

**European Association
of Establishments for Veterinary Education**



VISITATION REPORT

To the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, Trakia University, Stara Zagora, Bulgaria

On 13 – 17 May 2019

By the Visitation Team:

Maria Peleteiro (Chairperson), Lisbon, Portugal: Visitor in Basic Sciences

Angel Sainz, Madrid, Spain: Visitor in Clinical Sciences in Companion Animals

Wendela Wapenaar, The Netherlands (resident of Nottingham, UK): Visitor in Clinical Sciences in Food-Producing Animals

Stefano Rea, Camerino, Italy: Visitor in Food Safety and Quality

Sarah Baillie, Bristol, United Kingdom: Visitor in Quality Assurance

Pavol Valašek, Bratislava, Slovakia: Practitioner

Pedro Ruivo, Lisbon, Portugal: Student member

Marina Spinu, Cluj-Napoca, Romania: ESEVT Coordinator

Contents of the Visitation Report

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 programme, postgraduate and continuing education

11. Outcome Assessment and Quality Assurance

12. Indicators

13. Rubrics

Executive Summary

Glossary

Introduction

The Faculty of Veterinary Medicine (FVMSZ) was founded in 1923 and is currently part of the Trakia University located in the city of Stara Zagora. The first curriculum, including forty courses taught by foreign veterinarians or Bulgarian graduates of veterinary schools in Berlin, Vienna, Lyon and Turin was approved in 1924, while the infrastructure continuously developed till 1937. After the World War II, the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine was first part of the Agricultural Academy, then became an independent institution (Higher Institute of Veterinary Medicine) till 1972. After its relocation to Stara Zagora in 1974, it entered into the newly created Higher Institute of Zootechnics and Veterinary Medicine. Since 1995, the FVMSZ is an important part of the six faculties of Trakia University, training veterinary surgeons and doctors of veterinary medicine (PhD).

The Establishment has already been EAEVE-visited in 2009, when four major deficiencies were found: 1) Insufficient case load in pig and horse patients; 2) Hygienic conditions and student security; 3) Animal welfare – inadequate housing of animals, also experimental animals; 4) Requirements with respect to basic equipment not met, since for adequate training adequate equipment is needed (ultrasound, equipment for ophthalmology), which led to the status of non-approval. After the revisit in April 2015, the deficiencies were considered rectified and the approval status granted.

The Establishment is located in an industrialised and also agriculturally developed region, being one of two veterinary faculties in the country. Apart from grain production, vineyard growing and rose plantations, intensive animal farming including various types of livestock is performed in the region.

Before becoming a part of Trakia University, FVMSZ had 18 departments and five specialised clinics. Currently, the number of departments has reduced to 9 and a University Clinical Diagnostic Unit (UCDU) was established, including clinics for small and farm animals, equine, reproduction health control ward and isolation facilities, diagnostic laboratories, medical imaging, anaesthesiology and therapy, necropsy rooms. For student training to benefit from the presence of locally based animals, FVMSZ created the Biobase where students have access to farm and companion animals and also experimental ones. The FVMSZ initiated a training program in English in 2015, with a total of 87 students from Greece, UK, Ireland, Israel, Cyprus, Canada, Norway, Finland, Jamaica, Malaysia, Singapore, Turkey and India being enrolled at present. The Erasmus + student and teaching staff exchange program has been continuously developed, the Establishment holding 37 signed agreements.

Presently the Establishment has an average of 792 recorded students, this increased in the last academic year due to increased enrolment. The number of graduates also doubled, when compared with the academic year 2016/2017.

To improve the training of the students, the FVMSZ introduced a new curriculum in 2013, implementing Directives 2005/36/EC and 2013/55/EU, also compliant with national provisions for higher veterinary education. Four new mandatory and two elective courses were introduced in the curriculum and the syllabi of other courses were updated. Two postgraduate Master programs, “Veterinary Administration” and “Sanitary Microbiology and Food Safety” were accredited by the Bulgarian National Agency for Evaluation and Accreditation (NAEA).

Changes in national legislation led to the introduction of a new Statute for the management of FVMSZ. The clinical-diagnostic unit (UCDU) of the university was upgraded to support the requirements of the clinics and research-oriented education of undergraduate, PhD and postgraduate students. Renovation was carried out in the three major clinics as well as in the hospital of FVMSZ to improve animal living conditions and welfare.

The ESEVT SOP 2016 is valid for this Visitation

1. Objectives and Organisation

1.1. Findings

1.1.1. Brief description of the Strategic Plan

FVMSZ set as its strategic goals: continuous preservation of its excellency at country level in veterinary training and research, providing education and performing advanced research, partnering in education and research with international and national frameworks, obtaining high ranking in European evaluation by the quality of graduates and continuously improving their QA procedures. Its objectives involve improving the undergraduate, post graduate master and PhD students' education and also providing research, consultancy and diagnostic expertise. Although the SER did not provide a point by point SWOT analysis, some of the strength and threats were mentioned and explained afterwards during the visitation. Of the threats, some such as insufficiency of infrastructure due to lesser involvement of the state in helping the university to create its modern training farm and also upgrading its research facilities were emphasised. Similarly, the slow introduction of technology in student training which impedes the acquisition of professional qualifications was mentioned. Furthermore, opportunities provided by the University and Bulgarian Food Safety Authority were also stated. The veterinary education was identified as an area that would benefit from policies to create partnerships with the business sector in both student training and also placement within the labour market.

1.1.2. Brief description of the Operating Plan

An operating plan is provided on the site of Trakia University under FVMSZ via the link <http://uni-sz.bg/truni6/wp-content/uploads/vmf/file/Mandatna%20programa.pdf>, where the activities are directed towards:

- improvement of the teaching/learning program,
- scientific research and career development,
- improvement of clinical diagnosis and practical training of the students at all levels,
- improving the conditions of employment and social policy,
- community support and partnerships.

The short, medium and long-term activities described in this plan are delegated to different committees of the Faculty Council and their accomplishment is supervised by the respective vice-deans, the Dean, the General Assembly of the Faculty and communicated in the yearly Dean's Report. The benchmarks of these activities match the 57 criteria which are established by the national professional rating system of higher educational establishments run by the Ministry of Education and are presented point by point in the Dean's Report each year and at the end of his mandate.

1.1.3. Brief description of the organisation of the Establishment

The FVMSZ represents of the six faculties of Trakia University and is organised in nine departments and one clinical diagnostic unit (Fig. 1).

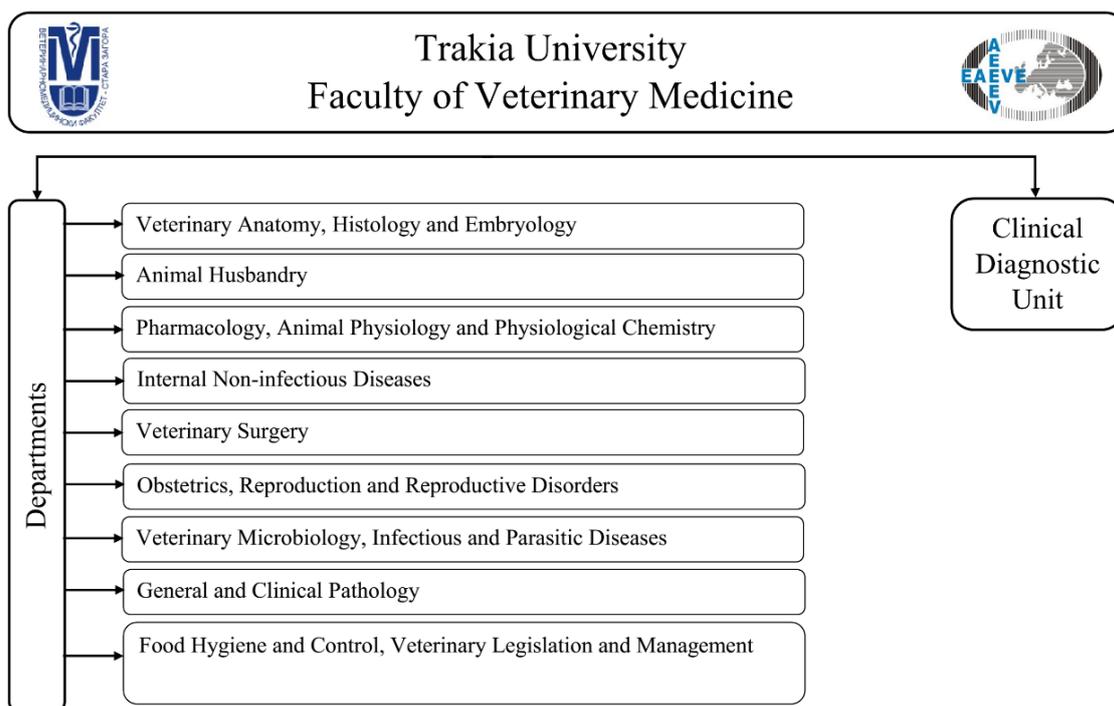


Fig. 1. Organisation of the FVMSZ

These departments are actively interconnected with the other divisions of the university – faculties, departments and also the experimental farm. Each of these departments is further divided in units:

The Department of Veterinary Anatomy, Histology and Embryology has two units, Veterinary Anatomy and Cytology, Histology and Embryology, the Department of Animal Husbandry has four units, namely Animal Genetics and Breeding; Animal Nutrition and Dietetics; Animal Hygiene and Ethology and Ecology and Radioecology, the Department of Pharmacology, Animal Physiology and Physiological Chemistry has also four units, including Chemistry; Biochemistry; Animal Physiology and Veterinary Pharmacology and Pharmacy. The Department of General and Clinical Pathology has two units: Pathological Anatomy and Histopathology and Functional Pathology, while the fifth department, that of Veterinary Microbiology, Infectious and Parasitic Diseases, includes three units: Veterinary Microbiology and Virology; Parasitology and Epidemiology, Infectious Diseases and Preventive Medicine. The Departments of Surgery, Internal Non-Infectious Diseases and of Obstetrics, Reproduction and Reproductive Disorders consist of a single unit.

The Department of Food Hygiene and Control, Veterinary Legislation and Management has two units, that of Food Hygiene, Technology and Control and that of Veterinary Legislation and Management.

The University Clinical Diagnostic Unit (UCDU) includes a small, an equine and a farm animal clinic, the isolation facility for transmissible diseases, medical imaging sectors, a therapy section and an anaesthesiology ward, a section on animal reproduction and reproductive health control, necropsy facilities and the Biobase. Also, the Laboratory Diagnostic Centre (LDC) is included in the UCDU and has laboratories for bacteriology, parasitology, virology, mycology, reproduction and udder diseases, histopathology and infectious diseases diagnostics.

The FVMSZ is led by the supreme management organ, the FVMSZ General Assembly, which meets at least once a year and elects the Dean for a four year mandate. It is composed of members of the academic staff (habilitated and non-habilitated), representatives of students and

the support staff. The Dean and his council, including Associate Deans for Academic affairs, Research and Clinical activity, Internships and Practices, as well as the coordinator for international relations and Erasmus along with the coordinator for lifelong learning manage the FVMSZ together with the Faculty council (Fig. 2). The Faculty Council approves the Dean's management program and all operational decisions. It also elects permanent committees such as Academic Affairs Committee, a Clinical Activities, Practices and Internships Committee, a Research Committee, and a Social Committee and an International Cooperation and Erasmus+ Coordinator and a Continuing Education and Professional Development Coordinator. The Dean's administrative team interacts with the Veterinary Medicine Students Council (VMSC). The students are also represented in the General Assembly and the Faculty Council and participate in the Academic Affairs Committee, the Clinical Activities, Practices and Internships Committee, and the Research Committee.

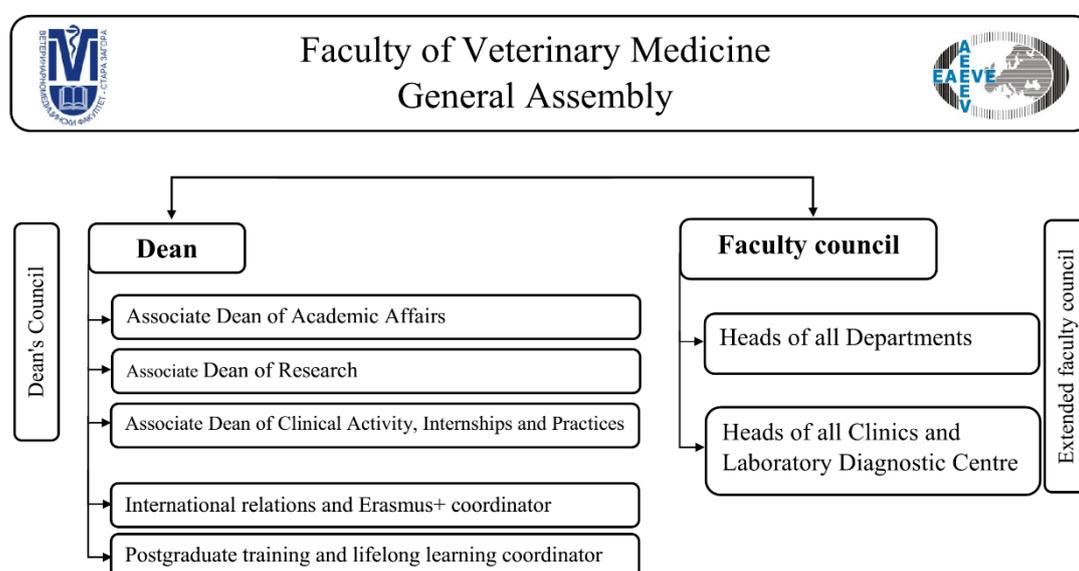


Fig. 2. Leadership of the FVMSZ

1.1.4. Brief description of the process and the implication of staff, students and stakeholders in the development, implementation, assessment and revision of the Strategic Plan and organisation of the Establishment

Staff members and students are involved in the decision making processes by their participation in the main decision making bodies that manage the FVMSZ. Agreements with the stakeholders at different levels (Bulgarian Food Safety Agency, pharmaceutical companies, farms, Bulgarian Veterinary Union (BVU), the Association of Veterinarians in Bulgaria) provide feed-back on the student education. The representativeness of the stakeholders in management bodies is not specified but their involvement in organizing EPTs, extramural training (contracts with farms), joint participation with the FVMSZ in job fairs was explained during the visitation and at meeting with the alumni.

1.2. Comments

The Establishments seems to have a relatively high degree of autonomy in deciding its own leadership and strategy/operating plan. Nevertheless, the Trakia University leadership, the Rector and his apparatus help with the implementation of these plans.

The involvement of staff, students and external stakeholders in designing the strategy,

operating plan and other aspects of the FVMSZ activities in the veterinary training and private sector is quite high. The opinion of stakeholders, most of them are graduates of FVMSZ is sought, especially in designing the students' clinical activity and potential employment (the main employer, the Bulgarian Food Safety Authority – at both regional and country levels) in spite of them not being a part of decisional bodies of the University or FVMSZ.

1.3. Suggestions for improvement

Clearer specification of stakeholder participation rate and involvement in decision making could improve the practical activities of the students and their placement on labour market.

A more structured operating plan, including a point by point SWOT analysis, could be designed to improve the financial planning, facilitate the activity of the numerous departments, and their involvement in joint tasks. Improved recording of feedback from alumni and external stakeholders should be put in place.

1.4. Decision

The Establishment is compliant with Standard 1.

2. Finances

2.1. Findings

2.1.1. Brief description of the global financial process of the Establishment and its autonomy on it

The FVMSZ, as part of a state run university, does not have an independent budget but relies on state subsidy intended to cover remuneration of academic and support staff and social security, capital costs and partially scientific research allocated by contests for research project funding.

The budget is approved by the Academic Council of the Trakia University and is officially published, including on the higher education website of the school.

Supplementary budgetary sources are tuition fees, clinical and other services, continuing education. Deduction rate from tuition fees for postgraduate and continuing education for Trakia University is 3%; expenditures from funds available at the FVMSZ are approved by the Faculty Council.

2.1.2. Brief description of the budget (expenditures, revenues, balance) of the last 3 years

The budget allocated to the FVMSZ is increased by revenues from tuition fees (standard and full fee students), fees from clinical services, administrative and diagnostic services and continuing education.

The revenues of FVMSZ increased in the academic year 2017/2018 mainly based on a 15% increase in the state subsidies, which also led to a substantial increase in the positive balance from 877,093 Euro in 2015/2016 to 1,489,669 Euro in 2017/2018. The tuition fee and clinical services' revenues also increased.

2.1.3. Brief description of the projected budget (expenditures, revenues, balance) of the next 3 years

The SER does not provide a budget forecast for the next three academic years since the state budget which leads to the budgetary allocation to the Trakia University, FVMSZ included, is approved annually by the state. Similarly, the number of admitted students allocated to FVMSZ is decided annually by the Ministry of Education. Therefore, FVMSZ cannot forecast its expenditures and revenues and cannot plan on major investments in advance.

2.1.4. Brief description of the planned or on-going investments

No plan for ongoing investments is indicated, for the reasons explained above.

