



RE-VISITATION REPORT

To the School of Veterinary Medicine of Rakuno Gakuen University, Ebetsu, Japan

On 22 – 24 July 2024

By the Re-visitation Team:

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Introduction

The VEE had an ESEVT Consultative Visitation in October 2019, and a full visitation was conducted on 23 - 27 October 2023. The ECOVE decision 11 December 2023 resulted in:

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

- Non-compliance with Standard 3.1.3 because of insufficient hands-on clinical training for all students in companion animals, including equine and exotic pets.
- Non-compliance with Standard 5.1 because of insufficient number of companion animal patients (including equine and exotic pets) and insufficient number of food-producing animal necropsies in relation to the number of students enrolled.

Four areas of concern (i.e. Minor Deficiencies):

- Partial compliance with Standard 3.1.5 because of suboptimal FSQ practical training in pigs and poultry for all students.
- Partial compliance with Standard 3.6 because of suboptimal evaluation of students during EPT.
- Partial compliance with Standard 5.1 because of suboptimal number of necropsies for companion animals (excluding equine).
- Partial compliance with Standard 9.1 because of suboptimal training to teach and to assess for teaching staff involved with extramural clinical training.

The RSER, RSER Appendices and an explanatory pamphlet describing the new facilities and equipment were provided on time and written in agreement with the SOP 2019 as amended in 2021. The expert had no questions before the start of the Visitation.

The Liaison Officer did an excellent job before and during the visitation adapting the Visitation schedule, searching for the requested information, organising relevant meetings and ensuring the health and safety of the visitors.

The RE-visitation was performed on 22 - 24 July 2024 in full accordance with the SOP 2019 guidelines.

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

1. Correction of the Major Deficiencies

1.1. Major Deficiency 1: Non-compliance with Standard 3.1.3. because of insufficient hands-on clinical training for all students in companion animals, including equine and exotic pets.

1.1.1. Findings

The number of academic faculty and staff responsible for Core Clinical Training (CCT), who work in the Animal Medical Center (AMC), increased from 27 in AY2020 to 44 in AY2023.

To provide high-quality CCT education to all students, it is important to not only secure the number of faculty and staff but also improve the quality of individual faculty and staff. Therefore, the School of Veterinary Medicine, Rakuno Gakuen University (SVM-RGU = VEE) actively encourages young faculty members, temporary assistants, and interns to participate in residency programmes that are now being prepared in Asian regions.

To improve the efficiency of companion animal medicine and provide excellent ultrasound imaging education to students and interns, the VEE has introduced the latest ultrasound imaging equipment to AMC by the summer of 2024.

AMC provides 24/7 education as CCT for the purpose of managing hospitalised animals, the ICU management of post-operative animals, assistance with night medical service and the reception of medical requests

The VEE, in collaboration with the non-profit organisation Horse Trust Hokkaido (2.5 hours' drive from the RGU main campus), an elderly horse care facility, has incorporated a one-night, two-day hands-on equine medical training programme into the CCT programme for all students in AY 2025 (2021 curriculum). Approximately 50% of students (under the 2015 curriculum) participate in this practical training trial in the 1st semester of AY2024, only students who have completed hands-on training at Horse Trust Hokkaido will be permitted to participate in actual horse medical service (outpatient, inpatient, and house calls). But from the academic year 2025 onwards (under the 2021 curriculum) all students will participate in the mandatory clinical training on horses at the Horse Trust in Hokkaido, bringing the I16 well above the minimum limit.

AMC has established the "Department of Exotic Animal Medicine" as a new clinical department, with service starting in April AY2024. The VEE has sought Highly Experienced Practitioners (HEP) to provide medical treatment and clinical training for exotic animals from May AY2024 and is furthermore collaborating with private clinics that have a large number of exotic animal cases.

The number of clinical cases in companion animals (I8) has increased tremendously due to the hiring of new, skilled staff and acquisition of new highly specialised equipment. The small animal caseload in 2023 was 6206 and at the middle of 2024, the number of patients seen indicates that the VEE will reach a similar or higher number in 2024.

