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FULL VISITATION REPORT

To Vetsuisse Faculty Universities Bern and Zurich, Bern & Zurich, Switzerland

On 30 September to 4 October 2024

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Introduction

Vetsuisse was established after an inter-cantonal agreement (the Vetsuisse Concordat) between the Veterinary Faculties of Bern (founded in 1900) and Zürich (founded in 1902). The merger between the Bern and Zürich veterinary faculties, which still belong to their respective home universities, started in 2001 and was officially completed by 2006 when the Vetsuisse Faculty (VEE) opened its gates. Both Bern and Zürich offer the whole VEE curriculum, although with some slight differences.

The main aim of the VEE is to improve education and research by networking, therefore, it is actively involved in numerous national/federal and international societies, committees and advisory boards in different veterinary fields, including EBVS, WEVA and others. Similarly, multiple reference veterinary diagnostic laboratories are hosted at VEE. According to the QS World University Ranking 2023, Vetsuisse ranked number 4.

Three ESEVT visitations took place at VEE. The first visitation was performed in November 2007, and a re-visitation followed in September 2010. Both visitation teams concluded that there were no major deficiencies, and ECOVE granted VEE full approval. A full visitation was carried out in October 2017 resulting in the accreditation of the Vetsuisse Faculty, Universities Bern and Zürich by ECOVE on November 28th, 2017.

The areas of concern (minor deficiencies) presented by the 2017 full visitation team were addressed in the Interim Report submitted by the VEE in April 2021 and acknowledged by ECOVE in June 2021. Some suggestions remained including the harmonisation of the courses with a negative balance in the two locations and correction of indicators to reach compliance with the ESEVT standards, as well as a careful analysis of an extra semester and its impact on the Curriculum 2021. Curriculum 21, designed by the Curriculum Committee and ratified by the Vetsuisse Council started in Autumn 2021 and added one more semester to the existing 10. New competence-based objectives, aligned with those used for training in human medicine, were defined. Practical skills (from bachelor phase), clinical skills (from master phase), and communication skills were emphasised in the new Curriculum, along with the involvement of the students in decision-making

at all levels. The new curriculum also introduced: the alignment of the competence-based learning objectives with the EAEVE day-1 competences; a common list of learning objectives and disciplines for the bachelor phase; common requirements for the external clinical rotations and the master thesis; and an identical state examination.
However, differences between the two Institutions still exist and are mainly related to different cantonal and university legislation.
The ESEVT SOP which is valid for the Visitation is the ESEVT SOP 2019 as amended in December 2020 and September 2021.

Area 1. Objectives, Organisation and QA Policy

Standard 1.1: The VEE must have as its main objective the provision, in agreement with the EU Directives and ESG recommendations, of 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.
The VEE must develop and follow its mission statement which must embrace all the ESEVT Standards.

1.1.1. Findings

The VEE operates with a mission statement dedicated to advancing animal health and well-being through exceptional preventive and curative measures, innovative research, and high-quality education. The two locations Bern and Zürich collaborate in teaching and research in accordance with the Code of Conduct. The VEE's primary objective is to provide comprehensive veterinary education that provides graduates with the skills necessary to perform in all commonly recognized branches of the veterinary profession. The VEE also emphasizes its role within the "One Health" framework, highlighting the interconnectedness of animal, human, and environmental health.
The objectives are aligned with the EU Directives (2005/36/EC, 2013/55/EU) and national regulations. Veterinary education is primarily governed by federal regulations that ensure the quality and consistency of the training. The key regulatory framework includes the Federal Act on Funding and Coordination of the Swiss Higher Education Sector (Higher Education Act, HEdA, SR 414.20) and the "Ordinance of the University Council on the Coordination of Teaching at Swiss Universities (AS 2019 4205)". The VEE's curriculum is structured in accordance with these regulatory frameworks covering the Bologna principles and the VET-PROFILES (Principal Relevant Objectives and a Framework for Integrative Learning and Education in Switzerland).
The VEE's approach to education, research, and clinical service demonstrates an integrated strategy that meets the mission statement and the objectives. The curriculum is designed to equip students with the scientific knowledge, research capabilities, and professional skills necessary for their future roles in the veterinary profession and within society, with a curriculum that progressively builds their knowledge from a foundation in basic sciences to advanced problem-solving and clinical skills in the later years. The integration of clinical practical training from the first year and the inclusion of a mandatory master's thesis project reflects its commitment to competent graduates ready for the profession. The VEE provides an array of opportunities for postgraduate specialisation in various veterinary disciplines and biomedical research, including internships and specialised training accredited by both European and American boards, ensuring continued professional development. The VEE endorses the principles of the Open Science strategy, which emphasises transparency, accessibility, and collaboration in research. As part of

this commitment, the VEE has signed the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA), the global initiative that advocates for improving the evaluation of scholarly research by moving away from the over-reliance on journal impact factors. The collaborative efforts across the two campuses in Bern and Zürich for research and education, further strengthen the implementation of the veterinary training, guided by the regulations, organisational and personnel development instruments, and the Vetsuisse Code of Conduct. This approach indicated in the mission statement, ensures that graduates are well-equipped for their professional roles while contributing to the broader goals of One Health and sustainability.

1.1.2. Comments

The VEE has articulated its main objective in alignment with EU Directives and ESG recommendations, focusing on providing ethical, research-based, and evidence-based veterinary training. The VEE's mission statement underlines its dedication to advancing animal health and well-being through high-quality education, innovative research, and a strong emphasis on the "One Health" concept. The strategic plan, approved in December 2021, reflects the mission statement and includes milestones such as the implementation and evaluation of the Curriculum 2021, accreditation goals, and the development of a white paper on data management. This strategic alignment indicates that the mission statement is reviewed and incorporated into the strategic planning process.

1.1.3. Suggestions for improvement

None.

1.1.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Standard 1.1.

Standard 1.2: The VEE 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.
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.
The decision-making process, organisation and management of the VEE must allow implementation of its strategic plan and of a cohesive study programme, in compliance with the ESEVT Standards.

1.2.1. Findings

The governance structure of the VEE spans both the University of Bern and the University of Zürich. At the highest level, the Vetsuisse Council (Vetsuisse Rat) oversees the entire VEE, providing strategic direction and making key decisions including financial planning. Beneath the Council, the Vetsuisse Executive Board (Vetsuisse Geschäftsleitung), composed of the local deans from both universities, is responsible for executing the strategic plans and managing day-to-day operations. Each university location has its own internal governance structure. At the University of Bern, the structure includes a Local Dean, a Faculty Board (Fakultäts-Ausschuss), and a Local Faculty Assembly (Fakultäts-Kollegium). Similarly, at the University of Zürich, the governance structure comprises a Local Dean, a Dean's Executive Board (Fakultätsvorstand), and a Faculty Assembly (Fakultätsversammlung). The central Vetsuisse Committees, which include the

Curriculum Committee, the Committee of Research and Promotion of Young Talents, and the Habilitation Committee, ensure a cohesive and unified approach to academic and administrative activities across both university locations. In conjunction with these, each location has Local Committees that handle specific operational areas. The Vetsuisse Faculty Assembly (Vetsuisse-Fakultätsversammlung) plays a central role in unifying the faculty across the two sites, ensuring alignment and coordination in fulfilling the faculty's educational and research missions.
The Bern (Fakultäts-Kollegium) and Zürich Faculty Assemblies (Fakultätsversammlung) serve as the primary governing bodies within their respective Vetsuisse Faculty locations, ensuring local faculty matters are managed with broad representation from professors, staff, and students.
The Bern Faculty Assembly is the primary governing body at the local level, consisting of all professors, representatives of intermediate staff and student representatives. This assembly holds the final responsibility for all local faculty business and makes decisions by majority vote. The assembly meets at least twice per semester. The Zürich Faculty Assembly mirrors the structure of Bern's assembly but includes additional participation from administrative and technical staff. The assembly meets at least three times per semester and holds the ultimate responsibility for local faculty matters, with decisions made by majority vote. The Faculty Board (Fakultäts-Ausschuss) in Bern supports the dean in decision-making. It includes the local Dean, Vice Dean, Chief Financial Officer, Head of Planning, department heads, and representatives responsible for quality in education and research. The Faculty Board ensures representation from all departments, including professors, intermediate staff, and students. The board has the final input on financial matters and meets five to six times per year.
As in Bern, The Faculty Council (Fakultätsvorstand) in Zürich is the executive governing body, led by the dean and supported by three vice deans responsible for teaching, research, and communication and continuing education. The council includes advisory members such as the assistant to the dean, the head of the administrative office, the faculty controller, and the finance director of the University Veterinary Hospital. The dean and vice deans are elected for four-year terms, with the possibility of re-election. The Faculty Council meets at least three times per semester, and decisions are made by majority vote.
The strategic plan of the VEE is developed and executed through a collaborative process involving various committees and boards that represent the interests of the stakeholders. The Vetsuisse Curriculum Committee, which includes representatives from both university locations, plays a crucial role in aligning the curriculum with the strategic goals and ensuring compliance with ESEVT Standards. Furthermore, the Faculty Boards in Bern and the Faculty Council in Zürich ensure that decisions related to financial matters, curriculum development, and academic policies are made with broad representation from all departments and stakeholders, which in return facilitates the continuous adaptation and improvement of the study program.