2.1.5. Brief description of the process and the implication of staff, students and stakeholders in the development, implementation, assessment and revision of the budget of the Establishment

No involvement of staff, students and stakeholders in deciding on the budget of the FVMSZ is possible, as it is regulated by the state and Trakia University. Nevertheless, the staff and students participate in decision bodies, where the budgetary allocation to different categories is defined.

2.2. Comments

The decision making process in the financial field is highly dependent on the public funding, provided by the Ministry of Education and Trakia University, and it could be variable because of the economic situation of the country, the annual allocation of the number of students to be admitted and also the decision of the Rector and his apparatus to evenly distribute the funds within the University.

2.3. Suggestions for improvement

Alternative funding sources should be sought. A more transparent budgetary scheme could be of help in developing educational and research activities.

2.4. Decision

The Establishment is compliant with Standard 2.

3. Curriculum

3.1. General curriculum

3.1.1. Findings

3.1.1.1. Brief description of the educational aims and strategy in order to propose a cohesive framework and to achieve the learning outcome ESEVT 'Uppsala' SOP May 2016

The present curriculum of the FVMSZ is the result of a recent approval by the Academic Council of the Trakia University in 2017. This approval follows the curriculum proposal developed by the Academic Affairs Committee (7 members: 5 habilitated professors; 1 student and 1 veterinary practitioner) and voted on by the Faculty Council (25 members: $\frac{3}{4}$ habilitated professors and the rest are non-habilitated professors and students) in 2016.

The curriculum fulfils the requirements of the Higher Education Act and criteria set by the Ordinance on State Requirements for Higher Education in the Specialty of "Veterinary Medicine" approved with Decree of the Council of Ministers No. 17/28.01.2016.

The present curriculum can be presented as follows (in number of hours):

- Total number of hours from mandatory courses throughout the entire course: 3372 hours
- Minimum number of hours devoted to elective courses: 150 hours (choosing a minimum of two elective courses per academic year, 15 hours each).
- Total number of hours from mandatory and elective courses – 3522 hours
- Total number of hours of mandatory and elective courses, study practice, clinical training including the three periods of External Practical Training (EPT), the last one corresponding to what is called State Practical Training: 4403 hours.

The masters' course in veterinary medicine in the FVMSZ includes External Practical Training (EPT), performed in three periods at the end of the sixth, eighth and tenth semesters. The first two periods comprise 160 hours distributed for 20 days over four weeks. The third period comprises 480 hours with a total duration of 12 weeks.

3.1.1.2. Brief statement if all EU-listed subjects are taught in the core curriculum to each student (independently of the tracking system)

The curriculum includes the subjects listed in Annex V of EU Directive 2005/36/EC (Table 3.1.2), regularly distributed in agreement with the following groups: Basic Subjects, Basic Sciences, Clinical Sciences, Animal Production, Food Safety and Quality and Professional Knowledge.

The distribution of the curriculum hours in EU-listed subjects taken by each student, considering a total of 3543 hours (Table 3.1.2), is the following:

- Basic Subjects – 195 hours (5.6%)
- Basic Sciences – 1754 hours (50.6%)
- Clinical Sciences – 1271 hours (36.6%)
- Animal Production – 200 hours (5.7%)
- Food Safety and Quality – 223 hours (6.4%)
- Professional Knowledge – Not presented individually, but included in the remaining groups and calculated as 101 hours.

3.1.1.3. Brief description of how curricular overlaps, redundancies, omissions and lack of consistency, transversality and/or integration of the curriculum are identified and corrected.

Unnecessary topics, missing topics, absence of compliance, as well as other omissions are discussed by the Academic Affairs Committee of the FVMSZ. Overlapping of study content of the different courses is not necessarily considered to be negative and is not fully excluded, as the Faculty considers it can be beneficial for certain material to be taught by different courses in a distinctive context, ensuring continuity in learning.

3.1.1.4. Description of the selection procedures of the Electives by the students and the degree of freedom in their choice (e.g. what happens when too many students select one specific track)

The number and type of elective subjects are not limited and can be entirely decided by the FVMSZ.

Students must choose one elective in each of the ten semesters. There are a total of 24 electives, with two or three offered in each semester. The elective subjects are varied and most have 15 hours of teaching. Three subjects comprise a total of 30 hours (computer studies, foreign language, repeated in the III and IV semesters, and tropical diseases).

At the beginning of the semester, the students enrol in the chosen elective course at the department where it is taught. The choice is free. The students have to be organised in groups of six to twelve, depending on the elective (basic or clinical subjects). The departments with electives that are chosen by a large number of students have to adjust to accommodate the demand, providing the necessary resources for training. If the number of students exceeds twelve, then several study groups are formed each consisting of twelve or less students. Elective subjects are taught in modules and are included in the main timetable.

3.1.1.5. Brief description of the process and the implication of staff, students and stakeholders in the development, implementation, assessment and revision of the curriculum

The veterinary profession is one of the few state regulated professions. Therefore, the veterinary medicine curriculum in the Establishment has been designed to comply with the Higher Education Act set by the Ordinance on State Requirements for Higher Education in the Specialty of "Veterinary Medicine" approved with Decree of the Council of Ministers No. 17/28.01.2016.

The Ordinance establishes the state policy in the field of veterinary medicine training regulating aspects such as: the duration of studies including the minimal total number of hours; application of the ECTS system; admission of students; mandatory subjects and minimum number of hours for each of them; number of hours for elective subjects; conditions for performance of theoretical training; conditions, periods and duration of practical training sessions; the content and performance of state exams.

The Establishment, however, states that there is a certain degree of freedom with respect to the curriculum. The Establishment is allowed to increase the number of hours of a core subject, as well as to include core subjects additionally to those specified in the Ordinance for state requirements. The number and type of elective subjects are not limited and could be entirely decided by the Establishment. The Ordinance does not limit the number of hours for additional training courses, including continuing education courses.

Any new or updated program for a given subject has to be approved by the Academic Affairs Committee followed by approval by the Establishment Council. The approval is based upon a proposal by the leading professor, discussed at department staff meetings, and is assessed by at least one external reviewer.

3.1.2. Comments

The degree of freedom of the Establishment to make changes to the curriculum is limited by law.

The decision making process around how material is assigned as core versus elective does not seem to take into consideration that all students should attain Day One Competences (D1C). However, there is no limitation to the way the different subjects are presented to students and in various cases there are clear efforts to stimulate students to understand that basic subjects are fundamental for later application in the clinical sciences and therefore to D1C (e.g.: anatomy, physiology, molecular biology, etc.)

Basic Sciences teaching hours represent more than 50% of the curriculum, with some subjects having a very heavy number of teaching hours, such as "Anatomy, Histology and Embryology" (450 hours). Epidemiology is indicated as having 194 teaching hours, including 98 hours of lectures and 60 seminars, while the Decree of the Council of Ministers No. 17/28.01.2016 establishes for Epidemiology and Preventive Veterinary Medicine only 40 hours.

3.1.3. Suggestions for improvement

Harmonisation of the Decree of the Council of Ministers No. 17/28.01.2016 with the Day One Competences assuring that in the mandatory courses the opportunities for the students to be properly trained are fully met.

Putting forward mechanisms that allow the Establishment and the students to check closely how the teaching objectives have been achieved (Chapters 3.6 and 7) should be pursued.

Revision of the curriculum for more equilibrated distribution of teaching hours between the various subjects.

3.2. Basic sciences

3.2.1. Findings

3.2.1.1. Brief description of the theoretical and practical education in basic sciences

Basic Sciences are a very large part of the curriculum, representing close to 50% of the total number of hours of the course provided at the FVMSZ. Part of the teaching is provided by schools external to the FMVSZ, such as Zoology that is taught by the Department of Biology and Aquaculture, which is part of the Faculty of Agriculture. Biostatistics, and Agroecomics is taught by departments which are part of the Faculty of Economics. Latin, Foreign languages and Sports are taught by departments that are part of the Faculty of Economics of the Trakia University. Bulgarian is taught as the foreign language to foreign students. Bulgarian students can study English, German, French or Russian.

All Basic Sciences subjects listed in Annex V of EU Directive 2005/36/EC are taught, although with a very variable number of hours. Anatomy, Histology and Embryology represent 450 hours, whereas most other subjects vary between 194 to 45 hours.

Practical teaching is mostly in small groups with the various units in the Departments involved in Basic Sciences teaching providing rooms that holds 25 to 10 students. Only the training of histology and histopathology is carried out in a micromorphology laboratory which has 74 places.

Teaching of anatomy, histology and embryology is under the responsibility of the Department of Veterinary Anatomy, Histology and Embryology, subdivided in two units.

- *Veterinary Anatomy Unit*: The ratio of Theoretical/Practical training is 1/3 in the first semester and changes to 1/1.5 in the second and third semesters. Topographic Anatomy in the fifth semester is 1/1. Teaching of anatomy takes place in a room with 25 places, two rooms with 15 places each, for training in systematic anatomy, two rooms for group work in topographic anatomy with 12 places each, and two research laboratories, dissection hall, maceration hall, 5 refrigeration rooms, taxidermy laboratory, museum and photography laboratory.

Anatomy practical training in osteology has over 4,000 pre-treated and dried bones of domestic animals and over 30 whole skeletons that are used by students to work independently during practical sessions. In addition, students can take home bones from the departmental collection for self-learning. Other practical anatomy teaching is made with fresh material obtained from slaughterhouses or from small ruminants, pigs, horses and carnivores that have been necropsied. Dry preparations are also used to a lesser extent. Cadavers are mainly used for making preparations of blood vessels and nerves.

Preparations and animal cadavers are stored in five freezing chambers, each of 8 m³. The department also has six 12 m³ basins for short-term storage of wet preparations in aqueous solutions of sodium chloride, potassium and sodium nitrate, phenol, glycerol, ethanol etc., alone or in combination.

Formalin fixed material is rarely used, only at minimum concentrations and mixed with other harmless substances. Its use is limited to a small part of the practical training in topographical anatomy (2 hours), away from the main training facilities of the department.

The Museum of Veterinary Anatomy has skeletons of different animals as well as dry and wet preparations. A new exhibition hall for the exposition of the anatomical museum has been recently completed.

The number of cadavers and material of animal origin used in practical anatomical training is adequate (table 5.1.1).

- *Cytology, Histology and Embryology Unit*: The ratio of Theoretical/Practical training is 1/1.5 in the first semester and changes to 1/1 in the second semester. The training of cytology, histology and embryology is performed in two laboratories for practical work with 10 and 24 places. Training is also carried out in a micromorphology laboratory with 74 places equipped with 40 microscopes, multimedia projector, interactive whiteboard, and monitors.

FINAL REPORT AS ISSUED BY ECOVE ON 11 DECEMBER 2019

Teaching of chemistry, biochemistry, pharmacology, pharmacy and physiology is under the responsibility of the Department of Pharmacology, Animal Physiology and Physiological Chemistry, divided in four units.

- *Chemistry Unit*: The training of students is done in three practical training labs, each with 15 working places.

- *Veterinary Pharmacology and Pharmacy Unit*: The training in pharmacology is done in 2 practical training rooms (24 and 16 places) equipped with PC stations and multimedia projectors.

- *Biochemistry Unit*: The unit has two laboratories for practical work (20 and 22 places).

- *Animal Physiology Unit*: The rooms for group work are two, with 24 and 15 places respectively. Part of the practical training is developed using the interactive platform PTB4153 Human and Animal Physiology System (AD Instruments). Modules are equipped with software LabTutor Teaching Suite and PowerLab 26T hardware. Another part of the study content is given under the form of presentations in the e-learning module, e-learning manuals in Bulgarian and English being provided. The equipment kit allows performing animal physiology experiments – registration and visualization of parameters in frogs (euthanized), earthworms (anaesthetised) and humans.

Teaching of general and special pathology and of immunology is performed under the responsibility of the Department of General and Clinical Pathology, with two units:

- *Pathoanatomy and Histopathology Unit*: Theoretical/Practical training ratio is 1/3 in the fifth semester for General Pathology and keeps being the same for Pathological Anatomy in the sixth semester. This ratio is 1/0,5 for Immunology in the third semester. Teaching is performed in three rooms for group work with 25, 16 and 14 places respectively; a room for practical work with pathoanatomical specimen collection (20 places), a histopathology laboratory (11 places), a cytopathology laboratory (8 places) and a preparatory room. The training in cytopathology and histopathology, as well the major part of training in normal cytology and histology, is carried out in a specialised micromorphology lab with 74 places equipped with 40 microscopes, multimedia projector, interactive whiteboard, and monitors for presentation of histological lesions. The Unit also has a museum collection of a thousand macroscopic preparations illustrating different diseases in birds and animals and a histothèque with more than 250 slides with histopathological lesions. Macroscopic preparations derive from organs obtained from necropsies. Students have free access to the preparations.

Macroscopic pathology training is done in a necropsy hall with total area of 750 m² equipped with necropsy tables and instruments, sinks, hot water high-pressure cleaner, ventilation and electric hoist for transportation of large cadavers. There are also annex storage rooms, one of which with rubber aprons, rubber boots, gloves and facemasks, changing rooms and three refrigeration chambers for carcasses, one outside the building with area 36 m² at 4 °C to keep carcasses delivered for necropsy, and two inside (36 m² and 8 m² at -18 °C).

Cadavers are referred for necropsy to the *Pathoanatomy and Histopathology Unit*. All animals with lethal outcome are necropsied, unless the owner has refused an autopsy, which he/she has to declare in a written form. Each cadaver is accompanied by a form indicating: the unit or structure of origin, the patient's ID number and identification data, name of the owner; brief disease history and clinical data, primary diagnosis, type of required examinations, and signature of the instructor on duty. A copy of the autopsy report with the diagnosis is incorporated into the main documentation at the appropriate clinic.

The number of cadavers used for necropsy is generally high involving small and large animals as well as poultry and rabbits (table 5.1.6).

Laboratory work in pathology includes 30 hours of microscopic examination of histopathological slides in the subject General Pathology and 26 hours of laboratory work in the subject Functional

Pathology. The disposal of cadavers is done by a private company specialised in removal of hazardous biological wastes – Lovamed Group.

- *Functional Pathology Unit*: The unit has two rooms for practical work with 12 places each and two rooms for group work with 16 and 22 places. The ration of Theoretical/Practical training is 1/1 in the fourth semester.

Teaching of microbiology, including virology, epidemiology and parasitology is performed under the responsibility of the Department of Veterinary Microbiology, Infectious and Parasitic Diseases, with three Units.

- *The Veterinary Microbiology and Virology Unit*: practical teaching takes place in two rooms with 20 and 24 places, equipped with microscopes, and sets for preparation of cultures from fresh organs and clinical materials, such as ear and eye swabs, and stained microscopic specimens. There is a preparation lab and autoclaving room for the training in bacteriology and mycology. Virology is taught in two rooms for practical work with 16 places each. There are also smaller laboratories equipped for cell culture.

- *The Epidemiology, Infectious Diseases and Preventive Medicine Unit*: Teaching takes place in a lecture hall with 45 places, a seminar hall with 24 places. There is a room for training in epidemiology and preventive medicines (18 places) and a computer room with 16 places and a new laboratory of bee pathology with 20 working places.

- *Parasitology Unit*: Practical teaching takes place in two rooms with 24 places each, and a seminar hall with 42 places. A collection of permanent preparations of parasitic specimens is also available.

Teaching of genetics, hygiene, ecology, ethology and nutrition is performed under the responsibility of the Department of Animal Husbandry, in four Units:

- *Animal Genetics and Breeding Unit*: The unit has two rooms for group work with 24 places each. A room from group work with 24 places is designed for molecular biology training.

- *Ecology and Radioecology Unit*: The unit has a room for group work with 24 places and a research lab.

- *Animal Hygiene and Ethology Unit*: Teaching takes place in two rooms for group work with 15 places each and a laboratory for practical work.

- *Animal Nutrition and Dietetics Unit*: Practical teaching is performed in a laboratory with 24 places and a laboratory for analysis of animal feeds (3 places).

3.2.2. Comments

The ration of Theoretical/Practical training for Basic Sciences varies from 1/3 in Anatomy in the first semester to 1/1 in many disciplines in Basic Sciences.

Practical teaching is mostly made in small groups with the various units in the Departments involved in Basic Sciences teaching providing rooms holding 10 to 25 students. Training of histology and histopathology is carried out in a micromorphology laboratory with 74 places.

The facilities available provide a very large number of rooms for small group teaching, both seminar rooms and laboratories.

Teaching in small groups is done in general for most Basic Sciences and Propaedeutic disciplines, with close contact between teachers and students. The teachers frequently repeat the same lecture/practical eight times.

3.2.3. Suggestions for improvement

None apart from those already mentioned in 3.1.3

3.3. Clinical Sciences in companion animals (including equine and exotic pets)

3.3.1. Findings

3.3.1.1. Brief description of the theoretical, practical and clinical education in Clinical Sciences in companion animals

The curriculum in clinical sciences includes the following subjects: obstetrics, reproduction and reproductive disorders, diagnostic pathology, medicine and surgery, including anaesthesiology, clinical practical training in all common domestic animals, preventive medicine, diagnostic imaging, state veterinary services and public health, veterinary legislation, forensic medicine and certification, therapy in all common domestic animal species, and propaedeutics of all common domestic animal species.