1.1.2. Comments

In the report issued by ECOVE on 11 December 2023 it is mentioned:

"Increasing the companion animal caseload represents a key step for offering more opportunities for hands-on training. Recruiting specialists may help in increasing the caseload.

Staff members with training in exotic pets could be recruited or a partnership with private clinics, with a large exotic pet caseload, could be established."

The number of CA patients in 2023 and onwards will be sufficient.

1.1.3. Suggestions

Since only 50% of students are able to attend the equine medical training programme at the Horse Trust Hokkaido in the current academic year, the VEE could strive to provide additional

places, so that all students following the 2015 curriculum have the opportunity to attend the mandatory equine medical training programme.

1.1.4. Decision

With the increase in companion animal patients including equine and exotics, the VEE has rectified the deficiency.

1.2. Major Deficiency 2: Non-compliance with Standard 5.1. because of insufficient number of companion animal patients (including equine and exotic pets)

1.2.1. Findings

Please refer to major deficiency # 1.

The overall numbers of cases in AMC and its related facilities meet the ESEVT indicators due to increases in FTE academic faculty and educational staff (e.g. clinical practitioners).

1.2.2. Comments

In the report issued by ECOVE on 11 December 2023 it is mentioned:

”The purchase of slaughter pieces (as done for dissection in anatomy) could enhance the number of pieces offered to the students during necropsy.

It is suggested to develop more online learning on small animals and food-producing animal necropsies.

The number of cases seen intramurally and extramurally (including emergency cases) for small animals (including exotics and equine) needs to be enhanced.”

The number of CA patients by 2023 is sufficient. The number of equine patients seen this academic year in the outside farm is only for 50% of the students,

1.2.3. Suggestions

None.

1.2.4. Decision

With the increase in companion animal patients including equine and exotics as mentioned above, the VEE has rectified the deficiency.

2. Correction of the Minor Deficiencies

2.1. Minor Deficiency 1: Partial compliance with Standard 3.1.5 because of suboptimal FSQ practical training in pigs and poultry for all students.

2.1.1. Findings

The VEE has signed an agreement with a major Japanese electronics manufacturer to develop virtual reality education tools for cattle related to meat inspection, and has already introduced them into meat inspection education in AY2023. In AY2024, the VEE has already invested in the development of a Virtual Reality-program (VR) for pigs following the VR for cattle. Pig thoracic and abdominal organs are provided to each group of 4th-year students.

The current 5th-year students will not all visit a slaughterhouse, as it is not compulsory under the 2015 curriculum, but from the next academic year (2025) and onwards under the 2021 curriculum the slaughterhouse practical training will be mandatory for all students.

The VEE has made agreements with a number of major slaughterhouses (Appendix B1, p.13). Due to biosecurity procedures, it is very difficult to send students to slaughterhouses for on-site training in poultry slaughter procedures. To bring the 2021 curriculum students up to date on FSQ the VEE provides this group with a mandatory "Poultry Inspection Practice" that simulates poultry inspection in the second semester of the 5th year. The "Poultry inspection practice" consists of poultry anatomy, pathological examination, microbiological examination, and lectures by an experienced poultry inspection veterinarian delivering teaching to the students. The syllabus is referred to in the Appendices, B1 p. 18. All students will pay visits to real slaughterhouses except poultry facilities from 2025 onwards.

The VEE also provides training in food hygiene, taking into consideration the D1Cs as a food hygiene veterinarian. The cohort of 2021 curriculum students are taught dairy procedures, meat processing and food hygiene in a lecture on "Livestock Product Utilisation" in the first semester of their 4th year. At the same time, in mandatory practice on "Livestock Product Utilisation," students are taught food hygiene while producing cheese and butter, and processing ham, sausage, and bacon using pig and poultry meat. Finally, all 4th-year students see HACCP in practice at the Sapporo Beer Eniwa Brewery, one of Japan's leading HACCP-certified breweries. Details of the syllabus for lectures and practice on "livestock product utilisation" are found in the Appendices B6.

