ESG. In reaching this overall judgement, the review team has also taken note of the fact that its judgements concerning ESG 2.1 and ESG 2.5 are essentially based on only one and the same deficiency.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER DEVELOPMENT

ESG 3.1: Although, students are not requesting membership of ECOVE and the appeal panel, EAEVE can consider to take the students on board.

ESG 3.5: While the director and the 3 deputy coordinators are essentially sufficient to meet operational needs, EAEVE may consider the added value gained by having a member of staff who is professionally experienced in the current quality assurance policies and practices in the European Higher Education Area and could be a useful resource person for developing EAEVE activities further.

A financial compensation of team members would strengthen the possibility to attract QA experts outside Veterinary establishments.

ESG 2.4: In the few cases when there is no student from the student organisation, an ESEVT expert can recommend a student panel member. The formulation in the ESEVT SOP 2016 suggests that all student members need a recommendation by an ESEVT expert, which is not the case. The panel suggest to clarify this in the current SOP.

The panel learned that students are now vital in the current ESEVT SOP. Nevertheless, students do not participate in the consultative visitations. The panel encourages EAEVE to involve students in the consultative visitations.

A daylong training session for panel members in a single location would be beneficial. With experts drawn from throughout Europe and at times beyond, the expense would presently be prohibitive. Other than the current online training, a more electronically visual and real time training programme might nonetheless be beneficial. EAEVE may consider linking a face-to-face-training the annual GA for all attendees.

ESG 2.7: EAEVE should consider to bear cost, at least its own, in cases of successful appeals and complaints if these have led to a change in judgement in the given case.

ANNEXES

ANNEX 1: PROGRAMME OF THE SITE VISIT

[Sunday 26.11.2017]				
TIMING	TOPIC	PERSONS FOR INTERVIEW	ISSUES TO BE DISCUSSED	LEAD PANEL MEMBER
15:30 – 18:15	Review panel's kick-off meeting and preparations for day I	Pre-meeting of ENQA Panel members at Parkhotel Schönbrunn Sisi meeting room (4 th floor).		
18:30	A pre-visit meeting with the agency contact person to clarify elements related to the overall system and context	Meeting with the President of EAEVE, Director of ESEVT and Office staff at Parkhotel Schönbrunn Sisi meeting room (4 th floor).		
19:30	Dinner (panel only)	Dinner of ENQA Panel members at Restaurant Plachutta .		
[Monday 27.11.2017]				
TIMING	TOPIC	PERSONS FOR INTERVIEW	ISSUES TO BE DISCUSSED	LEAD PANEL MEMBER
09:00 – 09:45	Meeting with the President of EAEVE and Director of ESEVT	Prof. Dr. Ana María Bravo del Moral Prof. Dr. Pierre Lekeux		
09:45 – 11:15	Meeting with the team responsible for preparation of the self-assessment report + Meeting with representatives from the ESEVT coordinators' group	Prof. Dr. Ana María Bravo del Moral Prof. Dr. Pierre Lekeux Prof. Dr. Philip Duffus Prof. Dr. Hans Henrik Dietz		
11:15 – 11:45	Review panel's private discussion			
11:45 – 12:45	Meeting with EAEVE Office staff	Mrs. Zsuzsanna Nagy Miss Laura Pohl Miss Viktoriya Momchilova		
12:45 – 14:15	Lunch (panel only)			