A total of 1171 hours of teaching in clinical sciences is received by every student: 515 hours of lectures, 65 hours of seminars, 16 hours of laboratory and desk based work, 565 hours of clinical animal work, and 10 hours of extramural clinical training.

3.3.1.2. Description of the core clinical exercises/practicals/seminars in companion animals prior to the start of the clinical rotations

The clinical training starts during the 5th semester with the subject “Propaedeutics and clinical laboratory diagnostics”. Students are introduced to practical approaches and techniques for clinical and paraclinical examination of main animal species, such as history taking, examination of status by body systems, indications and methods of biological sample collection for laboratory analysis.

Students are also trained prior to the start of the clinical rotations in the title “Epidemiology and Preventive Veterinary Medicine”. Training in biosecurity in animal facilities, personal biosecurity measures, disinfection, disinsection and pest control, and analysis of population health is given.

Furthermore, students are also trained in reproduction in intensive livestock production systems, including pregnancy monitoring, before the start of clinical rotations. This training is carried out mainly in the Reproductive Health Centre and also extramurally.

3.3.1.3. Description of the core clinical rotations and emergency services (*both intramural VTH and ambulatory clinics*) in companion animals and the direct involvement of undergraduate students in it (*responsibilities, hands-on versus observation, report writing, ..*)

Clinical rotations in the companion animal clinic include two weeks of practice in different specialties at the small animal clinic during the fifth Year of the Degree (one week during the first semester, and another one week during the second semester). Students are in groups of 6-12, depending on the training, through periodic duties at the FVMSZ clinics and UDCU wards. During the duties, students spend an entire week at the clinics.

Their involvement includes admission of patients, initial examination, sample collection, diagnostic algorithm, and therapy. They participate in all procedures (diagnostic imaging, disinfection, bandaging, etc), at a level which would not pose a threat to the life of the patient. Emergency services in the companion animal clinic are open from 8 am until 9 pm, every day. One member of the academic staff attends the service from 8 am to 4 pm, and another one is in charge from 4 pm to 9 pm. After this time, in case of emergency, the service for all the Clinics is given through an emergency phone attended by the Vice Dean of Clinical Studies who summons a team appropriate to the case. Undergraduate students of 5th Year are involved in the service until 9 pm. After this time, students can be present on a voluntary basis.

3.3.2. Comments

In Clinical Sciences, the curriculum includes the subjects listed in Annex V of EU Directive 2005/36/EC as amended by directive 2013/55/EU. All relevant subjects are included in the syllabus of FVMSZ. Some clinical subjects, such as Endocrinology, Veterinary Oncology, Dermatology, Veterinary Dentistry, Neurology, Exotic Animal Surgery, Clinical Microbiology, and Eye Surgery, are included in the curriculum as elective courses due to national regulations. A basic knowledge of these disciplines is included in the curriculum in the mandatory courses.

Regarding the types of teaching, supervised self-learning and non-clinical animal work are limited in the area of Clinical Sciences.

The students from 2nd to 5th year are on duty in different wards of the clinics, including weekends. However, this time spent in clinics is voluntary, and is not included in the curriculum, so the total mandatory clinical rotations in companion animals are restricted to two weeks in the small animal clinic. No rotations in equine clinic are included in the curriculum. Clinical animal work related to clinical sciences and, specifically, clinical practical training in companion animals is limited, affecting the hands-on training of the students with these animal species.

3.3.3. Suggestions for improvement

Clinical training in companion animals prior to the start of the clinical rotations should be enhanced, and should include training with models, simulators, cadavers, etc, in order to facilitate the student learning during the rotations and to reduce, refine and replace, when appropriate the use of live animals.

Clinical animal work related to clinical sciences and, specifically, clinical practical training in companion animals should be increased, in order to enhance the hands-on training of the students. It is quite obvious, that the practical training- in the meaning of obtaining of practical skills harmonised with Day One Competences is insufficient. Day One Competences should be harmonised and emphasised in all levels of clinical training. The major insufficiency is due to the absence of 24/7 Emergency Services for small animals and equine, the limited length of clinical rotations in small animals, and the absence of clinical rotations in equines. This should be improved to fulfil requirements of ESEVT Standards and to increase the caseload, especially for the Equine clinic, so a rotation in this clinic should be established.

3.4. Clinical Sciences in food-producing animals (including Animal Production)

3.4.1. Findings

3.4.1.1. Brief description of the theoretical, practical and clinical education in Clinical Sciences in food-producing animals

Theoretical education:

Students are taught the basic information on the majority of farmed species with regards to husbandry, population medicine and individual animal health and disease.

Practical and clinical education:

Practical and clinical education overlaps in year 4 and 5 of the course, where practical classes can include patients in the hospital which are taught in groups of approximately 20 students. Students are engaged in a wide variety of practical classes concerning food-producing animals. Particularly in the clinics, students are involved in every step of the diagnosis, management and treatment of common disease presentations in cattle and sheep. There are limited practical skills taught in poultry and pigs, however the population medicine in these species is addressed in the more practical classes.

3.4.1.2. Description of the core clinical exercises/practicals/seminars in food-producing animals prior to the start of the clinical rotations

Core clinical exercises, practicals and seminars prior to the start of rotations include many (applied) basic sciences such as animal nutrition, plant toxicology, biostatistics, molecular genetics (taught using very good clinically applied methods e.g. using scrapie as an example), pharmacology (using clinically applied commercially available drugs as examples), epidemiology (using outbreak situations with FAO and OIE data as examples). Clinical professional communication (relevant to food producing animals) is delivered in the curriculum although in a limited amount (1 lecture). Animal welfare is taught, although the clinical application was limited (as determined during the visits and in conversations with staff and students).

During rotations (Yr5) clinical core clinical exercises, practicals and seminars are delivered on a daily basis, with practicals in the morning on various clinical science subjects and supplemented with lectures in the afternoon. All required areas are covered, although herd health management provision is limited; where population level data analysis is expected to be included in herd health management, the students mainly undertook fertility examinations (pregnancy diagnosis), nutrition (feed analysis) and practical activities such as dehorning, lameness treatments, vaccinations, blood sampling and anthelmintic treatment. Economics at the clinical level was mainly taught in theory and students had limited access to records giving an indication of cost, advice or treatment on farm. When visiting the farms (one dairy farm, one poultry/turkey research farm and one wildlife rescue centre), no students were receiving core curriculum teaching on those farms at the time. Conversations with students confirmed the practical skills teaching was predominantly in the clinics and through exposure to other farms, animal health and management in their off-site visits.

3.4.1.3. Description of the core clinical rotations, emergency services (*both intramural VTH and ambulatory clinics*) and herd health visits in food-producing animals (*i.e. ruminants, pigs and poultry*) and the direct involvement of undergraduate students in it (*responsibilities, hands-on versus observation, report writing, ..*)

Core clinical rotations (intramural VTH & ambulatory):

The clinical training takes place in Yr4 and Yr5; during the semesters students practice the primary clinical approaches in practical conditions in the clinics and at off-site farms. They are in groups of 6 to 20 depending on the situation.

Students spend one week in the Farm animal Clinic in Yr4 and 5 and rotate around the different disciplines (Internal diseases, Surgery and Obstetrics, Infectious diseases, Parasitology, Animal hygiene and nutrition) which partly includes food animals in addition to equine and companion animals. Pregnancy diagnosis in cattle and sheep with identification of possible pathological processes and how to manage those is taught on an individual animal basis. This training takes place farm animal clinic and off-site farms that have signed agreements with the university. In addition to core rotations, four weeks are spent in a large animal practice or farm, at the end of the 5th year.

Emergency services (intramural VTH & ambulatory):

There is no involvement required from students in emergency services out of hours; students are included in emergency services when cases come in during the day. Student can volunteer to be involved, no record could be provided to demonstrate level or frequency of involvement. Emergency service for food animals is only provided in the clinic or occasionally on farm when a case was presented during a scheduled visit.

Herd health visits (*i.e. ruminants, pigs and poultry*):

As mentioned above, herd health visits do take place but the level of population-based analysis is limited as is the involvement with pig and poultry farms. On the other hand, there are several

contracts with cattle farms close to the university which provide good opportunities for students to practice skills learned in a more theoretical setting in earlier years.

Direct involvement:

There is ample opportunity for students to be involved in farm animal cases when present in the hospital or when visiting a farm.

3.4.1.4. Brief description of the theoretical and practical education in Animal Production

Before the start of clinical rotations, the students are taught reproduction livestock production systems, epidemiology and preventive medicine. This training familiarises students with biosecurity and how to examine and analyse population health parameters; the level of implementation of theoretical knowledge into practice is limited.

3.4.2. Comments

Exposure of students and opportunity to be involved in farm animal cases (sheep, goats, cattle) is to be commended; students are able to learn a lot from individual cases presented in the clinic.

The attitude of the farm animal staff towards students and teaching was excellent; particularly in the obstetrics department and clear progress has been made in recent years to include the use of models and simulators in the teaching to replace and complement cases. The group size in many practicals and clinical cases was good, and students had good opportunities to interact with the patient and learn from the teacher.

3.4.3. Suggestions for improvement

The level of population health management and analysis at herd level needs to be improved to prepare students for farm animal practice, where animals are managed at herd/flock level in addition to aspects of the individual animal's health. This requires collaboration between the different disciplines of epidemiology, infectious diseases, internal medicine, reproduction and obstetrics. The commercial farm contracted by the university provides a great opportunity to develop these skills, taught in theory in earlier years, and apply that knowledge in practice by evaluating data generated by the on-farm software or processing plants and combined with further information collected on farm (number of culls, fertility performance, health records) to provide evidence to inform herd health planning e.g. vaccination protocols. Client communication, compliance with suggested treatments or management changes and a collaborative approach to on-farm herd health management will provide students with a good insight into how to improve food animal health and production.

Each discipline provides their own learning outcomes in various different ways, there is no cohesive framework that staff are aware of. Certain areas are believed to be covered by other disciplines but this is not possible to confirm, except by personal conversations between staff from the different departments. Following the Day One Competences would facilitate the development of this cohesive framework which would benefit staff and students. Logbooks kept by students on farm patients/herd health management cases seen during their farm visits, should be aligned with Day One Competences to provide a clear overview of how these competences are achieved in food animal cases.

Communication skills and an understanding of the economics on farms is included in the theoretical aspects of the curriculum however considering the challenging role and value of the veterinarian in the food animal industry it is deemed important to allocate more time to increase the students' understanding and ability in these areas. The reason for providing free treatment of cases in the hospital is understandable however it does limit the students' understanding of their economic value as a food animal veterinarian. By providing a free service on farms is also understandable to provide a case load for students, however, providing a better insight into the

economic value of the veterinary skills and knowledge would enable students to better understand the role of the veterinarian in food animal health and enable them to better justify their value to future clients.

3.5. Food Safety and Quality (FSQ)

3.5.1. Findings

3.5.1.1. Brief description of the theoretical and practical education in FSQ

Practical training in food safety and quality consists of visits to various enterprises under agreements: mainly 3 slaughterhouses and 2 milk-processing enterprises.

One slaughterhouse is for pigs and small ruminants and also has a meat processing plant. Students visit it to become acquainted with the structure, slaughter technology and meat processing (meat cuts, freshly cooked and dry sausages). During the 10th semester, at the same enterprise students are trained on meat inspection of slaughtered animals and are allowed to independently perform meat inspection of at least two carcasses (viscera included) of a pig and of a small ruminant.

The second slaughterhouse is for pigs, small and large ruminants and is visited mainly for training students on the control and inspection of the cattle slaughter process and hazards related to bovine spongiform encephalopathy.

A poultry slaughterhouse is visited to train students on the technology of poultry slaughter and meat processing.

In one of the two visited milk-processing enterprises students are acquainted with transportation, delivery, inspection, technology of producing fresh pasteurised milk and yoghurt. At the other enterprise students are trained on production technology of white brined cheese and kashkaval.

Moreover, during the so called student travel seminar (a two-day travel arranged by the Establishment) at the end of the 10th semester students visit one or two more meat producing/processing and two more milk-processing plants, but only watch the technological process. During these travels students also have the opportunity to visit the border with Turkey to become acquainted with border-control activities.

During the pre-graduation EPT after the 10th semester, 1 of the 3 stages is devoted to FSQ, during which students visit enterprises associated to food safety and quality and perform their training in regional (district) BFSAs (Bulgarian Food Safety Agency) centres together with municipal (official) veterinarians.

Tracking of intramural and extramural practical activities is managed directly by the Department of Food Hygiene and Control and was made available during the visitation. Records of EPT in FSQ are kept at the Dean's Office by the vice Dean for clinical training who is in charge of managing all EPT activities.

Day One Competences in FSQ are not identified and listed. Thus, no methods of assessment are in place for evaluating the acquisition of these competences by students, who do not have a logbook or an equivalent tool.

3.5.1.2. Description (timing, group size per teacher) of the teaching in slaughterhouses and in premises for the production, processing, distribution/sale or consumption of food of animal origin

The organisation of student groups is done by the Dean's Office according to the students enrolled, and the number ranges between 8 and 12.

At the pig and small ruminant slaughterhouse with a meat-processing plant, students perform two visits of 9 hours each (3 training sessions of 3 hours) in groups of 8-12 under the supervision of instructors. At the cattle slaughterhouse meat inspection is learned by observation in groups.

At the poultry slaughterhouse practical training is conducted through visits (3.5 hours, supervised by one teacher) to the enterprise in groups.

During the 9th semester students visit 2 dairy enterprises usually arranged in 2 groups of 16-20 students for 3.5 hours.

Visits to the other meat producing/processing and milk-processing enterprises are arranged in groups of about 30 students supervised by two instructors and are carried out during the student travel seminar by the end of the 10th semester.

During EPT in FSQ (pre-graduation EPT) a 4-week (5 days per week) stage is performed: 2 weeks at Regional Directorates of the BFSA and 2 weeks in regional (district) centres together with municipal (official) veterinarians.

All transportation, to and from the plants, is provided by the FVMSZ, with the exception of those during EPT.

3.5.2. Comments

All relevant EU-listed subjects are covered by the training in FSQ. The syllabi in English provided on site made it possible to check that all main topics related to technology, safety and inspection of the most common foods of animal origin are included. Several practical activities (non-clinical animal work) and especially laboratory analysis are performed in FVMSZ's laboratories on different products purchased from the market.

Although no hours of extramural training in FSQ are reported in table 3.1.5 a sufficient number of extramural hours is performed at various enterprises under academic supervision, as ESEVT indicator I7 shows.

Where possible, safety and security measures for students at slaughterhouse need to be improved and encouraged (i.e. use of own white boots and coats, use of safety helmets), even though minimum requirements are respected according to the law.

3.5.3. Suggestions for improvement

The introduction of more non-clinical animal work in the curriculum, to increase intramural practical training on organs and/or animals from slaughterhouses under authorisation by Bulgarian Food Safety Agency could improve student training.

Where possible, increasing practical activity during the visits to production plants, e.g. by drafting their own-check plans, prerequisite programmes, HACCP plans, etc. would be useful for students: training them to fill in check lists about plant premises, procedures etc. during visits would be, among the other things, a useful tool to encourage discussions on specific cases and conditions.

A list of Day One Competences in FSQ and a tool to ascertain that the students have acquired them must be in place.

3.6. Professional knowledge

3.6.1. Findings

3.6.1.1. Brief description of the theoretical and practical education in Professional Knowledge

The Establishment declares that the following subjects are taught throughout the curriculum as a part of Professional knowledge:

- "History of veterinary medicine" (1st Semester, 15 hours of lectures) - as an elective course.
- Communication skills: the study content is part of "Professional Ethics" course, which takes place in 7th Semester (10 hours of lectures and 5 hours of seminars); also taught within the "Private Veterinary Practice Management" elective course in 10th Semester (15 hours of lectures).

- State veterinary service and public health is taught within the “Public Veterinary Activities and Legislation” course, which takes place in 10th Semester (15 hours of lectures and 15 hours of seminars);
- Professional ethics and behaviour are taught within the “Professional Ethics” course
- Veterinary legislation, forensic medicine and certification – the study content is distributed between two independent courses: 1) Public Veterinary Activities and Legislation; 2) Forensic Veterinary Medicine (15 hours of lectures and 15 hours of lectures), both in 10th Semester
- Veterinary legislation: the study content is taught in the “Public Veterinary Activities and Legislation” course
- Veterinary certification and report writing: the material is taught for 5 hours in the “Public Veterinary Activities and Legislation” course
- Practice management & business – taught by “Private Veterinary Practice Management” elective course

3.6.1.2. Brief description of the organisation, selection procedures and supervision of the EPT

The Establishment has signed contracts with several local/national stakeholders to provide EPT for students (copies of some contracts are available as Appendix 3-8 of SER), namely:

- Bulgarian Food Safety Agency (BFSA) and its Regional Directorates,
- Ajax Ltd (the biggest pig producer in Bulgaria),
- Agricultural Institute in Stara Zagora,
- Many farms in villages around Stara Zagora

To promote good cooperation, a tradition of meeting with the partner business organisations is annually organised on the FVMSZ birthday.

