

**European Association of Establishments for Veterinary Education
and the Federation of Veterinarians of Europe
European System of Evaluation of Veterinary Training**

**REPORT ON THE STAGE 2 EVALUATION VISITATION
TO THE VETSUISSE-FACULTY
OF THE
UNIVERSITIES OF BERN AND ZURICH
on
September 20 -24, 2010**

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INTRODUCTION

The Vetsuisse Faculty (VSF) emerged from the fusion of the two faculties of veterinary medicine of the universities of Bern and Zurich on September 1st, 2006. The two locations were maintained (VSF Bern and VSF Zurich) but adapted to be “complementary”.

VSF was submitted to an EAEVE Stage 1 evaluation in Oct. 2007 and fully approved in 2008.

Consequently VSF has asked for a Stage 2 evaluation seeking “accreditation” by EAEVE. A SER 2 was provided and the visit took place from Sept. 20 – 24, 2010 and was a joined visitation with the Center of Accreditation and Quality Assurance of the Swiss Universities (OAQ).

The process of assessing quality at VSF Bern and Zurich has gradually evolved in the last decade and the faculty at present anticipates no further changes as became obvious during the visit.

Chapter 1 POLICY STATEMENT

A policy statement usually highlights the goals or “missions” of an establishment and the quality a graduate should have at the time of graduation and what measures are being taken to secure these goals. It does not necessarily mean that these goals are reached.

Findings

The policy statement resp. the “Mission” is clearly outlined in German on the homepage of VSF and is given in English in the SER 2.

The importance of research based teaching is stressed, the input of all faculty members, including the students, is encouraged (Join! “Mitmachen”), reference is made to a code of conduct.

Further information provided with the SER 2 clearly indicates that

- VSF executes a strategy for quality assurance and standards,
- there are university and VSF based organizational structures of a quality assurance system with the respective responsibilities,
- students are involved in quality assurance and
- that procedures have been developed to implement, monitor and revise the measures taken

Comments and suggestions

While the “Mission” of VSF is clearly outlined on the homepage, a similarly condensed information on the provision and importance of quality assessment is missing.

It is suggested to make a brief amendment to the mission statement and to place this “Mission Statement” also on the homepages of VSF Zurich and Bern.

Chapter 2 ASSESSMENT OF STUDENTS, POST GRADUATE EDUCATION AND STUDENT WELFARE

2.1 UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATION

2.1.1 Assessment of students prior to entering VSF

Findings

VSF applies a *numerus clausus* system with an annual admission of 70 students at the VSF Bern and 80 students at the VSF Zurich. Admission is based on the passing and the grade obtained in an aptitude test organized by the Rector's Conference of Swiss Universities (CRUS). Admission to the aptitude test requires students to comply with the Standard for Admission to Swiss Universities. The rate of successful passing is highly correlated to test results in the first year of study.

This nationally controlled system is rather obstructive concerning admission of non Swiss nationals to year 1 of the curriculum.

Comments and suggestions

The admission procedure is based on a rational, nationally supervised system. It must be considered highly effective based on the performance of students as assessed in the first year of study.

2.1.2 Assessment procedures of the performance of enrolled undergraduates

Findings

The VSF curriculum follows the Bologna Process leading to a “non professional” Bachelor (B Vet Med) after three years and a Master (M Vet Med) after another two years. Students have to acquire 30 ECTS credits per semester. ECTS points are only awarded if the assessment for a given teaching and examination module is successful. Examinations (assessment of students) take place at the end of each module, typically during the semester break and are strictly based on the ECTS system. Two repeats of each exam may be taken and all 60 credit points must be earned before a student can pass from the first to the second year. The failure rate in the first year examinations averages 25 – 30% in Zurich and around 40% in Bern. The number of students dropping out thereafter is negligible.