1.2.2. Comments
The decision-making process, organization, and management of the VEE are structured to support the implementation of its strategic plan that includes both central and local bodies at Bern and Zürich.

1.2.3. Suggestions for improvement
None.

1.2.4. Decision
The VEE is compliant with Standard 1.2.

Standard 1.3: The VEE must have a strategic plan, which includes a SWOT analysis of its current activities, a list of objectives, and an operating plan with a timeframe and indicators for its implementation.

1.3.1. Findings

In 2021, the VEE approved its latest strategic plan that outlines the faculty's vision, mission, and key objectives, with a strong focus on maintaining its leadership in veterinary medicine within the "One Health" framework.

A SWOT analysis has been conducted to assess the current activities and challenges faced by the VEE. The strategic objectives include goals such as the successful accreditation of the new curriculum, the collectivisation of quality-assured external practical modules by 2025, and the completion and evaluation of the new curriculum by 2026 using 360° feedback. The governance structure supports this strategic plan through joint Vetsuisse committees, including the Vetsuisse Dean's Office, Executive Board, Faculty Assembly, and three permanent commissions focused on teaching, research, and the promotion of early career researchers. The VEE has identified key strategic priorities focused on enhancing collaboration between its Bern and Zürich sites, maintaining excellence in research and education, and expanding cooperation with industry, federal institutions, and international partners. The strategy also emphasizes, improving infrastructure, advancing digitalization in research and teaching, and fostering the development of young academics by providing attractive career opportunities. These priorities aim to enhance the VEE's leadership in veterinary medicine and ensure its continued growth and impact.

Besides the VEE's strategic plan, the Universities' strategic plans are also implemented. For instance, in Zürich, at a higher level, the Board, the Executive Board, and the Extended Executive Board of the University are responsible for shaping the strategy. Within the University, the General Secretariat oversees the coordination of the university-wide strategic process. The strategic development is guided by 10 Strategic Principles, in addition to the UZH Mission Statement. These principles were created by a working group within the Extended Executive Board and were approved by the University's Board and are reviewed every 10 to 12 years. Every four years, the University's Executive Board uses these strategic principles to establish specific goals and measures and to outline a priority program. Additionally, the Executive Board meets separately with the deans of each faculty twice a year, in fall and spring (resulting in a total of 14 meetings per year), to discuss the strategy. These meetings ensure continuous strategic dialogue between the Executive Board and the faculties and serve as preparation for the Executive Board's annual development and financial planning session. They are also a key component of the third cycle of evaluations.

1.3.2. Comments

The VEE has a strategic plan with a SWOT analysis, which outlines a strong vision for maintaining leadership in veterinary education at a global scale. The strategic plan does not include a detailed analysis of the outcomes or effectiveness of the previous strategic plan. Without this analysis, it is challenging to understand what worked well in the past, what challenges were encountered, and how these insights were used to shape the current plan. Additionally, although an operating plan is in place, it is overly broad and lacks a specified responsible person, with no clear operating framework provided. At the Bern location, a more detailed operating plan for activities related to the strategic plan is in place.

1.3.3. Suggestions for improvement

Vetsuisse, as a whole, could benefit from a more comprehensive operating plan. A detailed analysis of the outcomes and effectiveness of previous strategic initiatives could be advantageous if incorporated into and used to enhance strategic planning. Similarly, a clear, publicly available list of monitoring activities for the specific indicators, with assigned responsibilities, could ensure measurable progress and accountability.

1.3.4. Decision.
The VEE is compliant with Standard 1.3.

Standard 1.4: The VEE must have a policy and associated written procedures for the assurance of the quality and standards of its programmes and awards. It must also commit itself explicitly to the development of a culture which recognises the importance of quality, and quality assurance, within their VEE. To achieve this, the VEE must develop and implement a strategy for the continuous enhancement of quality. The development and implementation of the VEE's strategy must include a role for students and other stakeholders, both internal and external, and the strategy must have a formal status and be publicly available.

1.4.1. Findings
The VEE functions within a strong quality assurance (QA) system, as demonstrated by the accreditation granted with high ratings to both universities by the Swiss Accreditation Council in 2021/22. The VEE's QA is committed to fostering a culture that recognizes the importance of quality and continuous quality enhancement across its operations. This culture is actively supported by staff across academic and technical roles, who are well-versed in QA concepts, particularly in the areas of teaching and research. The involvement of teaching staff and students in the QA processes is systematic, with regular evaluations of teaching and curriculum adjustments being discussed in the Curriculum Committee and communicated through faculty assemblies. Student representatives play an active role in these processes, participating in all standing committees and conveying information to their peers. The QA strategy is implemented through joint Vetsuisse committees, including the Vetsuisse Dean's Office, Executive Board, and Faculty Assembly, as well as permanent commissions focused on teaching, research, and the promotion of early career researchers. These bodies ensure that QA processes are systematically communicated and applied across both Bern and Zürich locations.
The Quality Assurance and Development (Qualitätssicherung und Entwicklung-QSE) guidelines for the VEE's core tasks of teaching, research, continuing education and services were approved by the university management in Bern on February 19, 2019, and last updated on April 27, 2023. In the adapted document of the faculty, the various elements of QA on management and reporting, organization, roles and responsibilities, communication processes and quality assurance measures at the VEE level are implemented in the areas of teaching, research and services. The Faculty Board is responsible for implementing the faculty quality strategy and carrying out the external evaluations agreed with the university management. It reviews and approves the faculty action plan. The Faculty Assembly as the decision-making body approves the faculty QSE guidelines and is responsible for the final decision on conceptual, structural and procedural adjustments to QA. The QA-Circle monitors the QA processes within the faculty and designates a chairperson to represent the faculty as a Q-representative (Q-Beauftragte/r) at the university level and to report to the faculty after the commission meetings.

The VEE employs a cyclical, sustainable, and transparent approach to QA, following the Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) cycle to continuously refine and align its strategy and goals with overarching frameworks such as the Federal Act on Funding and Coordination of the Swiss Higher Education Sector (HFKG) and other regulatory standards. In addition to internal processes, the VEE engages in external QA evaluations as described in detail in Standard 1.6 (i.e., the monitoring of federal license examinations by the Institute for Medical Education (IML), the periodic external evaluation of research quality every seven years, etc). Diagnostic services maintain high standards through accreditation by the Swiss Accreditation Service (SAS). The VEE ensures that all stakeholders, including staff, students, and external partners, are regularly informed and involved in the QA processes. This is achieved through regular communication at faculty assemblies, committee meetings, and training sessions. The extent and explicitness of their involvement in the QA processes, particularly in the development and implementation of the quality assurance strategy, is not fully detailed. The documentation provides clear evidence of student involvement but is less explicit about how external stakeholders are engaged in these processes. The VEE does involve external stakeholders to some extent, but the specifics of this involvement, particularly in the development and implementation of the QA strategy, are not as clearly outlined as they are for the students.
All students are encouraged to provide feedback on their courses through evaluation forms, which are systematically analysed to inform the quality improvement cycle. Student representatives play an active role in this process, participating in discussions with course leaders and peers, and reviewing student comments. The evaluation data, including response rates and scores, are monitored by the department coordinating the course, while the overall process is overseen by the Programme Committee. The results, including quantitative and qualitative data, are summarized in standard templates accessible to students. Additionally, the course leaders collaborate with teaching staff to review the feedback and propose changes, which are then submitted to the Programme and Faculty Boards for further action. This structured approach ensures that both student feedback and staff input contribute to the continuous enhancement of the curriculum and overall educational experience.

1.4.2. Comments
The VEE has implemented procedures for QA processes, as demonstrated by the high ratings it received from the Swiss Accreditation Council. Both academic and technical staff are actively engaged in systematic QA processes, particularly in teaching and research. The QA strategy is implemented through joint Vetsuisse committees, ensuring consistent application across both Bern and Zürich locations, and is reinforced by the PDCA cycle.

1.4.3. Suggestions for improvement
None.

1.4.4. Decision.
The VEE is compliant with Standard 1.4.

Standard 1.5: The VEE must provide evidence that it interacts with its stakeholders and the wider society. Such public information must be clear, objective and readily accessible; the information must include up-to-date information about the study programme, views and employment destinations of past students as well as the profile of the current student population.

The VEE's website must mention the ESEVT VEE's status and its last Self Evaluation Report and Visitation Report must be easily available for the public.