14:15 – 15:15	Meeting with ESEVT Experts	Prof. Dr. Stéphane Martinot Prof. Dr. Florian Buchner Mrs. Éva Orbán, MA Dr. Mirja Ruohoniemi		
15:15 – 15:30	Review panel's private discussion			
15:30 – 16:15	Meeting with ESEVT Student Experts	Miss Rachel Dalton Miss Denise van Eekelen		
As necessary	Wrap-up meeting among panel members and preparations for day II			
19:30	Dinner (panel only)	Dinner of ENQA Panel members at Restaurant Mario		
[Tuesday 28.11.2017]				
TIMING	TOPIC	PERSONS FOR INTERVIEW	ISSUES TO BE DISCUSSED	LEAD PANEL MEMBER
09:00 – 10:00	Meeting with representatives of the Executive committee (ExCom)	Prof. Dr. Ana María Bravo del Moral Prof. Dr. Gerhard Greif Prof. Dr. Ewan Cameron Prof. Dr. Yngvild Wasteson Prof. Dr. Attilio Corradi		
10:00 – 10:15	Review panel's private discussion			
10:15 – 11:00	Meeting with heads of reviewed establishments	Prof. Dr. Pedro Luis Lorenzo González Prof. Dr. Marc Gogny Prof. Dr. Luis Tavares		
11:00 – 11:15	Review panel's private discussion			
11:15 – 12:00	Meeting with Stakeholders I: representatives of the Federation of Veterinarians of Europe (FVE) and the International Veterinary Students' Association (IVSA)	Prof. Dr. Rafael Laguens (FVE) Dr. Johannes Vaarten (FVE) Miss Denise van Eekelen (IVSA)		
12:00 – 12:15	Review panel's private discussion			
12:15 – 13:15	Meeting with representatives of the European committee of Veterinary Education (ECOVE)	Prof. Dr. Giovanni Re Prof. Dr. Frank Gasthuys Dr. Patrick Talty Dr. Despoina Iatridou		

13:15 – 14:30	Lunch (panel only)			
14:30 – 15:15	Meeting with representatives of the committee on Internal Quality Assessment (CIQA)	Prof. Dr. László Fodor Prof. Dr. Petr Horin		
15:15 – 15:30	Review panel's private discussion			
15:30 – 16:15	Meeting with Stakeholders II: representatives of the local veterinary establishment, representative of the European Board of Veterinary Specialisation (EBVS) and a private employer of graduate veterinarians	Prof. Dr. Petra Winter (VetMedUni) Ms. Victoria Drauch (VetMedUni Student) Prof. Dr. Jimmy Saunders (EBVS) Dr. Lynne Hill (Linnaeus Group)		
As necessary	Wrap-up meeting among panel members: preparation for day III and provisional conclusions			
19:30	Dinner (panel only)	Dinner of ENQA Panel members at Restaurant Parkhotel Schönbrunn Wintergarten		
[Wednesday 29.11.2017]				
TIMING	TOPIC	PERSONS FOR INTERVIEW	ISSUES TO BE DISCUSSED	LEAD PANEL MEMBER
09:00 – 09:45	Meeting among panel members to agree on final issues to clarify			
09:45 – 10:45	Meeting with the President of EAEVE and Director of ESEVT to clarify any pending issues	Prof. Dr. Ana María Bravo del Moral Prof. Dr. Pierre Lekeux		
10:45 – 12:00	Private meeting among panel members to agree on the main findings + lunch			
12:00 – 13:00	Final de-briefing meeting with staff and Council/Board members of the agency to inform about preliminary findings			

ANNEX 2: TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE REVIEW

External review of the European Association of establishments for Veterinary Education (EAEVE) by the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA)

March 2017

1. Background and Context

The European Association of establishments for Veterinary Education (EAEVE) was founded in 1988 in Paris, France, as a European Accrediting Organization and registered under French law. Offices were first in Paris, then in Brussels and since 2007 in Vienna, Austria. The formation of the Organisation was based on a 3-year cross-national peer assessment, which started in 1985 on the initiative of, and financed by, the EU Commission's Advisory committee on Veterinary Training (ACVT). Consequently, and upon recommendation of the study, ACVT installed a permanent evaluation system for European veterinary teaching establishments and recognised EAEVE as the evaluating agency.

In 1993 the EU Commission withdrew its financial support and ACVT mandated EAEVE to continue managing the evaluation system independently and with its own budget. The EAEVE Member establishments decided to maintain the system by paying membership and evaluation fees, as they recognised the benefits of such a Europe-wide profession-specific evaluation system.