As recommended by the Department for Assessment and Evaluation (AAE), University of Zurich, examinations applied may consist of

- multiple choice questions
- short answer questions
- structured practical examinations
- structured oral examinations

The examinations are “academic examinations” and under the control of VSF with the Institute of Medical Learning (IML) being involved and supervising all technical aspects of written examinations. The influence of external factors on test results is kept to a minimum. Only students having graduated to a M (please explain “M” - apparently, there is no Master programme offered – see statement on page 6 bottom) Vet Med are eligible to sit the federal examination in order to get a licence to practice in any field of veterinary medicine in Switzerland.

After analysis of all examinations by the IML for a given examination period there is a meeting with all involved teachers (“Notenkonferenz”) and a mathematical grading system (applying the Rasch Modell) including the pass/fail level for the respective cohort of students is developed

Examination records must be filed for a minimum of 10 years. The results (pass/not pass, grade) are immediately communicated to the students via IT. In special cases “Feedback letters” are sent out, each student is supplied with a print-out concerning the credit points gained per semester. Students complained that no further feedback can be obtained. However, during the interviews it was clearly and convincingly stated that for technical and capacity reasons a further feedback of the performance of students in a written exam is not possible.

Student performance in the obligatory 4-week extramural training with veterinarians entitled by the VSF to supervise is evaluated by the veterinarian by filling out a questionnaire.

Comments and suggestions

The faculty has implemented a strict, timely and highly satisfactory examination system for student assessment. There is a constant quality assessment of the system applied by involving the AAE and IML. Communication mechanisms have been established (“Notenkonferenz”) to provide the teaching staff with the necessary feedback and to base grading also on the respective cohort of students. On entering veterinary education students are informed about these regulations with their attention drawn to the homepage where the respective information concerning the examination system is accessible.

2.2 POST-GRADUATE STUDENT EDUCATION; ACADEMIC TRACK

Findings

Post-graduate student education is offered at both places, the VSF at Bern and Zurich. Other than stated in the SER 2, chpt. 2.5, no Master Program is offered as became obvious as a result of the visit. The two tracks are offered in parallel are 1) the Dr med vet and 2) the PhD track.

The tracks are open for all students (national/international) meeting the necessary qualifications. While the PhD track is open to all students with a life science background, the Dr med vet track is only open to students who graduated as veterinary surgeons.

The **PhD program** is governed by the respective University Graduate Schools. While in Bern students with a M. Vet. Med. may directly apply, in Zurich an additional qualification has to be obtained, e.g. throughout the Dr med vet program and additional course work. Consequently there are only few graduates from the VSF Zurich entering this program, while the number of graduates from the VSF Bern entering the PhD program is considerably higher. To overcome this discriminating situation the VSF Zurich seeks to install an independent faculty based and controlled PhD program. There are strict selection, mentoring and examination procedures. Students have to acquire credits following successful interim examinations, the thesis has to be defended at the final exam program.

The title of a **Dr med vet** may be obtained following an in general 1-2 year-period of research resulting in a doctoral thesis. The program is strictly regulated and students have a supervisor who supplies the topic of the thesis work, resources and guidance. The thesis must be approved by the supervisor and a co-referee. Final acceptance of the thesis is by majority vote of the VSF faculty council. There is a large number of graduates entering this program at both locations; the number of students graduating per year is about 40-50 at both locations.

In general the research work - which must be considered the basis for postgraduate education - is financed through grant money obtained on an in part highly competitive level. Positioning of students may be grant based or, for example, after having successfully applied for a fellowship provided by the university.

As there is a non separable amalgamation of high quality research and postgraduate education, postgraduate education in general results in authorship/co-authorship of more than 1 paper, published in peer-reviewed journals with a good and up to excellent impact factor.

Comments and Suggestions

Both faculties place a very strong impact on post graduate academic education as it is the backbone of the highly successful research performed at both places (see chapter 8). The total number of students enrolling in post graduate education is impressive, which is largely due to the offering of the Dr med vet track. For the time being this track can not be replaced by the PhD track.