There are three individual blocks of EPT during the undergraduate period. The first takes place after 6th semester and is targeted to activities related to animal nutrition and dietetics, veterinary sanitary control on feeds, hygiene practices in animal rearing facilities, organization and techniques of selection activities. Detailed content of topics is available as Appendix 3-9 of SER. The duration of this EPT is 4 weeks (20 days, 160 hours).

The second block of EPT takes place after the 8th semester in veterinary clinics and/or regional veterinary practices. During the first day of the practice, students are registered in the Regional Directorate of Bulgarian Food Safety Agency and specify the facilities where they will practice. The duration of this EPT is 4 weeks (20 days, 160 hours).

The third part of EPT is after the 10th semester, lasts 12 weeks and aims to support professional specialization and to help in the assimilation and mastery of routine practical skills for all the procedures taught in the clinical courses and during the EPT after the 8th semester. It is called the pre-graduation EPT and is performed in 3 stages. During the first 4-week stage, the future veterinarians are in Regional Directorates of the BFSA. In the first 10 working days they visit all enterprises associated with food safety and quality. The next 10 working days they continue their training in regional district centres together with municipal official veterinary surgeons. The second 4-week stage is undertaken in private small animal veterinary clinics. The third 4-week stage is spent in a licensed large animal practice or large animal farm (working with farm animals).

Students undertaking EPT are insured and the EPT providers are aware of the insurance.

All three types of EPT have adapted the conditions to accommodate foreign students.

Apart from the EPT, FVMSZ students can voluntarily enrol in a programme from the Ministry and Education and Science of Bulgaria that implemented a "Student Practices - Phase 1" project (BG05M20P001-2.002-0001), funded by the Operational Program "Science and Education for Smart Growth", which started in 2016. There are 22 companies that have signed contracts. The

total number of hours of the programme is 240, and students from all academic years may participate.

3.6.1.3. Description of the procedures (e.g. logbooks) used to ascertain the achievement of each core practical/clinical activity (pre-clinical, clinical, ambulatory clinics, EPT) and professional knowledge by each student (independently of the tracking system)

Each student has to complete a logbook called “Individual credit sheet”, that is provided only by Small animal clinic and Food producing animal clinic, which is composed as a checklist of certain skills that have to be achieved. Each of the required skill has a certain credit value, and has to be signed by supervising teacher/clinician. For successful passing of the core clinical activity, 90 % of the credits have to be obtained.

The Establishment designed a complex evaluation system for each block of EPT. For the first block (after 6th semester), the students are obliged to make a written report which has to be checked and approved by commission of instructors from the Department of Animal Husbandry. “Pass” grade is mandatory to enrol for the next semester.

After the second block (after 8th semester) of EPT students present a Journal with a description of the activities they performed from the practice which is discussed with two instructors from the clinical departments. “Pass” grade is mandatory to enrol for the next semester.

The success of pre-graduation EPT is based on a written report, which should reflect the creativity and individuality of the student, analytical and critical interpretation skills, and readiness to practice in the profession independently. The report should have 15-25 pages and has to be discussed and defended before a dedicated commission. There are three possible grades “pass”, “conditional pass” and “fail”. In the case of “conditional pass”, the student has to spend a period of 1 week in the clinics of the FVMSZ; in case of “fail” the student has to spend a period of 4 weeks. After the end of the respective period, the pre-graduation EPT is defended once again.

3.6.2. Comments

“Practice Management and Business” is taught in the title “Management of Private Veterinary Medical Practice”, which is an elective course (lectures only with no seminars - according to the curriculum) as well as “History of veterinary medicine”.

None of the EPT reports contain evaluation/assessment of the student’s performance by the EPT provider.

The EPT providers in the companion animals field (mandatory EPT for one-month duration after 10th semester) have no written agreement with the establishment about providing the EPT. It is just verbal consent.

There is no description of how the procedures/skills are aligned with Day One Competences in pre-clinical activities, FSQ subjects or EPT.

3.6.3. Suggestions for improvement

The course “Management of Private Veterinary Medical Practice” should be mandatory, not elective.

Existing logbooks, called “Individual credit sheet”, should be reviewed and organised to ensure alignment with Day One Competences.

“Logbooks” with descriptions of the procedures/skills obtained in pre-clinical training, FSQ training and EPT should be introduced and emphasised. These must be aligned with Day One Competences.

The EPT reports/journals must contain the EPT providers signed evaluation of the student’s performance of procedures/skills/activities undertaken during the training.

It is necessary to introduce signed agreement forms with EPT providers from companion animal clinics.

3.7. Decision

The Establishment is compliant with Standard 3, except for Substandards 3.5 and 3.8:

- The Establishment is not compliant with Substandard 3.5 because there is no acknowledgement of Day One Competences in all groups of subjects.
- The Establishment is partially compliant with Substandard 3.8 because standardised evaluation by the EPT providers of the performance of the students is insufficient and no formal mechanism to provide feedback to the Establishment on the EPT programme is in place.

4. Facilities and equipment

4.1. Findings

4.1.1. Brief description of the location and organisation of the facilities used for the veterinary curriculum

The FVMSZ is located in the main campus of the Trakia University, a few kilometers West of Stara Zagora. The campus also includes the Trakia University Rector Administration's offices, the training bases of the Establishment of Agriculture and the Establishment of Economics, student dormitories, the canteen, shops and related infrastructure.

The FVMSZ is situated in 5 buildings and includes 5 lecture halls. The clinical diagnostic unit is located in 3 different areas, and teaching animal hospitals are in 4 different areas: equine hospital, farm animal hospital, Biobase, and small animal hospital. A fifth area is occupied by the infectious and parasitic diseases section and isolation facilities.

4.1.2. Description of the adequacy for the veterinary training of the premises for:

-) lecturing, group work and practical work

There are 5 premises for lecturing, with a total of 674 places in the lecture halls. If needed, the FVMSZ can use another 5 lecture halls, with an additional number of 720 places. All halls are equipped with two laptops and media equipment.

Twenty six premises belonging to different Departments are available for group work with 615 places in these rooms. Forty-eight premises belonging to different Departments are available for practical work with 837 places.

-) housing healthy, hospitalised and isolated animals

The Establishment has a facility for housing healthy animals called Biobase. It is part of the University Clinical Diagnostic Unit, and includes premises with a maximum capacity of 3 horses, 1 donkey, 7 cows, 20 sheep, 7 goats, 41 pigs, 10 dogs, 6 cats, 800 frogs, 89 mice, 82 rats, 6 guinea pigs, 4 hamsters, 37 rabbits and 37 chickens.

The Small Animal Hospital has a canine inpatient ward with 16 places, and a feline one with 12 places. The Farm Animal Hospital has 9 places for large ruminants, facilities for large ruminants, small ruminants, and separate facilities for pigs, poultry and rabbits. The Equine Hospital has 7 large and 2 small stalls, and one recovery (reanimation) box.

An animal isolation facility is located in a building with an area of 420 m². It has separate sections for housing large and small ruminants, pigs, dogs, cats, horses, rabbits and poultry. Patients suspected of having, or confirmed with infectious or parasitic diseases caused by group 2 pathogens are housed in the isolation premises.

-) clinical activities, diagnostic services and necropsy

The Small Animal Clinic includes: reception room, consultation room, pre-operative room,

four surgery rooms (two aseptic, one septic, and one for obstetrics), recovery (reanimation) room, ophthalmology unit, dentistry room, endoscopy room, ultrasound and electrocardiography room, different changing rooms and a room for storage of medications and consumables. It also includes an emergency and critical care unit, and an area for small animal hospitalisation.

The Farm Animal Clinic includes: reception room, two rooms for examination (one for small ruminants, pigs and poultry, and one for large ruminants), two surgery wards, and an area for large animal hospitalisation.

The Equine Clinic includes: a room for examination and surgery in standing position, an aseptic surgery sector (including surgery room, sterilisation room, room for hand preparation, anaesthesiology room and changing room), an area for equine hospitalisation, teaching farriery, and a bath for horses.

Furthermore, there are: a Radiology and Computed Tomography unit, a Physical Therapy ward, an Animal Reproduction and Reproduction Health Control Ward, and an Anaesthesiology ward.

Department of General and Clinical Pathology

Finally, the Pathoanatomy and Histopathology Unit have a necropsy room including three freezers/refrigeration chambers, a histopathology lab, a cytopathology lab, and two research labs.

-) FSQ & VPH

The Food Hygiene, Technology and Control Unit has several premises for teaching, including a lecture hall, 2 labs for practical work, a fish diseases lab, a food physico-chemical analysis lab and a microbiology lab. Students are also trained at meat and milk processing enterprises.

The Veterinary Legislation and Management Unit has 2 rooms for group work.

-) study and self-learning, catering, locker rooms, accommodation for on call students and leisure

The campus includes a canteen with preferential prices for students, cafeterias and shops. The Establishment also has 3 computer labs, university library, self-study rooms at the individual departments, and different sport facilities. There are also lockers, toilets and baths for the students at the Establishment.

4.1.3. Description of the adequacy for the veterinary training of the vehicles used for student transportation, ambulatory clinic, live animal and cadaver transportation.

Eight buses and a minibus are available for transport of students during extramural practical training. The Establishment also uses a veterinary ambulance, a two-place van for large animal transport, and a specialised vehicle for transportation of cadavers and animal products.

4.1.4. Description of the adequacy for the veterinary training of the equipment used for teaching purposes and clinical services

The Small Animal Unit has the following equipment: two anaesthesia units, with infusion pumps, monitors and surgical light heads, thermocautery device, phacoemulsifier, operating microscope, and X-ray illuminators. The Emergency and critical care unit has oxygen therapy, assisted ventilation, and electrocardioversion devices. The Obstetrics Unit has a simulator for canine ovariohysterectomy, ultrasound machines, equipment for sperm analysis and assisted reproductive technologies. The Internal Non-Infectious Disease Ward has a four-channel ultrasound, fibrogastroscope, videoendoscope, and veterinary electrocardiograph. The Ophthalmology unit is equipped with direct ophthalmoscope, slit lamp, electroretinograph, indirect ophthalmoscope, tonometer, etc. The Dentistry room has two veterinary dental units, ultrasound scaler, anaesthetic machine, and hydraulic table with dental plot.

The Farm Animal Clinic is equipped with a three-channel veterinary electrocardiograph,

portable ultrasound, surgery tables, portable surgical light heads, dystocia simulator, a dummy for obstetric examination in cattle, and an ELISA reader for hormonal assays.

The Equine Clinic has the following equipment: a dummy mare for obstetric exam, fibrogastroscope, ultrasound machines, equine dentistry file with Haussmann speculum, anaesthesia unit, arthroscopy unit, and a portable X-ray unit.

The Diagnosis Imaging Unit is equipped with two X-ray machines (one for small and one for large animals), dental X-ray unit, radiology machine, X-ray film digitiser, and a computed tomography unit.

The Physical Therapy ward has equipment for ultrasound therapy, phonophoresis, magnetotherapy; electrotherapy, laser therapy (3 types of lasers) and phototherapy.

The Pathology Unit has diagnostic equipment listed at 4.1.2.

4.1.5. Description of the adequacy of the biosecurity rules in the Establishment

The Establishment has two contracts with two companies specialising in biological and chemical waste disposal. The Statute for Operation and Management of the FVMSZ also includes a Waste Management Program valid for all its structural units.

Students attending practical training are provided with personal protective clothing, especially when working with cadavers and in the radiology unit. Owners at the Hospital must certify the immunization schedule of the animal. In case of suspicion of a transmissible disease, students are not allowed contact with animals.

4.1.6. Brief description of the process and the implication of staff, students and stakeholders in the development, implementation, assessment and revision of facilities, equipment and biosecurity rules of the Establishment

Revision of facilities and purchase of new equipment is assessed in periodic meetings of the Dean and Associate Dean of Clinical Activities with the head of UDCU units and department heads. Technical proposals for new equipment are sent to the appropriate Department of the University for purchase. Other methods for financing equipment etc., are explored by the Establishment for instance, through research projects.

4.2. Comments

The strategy and programme for maintaining and upgrading buildings and equipment could be improved. Purchase of MRI equipment is of interest for the Establishment in the near future. However, an explicit and specific strategy for the acquisition of new equipment, is absent.

Biosecurity, bio-containment and safety of some facilities is deficient. For example, the use of the chairs with upholstery in the chemistry, biochemistry or even microbiology laboratories is unacceptable. The responsible person on biosecurity and bio-containment at the Establishment is the Vice-Dean of Clinical Education. Different biosecurity, and bio-containment protocols can be found in different facilities. However, there is no Biosecurity Committee at the Establishment.

Chemical storage at the Department of Biochemistry is not appropriate, different acids and basic products being stored together in the same room, without ventilation, not in the specific type of cabinets needed for that purpose. Some refrigerators used for the storage of reagents or samples also contained food. A plastic bottle formerly used as a drink container was found in the Production Animal clinic and had some medical/chemical content without a label and was easily accessible to students. Most drugs at the different clinics were properly stored, but open multi-vial unlabelled drugs, blood-stained bottles or recently expired drugs were found.

Fire extinguishers were absent in some labs where a fire accident could happen e.g. due to naked flames.

All the information regarding biosecurity, good laboratory practice, and good clinical practice should be in Bulgarian language and in English language, taking into account the existence of groups taught in both languages. However, some significant information posted on some facilities, such as the Clinic or the Biobase, is only in Bulgarian language.

Students wear appropriate clinical clothing at the different clinics. However, short-sleeved clinical clothing is often worn over long-sleeved personal clothing which could be in contact with sick animals.

Vaccination of healthy small animals, including canine parvovirus, is not done at the Small Animal Clinic. It takes place at the Infectious and Parasitic Diseases, the same place where puppies with canine parvovirus and other infectious diseases are admitted.

Animal welfare at the Biobase is a major concern, especially regarding cats and sheep. Cats were lodged in individual cages, with no availability of food or water or a litter tray. Environmental enrichment was also absent in the feline facility. The cleanliness of the facility for the sheep housed in Biobase is deficient, with an evident increased ammonia concentration. Rabies vaccination status of Biobase dogs was expired at the time of the visitation.

Laboratory of Clinical Pathology that serves the different clinics is closed during evenings and weekends, making it difficult to open a 24/7 emergency service. In the same way, no rooms suitable for on-call students are available at the clinics.

The using of the software, that covers records of all three clinics is not mandatory for all clinicians and thus, does not provide comprehensive and maintained information for students in the way of efficiently support the teaching and research. In addition, there were no patient records collected during ambulatory clinics.

4.3 Suggestions for improvement

The Establishment need to carefully review the biosecurity, bio-containment, safety, and animal welfare, which are insufficient. It is suggested the Establishment sets up a Committee to assess and review procedures related to these issues, and to manage their implications in the training of students.

Vaccinations should take place in another place, different to the current one.

Efforts should be made by the different diagnostic labs to implement a 24/7 emergency service. The record keeping in the software at the clinics should be mandatory and up to date for all the clinicians involved in the animal treatment process.

4.4. Decision

The Establishment is compliant with Standard 4, except for Substandards 4.6, 4.7 and 4.8:

- The Establishment is not compliant with Substandard 4.6 because of insufficient adherence to biosecurity, safety and animal welfare legislation in some facilities.
- The Establishment is partially compliant with Substandard 4.7 because best husbandry, welfare and management practices are not fully promoted in the Biobase facility.
- The Establishment is not compliant with Substandard 4.8 because the VTH does not provide 24/7 emergency services for companion animals and equines.

5. Animal resources and teaching material of animal origin

5.1. Findings

5.1.1. Brief description of the global strategy of the Establishment about the use of animals and material of animal origin for the acquisition by each student of Day One Competences

The establishment provides animals and material of animal origin for the acquisition of Day One Competences by each student in most disciplines by collaborating with abattoirs, farms, and various other external providers. In addition, the establishment aims to make best use of

patients in the hospital; when patients that cannot be treated and/or are euthanized, they are encouraged to be used for post-mortem examinations, provided the owner agrees. In addition, the Biobase was established to provide healthy animals for students to practise examination skills and other basic procedures. Where cattle farms have been successfully acquired they are included into core teaching; challenges exist with the equine caseload and the shortfall is managed by having more horses present in the Biobase for students to work with.

5.1.2. Description of the adequacy for the veterinary training of the enrolled students of:

-) the number and diversity of cadavers and material of animal origin used in anatomy, necropsy and FSQ;

Animal cadavers are referred for necropsy to the PM service. Fresh material is obtained from slaughterhouses. Equine cadavers are the most challenging to acquire, however the cases are utilised in sufficient detail to provide adequate teaching.

-) the number and diversity of healthy live animals used for pre-clinical training;

The Biobase provides a variety of common domestic animal species.

-) the number of visits in herds/flocks/units of food-producing animals;

Number of visits to cattle herds and sheep/goat flocks is adequate to provide exposure to actual farms and farm clients. Visits to poultry and pig farms are limited; however the challenges regarding biosecurity in this field limit opportunities.