In 2000, based on the EU-ACVT mandate, a Joint Educational committee (now European committee on Veterinary Education, ECOVE) was formed acting as an independent decision making Evaluation/Accreditation-Board managed by EAEVE, in cooperation with the Federation of Veterinarians of Europe (FVE), with the European System of Evaluation of Veterinary Training (ESEVT) as its accrediting arm. After each accreditation visitation, ESEVT reports back to ECOVE for a final decision.

EAEVE is the only transnational non-governmental accrediting organisation for veterinary medicine in Europe with the primary objective to monitor the harmonization of the minimum standards set down in the study programme for veterinarians or veterinary surgeons in the EU Directives.

EAEVE membership is voluntary; EAEVE counts presently 96 member establishments of which 75 are within the EU. The other members come from outside of the EU where many veterinary teaching establishments have joined EAEVE; for example, from Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, FYROM, Serbia, Switzerland, Norway, Turkey and Israel.

EAEVE has been an affiliate of ENQA since May 2012 and was assessed by an ENQA review panel on 10-12 June 2013. As a result of this review a number of suggestions were made by the ENQA panel which were enthusiastically taken up by EAEVE in both the internal QA workings of the agency as well as in its accreditation processes. Following on from these changes EAEVE has started to produce a self-assessment report in preparation for another external review by ENQA. Even though there exists no formal requirement for EAEVE to undergo a periodic external review, EAEVE considers it vital to demonstrate that its activities comply with international standards such as the ESG, therefore EAEVE is re-applying for ENQA membership and for registration in EQAR.

2. Purpose and Scope of the Evaluation

This review, will evaluate the way in which and to what extent EAEVE fulfils the *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG)*. Consequently, the review will provide information to the ENQA Board to aid its consideration of whether membership of EAEVE should be granted and to EQAR to support EAEVE application to the register.

The review panel is not expected, however, to make any judgements as regards granting membership.

2.1 Activities of EAEVE within the scope of the ESG

In order for EAEVE to apply for ENQA membership and for registration in EQAR, this review will analyse all activities of EAEVE that are within the scope of the ESG, i.e. reviews, audits, evaluations or accreditation of higher education institutions or programmes that relate to teaching and learning (and their relevant links to research and innovation). This is regardless of whether these activities are carried out within or outside the EHEA, and whether they are obligatory or voluntary.

As a supra-national but subject focused agency, EAEVE main activity focuses within the EHEA as an accreditation agency for veterinary education establishments in Europe and beyond.

EAEVE manages the European System of Evaluation of Veterinary Training (ESEVT), a profession-specific accreditation system which evaluates, promotes and further develops the quality and standard of veterinary teaching establishments and their teaching within, but not limited to, the member states of the European Union (EU). The main objective of the ESEVT is to monitor the harmonization of the minimum standards set down in the study programme for veterinarians in the EU Directives that regulate the mutual recognition of qualification of graduates in Health degrees, including veterinarians.

The ESEVT evaluation process is a fully transparent accreditation procedure, in place for more than 32 years. Periodic evaluation is compulsory for EAEVE members, every 7 years. Four types of evaluation are organised by the ESEVT, i.e.:

1. full visitation;
2. Re-visitation;
3. consultative visitation;
4. Interim Report.

To be accredited by ESEVT, a veterinary establishment must apply for full visitation and must demonstrate that the establishment and the curriculum it provides meet all the Standards set out in the ESEVT Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) and are compliant with the EU Directives on the recognition of professional qualifications (for veterinarians and other Health professions) and the ESG 2015.

The following activities of EAEVE have to be addressed in the external review:

- European System of Evaluation of Veterinary Training (ESEVT) accreditation visitations

Furthermore, the self-assessment report and external review report should also address how EAEVE ensures compliance with the ESG in reviews that it shares the decision with national quality assurance agencies or other veterinary-focused quality assurance agencies, especially in case the agency is not registered on EQAR.