2.1.2. Comments

In the report issued by ECOVE on 11 December 2023 it is mentioned:

”It is suggested to:

-) increase the number of bovine slaughterhouses that accept students;
-) develop real or virtual visits to pig and poultry slaughterhouses;
-) include visits to food processing plants where students can observe the production of meat and dairy products.”

The VEE has implemented the above suggestions and established a solid procedure for pre-practical and practical FSQ-training in pigs and poultry for all students, including a novel virtual reality educational tool.

2.1.3. Suggestions

None.

2.2. Minor Deficiency 2: Partial compliance with Standard 3.6 because of suboptimal evaluation of students during EPT.

2.2.1. Findings

The RGU has built an education system that requires EPT teachers and external lecturers to undergo training in 4 areas: (1) Code of Conduct, (2) ESVET Day One Competences, (3) GCP, and (4) Practical and Clinical Teaching (Basic Course), all of which are managed through RGU's e-learning system.

All teachers and veterinarians who participate in the EPT programme must go through the 4 areas followed by a test to check their proficiency. All parts of this programme including exam records are managed by the e-learning's logging system. By managing the logs, the VEE's Quality Assurance Committee is able to standardise student evaluations not only by EPT

teachers and veterinarians but also by all faculty and staff involved in veterinary education at RGU.

Remarks during companion animal EPT are written in the form of comments on the case reports and cover an overall evaluation of the student.

2.2.2. Comments

In the report issued by ECOVE on 11 December 2023 it is mentioned:

“It is suggested to standardise the evaluation of students during their EPT and have a full agreement in place with the EPT providers. All teaching staff involved with extramural clinical training should receive full training to teach and assess.”

The VEE has established a quality-controlled, extensive, global system for teaching training of faculty members, staff and external partners participating in EPT. This system includes training in biosecurity measures. The system is customised to the different categories of “teachers” (e.g. academic/extramural). The extensive training system for external teachers was solidly demonstrated during the visitation.

2.2.3. Suggestions

None.

2.3. Minor Deficiency 3: Partial compliance with Standard 5.1. because of suboptimal number of necropsies for companion animals (excluding equine) and food-producing animals.

2.3.1. Findings

In April 2024, RGU reached a formal agreement for the “Raccoon Project” with Naganuma town, which is located approximately 30 minutes by car from the RGU main campus, to use raccoons, which are Carnivora, anatomically similar to dogs, as an alternative to necropsies of dogs and cats (Appendices A3). Therefore, starting in April 2024, Naganuma Town has provided RGU with a number of raccoon corpses adding up to at least 200 raccoons by the end of the year. This number is additional to the ordinary necropsies performed. The corpses are frozen at -70°C for at least three days before necropsy to prevent raccoon roundworm and echinococcus infections, and students then perform necropsies supported by an academic pathologist and/or HEP pathologist. By sharing necropsy results, such as the findings of an evaluation of eating habits from a gastric content survey, with Naganuma town, the VEE will also conduct community contribution projects with student participation. The “Raccoon Project” is not only a compensative plan to ensure a sufficient number of necropsies of dogs and cats but also a good approach to provide biosecurity, wildlife and community cooperation education to veterinary students.

The VEE has established a freezing and refrigerated storage facility for animal cadavers in a room adjoining the pathology theatre. This has led to the possibility of storing whole carcasses from the university farm.

The VEE has also established a procedure of buying slaughterhouse material for teaching organ pathology.

Due to increases in FTE academic faculty and clinical practitioners as educational staff, the overall numbers of cases and necropsies in the AMC and its related facilities has risen and meets the ESEVT indicators.

2.3.2. Comments

In the report issued by ECOVE on 11 December 2023 it is mentioned:

- “-) The introduction of refrigerated storage for large animal cadavers could increase the number of cases or anatomical peaks available to students for teaching purposes.
-) The purchase of slaughter pieces (as done for dissection in anatomy) could enhance the number of pieces offered to the students during necropsy.
-) It is suggested to develop more online learning on small animals and food-producing animal necropsies.”

The deficiency has been handled sufficiently including using raccoons as paradigm cadavers for practical necropsy training in companion animals. By providing refrigerated storage for food-producing cadavers and organs from the slaughterhouse all students can experience hands-on training in necropsy.