1.5.1. Findings

The VEE shares its vision, objectives, organizational structure, regulations, and strategic plan on its main website, with detailed information accessible through links to the individual campuses in Bern and Zürich. The websites for both campuses are regularly updated with the latest news, events, study program details, including course structure and examination processes, student life information, research activities, continuing education opportunities, services, and contact details, ensuring that the public has access to comprehensive and current information.

Regarding employment outcomes, the VEE collaborates with external bodies to provide relevant data. Employment prospects and career information for veterinary graduates are available on the website of the Swiss Society of Veterinarians (GST), which offers resources on career entry, job profiles, and a job portal. Additionally, the employment destinations of graduates are tracked through the MedReg register of medical professions, with data evaluated annually by the Federal Office of Public Health (FOPH). These data are publicly accessible on the FOPH website with the latest approved version of 2023 data in March 2024.

The VEE also participates in the Graduate Survey (EHA) conducted by the Federal Statistical Office (FSO), which assesses the employment and educational outcomes of graduates one and five years after graduation. The results of this survey are made publicly available through press releases and data tables on the FSO website. Information on the current student population is also accessible to the public through statistical analyses from the MedReg register. The results of an alumni survey, providing an insight into the quality of education and potential integration, research activities, as well as continuing education and service activities do not undergo systematic evaluation and consistent communication.

Furthermore, the accreditation status of the VEE is displayed on the main website, including links to the self-evaluation reports and visitation reports from 2007, 2010 and 2017.

1.5.2. Comments

The VEE demonstrates a strong commitment to stakeholder engagement by providing comprehensive and up-to-date information on its website, ensuring transparency and accountability of its operations. Overall, the VEE provides clear, objective, and readily accessible public information, demonstrating a proactive approach to engaging with its stakeholders and maintaining transparency about its educational programs, student outcomes, and institutional status. This includes details on its vision, objectives, organizational structure, study programs, and accreditation status. Employment outcomes are well-documented through collaborations with external bodies, with data made publicly accessible via relevant websites. The alumni survey, while it collects valuable data on the quality of education, research integration, and continuing education needs, does not provide a systematic analysis and its findings are not communicated in a structured manner.

1.5.3. Suggestions for improvement

The VEE could benefit from a systematic analysis of the results of the alumni survey, with the insights gained being communicated in a more structured and consistent manner, to enhance institutional development and service activities.

1.5.4. Decision.

The VEE is compliant with Standard 1.5.

Standard 1.6: The VEE must monitor and periodically review its activities, both quantitative and qualitative, to ensure that they achieve the objectives set for them and respond to the needs of students and society. The VEE must make public how this analysis of information has been utilised in the further development of its activities and provide evidence as to the involvement of both students and staff in the provision, analysis and implementation of such data.
Any action planned or taken as a result of this data analysis must be communicated to all those concerned.

1.6.1. Findings

The VEE employs a structured approach to monitoring and periodically reviewing its activities to ensure alignment with its objectives and responsiveness to the needs of students and society. This involves using both quantitative and qualitative measures to evaluate performance in teaching, research, and clinical services, with regular evaluations of course content, teaching methods, and student outcomes being discussed in committees such as the Curriculum Committee and Faculty Assemblies. The Faculty Committee is responsible for implementing the faculty's quality strategy and conducting external evaluations in line with the university management, while the Faculty Assembly, as the decision-making body, approves the QSE guidelines and is responsible for making final decisions on QA adjustments.
Students and staff play an active role in the review process, with their feedback systematically collected, analysed, and used to inform curriculum improvements. Staff participation is also integral, with regular departmental meetings and committee involvement ensuring their input is considered in academic and administrative decision-making.
The outcomes of these reviews, along with any planned actions or changes, are communicated to faculty members through e-mail. While internal stakeholders are kept informed about how data analysis is driving the continuous development of the VEE's activities, there is no direct evidence of similar communication with external stakeholders.
The implementation of the faculty's goals is reviewed in the annual operational discussions with the university management. In addition to evaluating individual teaching units and the teaching of individual lecturers, the faculty arranges comprehensive evaluations of the curriculum. Suggestions for changes are submitted to the faculty in the form of a catalogue of measures.
For research, the VEE focuses on three central QSE elements: establishing research fields that foster synergies in key topics and improve the environment for young researchers; conducting annual self-evaluations of research by individual faculty units; and having research performance assessed every seven years by external experts. Both the annual self-evaluation and the 7-year external evaluation are crucial for identifying early positive or negative trends in research performance and quality, enabling timely support and intervention.

1.6.2. Comments

The VEE has established a comprehensive and structured approach to quality assurance (QA), overseen by the QA Circle, which ensures that all aspects of teaching, research, and services are regularly monitored and reviewed. The involvement of both students and staff in these processes highlights the VEE's commitment to incorporating internal feedback into curriculum and operational improvements. While the outcomes of these reviews and subsequent actions are

effectively communicated to internal stakeholders, such as students and faculty, an equivalent communication with external stakeholders was not evident.

1.6.3. Suggestions for improvement

Bearing in mind GDPR requirements for personal protection, it is advisable that the results of monitoring qualitative and quantitative VEE indicators are communicated to external stakeholders through the web.

1.6.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Standard 1.6.

Standard 1.7: The VEE must undergo external review through the ESEVT on a cyclical basis. Evidence must be provided of such external evaluation with the assurance that the progress made since the last ESEVT evaluation was linked to a continuous quality assurance process.

1.7.1. Findings

The VEE undergoes regular external evaluations by the ESEVT and The Swiss Accreditation Council on a cyclical basis to ensure the quality and effectiveness of its program, with the latest review conducted in 2017. The VEE has linked the outcomes of these evaluations to a continuous QA process, as evidenced by its actions following previous ESEVT evaluations.

The most recent external evaluation highlighted the VEE's strengths, including its comprehensive curriculum, strong student-to-teacher ratios, and active research initiatives. The Swiss Accreditation Council further affirmed the faculty's adherence to high standards by granting accreditation without any conditions. The VEE has made substantial progress in several areas identified as needing improvement, particularly in practical clinical training and campus collaboration, while other areas, such as internationalisation and complementary medicine, show ongoing development. The new Curriculum 2021, developed in response to earlier recommendations, has addressed weaknesses in practical clinical training by introducing hands-on experiences early in the bachelor phase and progressively increasing them throughout the program. Additionally, collaboration between the Bern and Zürich campuses has been strengthened, leading to more unified teaching approaches, particularly in external clinical rotations and standardized identical final examinations. According to sections of improvement for Area 1, the VEE was found to revise its communication strategies to improve the accessibility and attractiveness of information available to the general public and external stakeholders. The VEE has made advances in making relevant information available online, including updates on research, teaching activities, and events across both campuses.

The ESEVT and Swiss Accreditation Council evaluation reports are made publicly accessible, ensuring transparency and accountability. Overall, the VEE’s approach to external review is well-integrated with its continuous QA processes, demonstrating a commitment to maintaining high standards and responding proactively to feedback, thereby ensuring ongoing improvement in its educational programs and institutional practices.

1.7.2. Comments

The VEE demonstrates a strong commitment to quality assurance and continuous improvement through its regular external evaluations by ESEVT and the Swiss Accreditation Council. The VEE has effectively used feedback from these evaluations to enhance its programs, particularly in areas like practical clinical training and campus collaboration.

1.7.3. Suggestions for improvement
None.

1.7.4. Decision
The VEE is compliant with Standard 1.7.

Area 2. Finances

Standard 2.1: Finances must be demonstrably adequate to sustain the requirements for the VEE to meet its mission and to achieve its objectives for education, research and services. The description must include both expenditures (separated into personnel costs, operating costs, maintenance costs and equipment) and revenues (separated into public funding, tuition fees, services, research grants and other sources).

2.1.1. Findings
Each location has its own system of financing. The annual global budget of the Bern campus consists of staff costs provided via a point system (staff points «Personal - Punkte», PP) and of monetary resources divided into core funds (Betriebskredit, BK) and investment funds (Investitionskredit, IK). Thirty to fifty per cent of the investment fund is allocated for new equipment. Apart from this, each unit can finance investments from other sources such as core funds, large investment funds of the university, or service revenues. Within each operative unit, the staff- and core fund resources are defined in a so-called structure report (Strukturbericht).
The disciplines of Veterinary Virology and Immunology in Bern are outsourced to the Institute of Virology and Immunology (IVI), which is administered and owned by the Federal Food Safety and Veterinary Office (FSVO). The University of Bern allocates a budget for research and teaching. The Department of Clinical Veterinary Science and the Department of Infectious Diseases and Pathobiology host functioning service units. Running costs associated with electricity and water are covered by the University of Bern.
The Zürich campus annual budget is based on the development and financial plan (EFP). This plan is submitted annually to the university, is then discussed with the financial officers and finalised for the coming year. The budget consists of personal resources (Personal), monetary resources (Betriebsergebnis1) for running costs and an investment fund (Investitionskredit, IK) for equipment. The dean and chief financial officer are responsible for allocating money for each institute. All revenue from the hospital income is part of the Animal Hospital budget. The investment fund is allocated annually to the faculty through the university. Individual units can apply for new equipment each year. A priority list is made and assessed by the dean and the Faculty Council.
All institutes are responsible for their own revenues.
The business plans for each hospital and veterinary service are managed in Bern by the DCVS and in Zürich by the dean, the director of the Animal Hospital and the financial officers. There is a monthly review and a yearly report. The VEE Bern and Zürich has the autonomy to amend the use and distribution of the staff resources and the financial resources.
The main source of revenue of the VEE comes from public authorities (mean in Bern: 44,000,000 euros annually, mean in Zürich: 53,000,000 euros annually). The other sources of revenue are

clinical services, diagnostic services, research grants and donations. The mean annual revenue for the Bern campus is 77,525,414 euros; the mean annual revenue in Zürich is 114, 602, 021 euros.
The main area for expenditure of the VEE is personnel (mean for Bern about 56,000,000 euros; mean for Zürich about 73,000,000 euros). Other important expenditures are operating costs, maintenance, and equipment. The total annual mean of expenditure for Bern is 77,525,414 and for Zürich 114,602,021 euros.
Public funding guarantees the expenditures and costs of the two locations. The revenues and expenditures are balanced.