3. The Review Process

The process is designed in the light of the *Guidelines for ENQA Agency Reviews* and in line with the requirements of the *EQAR Procedures for Applications*.

The evaluation procedure consists of the following steps:

- Formulation of the Terms of Reference and protocol for the review;
- Nomination and appointment of the review panel;
- Self-assessment by EAEVE including the preparation of a self-assessment report;
- A site visit by the review panel to EAEVE;
- Preparation and completion of the final evaluation report by the review panel;
- Scrutiny of the final evaluation report by the ENQA Review committee;
- Analysis of the scrutiny by the ENQA Board and their decision regarding ENQA membership;
- Follow-up of the panel's and/or ENQA Board's recommendations by the agency, including a voluntary follow-up visit.

3.1 Nomination and appointment of the review team members

The review panel consists of four members: one or two quality assurance experts, an academic employed by a higher education institution, student member, and eventually a labour market representative (if requested). One of the members will serve as the chair of the review panel, and another member as a review secretary. Two of the reviewers are nominated by the ENQA Board on the basis of proposals submitted to ENQA by the member national agencies. The third external reviewer is drawn from a nomination provided by the European University Association (EUA) or the European Association of Institutions in Higher Education (EURASHE). The nomination of the student member comes from the European Students' Union (ESU).

In addition to the four members, the panel will be supported by the ENQA Secretariat review coordinator who will monitor the integrity of the process and ensure that ENQA expectations are met throughout the process. The ENQA staff member will not be the Secretary of the review and will not participate in the discussions during the site visit interviews.

Current members of the ENQA Board are not eligible to serve as reviewers.

ENQA will provide EAEVE with the list of suggested experts with their respective curriculum vitae to establish that there are no known conflicts of interest. The experts will have to sign a non-conflict of interest statement as regards EAEVE review.

3.2 Self-assessment by EAEVE, including the preparation of a self-assessment report

EAEVE is responsible for the execution and organisation of its own self-assessment process and shall take into account the following guidance:

- Self-assessment is organised as a project with a clearly defined schedule and includes all relevant internal and external stakeholders;
- The self-assessment report is broken down by the topics of the evaluation and is expected to contain, among others: a brief description of the national HE and QA system; background description of the current situation of the Agency; an analysis and appraisal of the current situation; proposals for improvement and measures already planned; a SWOT analysis; each criterion (ESG part II and III) addressed individually. All agency's QA activities (whether within their national jurisdiction or outside of it, and whether obligatory or voluntary) will be

described and their compliance with the ESG analysed.

- The report is well-structured, concise and comprehensively prepared. It clearly demonstrates the extent to which EAEVE fulfils its tasks of external quality assurance and meets the ESG and thus the requirements of ENQA membership.
- The self-assessment report is submitted to the ENQA Secretariat who has 4 weeks to pre-scrutinise it before forwarding the report to the panel of experts. The purpose of the pre-scrutiny is to ensure that the self-assessment report is satisfactory for the consideration of the panel. The Secretariat will not judge the content of information itself but whether the necessary information, as stated in the Guidelines for ENQA Agency Reviews, is present. For the second and subsequent reviews, the agency is expected to enlist the recommendations provided in the previous review and to outline actions taken to meet these recommendations. In case the self-assessment report does not contain the necessary information and fails to respect the requested form and content, the ENQA Secretariat reserves the right to reject the report and ask for a revised version within 4 weeks. In such cases, an additional fee of 1000 € will be charged to the agency.
- The report is submitted to the review panel a minimum of six weeks prior to the site visit.

3.3 A Site Visit by the Review Panel

EAEVE will draw up a draft proposal of the schedule for the site visit to be submitted to the review panel at least two months before the planned dates of the visit. The schedule includes an indicative timetable of the meetings and other exercises to be undertaken by the review panel during the site visit, the duration of which is 2,5 days. The approved schedule shall be given to EAEVE at least one month before the site visit, in order to properly organise the requested interviews.