The VSF Zurich is encouraged to establish its own PhD program as it is discriminating that graduates (M. Vet. Med.) are treated differently with respect to acceptance as PhD candidates by the two graduate schools at Zurich and Bern.

The existing quality control mechanisms can be classified as highly satisfactory.

2.3 POST-GRADUATE STUDENT EDUCATION; PROFESSIONAL TRACK

Findings

At both locations the VSF offers post-graduate education within the European and American specialist program. Open positions are internationally posted. With an apparently permanent number of around 55 diplomats on staff the VSF Zurich offers 17 different titles, the respective numbers for the VSF Bern are around 50 diplomats and 13 different titles.

Quality assurance is a matter of the credential and examination committee of the respective college. However, on top of that residents have to submit yearly progress reports (VSF Zurich) or a questionnaire evaluating their training (VSF Bern).

VSF Bern and Zurich also participate in the national postgraduate training programmes (FVH). The programs and requirements, however, are a matter of the Swiss Veterinary Association (SVA) reducing the input of VSF to provide adequate training facilities and supervision/mentoring by a FVH acknowledged specialist.

Comments and suggestions

The VSF offers a broad and highly impressive program for professional postgraduate education on the European (international) as well as the national level. In this respect it is one of the leading faculties, not only in Europe. The environment provided seems to encourage young graduates to submit themselves to this lengthy and highly intensive program. There is no doubt that VSF will try to maintain this status or even to further improve it.

2.4 STUDENT WELFARE

Findings

At both locations there is an office for student affairs at university and faculty level. While these offices mainly deal with study affairs, providing information via e-mails or intranet, student counselling (personal/psychological problems, career service, service for disabled students) is provided at university level and by the University Student Association.

The University Sports Association of the University of Zurich and Unisport at the University of Bern are open to all students and university staff.

Child care is provided at the VSF Zurich and is planned for Bern.

Students at the VSF Zurich have access to a close by cantina, while such a facility apparently has not yet been missed in Bern.

At both locations a mentoring program "VetMent" has been initiated for under- and post-graduate students.

In Switzerland health insurance is a matter of student self responsibility. However, vaccination against specific infectious risks (e.g. rabies, swine flu) is provided on request.

Comments and suggestions

Both locations provide an excellent service system and excellent facilities for student welfare implemented on a legal basis. There are no further suggestions.

Chapter 3 ASSESSMENT OF TEACHING STAFF

Findings

The evaluation of teaching staff is in accordance with the steps (evaluation by students, evaluation of teaching success, evaluation of scientific merit) required for a Stage 2 accreditation.

The evaluation of teaching staff follows a strict and well documented concept at both places. Assignment of the first official teaching obligation to young staff requires a prior assessment of their teaching experiences gained so far in practical courses and other temporary teaching duties and their scientific engagement and merits. Final approval is given by the teaching committee after a recommendation has been obtained from the respective head of department. After having been appointed evaluation of teaching by students at the VSF Zurich is for the first four semesters, thereafter the university requires evaluation on a 6 year cycle, encompassing the entire teaching staff. At VSF Bern evaluation of the entire teaching staff is on a 4 year cycle.

At both places not only frontal teaching but also teaching provided in the clinical rotations and the course modules is evaluated by students.

The teaching staff is informed about the results and VSF Bern requires teachers to have a feedback with students. Results of the evaluation are considered confidential and are not published. If a low score in teaching quality is obtained, teachers are asked to attend didactic courses offered by both universities or to be coached by external mentors for a period of time.

The students of the VSF Bern elect the “*teacher of the year*”. This award is considered to be highly prestigious. Starting from 2010 VSF Zurich introduces the award “best clinical teacher of the year” for the best supervisor of clinical rotations during the last year of the curriculum.

The majority of the staff at both VSF sites obtained a score ranging from good to excellent. For young staff wanting to stay with academia it is important to demonstrate regular evaluation and to obtain a high score in teaching quality. A list of publications must be handed in showing that the respective staff member publishes regularly in peer-reviewed journals. Only on that grounds prolongation of a teaching assignment is given.