2.1.2. Comments

Each campus operates with a distinct budget, as they are independently funded by their respective local cantons, which vary between locations. A relatively small portion of approximately 300,000 CHF is allocated as a shared budget and is utilized for collective purposes across all campuses.

2.1.3. Suggestions for improvement

None

2.1.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Standard 2.1.

Standard 2.2: 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.
The VEE must have sufficient autonomy in order to use the resources to implement its strategic plan and to meet the ESEVT Standards.

2.2.1. Findings

The business plans for each hospital and field service are managed in Bern by the DCVS and in Zürich by the dean, the director of the Animal Hospital and the financial officers. There is a monthly review and a yearly report. The VEE has the autonomy to amend the use and distribution of the staff resources and the financial resources.
In the Bern campus the Department of Clinical Veterinary Science and the Department of Infectious Diseases and Pathobiology host functioning service units, i.e. 94% of their service income revenue is part of their budget. The overhead for service revenues is 6%. Two-thirds (4% overhead) of this money is deposited at the university administrative head office for investments. The remaining 2% overhead money remains as a reserve for unforeseen financial issues that are associated with the service units.
In the Zürich campus, all revenue from the hospital income is part of the overall budget of the Animal Hospital and is governed by the chief financial officer of the Animal Hospital. The Dean discusses the planned budget for the following year with the CFOs of the two institutes (Veterinary Science Institute and Animal Hospital) each year.
The local commissions at each location and then at each University decide about applying for money for particular investments to cantonal authorities but the VEE prioritises which investments are the most needed.

2.2.2. Comments

The VEE has sufficient autonomy in planning its investments and spending money.

2.2.3. Suggestions for improvement
None

2.2.4. Decision
The VEE is compliant with Standard 2.2.

Standard 2.3: Resources allocation must be regularly reviewed to ensure that available resources meet the requirements.

2.3.1. Findings
The dean of each campus and chief financial officer allocate the annual budget according to the initial negotiations for each institute. The budget can be reallocated depending on changes within the structure of the various institutes. The investment fund for new resources is allocated annually through the universities to the campuses. Individual departments/units can apply for new equipment each year.
The annual budget of the Bern location is prepared by the Chief-Financial-Officer (CFO) and the administrative Faculty-Manager (AFM) together with the Financial and Planning Committee of the Faculty and the Faculty Board. The allocation of the overall financial budget to Bern is prepared in the preceding year by the university board, and the final decision on the overall budget is taken by the university's financial committee (consisting of CFOs of all faculties and members of the Executive Board of the University of Bern). The distribution of the individual budgets to the different units is carried out by the AFM. The individual budgets at the unit level are determined by the respective secretary under the responsibility of the head of the unit. Decisions at the unit level for the Department of Clinical Veterinary Science and the Department of Infectious Diseases and Pathobiology are taken by the head of the unit, the dean and the CFO. Assessment of processes and decisions concerning core funds take place within the Faculty Board. Communication of decisions and financial structures and processes follows a scheme: from CFO/ Dean to head of Departments, from the head of Departments to head of functional units, from head of functional units to staff of units. Students and staff are represented by one member of the Faculty Finance and Planning Committee and the Faculty Board. The governmental financial control of the Canton of Bern performs regular financial audits.
In Zürich, the allocation of the budget for the financial year is prepared by the university board and is then discussed at the annual budget meeting with the dean and the financial officer. The budget is finalised and is also accepted by the political authorities (executive council of the Canton of Zürich). The budget is communicated through the university board to the dean and the chief financial officer, who then communicate it to the individual units of the faculty. The financial management is regularly audited by the Government.

2.3.2. Comments
The VEE is financed by the government (local cantons) and audited by them on a regular basis.

2.3.3. Suggestions for improvement
None

2.3.4. Decision
The VEE is compliant with the Standard 2.3.

Area 3. Curriculum

Standard 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. The curriculum must include the subjects (input) and must allow the acquisition of the Day One Competences (output) listed in Annex 2. This concerns Basic Sciences, Clinical Sciences in companion animals (including equine and exotic pets), Clinical Sciences in food-producing animals (including Animal Production and Herd Health Management), Food Safety and Quality, and Professional Knowledge.

3.1.1. General findings

3.1.1.1. Findings

The educational aim of the VEE is to provide a modern competency-based veterinary curriculum focused on fundamental knowledge, day-one skills, and professional behaviours required of all graduates. The VEE has implemented the veterinary curriculum at two locations. One location is at the University of Bern and the other location is at the University of Zürich. The curriculum at both locations follows the Bologna principles leading to a bachelor's degree after 3 years of study (Bachelor of Veterinary Medicine; 180 ECTS) and to a master's degree after a further 2.5 years of study (Master of Veterinary Medicine; 150 ECTS). The competency framework for the VEE, VET-PROFILES, is aligned with the essential Day One Competences required by EU Directive 2005/36/EC (as amended by directive 2013/55/EU) and its Annexes. The new curriculum introduced in the autumn semester of 2021 (Curriculum 21) lasts 11 instead of 10 semesters and starts with the first year of the bachelor (year 1) and the master (year 4) programmes. Successful completion of the master's programme entitles the student to sit the federal examination to achieve the Swiss Federal Licence (Diploma) allowing them to practise as veterinarians in Switzerland and Liechtenstein.

The VEE curriculum has a mandatory core and an elective tracking system. The first year of the bachelor programme covers basic subjects, basic natural sciences and veterinary knowledge. The second and third years are taught in an organ-based manner. The master's programme (years 4-5.5) offers a core component focusing on problem-solving and clinical reasoning and a compulsory elective tracking component. Students select one of six elective tracks: small animal medicine; equine medicine; farm animal medicine; pathobiology; biomedical research; and veterinary public health. A master's thesis must be successfully completed during the master's programme. The VEE has implemented systematic practical skills development during years 1-4 and clinical rotations in the last 3 semesters. Students choose additional elective courses (Bern 10 ECTS; Zürich 3 ECTS). The VEE curriculum includes all subjects listed in Annex 2.

In the 5.5 years of study depending on the elective track, the students receive a total of 5531 to 5594 (Bern) and 5767 to 5814 (Zürich) curriculum hours. Of the total curriculum hours, 1629-1757 (Bern)/2005-2047- (Zürich) hours are lectures, 489-611 (Bern)/295-371 (Zürich) hours are seminars, 138-697 (Bern)/216-958 (Zürich) hours are laboratory and desk work, 347-497 (Bern)/337-1020 (Zürich) hours are non-clinical animal work and 530-1132 (Bern)/805-1422 (Zürich) hours are clinical work (from Table 3.1.1 in SER). The total curriculum hours include a master's thesis of 600 hours (Bern and Zürich) and external practical training in the 5th year of 450 (Bern)/504 (Zürich) hours. In addition, external practical training in the 2nd-4th year of 72 (Bern)/16 (Zurich) hours (from Table 3.5.1). The number of curriculum hours per subject taken by each

student in years 1-4 is listed in Table 3.1.2. The total number of core curriculum hours taken by each student in Bern is 2881 and in Zürich is 2899.

3.1.1.2. Comments

The veterinary curriculum at the VEE delivers teaching in all subjects in Basic Sciences, Clinical Sciences in companion animals, Clinical Sciences in food-producing animals, Food Safety and Quality and Professional Knowledge. The VEE also delivers teaching within all the Basic Subjects.

From Table 3.1.2, core curriculum hours taught at both locations of the VEE contain more theoretical teaching (2225 Bern; 2253 Zürich) than practical training (656 Bern; 646 Zürich). The ratio of theoretical teaching to practical training in the core curriculum hours is similar for both locations (3.4:1 Bern; 3.5:1 Zürich). The two locations show differences in the use of methods of theoretical teaching. The core curriculum hours in Bern contain fewer lectures compared with the core curriculum hours in Zürich (1631 Bern, 1905 Zürich). The core curriculum hours in Bern provide more teaching in the form of seminars and self-directed learning than the core curriculum hours in Zürich (594 Bern, 348 Zürich). Both locations deliver few core curriculum hours of laboratory and desk-based work and non-clinical animal work (300 Bern, 362 Zürich).