The review panel will be assisted by EAEVE in arriving in Vienna (Austria).

The site visit will close with an oral presentation and discussion of the major issues of the evaluation between the review panel and EAEVE.

3.4 Preparation and completion of the final evaluation report

On the basis of the review panel's findings, the review secretary will draft the report in consultation with the review panel. The report will take into account the purpose and scope of the evaluation as defined under articles 2 and 2.1. It will also provide a clear rationale for its findings with regards to each ESG. A draft will be first submitted to the ENQA review coordinator who will check the report for consistency, clarity and language and it will be then submitted to EAEVE for comment on factual accuracy. If EAEVE chooses to provide a statement in reference to the draft report it will be submitted to the chair of the review panel within two weeks after the receipt of the draft report. Thereafter the review panel will take into account the statement by EAEVE, finalise the document and submit it to ENQA.

The report is to be finalised within three months of the site visit and will not exceed 40 pages in length.

When preparing the report, the review panel should also bear in mind the *EQAR Policy on the Use and Interpretation of the ESG*, so as to ensure that the report will contain sufficient information for the Register committee for application to EQAR.

EAEVE is also requested to provide a letter addressed to the ENQA Board outlining its motivation applying for membership and the ways in which EAEVE expects to contribute to the work and objectives of ENQA during its membership. This letter will be discussed along with the final evaluation

report.

4. Follow-up Process and Publication of the Report

EAEVE will consider the expert panel's report and will publish it on its website once the ENQA Board has made its decision. The report will also be published on the ENQA website, regardless of the review outcome and decision by the ENQA Board. EAEVE commits to preparing a follow-up plan in which it addresses the recommendations of the review panel and to submitting a follow-up report to the ENQA Board. The follow-up report will be published on the ENQA website, in addition to the full review report and the Board's decision.

The follow-up report will be complemented by a small-scale visit to the agency performed by two members of the original panel (whenever possible). This visit will be used to discuss issues, based on the ESG, considered as of particular importance or challenge by EAEVE. Its purpose is entirely developmental and has no impact on the judgement of membership and/or compliance of the agency with the ESG. Should the agency not wish to take advantage of this opportunity, it may opt out by informing the ENQA Review coordinator about this.

5. Use of the report

ENQA shall retain ownership of the report. The intellectual property of all works created by the expert panel in connection with the review contract, including specifically any written reports, shall be vested in ENQA.

The review report is used by the Board of ENQA for the purpose of reaching a conclusion on whether EAEVE has met the ESG and can be thus admitted as a member of ENQA. The report will also be used for registration on EQAR, and is designed so as to serve these two purposes. However, the review report is to be considered final only after being approved by the ENQA Board. Once submitted to EAEVE and ENQA and until it is approved by the Board the report may not be used or relied upon by EAEVE, the panel and any third party and may not be disclosed without the prior written consent of ENQA. EAEVE may use the report at its discretion only after the Board has approved of the report. The approval of the report is independent of the decision on membership.

The chair of the panel shall remain available to respond to questions of clarification or further information from the EQAR Register committee provided that the ENQA Secretariat is copied in all such requests.

6. Budget

EAEVE shall pay the following review related fees:

Fee of the chair	4,500 EUR
Fee of the Secretary	4,500 EUR
Fee of the 2 other panel members	4,000 EUR (2,000 EUR each)
Fee of 2 panel members for follow-up visit	1,000 EUR (500 EUR each)
Administrative overhead for ENQA Secretariat	7,000 EUR
Experts Training fund	1,400 EUR
Approximate travel and subsistence expenses	6,000 EUR
Travel and subsistence expenses follow-up visit	1,600 EUR

This gives a total indicative cost of 30,000.00 EUR VAT excl. for a review team of 4 members. In the case that the allowance for travel and subsistence expenses is exceeded, EAEVE will cover any additional costs after the completion of the review. However, the ENQA Secretariat will endeavour to keep the travel and subsistence expenses in the limits of the planned budget, and will refund the

difference to EAEVE if the travel and subsistence expenses go under budget. The review fee will be paid by EAEVE in two instalments – first one at the signature of the contract and the second before the site visit.