Comment and suggestions

Evaluation of teaching at VSF Bern and Zurich is based on well documentable procedures and has a high level, meeting general and specific requirements, allowing to define the situation as highly satisfactory.

To allow for a better comparison between the two locations it is suggested to implement an identical system of assessment of teaching staff, though this might be difficult due to different university regulations, governed by two different Kantons.

Chapter 4 ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

Findings

“Learning opportunities” comprise the provision of and advice on learning material to students, the provision of IT and library facilities and the creation of an academic environment that also provides adequate opportunities for self-studies and interactions with the teaching staff beyond regularly scheduled lectures.

VSF has developed and published a list of day 1 competences (“Lernzielkatalog”) to be acquired on graduation.

There is a strict schedule of lectures, seminars, laboratory classes and hands on clinical training published and accessible via IT. Similarly specific information is available for each teaching module via IT and accessible to each VSF student. This information also includes advice on learning material. As a result of science based teaching as implemented at VSF the teaching goals are regularly updated. For each module (Block) taught there is a person from the academic staff responsible for proper implementation. One of his duties is to solve any upcoming problems or controversial issues.

Material for E-learning is provided on a very high level, a situation which is so far somewhat unique for VSF Bern and Zurich. The material is regularly updated by the responsible author. It is available to every student via IT, e.g. the OLAT system in Zurich, also from home. The material provided by each location is accessible to students from both faculties. However, there is a distinct preference to locally provided material.

Student guidance is provided to deal with all information offered by IT.

At VSF Bern and Zurich libraries provide adequate IT study areas with access to stationary computers. During open hours an excellent library service is provided and student’s are informed how to work with the electronic library. In Bern the Self Studying Centre can be made available over 24 hours on request. However, students must bring their own computer which fits the strategy of VSF Bern to base IT on student owned computers.

For clinical education small group teaching opportunities do exist, the clinical services guarantee an ample supply of patients for teaching supporting the likelihood that students will have acquired day 1 competences at graduation. Students are taught in an environment which is characterized by providing access to up to date or even most recent technical equipment, e.g. for diagnostic imaging, and a culture of good clinical practice (see also chpt 6). Laboratory training facilities are in general linked to accredited (ISO17025) institutions.

At both locations individual student counselling is offered at university level and at each faculty by an own Office of Students Affairs (see chpt 2.4).

If students want to discuss problems or upcoming questions, they can always contact their professor via mail or phone.

Comment

The training opportunities provided and the whole teaching environment should enable students to meet the demands of the examinations held during the course of veterinary education.

Though not really specified, *de facto* critical control points have been identified and persons have been assigned to meet any upcoming problem and demand.

High quality E- learning is provided at both faculties. However, access to the material provided by VSF Zurich seems to be somewhat problematic for the students at VSF Bern and vice versa. Measures should be taken to improve this situation and to better inform students about these possibilities. Stimulation of inter-student communication, for example by arranging regular meetings of the VSF Bern and VSF Zurich Student Councils might help to overcome this problem.

In summary the mechanisms established for assessment of learning opportunities can be considered as satisfactory.

Chapter 5 ASSESSMENT OF TRAINING PROGRAMMES AND THE AWARD OF THE TITLE OF VETERINARY SURGEON

Findings

Learning objectives were set by the joint VSF teaching Committee. To define learning objectives and outcome stakeholders were involved (practitioners from the Swiss Veterinary Association, Federal office of public health, BAG). An extended version of the learning objectives "Lernzielkatalog" is published. Students seem to be well informed and information is given on an *ad hoc* basis, relevant curriculum information and updates are given online. Systematic information is provided at the beginning of the year.