3.1.1.3. Suggestions for improvement

The process of aligning and harmonising the differences in implementing the curriculum at the VEE's two locations should continue. The analysis of the learning outcomes of the curriculum should be assessed during both the bachelor's and master's programmes.

3.1.1.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with the Sub-standard 3.1.

3.1.2. Basic Sciences

3.1.2.1. Findings

All basic science subjects are taught in the veterinary curriculum of the VEE. The design of the units of study is modular and in years 2-3, the courses are taught in an organ-based manner. Theoretical teaching includes lectures, seminars and self-directed learning while practical teaching includes both laboratory and desk-based work and non-clinical animal work. The study programme taught at the University of Zürich includes clinical animal work in Professional ethics and communication and in Animal health economics and practice management.

The ratio of theoretical (lectures, seminars and self-directed learning) to practical training (laboratory and desk work, non-clinical animal work and clinical animal work) in the bachelor programmes was 3.4:1 (Bern) and 3.5:1 (Zürich). From Table 3.1.2, the curriculum hours of lectures account for ca. 66% (Bern)/73% (Zürich) of the teaching in the Basic Sciences, while laboratory and desk work and non-clinical animal work account for ca. 22% (Bern)/20% (Zürich). Laboratory and desk work and non-clinical animal work were performed in 5 (Bern)/8 (Zürich) Basic Science subjects. From Table 3.1.2, laboratory and desk work are included in the teaching of Anatomy, histology and embryology, Pathology, Parasitology, Immunology and Microbiology (Bern) and in the teaching of Anatomy, histology and embryology, Physiology, Pathology, Parasitology, Microbiology, and Epidemiology, Professional ethics and communication and Animal nutrition (Zürich).

From Table 3.1.2, non-clinical animal work is included in the teaching of Anatomy, histology and embryology and Immunology (Bern) and in the teaching of Anatomy, histology and embryology,

Physiology, Pathology, Parasitology, Professional ethics and communication and Animal nutrition (Zürich). From Table 3.1.2, Anatomy, histology and embryology accounted for most non-clinical practical teaching performed in the Basic Sciences at Bern (97%) and Zürich (80%).

3.1.2.2. Comments

In both locations, the Basic Science subjects in the bachelor programmes (Years 1-3) are delivered mainly as theoretical teaching. Lectures were the main form of theoretical teaching. Most non-clinical practical training was provided in Anatomy, Histology and Embryology. Other Basic Science subjects such as Physiology, Biochemistry, Pharmacology and Microbiology offered little or no laboratory work.

There was limited or no laboratory training (hours) in Basic Science subjects, such as Physiology (0 Bern), Biochemistry (0 Bern, 0 Zürich), General and molecular genetics (0 Bern, 0 Zürich), Pharmacology, pharmacy and pharmacotherapy (0 Bern, 0 Zürich), Toxicology (0 Bern, 0 Zürich), Microbiology (12 Bern, 4 Zürich) and Immunology (4 Bern, 0 Zürich).

3.1.2.3. Suggestions for improvement

In the bachelor programmes, laboratory training in basic science subjects other than Anatomy, Histology and Embryology should be expanded to allow students to improve the acquisition of appropriate Day One Competences.

3.1.2.4. Decision

The VEE is partially compliant with Substandard 3.1.2 because of suboptimal laboratory training in some Basic Science subjects.

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

3.1.3.1. Findings

The VEE developed a competency framework adapted from human medicine (VET-PROFILE) to define the outcomes of the educational process based on the main roles of the veterinarian after graduation.

Most of the clinical core and practical rotations are taken during the master years (years 4-5.5). The compulsory tracking is held in the same years, during which the students must choose 1 out of 6 lines of interest (including small animal, farm animal and equine medicine), together with some electives (10 ECT in Bern, 3 ECT in Zürich). Among the electives, there is a quite large choice in Bern and a limited choice in Zürich for what concerns small animals, horses and exotics. The choice is free for each student, and in case one track is not available at one location of the VEE, the student is allowed to transfer to the other location (although this has never happened so far).

The Clinical Skills are taught in the Veterinary Teaching Hospitals (VTH) of the 2 locations of the VEE, in off-site practices owned by the VEE, and during the EPT, where mostly primary veterinary care can be seen. In both Bern and Zürich, students are exposed to animal handling (small animals, horses, farm animals) from the first year. Furthermore, during the 2nd and 4th years, students can take clinical histories and perform physical examinations on live animals in small groups (2-15) and have some days of practical rotations during which they reinforce what they have learnt in practice. Starting from the second year, the students also have night and weekend shifts in the emergency service for small animals, while the emergency service in equine clinics operates on call.

The VEE curriculum is accessible online by students and staff via two different platforms for Bern (ILIAS) and Zürich (OLAT). These systems make it easier to readily find overlapping, omissions

or inconsistencies between courses in clinical sciences in companion animals, because some modules are taught by subject and others by organ, with no data exchange between the two campuses.
The clinical rotations are held in the last 3 semesters in both centres. According to what is described in tables in the SER, the total number of weeks/students in the different rotations is 42 in Bern and 37 in Zürich. Furthermore, the overall number of hours in core curriculum per species is similar in both sites; however, the total number of hours in clinical sciences in the Horse track is 203 vs 143 hours in Bern and Zürich. Regarding the small animal clinical rotations, they are also different between the 2 campuses, being more diverse in Zürich (internal medicine, surgery, cardiology, neurology, oncology, dermatology, clinical emergency, reproduction, exotics and diagnostic imaging), than in Bern. Likewise, clinical rotations in zoos and exotic animals (3 weeks) are available for students in Zürich (small animal track), but they are not present in Bern, where there are elective courses on minipigs and zoo and exotic animals.
Regarding clinical rotations, students can choose to have externships in the subjects of the rotations not offered at their campus. Student group size during clinical rotations is variable (2 to 10 per clinic/division), depending on the discipline. During clinical rotations, students can collect clinical history, perform physical examinations, write medical records and management plans. The involvement of students in recording the clinical data in the electronic systems of both campuses (Polypoint in Bern, Vetera in Zürich) is larger during track rotations compared with core rotations. Furthermore, students have to train their communication skills with owners and clinicians and they have to attend the daily case-based and topic-based rounds and work with younger students and clinicians.
The achievement of a practical skill is ascertained by logging them in an e-portfolio (EPASS). Moreover, some work-based assessments (WBA) have to be carried out during each clinical rotation, using the Direct Observation of Procedural Skills tool, and the mini-CEX (Clinical Exam), which can be carried out by students when they feel comfortable with the acquired skills. At the end of the 3 semesters, the acquisition of the skills is evaluated by a practical case management and finally, an Objective Structured Clinical Examination is used during the final federal licensure examination.

3.1.3.2. Comments

The number of hours/student spent during clinical rotations, including core and track rotations, is sufficient to ensure the acquisition of Day One clinical Competences in companion animals. However, the total number of hours spent by students in clinical rotations is higher in Bern compared with Zürich, therefore, it should be harmonised between both centres. Additionally, clinical rotations in the horse track are different, as well as those for students in the small animal track, which should be adjusted. Clinical rotations in exotic animals should be increased in Bern and adjusted in Zürich.

3.1.3.3. Suggestions for improvement

The use of the same platform for the curriculum by the two locations of the VEE would make the exchange of data and the whole curriculum for the students more uniform. The VEE would benefit from the core clinical rotations being similar at both locations, ensuring the same opportunities for students to acquire clinical skills. Track rotations could be used to increase clinical skills in specific areas, however, core clinical rotation can be improved if they include a larger variety of clinical disciplines already present in the Hospitals of both locations (i.e., all students might take advantage of the Avenches facilities, with practical training at this centre being included in the core

curriculum, and not only in the electives; the Bern campus students would benefit from a clinical rotation in exotic pets, while those in the Zürich campus would benefit from a rotation in zoo animals which could be included in the core curriculum, and not only in the track rotation, etc.).