-) the number and diversity of patients examined/treated by each student;

There is ample opportunity for students to examine small animal patients, cattle, sheep, and equine on the clinics when patients are presented. The case load for equine is limited (69 cases/year), however when patients are presented the opportunities for students to get involved are good.

-) the balance between species, between clinical disciplines, between first opinion and referral cases, between acute and chronic cases, between consultations and hospitalisations, between individual medicine and population medicine

The balance of cases regarding above topics is representative of the current state of veterinary medicine in Bulgaria.

5.1.3. Description of the organisation and management of the VTH and ambulatory clinics

The VTH is headed by associate dean of clinical practice. VTH clinicians, heads of clinics, heads of departments, ward and lab managers' report to the associate dean of clinical practice. The 'mobile clinic' (ambulatory clinic) is a specific form of practical extramural clinical training performed on approximately 27 privately owned farms. The establishment has signed contracts with most of these farms.

5.1.4. Description of the group size for the different types of clinical training and of the hands-on involvement of students in clinical procedures in the different species

The major part of clinical practical training of students takes place in the clinics within the Establishment. Each group of students spends two full weeks at the Small Animal Clinic and in addition spends practical time in these clinical areas in the 5th year of the course.

Students have access to patient hospital records and, under the supervision of a lecturer, participate in completing the documentation. Additionally, fourth and fifth-year students are engaged in individual duties according to a pre-defined schedule in the small animal clinics,

where they are involved in admission procedures, examinations, laboratory and other diagnostic tests, and in the care of patients.

5.1.5. Description of the patient record system and how it is used to efficiently support the teaching, research, and service programmes of the Establishment

Data entry in the electronic patient record is performed by the clinician with help from students where possible. The password is occasionally shared by the clinician with the students who would otherwise not have access to the electronic database.

The electronic database is technically adequate as a recording system; it can be used across all species e.g. recording of farm animal cases seen in clinics as well as companion animal, however patient records are only completed by some clinicians. Paper-based records are kept but are not easy to retrieve by students as staff support is needed to be able to access the data. Recording of patients in the 'mobile clinic' (ambulatory clinic) seen outside the clinics is absent. However, this is required following ESEVT 'Uppsala' SOP May 2016: 15** Total number of individual ruminant and pig patients seen extra-murally (e.g. ambulatory clinics). Each patient has to be officially recorded and has to be individually examined/treated by at least 1 student under the supervision of at least 1 member of staff.

It was not clear during our visit how the patient record system is used to efficiently support the teaching, research, and service programmes of the Establishment.

The electronic patient record system is not used to support teaching, students can request access to paper based records for their learning however this is an ineffective retrieval method in a busy clinic. The electronic patient record system cannot currently be easily used by clinicians to support their research efforts. The electronic patient record system is used to communicate with owners and provide invoices.

The Day One Competence 1.5 states (Annex 2, page 30, 2016 SOP) "Prepare accurate clinical and client records, and case reports when necessary, in a form satisfactory to colleagues and understandable by the public." This is currently inconsistently provided for patients seen with students.

5.1.6. Description of the procedures developed to ensure the welfare of animals used for educational and research activities

All staff working with live animals has to attend a course on animal welfare. The Biobase officer has a degree in veterinary medicine and has completed a training course on animal welfare.

5.1.7. Brief description of the process and the implication of staff, students and stakeholders in the development, implementation, assessment and revision of the number and variety of animals and material of animal origin for pre-clinical and clinical training, and the clinical services provided by the Establishment

There is no structured process for staff, students and stakeholders to contribute to the development, implementation, assessment and revision of the number and variety of animals and material of animal origin for pre-clinical and clinical training, and the clinical services provided by the establishment. Where changes are made this is mostly due to an informal process to improve student exposure to cases or procedures.

5.2. Comments

The opportunity for students to be involved in cases is excellent. There is a representative range of cases presented as live animals as well as post-mortem specimens. Students' EPT logbooks show a wide range of cases.

5.3. Suggestions for improvement

The insufficiency of equine cases could be confirmed, however the efforts made to increase and improve this challenge are acknowledged; the provision of a 24/7 service is encouraged to support an increase equine cases.

Electronic records must be completed for every patient to provide an effective retrieval system to efficiently support teaching.

Animal welfare of the resident animals in the Biobase needs to be improved, when visiting inadequate facilities were provided for cats and sheep to meet basic animal welfare requirements and standards.

There was limited exposure to exotic animals; even though patients are seen in the clinic and in extramural practices (wildlife rescue centre), the development of clinical skills and knowledge around these species was limited throughout the curriculum.

5.4. Decision

The Establishment is compliant with Standard 5, except for Substandards 5.2 and 5.6:

- The Establishment is not compliant with Substandard 5.2 because of insufficient clinical training in several species.
- The Establishment is partially compliant with Substandard 5.6 because insufficiently completed medical records do not fully allow an effective retrieval system to efficiently support the teaching, research, and service programmes of the Establishment.

6. Learning resources

6.1 Findings

6.1.1. Brief description of the main library (facilities, equipment, staff, (e)books and (e)periodicals, software for databases)

Trakia University has a Central Library that is the primary unit providing services to undergraduate and PhD students, and to the academic staff of the FVMSZ. It is situated in the Student Campus. The opening hours of the library are from 8.00 AM to 4.30 PM. This is a small library with four members of support staff that is not generally used by the students, although it is close to the main building (no more than 100 meters). Scientific books important for teachers and students are not in the Library but in the Establishment's libraries organised in the Departments, available for the students to use or borrow.

The main task of the Library at present is to provide to the academic community with publications in Bulgarian, including journals, books and PhD thesis books and to manage various databases. The following international databases are available: Academic Search Complete; Health Source; Green File; Teacher Reference Centre; Springer Link; SCOPUS; Science Direct; ISI Web of Knowledge (presently named Web of Science).

The Central Library has a website through which readers are informed about new electronic resources, new library items, new books and FAO books, training seminars, have access to databases and the catalogue of the library. Upon request by readers, library materials are scanned and sent by e-mail.

Apart from the Central Library, students may use the library of the Establishment of Medicine. Trakia University publishes books and manuals written by the professors that students can either buy (the cost is very low, usually less than five euros) or access in the Establishment and via the Library computers. At present access to the information provided by the Library can only be done within the Establishment's grounds.

6.1.2. Description of the available electronic information and e-learning courses, and their role in supporting student learning and teaching in the core curriculum

The FVMSZ maintains and updates a webpage (www.uni-sz.bg/vmf) in which most important events and activities are advertised, including information regarding admissions and enrolment, etc. The full texts of all issues of the journal published by the FVMSZ – the Bulgarian Journal of Veterinary Medicine (SJR 0.207 for 2017) are regularly uploaded.

Students have access to their personal academic information through the InfoTrue program set by the Ministry of Education and Science.

Students at the FVMSZ have access to the following video collections:

- Rehabilitation Therapy focused on physiotherapy and chronic health problems, and showing techniques and methods for their treatment. Users may search the content using filters: by patient details, treatment method, presenting problem, etc.

- Veterinary Education in Video (Alexander Street's Enhanced Video Interface) - The collection provides examples of about 600 procedures and techniques in around 800 video clips, including clinical skills, descriptions of disease conditions, training in medical care and techniques on birds and animals.

Available videos are accessible for viewing from anywhere in the Establishment computer network, including those providing Wi-Fi.

Each Department and Unit makes public in displays in the corridors the list of subjects of the various lectures that will take place during the semester.

Student access to teaching materials such as the PowerPoint presentations used in classes is left to the teacher's discretion.

There is a Moodle e-learning platform for the teachers to provide information for the students, but its use is not compulsory. Some teachers use it extensively including for on-line evaluations. However the general feeling is that is excessively time consuming and there is no encouragement to extend its use to all departments. Some teachers use other means for electronic transfer of knowledge such as CDs that they distribute to the students. Trakia University provides teachers with courses on e-learning and the preparation of materials to take advantage of the system.

6.1.3. Description of the accessibility for staff and students to electronic learning resources both on and off campus

The FVMSZ has 24 PC stations in three computer rooms; there are also five PCs in the lecture halls. There is a member of the support staff dedicated to the computer rooms who also helps the students and teachers as required.

Computers are used by students mainly for gathering information from the internet, taking quizzes in several subjects, and practical training in biostatistics and information.

FVMSZ students are also allowed to use university computer halls. The overall ratio is estimated approximately as one PC for three students. Access to computer rooms is free except for the time in which they are used to hold student tests. For their use there is a responsible person - a system administrator.

6.1.4. Description of how the procedures for access to and use of learning resources are taught to students.

All students are aware of the learning resources available. They receive that information at the beginning of each semester.

6.1.5. Brief description of the process and the implication of staff, students and stakeholders in the development, implementation, assessment and revision of learning resources

See 6.1.2.

6.2. Comments

The learning resources seem to be satisfactory; the students use them extensively, especially those they can access through their own personal computers.

Books in Bulgarian produced by the teachers cover a great deal of information and are sold at a very low price.

6.3. Suggestions for improvement

The possibility for the students and teachers to access the information provided by the Library out of campus, through the use of a login and password, would be a very useful tool.

6.4. Decision

The Establishment is compliant with Standard 6.

7. Student admission, progression and welfare

7.1. Findings

7.1.1. Brief description of the admission procedures for standard and for full-fee students

The admissions process is centralised through Trakia University and a study guide booklet is published to provide all related information for prospective students, whether admitted as standard or full-fee paying students. The booklet is distributed as advertising material and is available via the website. The admission's campaign involves reaching out to secondary schools (with visits from students and staff from FVMSZ), an Open Door Day (at the veterinary Establishment), staff attending fairs in larger Bulgarian cities and agreements with companies specialising in the recruitment of foreign students. Basic information is available in English on the university website for prospective applicants who are considering studying veterinary medicine. Information regarding the current EAEVE status and Day One Competences are available on the university website, however the level of awareness of the Day One Competences among the Establishment staff was minimal.

Admission is based on an entrance exam or the grade in the state matriculation exam. Laureates from the biology Olympiads are admitted to the Establishment without entry examination. Processes are in place around admission of foreign citizens through the Ordinance and inter-governmental agreements and there is a requirement to pass an English proficiency test for admission onto the English language programme. Two percent of FVMSZ's veterinary state funded places are reserved for students with disability or illness. All admissions criteria and procedures are available via the university website, both in Bulgarian and English. There is an appeals process and processes for the selection and approval of admissions committee members.

7.1.2. Description of how the Establishment adapts the number of admitted students to the available educational resources and the biosecurity and welfare requirements

The number of students is determined by the administrative capacity and is based of available resources. A formal request is made by the Establishment to the National Agency for Education and Accreditation (NAEA), which then decides whether any changes are required. The FVMSZ makes an annual application to the Ministry of Education and Science for the number of first-year students it can enrol and, on receiving approval, announces the number of places. The Ministry makes the final decision.

Number of students admitted to 1st year: 160 state-funded, 4 fee-paying, 30 to the English language programme. Numbers are not expected to change in the next 3 years.

The FVMSZ has a range of policies and procedures for applicants with disabilities and adapts teaching provision for students who miss practicals. For example, pregnant women and

mothers with children up to 3 years of age may miss up to 50% of lectures and practical sessions and accommodation is then made to support their learning needs.

Regarding biosecurity, the Establishment assures that all students are taught the basic principles of biosecurity and safety in the first class of the relevant practicals. Students in years one to four are provided with detailed information regarding biosecurity in Bulgarian and English. All laboratories had biosecurity instructions on display. In the clinics the information was in Bulgarian only, although students on the English programme have access to these areas. All staff are expected to teach on the English language course and training is provided. Students report a high standard of English amongst most teachers and that support for their educational and other needs (e.g. visiting a doctor) is in place, although provision of further English language training for some staff in some areas would be valuable.

7.1.3. Description of the progression criteria and procedures, the available remediation and supports, the rate and main causes of attrition

Exams are in two parts: practical and theoretical, students have to pass the first exam to progress to the second and must have attended >50% of lectures. Only students with 100% attendance in practical classes are admitted to the exam. There is a resit shortly after the first attempt and again just before the start of the next academic year (September resit session). Students who fail must complete any required curriculum assignments during the next academic year when they are attending the next year's classes. Provision is made to support students with learning difficulties.

Information about exams is available in documentation on the website. For most departments, there is limited electronic information regarding examinations but is explained by lecturers and was considered sufficient by students on both Bulgarian and English-speaking courses.

The rate of attrition for FVMSZ students is 23% annually with 5.4% with poor performance. The Establishment considers the reasons for the attrition rates to be complex and that a significant factor is the economic situation in Bulgaria. The mean number of veterinary students graduating annually is 79. In year five, the number of students is higher than other years because some students need to repeat the year to achieve the standard required for graduation.

The mechanisms for the exclusion of students are described in the university statute. There is an appeals process: the appeal is lodged via the Registry Office and is considered by a Complaints Committee in accordance with procedures described in the Statue. Both the students and staff are aware of the appeals process and procedures.

7.1.4. Brief description of the services available for students

Overall administration of student services is run by the FVMSZ Academic Affairs Office under the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs. Two FVMSZ instructors have responsibility for students on the English language course, and a new administrator is to be appointed. ERASMUS+ students are managed by the instructor responsible for international cooperation. In accordance with the Trakia University rules, there is a tutoring system for students and a university level Career Development Centre, which is available both for FVMSZ's undergraduate and PhD students.

All students have health insurance and access to free health care and are assisted, if necessary, in finding a doctor. There is, however, no mechanism in place to support the emotional and welfare (mental health) needs of students. There is a Student Council whose activities aim to support and assist students and they act as the main mediator for student grievances. The Student Council has representatives from each academic year and has regular meetings with the academic staff regarding the scientific program and examination system. Students are aware of the existence of the Student Council but there is currently no representation from the

English-speaking course.

7.1.5. Brief description of the process and the implication of staff, students and stakeholders in the development, implementation, assessment and revision of the admission procedures, the admission criteria, the number of admitted students and the services to students

The number of students to be admitted is voted on at a meeting of the Faculty Council and then approved by the university Academic Council and then sent to the Minister of Education and Science, who submits it to the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Bulgaria for a decision. The admission criteria are determined by Trakia University. Services provided for students are part of the policies and are approved by the Academic Council. Students, administrative staff and technical staff are informed by the Vice Rector of Academic Affairs of Trakia University (who is in charge for the admissions). The implementation is undertaken by the Dean's Council, the Faculty Council, Associate Dean on the Academic Affairs and the Heads of the Departments and clinics.

7.2. Comments

In spite of the national demographic and emigration crisis, FVMSZ manages to attract enough students. The Establishment has a proactive admissions and recruitment strategy, with a good advertising system, including contacting schools and participation in fairs all over the country and an Open Door Day. Processes to review and manage the admissions strategy are well established and are within the national regulatory framework.

The student voice is well represented informally and formally e.g. via the Student Council and students reported being well supported by staff. However, there is no representation from the English-speaking programme on the Student Council although Bulgarian students from all years are represented.

The Establishment provides detailed information and support for disabled students and free health insurance for students.

The provision of electronic/online information regarding the programme and examinations is limited in the majority of the departments; however, the students and staff seemed satisfied with the current, mostly verbal, approach used.

7.3. Suggestions for improvement

Students would benefit from a mental health/psychology programme and the provision of on-campus support, since the rate of suicide and/or burnout among veterinarians and/or veterinary students is considered to be high among countries within the EU.

Students and staff would benefit from comprehensive provision of electronic information by all departments to improve access to learning materials and to inform students about examinations.

7.4. Decision

The Establishment is compliant with Standard 7.

8. Student assessment

8.1. Findings

8.1.1. Brief description of the student's assessment strategy of the Establishment

The forms of assessment of knowledge and skills are described in the curriculum and study guides, and are based on the Bulgarian Higher Education Act. The overall assessment strategy is defined in the Statute for the Organisation, Activities and Management of the FVMSZ.

Information about assessment tasks, grading criteria and the requirements for passing are available to students on the website. Students can only sit an exam if they have passed the practical training sessions and satisfied the lecture attendance criteria. Knowledge and skills are assessed on a 6-point scale and students require a final grade of at least 3 ('average') to pass. Students receive a grade for the examination according to the FVMSZ Statute and the grade is recorded in the student's book. Final grades and ECT points are recording according to the FVMSZ examination protocols and presented at the Dean's office within 3 days of the examination. The final record is made in the FVMSZ Register Book within two weeks. Written materials are held for at least one year following the examination.

8.1.2. Description of the assessment methodology to ensure that every graduate has achieved the minimum level of competence, as prescribed in the ESEVT Day One Competences

The final control over the assessment methodologies is approved by Department Councils following course leaders' proposals. Knowledge is primarily assessed in written examinations which may be followed by a short discussion. Information about examinations is provided to students on the Establishment website, in the course syllabus and by the lecturers. Formative assessments are provided to assist students as part of their learning and during preparation for examinations. Grading is done by professors and associate professors who taught the course. Assessment of pre-clinical practical skills can take a variety of formats including quizzes, oral presentations and performance of tasks. The examinations for the clinical disciplines are at the end of the semester and include assessment of practical and clinical skills with simulators and patients. In fifth year the assessment of clinical practical skills is undertaken during practicals and in the clinics and are assigned a number of ECTS. Some of these documents represent a student logbook. The activities are signed off by the instructor and students are required to obtain a minimum number of ECTS. Students undertake 3 months of EPT at the end of fifth year and their attendance is signed off by the placement providers. However, the EPT provider does not evaluate the student's performance of clinical skills and procedures during the placement. The final examination is the State Examination in November/December after the end of fifth year. This involves assessment of the student's technical skills and theoretical knowledge demonstrated with a small animal, a farm animal and an equine patient in the clinic and includes history taking, physical examination, diagnosis and treatment planning. FVMSZ describe the State Examination as the point at which the students have to demonstrate their achievement of Day One Competence standard.