The fee of the follow-up visit is included in the overall cost of the review and will not be reimbursed in case the agency does not wish to benefit from it.

In the event of a second site visit required by the Board and aiming at completing the assessment of compliance, and should the agency accept a second visit, an additional fee of 500 EUR per expert, as well as travel and subsistence costs are recoverable from the agency.

7. Indicative Schedule of the Review

Agreement on terms of reference	February 2017
Appointment of review panel members	July/August 2017
Self-assessment completed	Early September 2017
Pre-screening of SAR by ENQA coordinator	September 2017
Preparation of site visit schedule and indicative timetable	October 2017
Briefing of review panel members	November 2017
Review panel site visit	End of November/Early December 2017
Draft of evaluation report and submitting it to ENQA coordinator for pre-screening	February 2018
Draft of evaluation report to EAEVE	March 2018
Statement of EAEVE to review panel if necessary	March 2018
Submission of final report to ENQA	April 2018
Consideration of the report by ENQA Board and response of EAEVE	May/June 2018 (depending on the date of Board's meeting)
Publication of the report	July 2018

ANNEX 3: GLOSSARY

CIQA	Committee on Internal Quality Assurance (of EAEVE)
CSER	consultative SER
EAEVE	European Association of Establishments for Veterinary Education
EBVS	European Board of Veterinary Specialisation
ECCVT	European Coordination Committee on Veterinary Training
ECOVE	European Committee on Veterinary Education
ENQA	European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education
EPT	External Practical Training
ESEVT	European System of Evaluation of Veterinary Training
ESG	Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area, 2015
ExCom	Executive Committee (of EAEVE)
FVE	Federation of Veterinarians of Europe
GA	General Assembly (of EAEVE)
OIE	World Organisation for Animal Health
QA	Quality Assurance
SER	Self-Evaluation Report
RSER	Re-visitation SER
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats

ANNEX 4. DOCUMENTS TO SUPPORT THE REVIEW

DOCUMENTS PROVIDED BY EAEVE

Office meeting minutes
Minutes of the 13th CIQA meeting
Meeting of the Executive committee of EAEVE
Meeting of ECOVE minutes
29th General Assembly, 12-13 May 2016
Financial report
Financial forecast
Job-description of staff
Financial report
ESEVT visitation teams
Establishment document EAEVE – Récépissé de déclaration
Vereinsregisterauszug zum Stichtag 17082017
Meeting of the ESEVT 'Quality Assurance' Experts programme
Timetable of the EAEVE QA meetings 2017
Consultative visitation report VetNorth Japan
Consultative visitation report to the 'institut Agronomique et Vétérinaire Hassan II' in Rabat.
Consultative visitation report VetJapan South
Consultative visitation report of the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine of the University "St Cyril and Methodius" Skopje, Macedonia.
System-wide analysis of the European System of Evaluation of Veterinary Training (ESEVT). Period 2011 – 2015
Visitation report to the faculty of Veterinary Medicine of Karditsa, Greece
Visitation report to the faculty of Veterinary Medicine of the Freie Universität Berlin, Germany
Post-visitation questionnaire

OTHER SOURCES USED BY THE REVIEW PANEL

VETUCATION, Lernplattform der Veterinärmedizinischen Universität Wien,
<https://vetucation.vetmeduni.ac.at/>

ANNEX 5: LIST OF ENQA 2013 PANEL'S RECOMMENDATIONS

ESG 2.1 USE OF INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCEDURES

Conclusion: Partially compliant.