2.3.3. Suggestions

None.

2.2. Minor Deficiency 4: Partial compliance with Standard 9.1 because of suboptimal training to teach and to assess for teaching staff involved with extramural clinical training.

2.4.1. Findings

The VEE Quality Assurance Committee has organised a structured e-learning education where all teachers including EPT teachers and staff are required to take those courses.

The VEE holds regular (mainly once a month) Faculty Development meetings related to education and evaluation methods, and all academic faculty and staff in the Department of Veterinary Medicine departments are required to attend. All faculty and staff are required to have attended these educational programs and meetings.

All teachers and veterinarians who participate in the EPT programme (as mentioned under minor deficiency # 2) must go through the designated 4 areas followed by a test to check their proficiency.

The educational program using an e-learning system introduced in April was built based on the latest ESVET recommended "General Guidelines for Minimum Training for Teaching and Assessment for Each."

2.4.2. Comments

In the report issued by ECOVE on 11 December 2023 it is mentioned:

“Workshops and CPD for improving the skills (for both academic and non-academic staff) could be more structured and be compulsory.”

The VEE has via its QA committee established a comprehensive, mandatory and logged system for structured training to teach and assess for all teaching staff, staff and EPT providers.

2.4.3. Suggestions

Student feedback and evaluation of the EPT providers should also be routinely collected and used to enhance the extramural clinical training.

3. ESEVT Indicators

Name of the VEE:		School of Veterinary Medicine, Rakuno Gakuen University			
Name & mail of the VEE's Head		Prof. Yasukazu MURAMATSU, DVM, PhD.			
Date of the form filling:		29-Apr-24			
Raw data from the last 3 complete academic years		AY2021	AY2022	AY2023	Mean
1	n° of FTE teaching staff involved in veterinary training	65,5	76	79,5	73,67
2	n° of undergraduate students	870	846	826	847,33
3	n° of FTE veterinarians involved in veterinary training	55,75	66,25	68,25	63,42
4	n° of students graduating annually	142	137	125	134,7
5	n° of FTE support staff involved in veterinary training	90	90	90	90,00
6	n° of hours of practical (non-clinical) training	765	765	765	765
7	n° of hours of Core Clinical Training (CCT)	900	900	900	900
8	n° of hours of VPH (including FSQ) training	225	225	225	225
9	n° of hours of extra-mural practical training in VPH (including FSQ)	45	45	45	45
10	n° of companion animal patients seen intra-murally	3578	3454	6206	4412,7
11	n° of individual ruminant and pig patients seen intra-murally	53	20	44	39
12	n° of equine patients seen intra-murally	9	2	1	4,0
13	n° of rabbit, rodent, bird and exotic patients seen intra-murally	0	70	115	61,7
14	n° of companion animal patients seen extra-murally	0	210	274	161,3
15	n° of individual ruminants and pig patients seen extra-murally	1077	1223	3495	1931,7
16	n° of equine patients seen extra-murally	39	621	648	436,0
17	n° of rabbit, rodent, bird and exotic patients seen extra-murally	0	6	145	50,3
18	n° of visits to ruminant and pig herds	122	141	165	142,7
19	n° of visits to poultry and farmed rabbit units	0	16	22	12,7
20	n° of companion animal necropsies	2	15	101	39,3
21	n° of ruminant and pig necropsies	83	62	124	89,7
22	n° of equine necropsies	204	177	183	188,0
23	n° of rabbit, rodent, bird and exotic pet necropsies	52	58	159	89,7
24	n° of FTE specialised veterinarians involved in veterinary training	11	11	11	11,0
25	n° of PhD graduating annually	8	8	8	8,0

