

**European Association
of Establishments for Veterinary Education**

**Association Européenne des Etablissements
d'Enseignement Vétérinaire**



**REPORT on the RE-VISITATION to the
VETERINARY FACULTY OF KAUNAS, LITHUANIAN UNIVERSITY OF
HEALTH SCIENCES**

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by the EXPERT GROUP

Prof. Dr. Ana M^a Bravo Moral (University of Santiago de Compostela, Spain)

Dr. Borut Zemljič (Veterinary Polyclinic, Ormoz, Slovenia)

INTRODUCTION

Former full visitation to the Veterinary Faculty of Kaunas (VFK), Lithuanian University of Health Sciences (LUHS), took place on 1-5 October 2012. ECOVE final decision on that visitation (30-31 January 2013) granted the establishment with the status of NON APPROVAL, considering the finding of 5 major deficiencies:

- *“The extent, nature and form of practical clinical training, as laid down in Annex I of the SOP, are not met”;*
- *The requirements regarding student care and safety, as laid down in Annex I of the SOP, are not met;*
- *The requirements regarding Physical Facilities in general and with respect to safety and health procedures, as laid down in Annex I of the SOP, are not met;*
- *The Clinical facilities are inadequate and not conducive to a good learning and working environment;*
- *The isolation facilities (both small and large animals) are lacking;*

After receiving a letter issued on 29 October 2014, from the Vice Rector for Studies of the LUHS, Prof. Daiva Rastenyté asking for a re-visitation, together with the interim report from the Dean of the VFK, Prof. Vita Riškevičienė, on the improvements developed by the establishments to overcome the major deficiencies (Annex 1), the ECOVE decided to accept the re-visitation to the Establishment in the meeting held in Vienna on 10 December 2014.

PROGRAMME OF THE RE-VISITATION

The re-visitation was carried out in a very cordial, friendly and professional atmosphere and the team was supplied with all further information asked for.

After a brief introduction of the changes implemented in the curriculum and the Faculty by the Dean, the team visited the facilities and met the staff at the Department of Infectious Diseases (Prof. S. Petkevičius), the Institute of Microbiology and Virology (Dr. R. Mockeliūnas), the Small Animal Clinic and Isolation facilities (Doc. B. Karvelienė), the Large Animal Clinic and Isolation facilities (Prof. A. Kučinskas), the Department of Food Safety and Quality (Prof. M. Malakauskas) and the Anatomicum (Prof. J. Žymantienė). The team also visited the state-of-the-art building and facilities of Animal Research Centre.

The team had the opportunity to ask questions to the students during practicals.

FINDINGS

During re-visitation the team verified some important improvements at the VFK to overcome the Major Deficiencies by following the suggestions of the report made by the team during the full visitation in October 2012:

Regarding the 1st Major deficiency “the extent, nature and form of practical clinical training, as laid down in Annex I of the SOP, are not met” the VFK has developed substantial improvements:

- The caseload in the small animal clinic increased from 458 average patients per month in 2012 to 619 in 2014.
- Standard Operating Procedures (SOP's) and general treatment protocols (algorithms) are in place now in the intranet and print outs in the Small Animal clinics (reception) for staff and students on: Anaesthesia, Clinical, Ophthalmology, Cleaning and Disinfection in Surgery, Diagnostic Imaging, Dermatological examination, Cardiology examination, Oncology examination, Endoscopic examination, Dental examination and Large Animal clinic.
- Students have access to computerized clinical records upon demand (24h service).
- The number of lectures was reduced in all subjects.
- The number of the contact hours was reduced especially in basic subjects and sciences: Physics, Biomathematics, Epidemiology and Anatomy, Histology and Embryology.
- The number of practical hands-on hours in clinical subjects was increased in parallel to a decrease in the size of the clinical group of practicals.
- The attendance to practical and clinical work is compulsory for all students.
- At the beginning of clinical rotation students are introduced to a daily reporting of activities that have to be supervised by the teacher. At the end of the study year students have to pass an examination on the clinical skills acquired. For this purpose, students from different study years are not grouped together.
- For the acquisition of some clinical skills students visit Lithuanian Zoo, LUHS Veterinary academy Continuing Education and Consultation Centre (large animals) and Vivarium, Practical Training and Testing Centre as well as private veterinary clinics and farms. The development of practical skills by the student is registered daily in reporting of clinical activities of the day that are monitored by the practitioner and/or the teacher.
- The number of veterinary doctors and staff of clinical subjects have increased.

With respect to the 2nd Major Deficiency “The requirements regarding student care and safety, as laid down in Annex I of the SOP, are not met” the VFK has developed the following improvements:

- All undergraduates have accident insurance covering accidental injuries, loss of ability to work, death, etc.
- Health insurance of student is valid *intra* and *extramural* during lectures, practical training, interim transport, practice or practical training places.
- Preventive vaccination against rabies is not compulsory but highly recommended for students and staff. The veterinary faculty compensates all expenses related to vaccination. In cases of risk of contact rabies vaccination is performed immediately.
- Newborns in Lithuania are vaccinated against tetanus and revaccinated as teenagers (15-16 years) so undergraduates are well protected. In case of contact with risk materials vaccination is done immediately.
- All this information is available to the students in the Intranet.