Recommendation: The Panel recommends for EAEVE to immediately consider revising both the evaluation methodology and the site-visitation agenda for Stage 2 evaluations in order to include a general review of the HEI and not just QA documents and not just meeting the people responsible for quality assurance. Furthermore, we suggest developing the pool of students and their full inclusion in the evaluation process.

ESG 2.2 DEVELOPMENT OF EXTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCESSES

Conclusion: Partially compliant

Recommendation: It is suggested that EAEVE still strengthens its relations with its internal and external stakeholders, regarding policies, procedures, criteria and the entire evaluation system, in a systematic way. This would apply in particular to the process of producing periodic summary analyses as part of the strategy of EAEVE. Cooperation with FVE appears good but could be strengthened in the future. In addition, student members seem to be only handpicked as participants in evaluations, also using somewhat vague and inconsistent criteria. Apparently, there is no general cooperation with the student representative bodies like the International Veterinary Students' Association (IVSA).

ESG 2.3 CRITERIA FOR DECISIONS

Conclusion: fully compliant.

Recommendation: A future challenge might be the possible merging of Stage 1 and Stage 2 evaluations so that the processes and criteria also meet the requirements of ESG.

ESG 2.4 PROCESSES FIT FOR PURPOSE

Conclusion: Partially compliant.

Recommendation: We recommend EAEVE to take measures so that all members of evaluation teams undergo an adequate training. Moreover, we advise EAEVE to consider that all members of the evaluation teams are nominated through the same processes, including the student as well as suggested more openly, e.g. beyond the dean's office.

ESG 2.5 REPORTING

Conclusion: fully compliant.

Recommendation: EAEVE should ensure that its evaluation reports are constantly available and public on its web site.

ESG 2.6 FOLLOW-UP PROCEDURES

Conclusion: Partially compliant.

NB Following on from this conclusion and on an appeal from EAEVE, the appeals and Complaints committee of ENQA concluded that EAEVE was "at least substantially compliant with this criterion"

Recommendation: It is advisable that EAEVE takes steps towards a continuous and effective system of follow-ups after institutional evaluations/accreditations, according to the guidelines in ESG 2.6. Admittedly, the situation is not fully in the control of EAEVE as it is dependent also on national policies, but also on the voluntary nature of the entire evaluation/accreditation system which also

complicates the matter.

ESG 2.7 PERIODIC REVIEWS

Conclusion: Substantially compliant.

NB Following on from this conclusion and on an appeal from EAEVE, the appeals and Complaints committee of ENQA concluded that EAEVE was “fully compliant with this criterion”

Recommendation: EAEVE is advised to shorten the periodic reviews, as a decade is clearly a too long an interval for reviews in the dynamic environment where also veterinary HEIs now have to function. The periods of reviews for the conditionally approved/accredited or non- approved/non-accredited HEI's should also be adjusted accordingly for clear policy targets.

ESG 2.8 SYSTEM-WIDE ANALYSES

Conclusion: Not compliant.

Recommendation: It is advised that EAEVE develops a policy of periodic system-wide analyses of the veterinary education in Europe. These analyses could be important and even crucial tools in developing the veterinary field in Europe at large (and even outside Europe), and also a way of developing the evaluation/accreditation processes and practices of EAEVE itself, including its own long-term strategy and mission.

ENQA criterion 1 / ESG 3.1, 3.3: Activities Conclusion: Partially compliant.

Recommendation: Particular recommendations are given above at each ESG criteria 2.1-2.8.

4.2 ENQA criterion 2 / ESG 3.2: Official status

Conclusion: Partially compliant.

NB Following on from this conclusion and on an appeal from EAEVE, the appeals and Complaints committee of ENQA concluded that EAEVE was “fully compliant with this criterion” **Recommendation:** The results and recommendations of EAEVE evaluations may not be ‘binding’ in a number of European countries, and it appears that it is mostly up to the individual HEIs to react (or not to react) to them. This is all dependent on national policies, over which EAEVE itself does not have any direct power, except maybe through publicity and by keeping its findings as public and accessible as possible.