Name of the VEE:		School of Veterinary Medicine, Rakuno Gakuen University			
Date of the form filling:		29-apr-24			
Calculated Indicators from raw data					
		VEE values	Median values ¹	Minimal values ²	Balance
I1	n° of FTE teaching staff involved in veterinary training / n° of undergraduate students	0,087	0,15	0,13	-0,039
I2	n° of FTE veterinarians involved in veterinary training / n° of students graduating annually	0,471	0,84	0,63	-0,159
I3	n° of FTE support staff involved in veterinary training / n° of students graduating annually	0,668	0,88	0,54	0,128
I4	n° of hours of practical (non-clinical) training	765,000	953,50	700,59	64,410
I5	n° of hours of Core Clinical Training (CCT)	900,000	941,58	704,80	195,200
I6	n° of hours of VPH (including FSQ) training	225,000	293,50	191,80	33,200
I7	n° of hours of extra-mural practical training in VPH (including FSQ)	45,000	75,00	31,80	13,200
I8	n° of companion animal patients seen intra-murally and extra-murally / n° of students graduating annually	33,965	67,37	44,01	-10,045
I9	n° of individual ruminants and pig patients seen intra-murally and extra-murally / n° of students graduating annually	14,634	18,75	9,74	4,894
I10	n° of equine patients seen intra-murally and extra-murally / n° of students graduating annually	3,267	5,96	2,15	1,117
I11	n° of rabbit, rodent, bird and exotic seen intra-murally and extra-murally / n° of students graduating annually	0,832	3,11	1,16	-0,328
I12	n° of visits to ruminant and pig herds / n° of students graduating annually	1,059	1,29	0,54	0,519
I13	n° of visits of poultry and farmed rabbit units / n° of students graduating annually	0,094	0,11	0,04	0,049
I14	n° of companion animal necropsies / n° of students graduating annually	0,292	2,11	1,40	-1,108
I15	n° of ruminant and pig necropsies / n° of students graduating annually	0,666	1,36	0,90	-0,234
I16	n° of equine necropsies / n° of students graduating annually	1,396	0,18	0,10	1,296
I17	n° of rabbit, rodent, bird and exotic pet necropsies / n° of students graduating annually	0,666	2,65	0,88	-0,214
I18	n° of FTE specialised veterinarians involved in veterinary training / n° of students graduating annually	0,082	0,27	0,06	0,022
I19	n° of PhD graduating annually / n° of students graduating annually	0,059	0,15	0,07	-0,011

3.1. Findings

A number of the Indicators are below the minimum value using a mean of the 3 preceding years. However, major changes in the FTE-composition and the number of companion animal necropsies have been established and the full effect (hence stabilising the Indicators at a sufficient level) will not be seen until the end of the academic year 2025.

The FTE number has gone up to 96.25 at the end of 2024 and a rise to 104.25 permanent FTE in 2025 has been financially guaranteed by the university Executive Committee of Board of Trustees (ECBT) (Please refer also to the SER 2023, Appendices, p.89-90).

The number of companion animal patients seen intramurally has already gone tremendously up after hiring specialists and the number is expected to grow further during the next couple of years due to the continued increase in FTE.

Individual ruminant and pig patients seen extramurally have also gone up due to hiring of new staff. The number of individual ruminant and pig patients seen intramurally is not expected to rise any further during the coming years.

The number of companion animal necropsies will be raised permanently by the 200 raccoons as mentioned above.

The number of production animal necropsies is raised due to the possibility of refrigerated storage of e.g. whole pig carcasses from the university farm.

3.2. Comments

With the actual improvements in staff number, clinical cases and necropsy cases the Indicators are within the given limits although marginal differences may apply.

3.3. Suggestions

It is suggested to follow the Indicators closely during the coming years to make sure that the background data is still sufficiently enhanced for the upcoming Interim reports.

4. Conclusions

The Minor Deficiencies have been addressed by the VEE and actions are in place to rectify these permanently. The full effect of these actions will be visible in the current and coming academic years.

The Major Deficiencies (Non-compliance with Standard 3.1.3 and 5.1) identified after the full Visitation on 23 - 27 October 2023 have been addressed extensively. With the increase in companion animal patients including equine and exotics as mentioned above, the VEE has rectified the major deficiencies.

Decision of ECOVE

The Committee concluded that the Major Deficiencies identified after the Full Visitation on 23 – 27 October 2023 had been corrected.

The Veterinary Education Establishment (VEE) of the School of Veterinary Medicine of Rakuno Gakuen University is therefore classified as holding the status of: **ACCREDITATION**.