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With regard to the 3rd Major Deficiency “The requirements regarding Physical Facilities in general and with respect to safety and health procedures, as laid down in Annex I of the SOP, are not met” the main changes implemented by the VFK are:

- Students are instructed, and must sign in a registration form (*students’ practical training safety and health instructions register*) on the safety risks and preventive measures”.
- There are footwear disinfection mats in the Isolation Units and SA and LA clinics, Pathology centre.
- There is instruction and devices for students and staff for hands disinfection in risk zones (autopsy room, clinics, etc.)
- Laboratories and clinics with chemical and biological risks are equipped with eye wash showers. These places are specially marked. Staff is trained on how to use this equipment.
- In risk areas (e.g. autopsy room, vivarium, clinics, etc.) information on preventive and emergency measures in case of rabies and tetanus risk (bite from an animal or contact of soil in wounds) is posted in Lithuanian and English.
- Every building or floor is equipped with proper emergency evacuation plans and signs. Evacuation paths are properly maintained and free of obstacles.
- Buildings are supplied with proper number of fire extinguishers and fire hoses according to requirements of existing national legislation.
- All staff in Radiology Service has a personal dosimeter which is revised every 3 months.
- In the renovated buildings there are adapted lifts for disabled people. Staff is trained to provide service on how to use the equipment for disabled people (stair climbers) and to provide them with other help when necessary.

Regarding the 4th Major Deficiency “The Clinical facilities are inadequate and not conducive to a good learning and working environment” the VFK has developed the following improvements:

- New equipment and devices were purchased in the clinics to improve the clinical assistance level.
- In the strategic plan of LUHS for 2014-2020 periodic renovation and updating of the infrastructure of the Small and Large animal Clinics are priority areas.

Finally with regard to the 5th Major Deficiency “The isolation facilities (both small and large animals) are lacking” the team had the opportunity to visit both facilities with two rooms, one for dogs with two cages and one bath tub, and another for cats in the Small Animal Clinic, and two boxes in the Large Animal Clinic.

SUGGESTIONS

The team encourage the establishment to continue the improvements and would make some suggestions:

- The team misses the implementation of an SOP on biosecurity to handle with patients and to use the Isolation Units by the staff and students as well as for the cleaning and disinfection of the clinical facilities, especially of the Isolation Unit rooms. The Faculty must implement a biosafety and biosecurity SOP for the Establishment as a whole, including the Small and Large Animal Clinics. The team strongly recommends creating a Committee on Biosecurity and Biosafety at Faculty level and appointing some staff from the Department of Infectious Diseases or from the Institute of Microbiology & Virology to audit and monitor the correct implementation of the SOP.
- Regarding the clinical facilities and equipment there are some deficiencies still present. There is a shower but not a lavatory in the entrance of the Isolation Unit for Small Animals and no equipment to wash and disinfect the hands in the Large Animals Isolation Unit. The system to transport the patients to Surgery through the stairs is far from being appropriate for the patient and staff welfare and wellbeing. The team strongly suggest to allocate a major part of the new building for Experimental animals to host the Small Animal Clinic, as well as both the Small and Large Animal Isolation Units that are now not appropriate for the purpose: the floor and doors are wooden made so good cleaning and disinfection is almost impossible; for the Large Animal Isolation Unit there is an open, wooden scaffolding for the roof with no air negative pressure, absolutely not appropriate to secure the hospitalization of patients with infectious diseases.
- The team has concerns about the proper clothing and shoes' cleaning & disinfection by the students during practicals at both clinics (Small and Large Animals). The team strongly suggests developing a clothing code on the SOP for biosecurity and biosafety for the staff and the students; to ensure that the preventive measures are correct the VFK should facilitate the clothes and boots for the students and should be in charge of the periodic cleaning and disinfection of this equipment at Faculty level.
- The team acknowledges the monitoring by a teacher of the daily activity of the student in the clinics but there is not a verification of the fulfilment of all day-one skills. To guarantee that, the team strongly suggest to design a logbook with a listing of all Day-1 skills (Annex IV of EAEVE SOP) and the signature of the practitioner and /or teacher responsible on the verification of the appropriate performance for each task.
- Even when the students have information of vaccination and day-one skills in the intranet the team strongly recommends the VFK to ensure that all students know this important information by personal communication in the first year, making them to sign a registration form after reading and comprehending the information.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on evidence and the information supplied by the establishment and collected during the re-visitation, it is the opinion of the team that the 1st, 2nd, 4th and 5th Major Deficiencies are mostly solved by the VFK and the still pendant necessary improvements are considered minor deficiencies. With respect to the 3rd deficiency, it is the opinion of the team that "The requirements regarding Physical Facilities in general and with respect to safety and biosecurity procedures, as laid down in Annex I of the SOP, are still not met.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The team would like to thank the Dean, Professor Vita Riškevičienė, and her team for the preparation of the re-visitation and the exhaustive and well documented interim report. We also thank the representatives of Departments, Institutes and Clinics, and the Liaison Officer, Professor Alvidas Šarlauskas, for the availability, friendliness and hospitality offered.

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ANNEX 1 DECISION OF ECOVE

The following Major Deficiency has not yet been rectified:

-) The requirements regarding Physical Facilities in general and with respect to safety and biosecurity procedures, as laid down in Annex I of the SOP, are not met.

The Veterinary Faculty of Kaunas, Lithuanian University of Health Sciences is classified after Re-visitation as holding the status of: **CONDITIONAL APPROVAL**