4.3 ENQA criterion 3 / ESG 3.4: Resources Conclusion: Substantially compliant. **Recommendation:** It appears that EAEVE is managed adequately with the current human and financial resources. Its financial basis rests solely on the membership fees, and apparently, the members appreciate greatly the membership and the benefits they obtain. There have been no member dropouts so far. But to continue this, it should be necessary that EAEVE keeps opening up not only within the veterinary medicine field itself but also more towards other related academic fields, also and especially in terms of quality assurance.

4.4 ENQA criterion 4 / ESG 3.5: Mission statement Conclusion: Partially compliant.

NB Following on from this conclusion and on an appeal from EAEVE, the appeals and Complaints committee of ENQA concluded that EAEVE was “fully compliant with this criterion”

Recommendation: The Review Panel suggests that EAEVE will discuss both internally and externally its role and revises its mission and vision accordingly. Actually, this should also be a continuation of the ESG 2.8 (above).

4.5 ENQA criterion 5 / ESG 3.6: Independence Conclusion: Partially compliant.

Recommendation: It is recommended that EAEVE opens up more its evaluation and accreditation processes and procedures, involving also stakeholders, and also relying on experts who come from outside the veterinary field, especially in matters related to Quality Assurance. It would strengthen the credibility of EAEVE's evaluation/accreditation work despite the fact that it formally is autonomous and independent in its decision-making.

4.6 ENQA Criterion 6 / ESG 3.7: External quality assurance criteria and processes used by the members

Conclusion: Substantially compliant.

Recommendation: The Stage 1 and Stage 2 evaluations differ in many ways and also by their purposes, and especially in terms of the QA process (mostly Stage 2) there exist features that do not fully conform to the ESG procedures, including also the follow-up practice. Possible merging of the two stages will be a challenge for EAEVE, first by addressing the EU Directive and then conforming fully to ESG.

4.7 ENQA Criterion 7 / ESG 3.8: Accountability procedures

Conclusion: fully compliant.

Recommendation: It is advisable that EAEVE develops a clear and consistent Code of Conduct, for use in all its evaluation/accreditation processes.

4.8 ENQA criterion 8: Consistency of judgments, appeals system and contributions to aims of ENQA

Conclusion: fully compliant.

Recommendation: No specific recommendations.

ANNEX 6: ADVICE OF THE APPEALS AND COMPLAINTS COMMITTEE (12 JUNE 2014)

The appeals and Complaints committee follows the arguments of the panel in its original report and in the panel's response on the standards and criteria: 2.1, 2.2, 2.8, 3.4 and 3.6;

The committee advises that it disagrees with the judgments of the panel on:

ESG 2.6: as there is a predetermined follow up procedure (summarised in the panel's evaluation, p. 23), the mere fact that it is voluntary (like the whole process) is not sufficient to support the panel's conclusion; The appeals and Complaints committee considers that EAEVE is at least substantially compliant with this criterion;

ESG 2.7: the appellant rightly points out that the ESGs do not require any minimum cycle, but only that "the length of the cycle and the review procedure to be used should be clearly defined and published in advance", which is the case here; thus, the appeals and Complaints committee considers EAEVE is fully compliant with this criterion;

ESG 3.2: EAEVE is officially recognised by more than one national authority in Europe, ESG 3.2 does not require recognition by all members of the EHEA; hence, the appeals committee considers that the agency is fully compliant with this criterion.

ESG 3.5: this standard requires only that the applicants have "clear and explicit goals and objectives for their work, contained in a publicly available statement"; this is clearly the case of EAEVE.



THIS REPORT presents findings of the ENQA Agency Review of the European Association of Establishments for Veterinary Education (EAEVE), undertaken in 2017.



2018 ENQA AGENCY REVIEW