However, awareness and knowledge of the Day One Competences amongst those responsible for assessment was very limited and the Establishment has no system of mapping examinations or entries in the student logbook to Day One Competences. Therefore, without the knowledge and awareness of the Day One Competences or a mapping system, there is no comprehensive mechanism that provides assurance that students have attained all the ESEVT 'Day One Competences'.

8.1.3. Description of the processes for providing to students a feedback post-assessment and a guidance for requested improvement

Students receive a grade for examinations which is recorded in the student's book and a final record is made in the FVMSZ Register Book. Students do have opportunities to receive formative feedback on their performance from lecturers e.g. during practicals. Poor performing students are provided with further assistance from lecturers in group or individual meetings to help improve preparation, knowledge and skills. Students have re-sit opportunities shortly after the original examination and again if required just before the beginning of the next academic year (in September). Students wishing to appeal to obtain a higher grade can request to sit

another examination but that result (grade) is final.

8.1.4. Brief description of the process and the implication of staff, students and stakeholders in the development, implementation, assessment and revision of the student's assessment strategy

Quality management of all aspects of the assessment strategy is undertaken by the Dean's team and the overall process is overseen by the Tuition Quality Commission, Quality and Accreditation Unit of Trakia University. The process involves control and analysis of student performance in the various subjects and is conducted after every final examination session. The Departmental Councils make suggestions on the assessment strategy and the evaluations of taught subjects. The plans for measures to remedy any issues and other proposals are put forward to, and considered by, the FVMSZ Academic Affairs Committee (whose membership represents a variety of stakeholders including students and practitioners). The analysis and necessary measures for improvement are drafted, checked for alignment with Trakia University regulations (if there are discrepancies the proposals are returned to the department/s for amendment) and then the decisions and recommendations are ratified at a meeting of the Faculty Council. Approved changes are incorporated into the relevant courses and staff and students are informed via the Establishment website. Course leaders and department heads then implement the changes to the assessment strategy.

8.2. Comments

The FVMSZ uses a variety of assessment methods and has a process for review of the student assessments and the assessment strategy including mechanisms to propose changes followed by consideration, ratification and communication of decisions. However, the assessment of student performance was not clearly aligned with the ESEVT Day One Competences, partly because those responsible for assessments and the assessment strategy had no (or limited) awareness and knowledge of the ESEVT Day One Competences. Additionally, there is no mapping of the programme's assessments to Day One Competences and the list of skills in the student logbooks (where they exist) are not explicitly or comprehensively aligned with Day One Competences. The assessment of students by EPT providers is based only on certification of attendance and does not include evaluation of the student's performance of clinical skills and procedures.

8.3. Suggestions for improvement

The FVMSZ needs to adopt a mechanism to raise awareness of the ESEVT Day One Competences amongst all those involved in assessments. Additionally, those responsible for implementing the assessment strategy need to ensure Departments and staff aligns their assessments with Day One Competences. The FVMSZ needs to implement a system of quality assurance that will enable them to demonstrate all students have achieved the Day One Competences by graduation. The student logbooks need to be more comprehensive and mapped to the Day One Competences. The assessments undertaken by EPT providers need to be changed to include their evaluation of the student's performance while on the placement.

8.4. Decision

The Establishment is compliant with Standard 8, except for Substandard 8.9:

The Establishment is not compliant with Substandard 8.9 because of absence of knowledge of Day One Competences affecting the overall process of assessment.

9. Academic and support staff

9.1. Findings

9.1.1. Brief description of the global strategy in order to ensure that all requested competences for the veterinary programme are covered for both academic and support staff and that they are properly qualified and prepared for their roles

The selection of academic and research staff and the rules for the academic career are based on a new legal framework (Academic Staff Development). New assistant professors and PhD students involved in training are recruited based on a competition for the vacancies, publicly announced on the website of the University. The admission of PhD is done in doctoral programmes accredited by the National Agency for Evaluation and Accreditation (NAEA). The competition for assistant professors includes an examination in the specialty.

The specific strategy for the teaching and research undertaken by assistant professors and PhD students is carried out based on an individual plan designed by trainees and their supervisors or consultants. This plan is discussed by the Department Council and then approved by the Faculty Council. The tasks that should be fulfilled by assistant professors include different professional, research, and moral educational competences. Periodic assessment of the work is done by the Department Council. Staff members are trained in modern digital, information and didactic tools used in teaching and research. Young academic staff members are also trained in English language, professional pedagogical qualification, animal protection and welfare, and research and experimental methodology.

Habilitated instructors and chief assistant professors are appointed after assessment of their entire activity and is based on a competition. Merits on research are evaluated in the first place. Furthermore, other activities related to teaching, clinical activities, professional experience, administration, etc., are evaluated. Part-time instructors are unusual at the Establishment.

Non-habilitated staff is evaluated every 3 years by a Commission of the University and another one of the Establishment, and habilitated staff are evaluated every 5 years.

The support staff competences or job profiles are decided by the heads of departments and Establishment clinics, depending on the needs. They are responsible for the selection of candidates. After a probationary period, they get an indefinite contract, but subject to periodic attestation every 3 years.

9.1.2. Description of the adequacy of the number of academic and support staff in the different departments/units with the number of students to be taught

The mean number of academic staff during the last three years is 108.34 FTE, and 93% of them are veterinarians. Distribution of the 101 members of staff (56 habilitated and 45 non-habilitated) in the different Departments is:

- Department of Veterinary Anatomy, Histology and Embryology: 12
- Department of Animal Husbandry: 10
- Department of Pharmacology, Animal Physiology and Physiological Chemistry: 16
- Department of General and Clinical Pathology: 9
- Department of Veterinary Microbiology, Infectious and Parasitic Diseases: 17
- Department of Veterinary Surgery: 10
- Department of Internal Non-Infectious Diseases: 11
- Department of Obstetrics, Reproduction and Reproductive Disorders: 7
- Department of Food Hygiene and Control, Veterinary Legislation and Management: 9

Support staff are distributed through the departments/units and the total is 45 persons.

9.1.3. Brief description of the process and the implication of staff, students and stakeholders in the development, implementation, assessment and revision of the strategy for allocating, recruiting, promoting, supporting and assessing academic and support

staff

A new legal framework has been adopted and implemented in 2018 with the Academic Staff Development Act and statutes for its implementation. It determines the career for academic staff. Instructors and PhD students involved in the training of veterinary students are recruited and appointed based on a competitive system. The main prerequisite for announcing a competition is availability of free lecture hours for teaching in a specific area of knowledge. The competition is based on the proposal of the Department Council responsible of this teaching activity, and subsequently approved by the Establishment council, an academic council and the leadership of the Trakia University. Vacancies are announced on the website of the university and in the State Gazette.

The number of support staff is relatively constant, and additional posts are offered only when needed (e.g. illness, pregnancy, etc).

9.2. Comments

Academic staff are qualified and well prepared for their roles in agreement with the national and EU regulations. The Establishment provides opportunities of formal training for academic staff in teaching practices, research, animal protection and welfare. Opportunities of exchange with other universities for staff through the Erasmus programme are an excellent strategy for training and internationalization.

Promotion criteria for academic and support staff are clear and explicit. Promotions for teaching staff are regulated, and try to recognise excellence. However, the significance of research on the career progression is higher than the recognition of teaching excellence or clinical activity.

Support staff also receives regular training. Profile jobs of academic staff can be determined by those directly responsible for the personnel. A significant percentage of support staff has a Degree in Veterinary Medicine, taking into account the potential benefits of working alongside academic staff in a university, including the possibility to get a PhD.

The relationship among academic staff, support staff and students at the Establishment is remarkable.

9.3. Suggestions for improvement

It is suggested to improve the conditions of those postgraduate students interested in being part of the academic staff, in order to be competitive and attract talent. Higher fellowships can be helpful for that purpose.

Formal training is specifically directed to non-habilitated staff, but it should also be formally focused on habilitated staff.

The specific clinical/expert profiles of the academic staff should be reviewed and new positions offered in order to enhance those areas that need to be strengthened in the Establishment.

9.4. Decision

The Establishment is compliant with Standard 9.

10. Research programmes, continuing and postgraduate education

10.1. Findings

10.1.1. Brief description of how the research activities of the Establishment and the implication of most academic staff in it contribute to research-based undergraduate veterinary education

The academic career of teachers is strictly related to their individual area of scientific activity.

Articles published in journals indexed in Web of Science (WoS) and SCOPUS are considered more valuable.

According to data reported in Appendix 10-1, the total number of articles published by academic staff in the last three years prior to the visitation is 365. However, about 40% (145) are not indexed in Scopus or in WoS. About 28% (102) are indexed only in Scopus and 32.5% are indexed in WoS (118). The largest proportion of papers is distributed between quartiles Q3 and Q4 (96%) for Scopus indexed papers and Q2 and Q3 (69%) for WoS indexed papers. Several papers are published in predatory journals.

Twenty-six ongoing projects, across a wide variety of areas related to veterinary medicine, are funded by the FVMSZ and reported in Table 10.1.5.

Ten research projects funded by industry are listed also in Appendix 10-2. The research project listed as n° 8 is an EC project. With the exception of projects listed as n° 1 and n° 9, all projects (8 out of 10) consist of drug testing (antibiotics and antiparasitic drugs) and are financed by 3 pharmaceutical industries. Six projects out of 10 (projects listed as n° 1, 3, 4, 5, 9, 10) are funded through international partnerships.

Research is also an integral part of the activities of undergraduate, PhD and post-graduate students. Members of academic staff are involved as leaders or members of teams in group or individual research projects (at national and international level), especially supported with state funds.

The main goal of the research performed by academic staff is to achieve integration between the training and research process. Undergraduate students gain an understanding of the importance of evidence-based medicine through training in subjects using mathematical methods for objective assessment of biological phenomena (including those related to pathology and treatment of animals), from information provided in practical classes and by using information from world-renowned sources.

10.1.2. Description of how the postgraduate clinical trainings of the Establishment contribute positively to undergraduate veterinary education and how potential conflicts in relation to case management between post- and undergraduate students are avoided

During clinical practice undergraduate students are mainly involved in receiving, registering and the primary care of patients, collection of samples, post-operative care and monitoring. At the same time, they are included by the clinical staff and instructors in the actual work related to each clinical case, as well as in clinical and laboratory diagnostics. At certain times, postgraduate students serve as the teachers of undergraduate students and are a natural connection between patients, students and instructors. PhD students often work with undergraduate students and collaborate with them in various clinical cases, experiments and realisation of scientific projects.

10.1.3. Brief description of the process and the implication of staff, students and stakeholders in the development, implementation, assessment and revision of research, continuing and postgraduate education programmes organised by the Establishment

As for research, during the educational process some interested students with abilities and excellent performances in a certain scientific field are involved in research programmes directly under the supervision of the responsible teacher. The participation of students in research programmes is absolutely voluntary.

The inclusion of undergraduate students and PhD students in research is a criterion in the assessment of instructors and their career development. It is also a criterion to evaluate the provision of funding of each research project when submitted to the Establishment. In addition, the rating and accreditation of the Establishment and PhD programmes is related with the number of students involved in research.

Postgraduate education at the FVMSZ consists in PhD programmes and two other programmes listed in table 10.1.3 (“Veterinary administration” and “Sanitary microbiology and food safety”). PhD programmes are accredited by the National Agency for Evaluation and Accreditation (NAEA) for a term of 6 years and comply with the current legal framework. At the beginning of each calendar year, upon proposal of the Departments, approval by the Establishment Council and the Academic Council, an application is submitted to the Ministry of Education and Science for the admission and funding of PhD students in the next academic year. If a programme is approved, an announcement is posted on the University's website and in a national daily newspaper. Then, prospective PhD students submit their applications and documents. Admitted PhD students are trained according to an individual study plan. The specific research subject is determined on the basis of achievements and potential of the training unit, and is under the supervision of the Department. The financial support for the research activities of state-funded PhDs is about 3,000 EUR per year.

The number of students enrolled in PhD programmes was 14, 10 and 16 in 2015/16, 2016/17 and 2017/18, respectively (table 10.1.2). State-funded PhD students are engaged mainly in research, but those who do not have not a definite term of employment may be charged with a workload of up to 180 hours per year of teaching, but do not teach during the last year of doctoral studies.

Postgraduate education does not include residency and/or internship programmes.

Continuing education is organised and coordinated by the Continuous Education Department at the Establishment in close contact with the Dean's team. The Bulgarian Food Safety Agency (BFSA) and the Bulgarian Veterinary Union are also involved. This activity is carried out in accordance with the Statute for Postgraduate Qualification (Continuing Education) at the Trakia University. Subjects of continuing education courses may be proposed by the profession but must be accepted by the Establishment Council through the Continuing Education and Professional Development Coordinator

The Trakia University website provides detailed information on various continuing education courses offered at the FVMSZ. Candidates are enrolled by order of the Rector, based on an application for individual or group courses submitted to the Dean. Two types of postgraduate training for veterinary surgeons are performed: long-term (18 months) and short-term (up to 6 months) courses. Each course has its own curriculum, where hours, exams, and knowledge assessment criteria are clearly outlined. After completion of the training and passing all forms of assessment, attendees receive a licence or a certificate, according to the type of course. During the last 3 years a total of 29 attendees have completed 11 long-term courses and 803 attendees were trained in 23 short-term courses (Table 10.1.4). The low numbers of students in long-term courses is due to the low number of applicants, while the high numbers in short-term ones is related to the needs of profession, where the certificates of such continuing education courses are requested by the employers.

“Extramural” continuing education courses on several topics of current veterinary relevance are continuously active, held by lecturers from the FVMSZ and practitioners from all over the country.

10.2. Comments

The distribution of research outputs among years is rather irregular, with the highest number in 2017 (113), and the distribution of papers among quartiles is also uneven. However, according to their indexing in the largest abstract and citation databases of peer-reviewed literature (Scopus and Web of Science) the overall quality of research production is sufficient to integrate and support teaching activities.

Funds assigned to each project by the FVMSZ seem to be quite low, ranging between 750 and 4,800 euros (most are between 750 and 3,000). The reason is that funds for each project are

assigned every year according the final ranking of all presented projects that received a minimum percentage points on the basis of several criteria. Funds are calculated on the basis of marks assigned to each of such criteria.

The number of research projects funded by industry in which the academic staff is involved is low (10 in total). With the exception of an EC project, they are financed with limited amounts of money, ranging between 1,100 and 16,000 euros (4 out of 9 with 6,000 euros or much less). On the whole the presence of an EU-financed project demonstrates top research activity, but the average quality in terms of research funding is low.

Considering that according to table 10.1.2 some academic staff are included among PhD students, the number is low number in comparison with the total number of teaching staff and the number of students graduating annually. This is confirmed also by the relevant ESEVT indicator I22.

The high number of courses provided and the involvement of veterinary institutions (e.g. BFSA) and the profession shows that the FVMSZ undoubtedly represents a reference centre for continuing education and postgraduate training of veterinary surgeons in the Republic of Bulgaria.

A reasonable number of long-term and short-term continuing education courses is offered by the Establishment.

10.3. Suggestions for improvement

Publication of articles in trustworthy Scopus and Web of Science indexed journals would be beneficial.

Funding a lower number of researches with higher amount of money would be useful to improve research, thus favouring also cooperation among research groups and disciplines (interdisciplinarity).

On the whole more funds must be invested in research both by the Establishment, the Government and Industry.

Considering the number of academic and support staff, an increase in the type and number of postgraduate courses, including residency programmes and/or internships, would be beneficial. As for continuing education programmes, an increase of the number of applicants by improving somehow the attractiveness of courses would help with the financing other activities and improving equipment and facilities.

10.4. Decision

The Establishment is compliant with Standard 10.

11. Outcome Assessment and Quality Assurance

11.1. Findings

11.1.1. Description of the global strategy of the Establishment for outcome assessment and Quality Assurance (QA), in order to demonstrate that the Establishment:

-) has a culture of QA and continued enhancement of quality;**
-) operates *ad hoc*, cyclical, sustainable and transparent outcome assessment, QA and quality enhancement mechanisms;**
-) collect, analyse and use relevant information from internal and external sources for the effective management of their programmes and activities (*teaching, research, services*);**
-) informs regularly staff, students and stakeholders and involves them in the QA processes;**
-) closes the loop of the QA Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) cycle;**
-) is compliant with ESG Standards.**

At Trakia University quality control is conducted by the administrative Department of Quality and Accreditation. The FVMSZ aligns the quality assurance processes with the Trakia University Quality Handbook which details the Quality Management System (QMS) in accordance with the requirements of the Higher Education Act of the Republic of Bulgaria. The FMVSZ maintains compliance with the national Ordinance on State Requirements for Higher Education in the Specialty "Veterinary Medicine" to guarantee future veterinary specialists have acquired the necessary knowledge, skills and competences described in the National qualification framework and Directive 2005/36/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council.