The curriculum resp. modules are reviewed and evaluated regularly. A feedback system from the students follows a standard procedure; courses, modules and teachers are evaluated. The feedback from teachers concerning the curriculum is performed on an *ad hoc* basis and personally. The study coordinators on both sides of VSF are the most important persons facilitating the study program evaluation and adaption to new needs. Official discussions on curriculum, modules and courses take place during faculty meetings and in the so called "Notenkonferenz". Shortcomings may be identified using these feedback mechanisms. A policy for faculty/curriculum development is included in the so called "Mehrjahresplan".

An ECTS system is used. Students participate in the teaching committee of the faculty.

Day-1-skills are well defined (an example was provided) and are in agreement with the EAEVE requirements. A last federal examination was designed in close collaboration with the Federal Office of Public health. The present system can not give proof that all day 1 skills are equally met at graduation. However, there is good evidence that this goal is reached, also from the feedback obtained from the group of practitioners qualified to teach students in the extramural practicals and the alumni.

An external examiner participates in the last federal examination. The interviews confirmed the conclusions deducted from the whole “teaching environment” that students are stimulated and prepared for life-long learning (controlled self studies, study design of the 4th year).

Conclusion

Based on the SER-2 and the discussions with relevant personnel from the faculty, students and representatives of external bodies, the expert visitors consider the assessment procedures as satisfactory.

Chapter 6 ASSESSMENT OF QUALITY ASSURANCE FOR CLINICS, LABORATORIES AND FARM

Findings

Full information of the infrastructure in respect to facilities and equipment is given in SER 1, chpt. 6, p 74-93. The infrastructure concerning academic and non academic staff is depicted in SER 1, chpt. 10, p 131-136. Special information concerning learning resources is given in SER 1, chpt. 8, p 118-125.

In summary, the clinical and laboratory infrastructure in Zurich and Bern is very good. The equipment available at both locations and at all preclinical, paraclinical and clinical units is of latest technical development and allows for a broad spectrum of applications e.g. diagnostic, therapeutic and laboratory services. It can be classified as excellent.

The clinical institutions in Zurich and Bern meet all requirements in respect to a modern animal hospital. They are well organized showing the necessary interactions and patient referrals. Furthermore the clinics have many residents supervised by a Diplomate belonging to one of the European or American Colleges, which is also a sign of a high level of clinical quality.

The assurance of quality within the different clinics, however, is not very well structured. Quality is maintained by a highly structured supervising system within the frame of resident and student education. However, a real quality policy including written procedures is missing. There is no doubt that all clinics do have a high level of quality but it is not assessed at a regular basis. The clinics do not work within a Good Veterinary Practices or Good Clinical Practices framework as suggested by FVE.

The safety within the clinics is well regulated. There are protocols available to prevent accidents. In case of injuries the student is immediately sent to the neighbouring hospital after having received first aid. If a complaint is lodged it is treated on an individual basis.

The diagnostic institutes at the VSF locations in Zurich and Bern have been accredited by the Swiss Agency for Accreditation.

Other laboratories like the Center of Clinical Studies at the animal hospital, VSF Zurich, could demonstrate adequate quality control mechanisms by showing SOPs and a documentation on inter-laboratory validation.

Most laboratories do have a responsible quality officer. This results in excellent quality.

In the SER 2 Chapter 6, the quality assurance systems at the farms in Zurich and Bern are not evaluated. The discussions during the visit learned that the farm in Zurich is small and less than optimal for student education. The farm is visited at regular intervals by the ambulatory clinic to check animal health. The faculty is aiming to replace the farm by new facilities for research and teaching in collaboration with the ETHZ and the local school of agriculture.

In Bern the farm is not owned by the University. The faculty has the possibility to make use of a large experimental farm of the Ministry of Agriculture. The animals at this farm are also examined by veterinarians of the faculty. The farm does not work according to "Good Agricultural Practices".

Comments and suggestions

The clinical and laboratory facilities are in good to excellent conditions and are very well equipped. The clinics and laboratories function at a high level but do not have a well structured quality assurance system which should be enhanced. It is advised to implement a "Good Clinical Practice" or "Good Veterinary Practice" procedure.