3.1.3.4 Decision
The VEE is compliant with Sub-standard 3.1.3.

3.1.4. Clinical Sciences in food-producing animals (including Animal Production and Herd Health Management)

3.1.4.1 Findings
Total core curriculum exposure of students for clinical sciences in food-producing animals from year 1 to year 4 includes some dedicated topics (animal production, herd health management), but also common topics under the general chapter of Clinical sciences. Students of year 1 are exposed to introduction to handling, restraint and husbandry in food-producing animals. During year 2 to year 4 students are exposed to practical rotations in swine medicine and ruminant medicine/surgery and reproduction for a total duration of 1 week each in Bern. Practical rotations in food-producing animals are taught beginning with year 5 in Zürich.
During year 5 to year 5.5, core curriculum students are exposed to a total of 6 weeks of rotation in major topics of livestock clinics at the intramural clinics in Bern and of 4 weeks in Zürich. Swine medicine, clinical emergency, and Herd Health management are not offered to students of the core curriculum in Zürich. Only the ambulatory clinic is not offered to core curriculum students in Bern. Additional rotations are organised for the students choosing the tracking programme on farm animals with an additional 10 weeks in the different clinics in Bern and 16 weeks in Zürich.
For preclinical training, students are exposed to practical training in live animals either in the intra-mural clinic or in external facilities (AVIFORUM for poultry for both campuses, Agrovet teaching farm for students of the Zürich campus). Additional experience could be obtained during Herd Health management weeks on both campuses.

3.1.4.2 Comments
The core curriculum regarding clinical sciences in food-producing animals differs in rotation and duration on the two campuses. At the campus of Zürich, students have excellent opportunities to acquire competences in bovine during preclinical training in the Agrovet teaching farm. At the campus of Bern, no premise like Agrovet was described for preclinical training in bovine leading to a suboptimal acquisition of preclinical skills in bovine. Students of both campuses have excellent opportunities to acquire competences in poultry with preclinical training in the Aviforum farm.

3.1.4.3 Suggestions
At the Bern campus, the acquisition of preclinical skills in bovine should be reinforced. It should be interesting to consider how students from the Bern campus could benefit from preclinical teaching at the Agrovet farm.

3.1.4.4. Decision
The VEE is partially compliant with Substandard 3.1.4 because of suboptimal pre-clinical training in bovine on the campus of Bern.

3.1.5. Food Safety and Quality

3.1.5.1. Findings

The emphasis on the part of the veterinary core curriculum that is mandatory for each student concentrates on theoretical education with additional visits to the slaughterhouse (4 hrs). FSQ related core subjects that are mandatory for each student, which are taught in the 3rd year by the same teachers in VEE Bern and Zürich are:

-Control of food, feed and animal by-products: 13 hrs, plus 6 hrs self-directed learning about the slaughtering processes (2 videos and e-learning tool);

-Food hygiene and microbiology: 11 hrs;

-Food technology: 6 hrs plus 4 hr trip to the slaughterhouse.

Together with FSQ related subjects, each student takes 40 hrs.

The topics related to FSQ are taught in the form of lectures (30 hrs) with the use of visual slide presentations, video files, self-study tasks and during the trip to a large pig abattoir (in Basel) in small groups.

The slaughterhouse internship is not mandatory for each student.

There is also a small abattoir (for slaughtering pigs and/or cattle) at the VEE, approved by the official veterinary authorities for commercial use, and students enrolled in the VPH track have practical classes there.

At the master level, the VPH track module in the 4th and 5th year includes different courses in meat production, i.e. food law, practical meat control, and practical slaughter monitoring. Students learn through seminars, self-study, practical exercises, and field trips. Each student of the VPH track also completes compulsory slaughterhouse and veterinary office internships of 10-21 days during the final semester.

There is a very low number of hours in the curriculum devoted to the FSQ area.

3.1.5.2. Comments

FSQ related subjects are taught mainly theoretically. There is no practical hands-on training on post-mortem examination of the main species of slaughter animals. The topics related to poultry slaughtering process and fish processing are taught only during the VPH track, which is not compulsory for each student. The VEE does not use any additional animal-origin materials for core teaching on FSQ. During visits to the pig slaughterhouse in Basel students only observe the process, without any hands-on activities. The post-mortem examination of cattle is taught only theoretically.

3.1.5.3. Suggestions for improvement

Each student should be exposed to more practical teaching in FSQ using i.e., the VEE's slaughterhouse, animal organs and laboratory classes.

3.1.5.4. Decision

The VEE is non-compliant with Substandard 3.1.5 because of insufficient training in Food Safety and Quality, which does not allow the students to acquire Day One Competences.

3.1.6. Professional Knowledge

3.1.6.1. Findings

Professional Knowledge is taught during the whole curriculum, in the core curriculum as well as after choosing elective courses. Besides specific courses, Professional Knowledge is also part of the daily activities in the clinics, during ambulatory visits and EPT. In more detail, teaching includes information literacy and data management, ethics and communication, practice management and economics, clinical practical training, ethology, animal welfare, herd health

management, and veterinary legislation including official controls, forensic veterinary medicine and certification. These courses (Table 3.1.2) are summed up to 547 hours (B) and 407 hours (ZH), which combined with the Master Thesis (Table 3.1.1) and EPT (Table 3.1.1 and 3.5.1) leads to a total of 1669 hours (B) and 1527 hours (ZH) of Professional Knowledge in the core curriculum, respectively. The elective courses in Bern, which are only offered during the bachelor programme, have an extent of 10 ECTS, while in Zürich the total size is 3 ECTS, which are compulsory credits. Students are encouraged to take additional electives, which can be signed out as ECTS exceeding the 60 ECTS/year. According to table 3.1.5., in Bern, practical training is the main focus of the elective courses related to Professional Knowledge. The focus in Zürich is on ethical issues (3 courses) and managing data and data science from a broad perspective (4 courses). All elective courses at both locations are open for students from both locations.
In the clinics, students are trained on many occasions in communication skills by communicating with students, teachers, and clients. Students participate in daily reports, and case-based and topic-based rounds. Fifth-year students collaborate with junior students or near peers. Students are using the e-portfolio system EPASS, which enables students to take responsibility for their learning progress, clarifying goals during clerkships, intramurally as well as extramurally. In Bern, principles of Herd Health Management (HHH) are trained in the bachelor programme during a visit to Aviforum Zollikofen (poultry), and also in lectures, seminars and supervised self-learning (88 hours). In the master's programme, HHH is taught to all students within the module Herd and population medicine, during practical rotations under academic staff supervision and in diverse elective courses. In Zürich, during year 1- year 4, in total 57 hours were allocated for HHH, using the teaching farm Agrovet Strickhof. Students in the farm animals' track participate in a rotation of 16 weeks, among others in the bovine and porcine herd health section, and in the ambulatory clinic. All students have access to the patient recording system in the clinics.

3.1.6.2. Comments
Professional skills are taught during both the core curriculum and elective courses, including the Master Thesis and EPT. The courses in the core curriculum have the same content in both locations of the VEE, but the diversity between the elective courses is wider. In Bern, the electives are scheduled during the whole curriculum, the emphasis is more on practical training. Students are enabled and obliged to make decisions on which topics they would like to receive additional training. In Zürich, elective courses are organised during the whole curriculum and more focused on data management, data science, and ethical issues. Students are encouraged to book a module in year 1. Students indicate that this early stage in their studies makes it difficult to choose the right electives. The total size of the required electives differs between both locations (Bern - 10; Zürich - 3 ECTS). The discrepancy is the result of a general policy within the University of Zürich. It is possible to exceed the 60 ECTS/ year by choosing electives. Herd Health Management is taught during the core curriculum (practical rotations, electives), and also in the farm animal track. The teaching farm Agrovet Strickhof is an excellent location for teaching students, not least because of its highly motivated personnel.

3.1.6.3. Suggestions for improvement
None

3.1.6.4 Decision
The VEE is compliant with Sub-standard 3.6.1.

Standard 3.2: Each study programme provided by the VEE must be competency-based and designed so that it meets the objectives set for it, including the intended learning outcomes. The qualification resulting from a programme must be clearly specified and communicated and must 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.
The VEE must provide proof of a QA system that promotes and monitors the presence of an academic environment highly conducive to learning including self-learning. Details of the type, provision and updating of appropriate learning opportunities for the students must be clearly described, as well as the involvement of students.
The VEE must also describe how it encourages and prepares students for self-learning and lifelong learning.

3.2.1. Findings

The VEE's curriculum is designed to be competency-based, ensuring that it aligns with the objectives set out by both the national qualifications framework and the European Higher Education Area. The implementation of the curriculum at the VEE's two locations is guided by the VET-PROFILES framework, which defines the key competences and learning outcomes required for veterinary graduates in Switzerland. In the VET-PROFILES framework, Entrustable Professional Activities (EPAs) serve as a tool for assessing whether veterinary students have achieved the necessary competences to be trusted to perform specific professional tasks without direct supervision. Each EPA represents a unit of professional practice that integrates multiple competences (knowledge, skills, attitudes) and is observable and measurable. The curriculum is structured to build students' knowledge and skills progressively, starting with foundational sciences and advancing to complex clinical problem-solving, enhancing their SDL skills and ensuring that graduates are fully prepared to enter all recognized branches of the veterinary profession.
The VEE promotes Self-Directed Learning (SDL) through a curriculum that includes mandatory research projects and internships, where students independently explore veterinary topics, formulate research questions, and apply their knowledge in real-world settings. Additionally, case studies and Problem-Based Learning (PBL) are integrated into the teaching methods, requiring students to solve real-life scenarios by identifying learning needs, seeking relevant information, and applying their knowledge. The use of e-portfolios (EPASS) is also integrated into SDL for reflecting on clinical experiences.
The VEE offers a variety of continuing education programs; supporting the principle of lifelong learning of veterinarians throughout their careers including specialist training programs that combine practical training with academic coursework, such as certifications in areas like veterinary anesthesiology, internal medicine, or pathology. Additionally, the VEE provides doctoral programmes (Dr. med. vet.) and PhD programmes in collaboration with the Graduate Schools of the University of Bern and Zurich, allowing candidates to engage in advanced research. Moreover, Certificate of Advanced Studies (CAS) programmes, such as the CAS in One Health, are available to provide interdisciplinary knowledge that integrates veterinary, human, and environmental health. For the involvement of external stakeholders, particularly in the design and continuous improvement of continuing education, a more systematic and transparent approach could be implemented to ensure that external feedback is regularly incorporated for updates and QA processes.