External review is undertaken periodically (every 6 years), and procedures and criteria are defined by the National Agency for Evaluation and Accreditation (NAEA) of the Ministry of Education and Science. A group of experts review the SER, appendices and undertake a site visit. The Trakia University's committee for quality of education performs an annual internal audit. The findings and recommendations are presented to Trakia University and FVMSZ administration teams. The quality management activities are registered in a Journal, while the criteria for the evaluation of activities related to the educational process are announced publicly at department and section level and are available to the students.

At faculty level, the Establishment supports and promotes a shared responsibility for quality control with a list of policies and priorities related to delivery, support and monitoring of teaching. There is a Quality Management System conducted by the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs together with an expert of tuition quality control and departmental level quality of education supervisors. There are cyclical mechanisms for quality assurance and enhancement of the programme and associated educational activities through internal and external evaluations, data collection and the committee structures. There is a formal process for the review of examinations and student performance, an active Student Council and student representation on committees, ad hoc opportunities for students to provide feedback to lecturers and senior academics, as well as feedback and suggestions from staff and external stakeholders including the Bulgarian Food Safety Agency, practitioners and employers (e.g. through for example an annual meeting, ad hoc feedback to staff at other meetings and during external visits). However, there is no formal system for the collection of feedback from EPT providers. The Trakia University is planning to implement a dedicated system to gather feedback from employers to evaluate the quality of graduates and their training through a formal survey; however this has not yet been implemented.

The FVMSZ engages in annual student evaluation of teaching quality using an anonymised survey, the results of which are summarised to the Dean and Trakia University and can be used by staff to improve their teaching. Training is mandatory for

Changes in content of the programme including core, elective and facultative subjects are discussed by academics at Department councils and proposals are presented for consideration to the Academic Affairs Committee of the FVMSZ which is chaired by the Associate Dean on Academic Affairs, although there is not a specific Quality Assurance committee. Decisions are sanctioned by the Faculty Council and the Academic Council of the Trakia University. Examples of 'closing the loop' were evident including introducing a successful 'Molecular Biology' course and the provision of more opportunities for basic surgical skills training following student requests.

The changes resulting from the quality assurance processes are communicated to staff and students attending committees, via Department meetings, the Student Council and via the university website. The FMVSZ also holds events to raise awareness amongst the broader public, prospective students and veterinarians through admissions activities including fairs and an Open Doors Day, continuing education events, a biennial exhibition and has recently opened a veterinary historical museum.

11.1.2. Brief description of the specific QA processes for each ESEVT Standards

The Establishment and Trakia University have clear and well embedded processes for quality control implemented via the university and faculty committee structure. The Establishment has a Quality Management System conducted by the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs and promotes shared responsibility for quality assurance related to the design, delivery and support of the programme. Information is gathered from staff, students and external stakeholders, is evaluated and changes are proposed via the relevant committees, some of which include student representatives.

There was no formal point by point SWOT, but risks and threats were defined; recent investments in facilities to support student learning were evident with many small group teaching rooms, new laboratory equipment, computers, software programs, simulators, etc.

The students participate in EPT, can chose from a range of suitable opportunities and are provided with insurance. However, feedback to the Establishment from EPT providers was informal i.e. there was no formal mechanism, and the adoption of contractual agreements across EPT was incomplete.

Information is provided to students about the procedures for biosecurity and safety in areas where teaching activities are conducted. However, adherence by some departments to biosecurity, bio-containment and safety protocols and animal welfare standards (e.g. within their facilities, storage arrangements and housing) was inadequate.

Although there has been investment to support case-load, enhance clinical services and further improve student learning opportunities, the provision of 24/7 emergency service was absent.

The admissions processes are thorough, transparent and, in spite of the challenging economic climate in Bulgaria, enable the FMVSZ to continue to attract a full cohort of students for both the Bulgarian and English language courses.

The criteria around examinations and progression are clear to students, although greater use of the university's electronic platform would be desirable. There are mechanisms for student input on their educational experience, including representation via an active Student Council. The assessments represent a broad range of methods although there is limited and/or inconsistent adoption of a student logbook and it is not explicitly aligned with Day One Competences.

Formal training is provided for staff, academic and non-academic across a range of areas to support the educational process including English language and IT, although the requirement for participation once staff are habilitated is not clearly articulated or enforced.

11.1.3. Brief description of the process and the implication of staff, students and stakeholders in the development, implementation, assessment and revision of the QA strategy of the Establishment

There is an annual FVMSZ General Assembly at which the work and activities of the Faculty Council are reported including those related to quality assurance. Results based on what has or has not been achieved by FVMSZ are presented by the Dean's administration and include information gathered from the various stakeholders - staff, department councils, students and employers. The report includes information and proposals related to admissions, student progress, the state of educational processes for classes and disciplines, research and clinical-diagnostic services, etc. The institutions financial status is also reported. Issues are discussed, proposals commented on to inform decisions, which are ultimately sanctioned by the Academic Council of the Trakia University.

11.2. Comments

Quality assurance processes, gathering and reviewing of data by the Trakia University and within the FMVSZ are well embedded. The Establishment engages in annual review processes that inform, enable and support changes to the programme with representation from staff,

students and external stakeholders and there are processes for communication of decisions. However, the mechanisms for gathering information from external stakeholders, including employers and EPT providers, are mostly informal and/or ad hoc. Additionally, the rationale and decision making in certain areas was not always clearly articulated e.g. the proportion of content allocated to the core course versus electives. There are comprehensive mechanisms to inform students about biosecurity and safety but the adherence to the required protocols as part of normal working practice and the adoption of expected standards of animal welfare in some areas was inadequate.

11.3. Suggestions for improvement

Ensure the formal survey (being developed by the Trakia University), which will be dedicated to gathering feedback from employers and will evaluate the quality of graduates and their training, is implemented and promoted by FMVSZ to relevant stakeholders i.e. employers of FMVSZ graduates; discuss the content of the survey with the university to ensure relevance to the veterinary programme; consider implementing mechanisms to analyse and utilise the data that incorporates a more formal QA Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) cycle through the Quality Management System whose members would have responsibility for all stages of the cycle.

Develop a more formal process to gather feedback from the EPT providers and ensure contractual agreements are in place for all EPT providers. Implement a format by which EPT providers evaluate procedures/skills performed by students, rather than just certifying attendance.

Student logbooks (intramural) and EPT skills lists need to be formally aligned with Day One Competences; awareness of the Day One Competences across the FMVSZ needs to be increased.

Review processes around biosecurity, safety protocols and animal welfare to ensure a culture of adherence and promotion of standards is embedded in all areas.

Implement a more formal process around requirements for continuing education for all staff i.e. habilitated and non-habilitated, aligned with the current and ongoing needs of the FMVSZ and programme.

11.4. Decision

The Establishment is compliant with Standard 11.

12. ESEVT Indicators

Name of the Establishment: Establishment of Veterinary Medicine, Stara Zagora, Bulgaria					
Date of the form filling: March 11, 2019					
		Establishment values	Median value	Minimal value	Balance
I1	n° of FTE academic staff involved in veterinary training / n° of undergraduate students	0.126	0.16	0.13	0.000
I2	n° of FTE veterinarians involved in veterinary training / n° of students graduating annually	1.212	0.87	0.59	0.622
I3	n° of FTE support staff involved in veterinary training / n° of students graduating annually	1.162	0.94	0.57	0.595
I4	n° of hours of practical (non-clinical) training	851.00	905.67	595.00	256.000
I5	n° of hours of clinical training	712.00	932.92	670.00	42.000
I6	n° of hours of FSQ & VPH training	223.00	287.00	174.40	48.600
I7	n° of hours of extra-mural practical training in FSQ & VPH	36.00	68.00	28.80	7.200
I8	n° of companion animal patients seen intra-murally / n° of students graduating annually	67.037	70.48	42.01	25.028
I9	n° of ruminant and pig patients seen intra-murally / n° of students graduating annually	3.166	2.69	0.46	2.702
I10	n° of equine patients seen intra-murally / n° of students graduating annually	0.917	5.05	1.30	-0.381
I11	n° of rabbit, rodent, bird and exotic seen intra-murally / n° of students graduating annually	5.253	3.35	1.55	3.708
I12	n° of companion animal patients seen extra-murally / n° of students graduating annually	0.00	6.80	0.22	-0.223
I13	n° of individual ruminants and pig patients seen extra-murally / n° of students graduating annually	91.548	15.95	6.29	85.253
I14	n° of equine patients seen extra-murally / n° of students graduating annually	0.00	2.11	0.60	-0.595
I15	n° of visits to ruminant and pig herds / n° of students graduating annually	3.606	1.33	0.55	3.059
I16	n° of visits of poultry and farmed rabbit units / n° of students graduating annually	0.050	0.12	0.04	0.005
I17	n° of companion animal necropsies / n° of students graduating annually	1.739	2.07	1.40	0.339
I18	n° of ruminant and pig necropsies / n° of students graduating annually	3.602	2.32	0.97	2.631
I19	n° of equine necropsies / n° of students graduating annually	0.336	0.30	0.09	0.243
I20	n° of rabbit, rodent, bird and exotic pet necropsies / n° of students graduating annually	2.660	2.05	0.69	1.967
I21*	n° of FTE specialised veterinarians involved in veterinary training / n° of students graduating annually	0.021	0.20	0.06	-0.042
I22*	n° of PhD graduating annually / n° of students graduating annually	0.046	0.15	0.09	-0.042

FINAL REPORT AS ISSUED BY ECOVE ON 11 DECEMBER 2019

Most of the indicators targeting the practical training of the students (i.e. I4 to I7) are in the positive range. However, the numbers of equine patients seen intramurally is very low, because the equine clinic does not provide 24/7 services. The number of equine patients seen extramurally is 0, because there are no equine units available in the range of the FVMSZ that will take students. The FVMSZ is in discussion with a potential equine unit which is located far from the Establishment (200 km) for visitation to fulfil this indicator. Nevertheless, the number of equine necropsies exceeds the minimal value of I 19. The number of companion animal patients seen extramurally is 0 due to the unwillingness of small animal private practices to receive even small groups of students and then let them record the cases they have handled and seen at the FVMSZ. In spite of that, the number of companion animal necropsies is positive, as for equine. The intramural caseload is high, exceeding the minimal limit by 30%, being almost at the level of the median value.

13. ESEVT Rubrics (summary of the decision on the compliance of the Establishment for each ESEVT Standard, i.e. (total or substantial) compliance (C), partial compliance (PC) (Minor Deficiency) or non-compliance (NC) (Major Deficiency))

Standard 1: Objectives and Organisation	C	PC	NC
1.1. The Establishment must have as its main objective to provide, in agreement with the EU Directives and ESG recommendations, adequate, ethical, research-based, evidence-based veterinary training that enables the new graduate to perform as a veterinarian capable of entering all commonly recognised branches of the veterinary profession and to be aware of the importance of lifelong learning.	X		
1.2. The Establishment must develop and follow its mission statement which must embrace all the ESEVT standards.	X		
1.3. The Establishment must be part of a university or a higher education institution providing training recognised as being of an equivalent level and formally recognised as such in the respective country.	X		
1.4. The person responsible for the veterinary curriculum and the person(s) responsible for the professional, ethical, and academic affairs of the Veterinary Teaching Hospital (VTH) must hold a veterinary degree.	X		
1.5. The organisational structure must allow input not only from staff and students but also from external stakeholders.	X		
1.6. 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.	X		
Standard 2: Finances			
2.1. Finances must be demonstrably adequate to sustain the requirements for the Establishment to meet its mission and to achieve its objectives for education, research and services.	X		
2.2. The finance report must include both expenditures and revenues and must separate personnel costs, operating costs, maintenance costs and equipment.	X		
2.3. Resources allocation must be regularly reviewed to ensure that available resources meet the requirements.	X		
2.4. Clinical and field services must function as instructional resources. Instructional integrity of these resources must take priority over financial self-sufficiency of clinical services operations. Clinics must be run as efficiently as possible.	X		
2.5. The Establishment must have sufficient autonomy in order to use the resources to implement its strategic plan and to meet the ESEVT Standards.	X		
Standard 3: Curriculum			
3.1. The curriculum must be designed, resourced and managed to ensure all graduates have achieved the graduate attributes expected to be fully compliant with the EU Directive 2005/36/EC as amended by directive 2013/55/EU and its Annex V.4.1.	X		
3.2. The learning outcomes for the programme must be explicitly articulated to form a cohesive framework.	X		
3.3. Programme learning outcomes must be communicated to staff and students and: -) underpin and ensure the effective alignment of all content, teaching, learning and assessment activities of the degree programme; -) form the basis for explicit statements of the objectives and learning outcomes of individual units of study; -) be regularly reviewed, managed and updated to ensure they remain relevant, adequate and are effectively achieved.	X		
3.4. The Establishment must have a formally constituted committee structure (which includes effective student representation), with clear and empowered reporting lines, to oversee and manage the curriculum and its delivery. The committee(s) must: -) determine the pedagogical basis, design, delivery methods and assessment methods of the curriculum, -) oversee QA of the curriculum, particularly gathering, evaluating, making change and responding to feedback from stakeholders, peer reviewers and external assessors, and data from examination/assessment outcomes, -) review the curriculum at least every seven years by involving staff, students and stakeholders, -) identify and meet training needs for all types of staff, maintaining and enhancing their competence for the on-going curriculum development.	X		
3.5. The curriculum must include the subjects (input) listed in Annex V of EU Directive 2005/36/EC and must allow the acquisition of the Day One Competences (output) (see Annex 2). This must concern all groups of subjects, i.e. Basic Sciences, Clinical Sciences, Animal Production, Food Safety and Quality, and Professional Knowledge.			X
3.6. External Practical Training (EPT) are training activities organised outside the Establishment, the student being under the direct supervision of a non-academic person (e.g. a practitioner). EPT cannot replace the core intramural training nor the extramural training under the close supervision of academic staff (e.g. ambulatory clinics, herds visits, practical training in FSQ).	X		
3.7. Since the veterinary degree is a professional qualification with Day One Competences, EPT must complement and strengthen the academic education by enhancing for the student the handling of all common domestic animals, the understanding of the economics and management of animal units and veterinary practices, the communication skills for all aspects of veterinary work, the hands-on practical and clinical training, the real-life experience, and the employability of the prospective graduate.	X		
3.8. The EPT providers must have an agreement with the Establishment and the student (in order to fix their respective rights and duties, including insurance matters), provide a standardised evaluation of the performance of the student during their EPT and be allowed to provide feedback to the Establishment on the EPT programme.		X	
3.9. There must be a member of the academic staff responsible for the overall supervision of the EPT, including liaison with EPT providers.	X		
3.10. Students must take responsibility for their own learning during EPT. This includes preparing properly before each placement, keeping a proper record of their experience during EPT by using a logbook provided by the Establishment and evaluating the EPT. Students must be allowed to complain officially or anonymously about issues occurring during EPT.	X		
Standard 4: Facilities and equipment			
4.1. All aspects of the physical facilities must provide an environment conducive to learning.	X		