Since the standards are met, safety is well regulated and the quality of clinical teaching is controlled, the current situation is considered to be satisfactory. However, documented and structured quality assessment procedures should be introduced or expanded.

In Zurich use of the farm for student education must be seen critically; only animal health is assessed. The faculty is encouraged to replace the farm by new facilities as indicated above.

The farm of the Ministry of Agriculture in Bern offers good opportunities for teaching. The implementation of "Good Agricultural Practice" is suggested.

Chapter 7 ASSESSMENT OF CONTINUING EDUCATION

The faculty is actively involved in continuing education in all different aspects of veterinary medicine as became evident from the impressive list of courses provided.

Although continuing education is not an official task of the VSF, the faculty organizes courses by itself or in collaboration with the Swiss Veterinary Society (Gesellschaft Schweizerischer Tierärztinnen und Tierärzte (GST) or Société des Vétérinaires Suisse (SVS).

Cooperation of the SVS and VSF is secured by the fact that the dean of VSF is a member of the SVS-Board.

One of the main official duties of SVS is to secure continuing education of practicing veterinarians. Swiss law requires that practicing veterinarians acquire a certain amount of points per year by participating in continuing education. These points are defined following accreditation of the respective course or module by SVS or other official authorized bodies, e.g. the BAG.

The lectures are evaluated by the participant filling out questionnaires developed by SVS. Evaluation has shown that the participants are in general greatly satisfied, particularly with the contribution of the VSF staff that generally gets a score from good to excellent.

In many cases senior teachers of VSF are also invited speakers at international meetings providing continuing education.

Both VSF faculties have a large number (around 55 in Zurich and around 50 in Bern) of Diplomats of European and American Colleges on staff, with a high percentage of Diplomats coming from outside Switzerland (approximately 20-30%). Several members of the VSF have been or are actively involved in the EBVS and Colleges, acting as members of the executive board, credential and examination committees or as organizers of annual meetings.

Comments and suggestions

The system of continuing education is well established in Switzerland with an important impact by VSF. There are no suggestions for any changes. Due to the construction of the system and the internal quality control mechanisms all demands on an assessment procedure monitoring quality – at least with respect to the participation of VSF – are met.

Chapter 8 ASSESSMENT OF RESEARCH

The VSF emphasises that research based teaching and learning is one of their main objectives for both, the non-clinical and clinical teaching staff. Teachers are proud providing research based learning in all courses. Students are involved in research projects during their undergraduate studies (master thesis) and are stimulated to participate in research work during their studies. The “master thesis phase” of the current curriculum just started and no experience on control mechanisms can be provided at this stage. However, a common procedure was developed for both sides of VSF to facilitate the distribution of research themes to the students.

For postgraduate studies the Dr med vet track and the PhD are offered which are carefully controlled and monitored (see 2.2).

All people involved in animal experiments, including, Doctoral and PhD students have to participate in continuing education courses annually. An *ad hoc* ethic committee for clinical research in the small animal clinic in Bern controls clinical studies.

VSF collects data (database) on grant money and scientific publications. Scientific performance was evaluated by an international committee in 2008. The performance of VSF must be considered excellent and very successful. The academic staff, clinical and non-clinical, is proud of performing research on a high scientific level.

All interview partners were convinced that excellent research performance is necessary for personal promotion and development of Institutes/Clinics, though there is no immediate effect on the allocation of funds to a unit by the faculty.

Both faculties have well established main research themes. Research cooperation throughout the faculty and on the national and international level is good. However, excellent research is also fostered outside the mainstream. Yearly progress reports are provided by the Departments/working groups. The outcome is discussed with the Dean in Bern.

Conclusion

Based on the SER-2 and the discussions with relevant personnel from the faculty, the expert visitors consider assessment procedure 10 as highly satisfactory.

Chapter 9 ASSESSMENT OF INTERNATIONALISATION OF EDUCATION AND RESEARCH

Findings

Teaching and research are on a high international level.