3.2.2. Comments

The VEE has designed its study programmes to be competency-based, in line with the VET-PROFILES framework, ensuring that the students acquire the necessary skills and knowledge to perform professional tasks independently. SDL is supported by research projects, internships, and the use of e-portfolios. Furthermore, the VEE supports lifelong learning through its diverse continuing education programs, including specialist certifications, doctoral programmes, and interdisciplinary CAS programmes such as One Health.

3.2.3. Suggestions for improvement

The VEE is suggested to improve the systematic incorporation of external stakeholder feedback into the continuous development and the QA processes of these programmes, ensuring they remain relevant and aligned with the needs of the veterinary profession and society.

3.2.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Standard 3.2.

Standard 3.3: Programme learning outcomes must:

- **ensure the effective alignment of all content, teaching, learning and assessment activities of the degree programme to form a cohesive framework**
- **include a description of Day One Competences**
- **form the basis for explicit statements of the objectives and learning outcomes of individual units of study**
- **be communicated to staff and students**
- **be regularly reviewed, managed and updated to ensure they remain relevant, adequate and are effectively achieved.**

3.3.1. Findings

The programme is designed as competency-based and aligned with the VET-PROFILES framework, which defines the key competences and EPAs necessary for veterinary graduates. These competences are aligned with the D1C, ensuring that graduates are well-prepared for the profession. Learning outcomes for each module are detailed, categorised according to Bloom's taxonomy, and communicated to both staff and students through course syllabi and digital curriculum mapping tools (CTS and LOOOP). Two key digital curriculum mapping tools are employed in the process, which are CTS (Curriculum Tracking System) and LOOOP (Learning Outcome-Oriented Organizational Process). CTS allows for the systematic tracking and management of the curriculum, which also facilitates the communication of learning outcomes to both staff and students, making it clear how each course fits into the broader educational framework. LOOOP in Zürich allows for the detailed mapping of competences, ensuring that they are integrated into teaching and assessment activities across the programme, which similarly supports the review and updating of learning outcomes, ensuring that the competences remain relevant and aligned. ILIAS and OLAT, resp., are learning management systems used by Bern and Zurich, respectively, which serves as a platform where students can access course syllabi, lecture materials, assignments, and other academic resources. They are also used for communication between students and staff, and for managing various aspects of the educational process. Vorlesungsverzeichnis (VVZ) is the course catalogue system used in Zürich, providing information about courses, including syllabi, schedules, and examination requirements. VVZ is a central tool for students to plan their studies and ensure they meet all curriculum requirements.

The refinement or modification of the general learning outcomes under VET-PROFILES is managed by the Curriculum Committee and subsequently approved by local faculty assemblies and the VEE Assembly. Curriculum-related updates are communicated internally to staff through faculty assemblies, with documentation available on relevant websites. Students are informed of these changes at the start of their studies and each academic year via the student affairs offices. External stakeholders are kept informed through the VEE websites, traditional media, introductory courses for extramural supervisors, and the involvement of Swiss Veterinary Society representative (GST-Gesellschaft Schweizer Tierärztinnen und Tierärzte), who is on the Curriculum Committee.

3.3.2. Comments

The VEE's curriculum is well-structured, competency-based, and aligned with the VET-PROFILES framework, ensuring that graduates meet the D1C required for veterinary practice. Learning outcomes are communicated to both staff and students through various digital platforms, such as CTS, LOOOP, ILIAS, OLAT and VVZ, which facilitate curriculum tracking and management. While external stakeholders are informed of curriculum changes, there is potential to further systematize their involvement (especially external stakeholders besides GST) in the ongoing review and refinement of the program.

3.3.3. Suggestions for improvement

The VEE would benefit from an improved process for regular updates and management of the syllabi, which could be more clearly defined and consistently applied across both Bern and Zürich campuses to ensure uniformity and coherence in the educational experience provided to students.

3.3.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Standard 3.3.

Standard 3.4: The VEE 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**
- **perform on going and periodic review of the curriculum at least every seven years by involving staff, students and stakeholders; these reviews must lead to continuous improvement. Any action taken or planned as a result of such a review must be communicated to all those concerned**
- **identify and meet training needs for all types of staff, maintaining and enhancing their competence for the ongoing curriculum development.**

3.4.1. Findings

The Vetsuisse Curriculum Committee is comprised of representatives from both Bern and Zürich campuses, including professors, junior academic staff, student affairs offices and students, with a non-voting representative from the Swiss Veterinary Society (GST). The committee is responsible for developing and refining the curriculum, ensuring it aligns with strategic goals and meets the required standards. The Curriculum Committee regularly reviews the curriculum based on

feedback from students, teaching staff, graduates, and external stakeholders. This feedback is collected through course evaluations, examination results, and external reviews. The committee then submits recommendations for curricular changes, which are approved by the local faculty assemblies and the VEE Assembly. The involvement of examination committees in the evaluation of performance controls further reinforces the VEE to ensure that the curriculum remains relevant and effective.
Data from various examinations and assessments, both formative and summative, are analysed to evaluate student performance, the effectiveness of teaching methods, and the alignment of course content with the intended learning outcomes. Results from these assessments are reviewed by the Curriculum Committee and other relevant faculty bodies. The outcomes of these assessments and any resulting curriculum changes are communicated to students, staff, and stakeholders through various channels, including faculty meetings, student affairs offices, and digital platforms like CTS and LOOOP. Bern employs a structured evaluation process for its courses, beginning with an interim evaluation using a standardized questionnaire provided to lecturers midway through the semester. This interim evaluation is primarily formative, allowing for timely adjustments to enhance the course before its completion. For the final evaluation, a standardized, shortened questionnaire is used across both campuses and teaching methods, ensuring consistency and comparability. This final evaluation process, which is conducted according to binding evaluation plans, ensures that all courses are evaluated on a three-year cycle, contributing to the continuous improvement of the curriculum.

3.4.2. Comments
The VEE has implemented a comprehensive committee structure, particularly through the Curriculum Committee, which effectively manages and reviews the curriculum across its campuses. This structure ensures that the curriculum is regularly updated based on feedback, with clear communication channels in place. Examination data are systematically analysed to inform curriculum adjustments, supporting continuous improvement.

3.4.3. Suggestions for improvement
While there is a strong system in place for internal communication, the VEE should take the opportunity to further systematize the process for involving and informing external stakeholders (besides GST) about curriculum changes and evaluation outcomes to enhance the overall effectiveness of the programme.

3.4.4. Decision
The VEE is compliant with Standard 3.4.

Standard 3.5: External Practical Training (EPT) is compulsory training activities organised outside the VEE, 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, herd health management, practical training in FSQ and VPH).
Since the veterinary degree is a professional qualification with Day One Competences, EPT must complement and strengthen the academic education inter alia by enhancing student's professional knowledge.

3.5.1. Findings

In Bern, the EPT is scheduled for 2 weeks in each semester from year 2 to year 4 (table 3.1.5. in the SER). The students are free to choose where they go. In Zürich, students gain experience in veterinary clinical practice during 2 weeks in year 1 as preparation for the EPT in the final year. In year 2 to year 4, 2 days EPT are scheduled in clinics. All these EPTs are largely focused on communication, workplace ethics, and teamwork. For students of the farm animal track, EPT in an agricultural training placement is mandatory (Bern 3, ZH 2 weeks) from year 1 to year 3, but all students are invited to complete this training. In Bern, students can receive up to 3 ECTS for this training as an elective course. In this training, they become familiar with husbandry and handling of farm animals as well as general workflows in this field. All these training locations are commercial (private) farms all over Switzerland, and the students are free to select any farm. The farmer needs to be accredited to train students. There are no contracts in place between farmers, students, or the VEE. In semesters 9-11, students undertake EPT for 12 weeks, mostly in clinical disciplines. The focus is on client communication, history taking, record keeping, clinical examination and procedures. Students of the VPH track have a 10-week EPT in FSQ and VPH, of which 31 days are mandatory (10 days at the slaughterhouse, and 21 days in a veterinary office). Additional EPTs can be chosen from a list of EPT providers in Food Safety and Public Health. Providers evaluate students at the end of their EPT and provide written confirmation about the achievement of learning outcomes. Finally, the student affairs office checks that all documents are in place and that the training has been successfully completed. Students are in contact with the professor who keeps records and collects feedback about EPTs. Non-VPH track students can perform such EPTs during their mandatory 12 weeks EPT.