FINAL REPORT AS ISSUED BY ECOVE ON 11 DECEMBER 2019

4.2. The veterinary Establishment must have a clear strategy and programme for maintaining and upgrading its buildings and equipment.	X		
4.3. Lecture theatres, teaching laboratories, tutorial rooms, clinical facilities and other teaching spaces must be adequate in number, size and equipped for the instructional purposes and must be well maintained. The facilities must be adapted for the number of students enrolled.	X		
4.4. Students must have ready access to adequate and sufficient study, self-learning, recreation, locker, sanitary and food services facilities.	X		
4.5. Offices, teaching preparation and research laboratories must be sufficient for the needs of the academic and support staff.	X		
4.6. Facilities must comply with all relevant legislation including health, safety, biosecurity and EU animal welfare and care standards.			X
4.7. The Establishment's livestock facilities, animal housing, core clinical teaching facilities and equipment must: -) be sufficient in capacity and adapted for the number of students enrolled in order to allow hands-on training for all students -) be of a high standard, well maintained and fit for purpose -) promote best husbandry, welfare and management practices -) ensure relevant biosecurity and bio-containment -) be designed to enhance learning.		X	
4.8. Core clinical teaching facilities must be provided in a VTH with 24/7 emergency services at least for companion animals and equines, where the Establishment can unequivocally demonstrate that standard of education and clinical research are compliant with all ESEVT Standards, e.g. research-based and evidence-based clinical training supervised by academic staff trained to teach and to assess, availability for staff and students of facilities and patients for performing clinical research and relevant QA procedures. For ruminants and pigs, on-call service must be available if emergency services do not exist for those species in a VTH. The Establishment must ensure state-of-the-art standards of teaching clinics which remain comparable with the best available in the private sector.			X
4.9. The VTH and any hospitals, practices and facilities (including EPT) which are involved with the curriculum must meet the relevant national Practice Standards.	X		
4.10. All core teaching sites must provide dedicated learning spaces including adequate internet access.	X		
4.11. The Establishment must ensure students have access to a broad range of diagnostic and therapeutic facilities, including but not limited to: pharmacy, diagnostic imaging, anaesthesia, clinical pathology, intensive/critical care, surgeries and treatment facilities, ambulatory services and necropsy facilities.	X		
4.12. Operational policies and procedures (including biosecurity, good laboratory practice and good clinical practice) must be taught and posted for students, staff and visitors.	X		
4.13. Appropriate isolation facilities must be provided to meet the need for the isolation and containment of animals with communicable diseases. Such isolation facilities must be properly constructed, ventilated, maintained and operated to provide for animal care in accordance with updated methods for prevention of spread of infectious agents. They must be adapted to all animal types commonly handled in the VTH.	X		
4.14. The Establishment must have an ambulatory clinic for production animals or equivalent facilities so that students can practise field veterinary medicine and Herd Health Management under academic supervision.	X		
4.15. The transport of students, live animals, cadavers, materials from animal origin and other teaching materials must be done in agreement with national and EU standards, to ensure the safety of students and staff and to prevent the spread of infectious agents.	X		
Standard 5: Animal resources and teaching material of animal origin			
5.1. The number and variety of healthy and diseased animals, cadavers, and material of animal origin must be adequate for providing the practical training (in the area of Basic Sciences, Clinical Sciences, Pathology, Animal Production, Food Safety and Quality) and adapted to the number of students enrolled.	X		
5.2. It is essential that a diverse and sufficient number of surgical and medical cases in all common domestic animals and exotic pets be available for the students' clinical educational experience and hands-on training.			X
5.3. In addition to the training provided in the Establishment, experience can include practical training at external sites, provided this training is organised under direct academic supervision and at the same standards as those applied in the Establishment.	X		
5.4. The VTH must provide nursing care skills and instruction in nursing procedures.	X		
5.5. Under all situations students must be active participants in the workup of patients, including physical diagnosis and diagnostic problem oriented decision making.	X		
5.6. Medical records must be comprehensive and maintained in an effective retrieval system (preferably an electronic patient record system) to efficiently support the teaching, research, and service programmes of the Establishment.		X	
Standard 6: Learning resources			
6.1. State-of-the-art learning resources must be available to support veterinary education, research, services and continuing education. Timely access to learning resources, whether through print, electronic media or other means, must be available to students and staff and, when appropriate, to stakeholders. State-of-the-art procedures for bibliographical search and for access to databases and learning resources must be taught to undergraduate students.	X		
6.2. Staff and students must have full access on site to an academic library, which is administered by a qualified librarian, an Information Technology (IT) unit, which is managed by an IT expert, an e-learning platform, and the relevant human and physical resources necessary for development by the staff and use by the students of instructional materials.	X		
6.3. The Establishment must provide students with unimpeded access to learning resources which include scientific and other relevant literature, internet and internal study resources, and equipment for the development of procedural skills (e.g. models). The use of these resources must be aligned with the pedagogical environment and learning outcomes within the programme, and have mechanisms in place to evaluate the teaching value of innovations in learning resources.	X		
6.4. The relevant electronic information, database and other intranet resources must be easily available for students and staff both in the Establishment's core facilities via wireless connection (Wi-Fi) and from outside the Establishment via Virtual Private Network (VPN).	X		
Standard 7: Student admission, progression and welfare			

FINAL REPORT AS ISSUED BY ECOVE ON 11 DECEMBER 2019

7.1. The selection criteria for admission to the programme must be consistent with the mission of the Establishment. The number of students admitted must be consistent with the resources available at the Establishment for staff, buildings, equipment, healthy and diseased animals, and materials of animal origin.	X		
7.2. In relation to enrolment, the Establishment must provide accurate information in all advertisements regarding the educational programme by providing clear and current information for prospective students. Further, printed catalogue and electronic information must state the purpose and goals of the programme, provide admission requirements, criteria and procedures, state degree requirements, present Establishment descriptions, clearly state information on tuition and fees along with procedures for withdrawal, give necessary information for financial aid programmes, and provide an accurate academic calendar.	X		
7.3. The Establishment's website must mention the ESEVT Establishment's status and its last Self Evaluation Report and Visitation Report must be easily available for the public.	X		
7.4. The selection and progression criteria must be clearly defined, consistent, and defensible, be free of discrimination or bias, and take account of the fact that students are admitted with a view to their entry to the veterinary profession in due course.	X		
7.5. The Establishment must regularly review and reflect on the selection processes to ensure they are appropriate for students to complete the programme successfully, including consideration of their potential to meet all the ESEVT Day One Competences in all common domestic species (see Annex 2).	X		
7.6. Adequate training (including periodic refresher training) must be provided for those involved in the selection process to ensure applicants are evaluated fairly and consistently.	X		
7.7. There must be clear policies and procedures on how applicants with disabilities or illnesses will be considered and, if appropriate, accommodated in the programme, taking into account the requirement that all students must be capable of meeting the ESEVT Day One Competences by the time they graduate.	X		
7.8. The basis for decisions on progression (including academic progression and professional fitness to practise) must be explicit and readily available to the students. The Establishment must provide evidence that it has mechanisms in place to identify and provide remediation and appropriate support (including termination) for students who are not performing adequately.	X		
7.9. The Establishment must have mechanisms in place to monitor attrition and progression and be able to respond and amend admission selection criteria (if permitted by national or university law) and student support if required.	X		
7.10. Mechanisms for the exclusion of students from the programme for any reason must be explicit.	X		
7.11. Establishment policies for managing appeals against decisions, including admissions, academic and progression decisions and exclusion, must be transparent and publicly available.	X		
7.12. Provisions must be made by the Establishment to support the physical, emotional and welfare needs of students. This includes, but is not limited to, learning support and counselling services, careers advice, and fair and transparent mechanisms for dealing with student illness, impairment and disability during the programme. This shall include provision of reasonable accommodations/adjustments for disabled students, consistent with all relevant equality and/or human rights legislation.	X		
7.13. There must be effective mechanisms for resolution of student grievances (e.g. interpersonal conflict or harassment).	X		
7.14. Mechanisms must be in place by which students can convey their needs and wants to the Establishment.	X		
7.15. The Establishment must provide students with a mechanism, anonymously if they wish, to offer suggestions, comments and complaints regarding compliance of the Establishment with the ESEVT standards.	X		
Standard 8: Student assessment			
8.1. The Establishment must ensure that there is a clearly identified structure within the Establishment showing lines of responsibility for the assessment strategy to ensure coherence of the overall assessment regime and to allow the demonstration of progressive development across the programme towards entry level competence.	X		
8.2. The assessment tasks and grading criteria for each unit of study in the programme must be clearly identified and available to students in a timely manner well in advance of the assessment.	X		
8.3. Requirements to pass must be explicit.	X		
8.4. Mechanisms for students to appeal against assessment outcomes must be explicit.	X		
8.5. The Establishment must have a process in place to review assessment outcomes and to change assessment strategies when required.	X		
8.6. Programme learning outcomes covering the full range of professional knowledge, skills, competences and attributes must form the basis for assessment design and underpin decisions on progression.	X		
8.7. Students must receive timely feedback on their assessments.	X		
8.8. Assessment strategies must allow the Establishment to certify student achievement of learning objectives at the level of the programme and individual units of study.	X		
8.9. Methods of formative and summative assessment must be valid and reliable and comprise a variety of approaches. Direct assessment of clinical skills and Day One Competences (some of which may be on simulated patients), must form a significant component of the overall process of assessment. It must also include the quality control of the students logbooks in order to ensure that all clinical procedures, practical and hands-on training planned in the study programme have been fully completed by each individual student.			X
Standard 9: Academic and support staff			
9.1. The Establishment must ensure that all staff are appropriately qualified and prepared for their roles, in agreement with the national and EU regulations. A formal training (including good teaching and evaluation practices, learning and e-learning resources, biosecurity and QA procedures) must be in place for all staff involved with teaching. Most FTE academic staff involved in veterinary training must be veterinarians. It is expected that greater than 2/3 of the instruction that the students receive, as determined by student teaching hours, is delivered by qualified veterinarians.	X		
9.2. The total number, qualifications and skills of all staff involved with the programme, including teaching staff, 'adjunct' staff, technical, administrative and support staff, must be sufficient and appropriate to deliver the educational programme and fulfil the Establishment's mission.	X		
9.3. Staff who participate in teaching must have received the relevant training and qualifications and must display competence and effective teaching skills in all relevant aspects of the curriculum that they teach, regardless of whether they are full or part time, residents, interns or other postgraduate students, adjuncts or off-campus contracted teachers.	X		

FINAL REPORT AS ISSUED BY ECOVE ON 11 DECEMBER 2019

9.4. Academic positions must offer the security and benefits necessary to maintain stability, continuity, and competence of the academic staff. Academic staff should have a balanced workload of teaching, research and service depending on their role; and should have reasonable opportunity and resources for participation in scholarly activities.	X		
9.5. The Establishment must provide evidence that it utilises a well-defined, comprehensive and publicised programme for the professional growth and development of academic and support staff, including formal appraisal and informal mentoring procedures. Staff must have the opportunity to contribute to the Establishment's direction and decision making processes.	X		
9.6. Promotion criteria for academic and support staff must be clear and explicit. Promotions for teaching staff must recognise excellence in, and (if permitted by the national or university law) place equal emphasis on all aspects of teaching (including clinical teaching), research, service and other scholarly activities.	X		
Standard 10: Research programmes, continuing and postgraduate education			
10.1. The Establishment must demonstrate significant and broad research activities of staff that integrate with and strengthen the veterinary degree programme through research-based teaching.	X		
10.2. All students must be trained in scientific method and research techniques relevant to evidence-based veterinary medicine.	X		
10.3. All students must have opportunities to participate in research programmes.	X		
10.4. The Establishment must provide advanced postgraduate degree programmes, e.g. PhD, internships, residencies and continuing education programmes that complement and strengthen the veterinary degree programme and are relevant to the needs of the profession and society.	X		
Standard 11: Outcome Assessment and Quality Assurance			
11.1. The Establishment must have a policy for quality assurance that is made public and forms part of their strategic management. Internal stakeholders must develop and implement this policy through appropriate structures and processes, while involving external stakeholders.	X		
11.2. The Establishment must have processes for the design and approval of their programmes. The programmes must be designed so that they meet the objectives set for them, including the intended learning outcomes. The qualification resulting from a programme must be clearly specified and communicated, and refer to the correct level of the national qualifications framework for higher education and, consequently, to the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area.	X		
11.3. The Establishment must ensure that the programmes are delivered in a way that encourages students to take an active role in creating the learning process, and that the assessment of students reflects this approach.	X		
11.4. The Establishment must consistently apply pre-defined and published regulations covering all phases of the student "life cycle", e.g. student admission, progression, recognition and certification.	X		
11.5. The Establishment must assure themselves of the competence of their teachers. They must apply fair and transparent processes for the recruitment and development of staff.	X		
11.6. The Establishment must have appropriate funding for learning and teaching activities and ensure that adequate and readily accessible learning resources and student support are provided.	X		
11.7. The Establishment must ensure that they collect, analyse and use relevant information for the effective management of their programmes and other activities.	X		
11.8. The Establishment must publish information about their activities, including programmes, which is clear, accurate, objective, up-to date and readily accessible.	X		
11.9. The Establishment must monitor and periodically review their programmes to ensure that they achieve the objectives set for them and respond to the needs of students and society. These reviews must lead to continuous improvement of the programme. Any action planned or taken as a result must be communicated to all those concerned.	X		
11.10. The Establishment must undergo external quality assurance in line with the ESG on a cyclical basis.	X		
<i>C: (total or substantial) compliance; PC: partial compliance (Minor Deficiency); NC: non-compliance (Major Deficiency)</i>			

Executive Summary

The Establishment of Veterinary Medicine (FVMSZ) was founded in 1923, and is nowadays part of the Trakia University located in the city of Stara Zagora. Since 1995, the FVMSZ is an important part of the six faculties of Trakia University, training veterinary surgeons and doctors of veterinary medicine (PhD). The FVMSZ has 9 departments and a University Clinical Diagnostic Unit (UCDU). To benefit student training, FVMSZ created a Biobase, where students have access to farm, equine and companion animals and also experimental ones. In 2015, the FVMSZ initiated a training programme in English.

The Establishment has already been EAEVE-visited in 2009, when four major and four minor deficiencies were found, which led to the status of non-approval. After the revisit in April 2015, the deficiencies were considered rectified and the Establishment was granted the approval status.

The SER was completed according to SOP 2016 and provided on time to the Visitation Team. Annexes to the report were provided by email and on the site. Documents requested during the visitation were willingly provided.

We would like to thank everybody who made this Visitation possible. The Visitation was well prepared, well organised and carried out in a cordial and professional atmosphere. The Liaison Officer was efficient and always helpful. The programme of the Visitation was easily adapted when requested by the Visitation Team who had full access to all the information, facilities and individuals they asked for.

Areas worthy of praise (i.e. Commendations), e.g.:

- Enthusiasm of staff and students
- Very good staff/student ratio
- Transparency and openness
- Positive interaction between students and staff
- Willingness to improve teaching and research
- Excellent students' life
- High caseload of small animals and student involvement in the VTH
- Excellent museums

Areas of concern (i.e. Minor Deficiencies):

1. Partial compliance with Substandard 3.8 because standardised evaluation by the EPT providers of the performance of the students is insufficient and no formal mechanism to provide feedback to the Establishment on the EPT programme is in place.
2. Partial compliance with Substandard 4.7 because best husbandry, welfare and management practices are not fully promoted in the Biobase facility.
3. Partial compliance with Substandard 5.6 because insufficiently completed medical records do not fully allow an effective retrieval system to efficiently support the teaching, research, and service programmes of the Establishment.

Items of non-compliance with the ESEVT Standards (i.e. Major Deficiencies):

1. Non-compliance with Substandard 3.5 because there is no acknowledgement of Day One Competences in all groups of subjects.
2. Non-compliance with Substandard 4.6 because of insufficient adherence to biosecurity, safety and animal welfare legislation in some facilities.

FINAL REPORT AS ISSUED BY ECOVE ON 11 DECEMBER 2019

3. Non-compliance with Substandard 4.8 because the VTH does not provide 24/7 emergency services for companion animals and equines.
4. Non-compliance with Substandard 5.2 because of insufficient clinical training in several species.
5. Non-compliance with Substandard 8.9 because of absence of knowledge of Day One Competences affecting the overall process of assessment.

Glossary

(Please use the same terminology and abbreviations as in the ESEVT SOP when possible)

EAEVE: European Association of Establishments for Veterinary Education

EBVS: European Board of Veterinary Specialisation

ECOVE: European Committee on Veterinary 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

FSQ: Food Safety and Quality

FTE: Full-Time Equivalent

IT: Information Technology

QA: Quality Assurance

SER: Self Evaluation Report

SOP: Standard Operating Procedure

VPH: Veterinary Public Health

VTH: Veterinary Teaching Hospital

Standardised terminology

Accreditation: status of an Establishment that is considered by ECOVE as compliant with the ESEVT Standards normally for a 7 years period starting at the date of the last (full) Visitation;

Establishment: the official and legal unit that organise the veterinary degree as a whole, either a university, Establishment, school, department, institute;

Ambulatory clinic: clinical training done extra-murally and fully supervised by academic trained teachers;

Establishment's Head: the person who officially chairs the above described Establishment, i.e. Rector, Dean, Director, Head of Department, President, Principal, ..;

External Practical Training: clinical and practical training done extra-murally and fully supervised by non-academic staff (e.g. practitioners);

Major Deficiency: a deficiency that significantly affects the quality of education and the Establishment's compliance with the ESEVT Standards;

Minor Deficiency: a deficiency that does not significantly affect the quality of education or the Establishment's compliance with the ESEVT Standards;

Visitation: a full visitation organised on-site in agreement with the ESEVT SOP in order to evaluate if the veterinary degree provided by the visited Establishment is compliant with all ESEVT Standards; any chronological reference to 'the Visitation' means the first day of the full on-site visitation;

Visitation Report: a document prepared by the Visitation Team, corrected for factual errors and finally issued by ECOVE; it contains, for each ESEVT Standard, findings, comments, suggestions and identified deficiencies.

Decision of ECOVE

The Committee concluded that the following Major Deficiencies had been identified:

1. Non-compliance with Substandard 3.5 because there is no acknowledgement of Day One Competences in all groups of subjects.
2. Non-compliance with Substandard 4.6 because of insufficient adherence to biosecurity, safety and animal welfare legislation in some facilities.
3. Non-compliance with Substandard 4.8 because the VTH does not provide 24/7 emergency services for companion animals and equines.
4. Non-compliance with Substandard 5.2 because of insufficient clinical training in several species.
5. Non-compliance with Substandard 8.9 because of absence of knowledge of Day One Competences affecting the overall process of assessment.

The Faculty of Veterinary Medicine of Trakia University, Stara Zagora, is therefore classified as holding the status of: **NON-ACCREDITATION**.