It is difficult and almost impossible for non Swiss nationals to enter the veterinary curriculum in year 1 (see 2.1.1). However, VSF has an Erasmus agreement with 20 veterinary establishments spread across Europe (SER 2, chpt 2.3). There is a substantial number of incoming students, however, due to the structure of the curriculum there are only few outgoing students.

Postgraduate education, academic track, is clearly on an international level. It is open to non Swiss nationals; open positions are posted on the homepage and selection is based on quality of the candidate. There is a substantial number of postgraduates coming from foreign countries. Also part of the teaching staff is of non Swiss origin; it is emphasised, that staff has to be able to communicate with students (in general in German and French).

Postgraduate education, professional tract, is on a similarly high international level. This is largely due to the fact, that there are more than 50 diplomats of the European and American Colleges on staff with about 30% being non Swiss. Positions for internships are internationally (homepage) posted.

Comments and suggestions

VSF has developed a clear policy for internationalisation of education and research. The quota to accept Erasmus students is high. It is inherent to the goal to be excellent in research and clinical services to hire postgraduates and to some extent also teaching staff at an international level. The quality standards, though somewhat flexible, have been set. It is well documented by the papers published and the lectures given outside Switzerland that the teaching staff of VSF is part of the international (veterinary) community.

The requirements are clearly met.

This statement is not hampered by the suggestion that VSF should try to remove the obstacles with respect to the participation of its students in the Erasmus program.

Chapter 10 ASSESSMENT OF COOPERATION WITH STAKEHOLDERS AND SOCIETY

Findings

VSF considers the top management (president, vicepresident) of the respective university, the profession represented by the Swiss Veterinary Society (SVS), the alumni, the general public and the scientific community as the prime stakeholders.

Interaction with the university top management is on a regular basis due to the legal requirements to sign performance agreements and to report on their implementation.

Interaction with the SVS is secured as the Vetsuisse Dean is a member of the SVS executive board and that continuing education is organized in cooperation between VSF and SVS.

The newly founded alumni organization is regularly informed.

For information of the general public VSF regularly organizes open door days and additional special events, for example at the 175th anniversary of the University of Zürich.

Communication with the scientific community is via a constant flow of publications in international peer reviewed journals.

On top of that up to date information about VSF is available to everybody through the VSF and the VSF Bern and Zurich homepages.

Suggestions and comments

As well as by legal request and as well as by own initiative VSF maintains excellent and stable – based on the mechanisms set up – cooperation with the various stakeholders. The requirements are met.

Executive Summary

Concerning all 10 points addressed in this report the visiting team is of the opinion that there are no category 1 or 2 deficiencies.

VSF has implemented clear assessment procedures for the evaluation of students, teachers and teaching as well as for the recruitment of scientific/teaching staff (chpt 2, 3 & 5). Virtually all laboratory diagnostic facilities are ISO certified and critical control points have been defined within respect to clinical management. Though there is no doubt that clinical management meets up to date standards it is suggested to implement a defined program such as "Good Veterinary Practice" or "Good Clinical Practice" (chpt. 6).

The fixed duties and responsibilities assigned to various staff members and committees secures a constant assessment of learning opportunities (chpt. 4) of the training program.

The system underlying continuous education has an inherent assessment procedure (chpt. 7). Research is assessed on an international level as VSF requests publication in peer reviewed journals (chpt. 8).

There are no specific assessment procedures but rather policies to provide education and research on an international level and to secure cooperation with stakeholders; The organizational structure backing these processes operate successfully as became evident during the visit (chpt. 9 & 10).

Finally, VSF has published a clear policy statement. It is certainly good to be able to refer to such a statement. However, it may be meaningless as it gives no indications that the "mission" is in fact achieved. Concerning VSF assessment of points 2 – 10, clearly showed that the mission is met.

In conclusion unconditional accreditation is suggested by a unanimous vote of the visiting team.

Decision: ECOVE confirmed the suggestion of the experts unanimously and awards full accreditation of Vetsuisse.