3.5.2. Comments

It is commended that all students have the possibility to gain experience on commercial farms at the bachelor level, which enhances the orientation on the future work field and provides a feeling of agricultural farms before choosing their track. Moreover, the students have a high degree of freedom when choosing farms. This training is mandatory for students on the farm animal track. The fact that the allocated time for EPT differs between both locations is to be noted.

3.5.3. Suggestions for improvement

None.

3.5.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Standard 3.5.

Standard 3.6: The EPT providers must have an agreement with the VEE and the student (in order to state 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 VEE on the EPT programme.
There must be a member of the academic staff responsible for the overall supervision of the EPT, including liaison with EPT providers.

3.6.1. Findings

EPT providers have a contractual agreement with the VEE as well as with the individual student, in which mutual expectations and obligations are regulated. Each provider nominates a supervisor who assesses the student and functions as the student's mentor. Besides a minimum of 5 years of professional experience, supervisors must show willingness and interest in teaching. The

supervisor is responsible for negotiating the goals and expectations of both parties. The student completes a digital Work Based Assessment (WBA), which is directly discussed with the supervisor so that students can perform them again, if needed, to improve their skills. At the end, the WBA is digitally transmitted to the VEE. In cooperation with the GST (Swiss Society of Veterinarians), the VEE offers the EPT supervisors professional development activities regarding goals, expectations, and student assessment. This year, a pilot has started for external evaluation of the EPT. Members of the academic staff of the local student affairs offices oversee and coordinate all EPT activities.

3.6.2. Comments

It is commended that the Swiss Society of Veterinarians takes a role in the professional development activities of supervisors, but also the fact that a pilot of an external evaluation of EPT has been started this year. This indicates the importance of EPT as part of the veterinary curriculum. Agreements are in place between EPT providers, students and VEE. Evaluations of the performance of students take place by a Work Based Assessment (WBA). After a discussion of the WBA with the supervisor, students get the possibility to improve their skills if their performance is not quite satisfactory.

3.6.3. Suggestions for improvement

None

3.6.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Standard 3.6.

Standard 3.7: 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 VEE and evaluating the EPT. Students must be allowed to complain officially and/or anonymously about issues occurring during EPT. The VEE must have a system of QA to monitor the implementation, progress and then feedback within the EPT activities.

3.7.1. Findings

Students select one or more placements for their EPT. If it mainly involves some kind of veterinary activity, they have the freedom to choose placements. The e-portfolio (EPASS) is crucial in managing learning objectives. The goals and expectations are agreed between the student and the supervisor. At the end of the training, objectives are reached. It is the responsibility of students to prepare the EPT in a suitable manner. The EPT provider checks together with the student if the (previously agreed) learning goals have been met and gives feedback on the competences developed by the student and on the internship in general. Implementation, progress and then feedback are included in the system of QA.

3.7.2. Comments

It is commended that students are encouraged and responsible for organising their EPT. This offers the possibility that the students choose EPT training close to their fields of interest. The EPASS system offers the opportunity, also during EPT, to show the development of students in their professional performance, meeting goals and actions taken to improve skills.
Complaints of students can be adequately addressed.

3.7.3. Suggestions for improvement

It would be beneficial to use the current evaluation tools for EPT (e.g. EPASS) more regularly and effectively. EPT supervisors and students could be further encouraged to improve the quality of assessments in the EPASS. A more detailed survey targeting EPT providers, coupled with comprehensive mechanisms for analysing the results, might be helpful. This approach would enhance understanding of provider experiences and identify areas for improvement in educational practices and outcomes.

3.7.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Standard 3.7.

Area 4. Facilities and equipment

Standard 4.1: All aspects of the physical facilities must provide an environment conducive to learning, including internet access. The veterinary VEE must have a clear strategy and programme for maintaining and upgrading its buildings and equipment. Facilities must comply with all relevant legislation including health, safety, biosecurity, accessibility to people with reduced mobility, and EU animal welfare and care standards.

4.1.1. Findings

Both the Bern and Zürich campuses are located in a peripheral part of the city, but a few minutes by public transportation from the train station and the freeway exit. Bern campus has some buildings located outside the campus, such as part of the Institute for Equine Medicine (ISME, in Avenches), the ambulatory clinic for ruminants, part of the Institute of Virology and Immunology (IVI), the Institute of Bee Health, the Division of Veterinary Physiology and the Centre for Proper Housing of Poultry and Rabbits, which are all reachable by car or public transport in about 30 minutes. A similar situation exists in Zürich, where the external parts are mainly offices and laboratories of some preclinical Institutes, and the competence centre in agriculture, foods and economics.

All University buildings belong to the respective Canton, which is responsible for upgrading and building new facilities, and each campus has a Construction and Building Committee that collaborates with Canton authorities. A systematic condition assessment is carried out approximately every 20 years and structural adjustments and maintenance are assessed annually. Compliance with legislation is ensured, reviewed and verified by authorities.

Maintenance and acquisition of new equipment and biosecurity are undertaken on the two campuses separately. At the Bern Campus, there is a plan for the maintenance and acquisition of the equipment, which is in response to the needs of the Departments. The Financial Committee of the Faculty proposes an investment list, which is finally approved by the Faculty Board. A similar system applies in Zürich where the planning and building committee decides the funding source for the equipment needs (at the Faculty as operating cost or at the University as investment fund). At both campuses, major constructions are ongoing and also foreseen for the next 10 to 20 years.

4.1.2. Comments

The Bern and Zürich campuses are very well located, however, some premises are small for clinical and teaching needs. This is why additional external locations are currently being used to

compensate for this situation. The major constructions and renewal foreseen for the next years will surely improve the general context of the University, although a long time is needed to see the end of the plan. The finalisation of the buildings that are under construction will improve the restrictions in space.
In the meanwhile, the location of some of the facilities away from the campus may represent a point of weakness for the organisation of the students' life.
On both campuses, EU animal welfare and care standards are followed adequately**.** Likewise, the equipment in the facilities, especially in the clinics, is of high quality and well-maintained.
Biosecurity is managed differently in the two Campuses, and different biosecurity protocols and committees are responsible for this issue in the two different locations.

4.1.3. Suggestions for improvement
A global biosecurity committee that regularly reviews biosecurity policies and implementation in both campuses is advisable in order to harmonise biosecurity at both locations.

4.1.4. Decision
The VEE is compliant with Standard 4.1.

Standard 4.2: 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. Students must have ready access to adequate and sufficient study, self-learning, recreation, locker, sanitary and food service facilities.
Offices, teaching preparation and research laboratories must be sufficient for the needs of the academic and support staff.

4.2.1. Findings
On the Bern campus, lecture theatres with an adequate number of seats are present, and a larger theatre is available for larger events in the nearby Roll campus (a 5-minute walk). All the lecture halls are equipped with digital signal lines, beamers or big screens and both centres have the possibility to podcast. In Zürich, lectures for year 1 students take place at the Irchel campus, students of the years 2 to 4 can attend their courses at the campus, while the courses of the last semesters are held in small students' groups in research and diagnostic laboratories.
An adequate number of microscopes is available at both sites. Small rooms are present at both sites for group work and seminars. A post-mortem hall for necropsies is available at both locations, and a slaughterhouse is also present in Zürich.
The space for self-learning and study is limited in both centres, especially in the Bern campus. Even though the libraries are open 24/7, the space for study is mainly represented by the lecture halls and seminar rooms, when they are not occupied by theoretical lessons.
On the Bern campus, major projects for expansion and renewal of the isolation unit for ruminants and horses and for the DIP building are planned to be concluded in the next 20 years. There is some shortage of laboratories and offices that will be managed with temporary buildings planned to be active for the next 20 years while waiting for more definitive ones to be built. On the Zürich campus, an additional group of buildings is being created and several actions are currently ongoing such as the repair and expansion of the equine clinic, and repair of the buildings (the Institute of Parasitology, Virology and Bacteriology, the Diagnostic Centre and Childcare unit) started in 2024, even though major constructions are foreseen by 2030s.

There are lockers for students throughout the campuses (400 in Bern, 443 in Zürich), although not always properly located with regards to biosecurity, as well as sanitary infrastructures.
A canteen is available on the Zürich campus. On the Bern Campus, no canteen is available for students and staff.
Both campuses offer offices and IT infrastructures for all employees, which are strategically located for the respective working areas.
Both campuses have space problems (including offices, laboratories and clinical premises) considering the number of employees, which are planned to be solved in the next years as part of the major constructions.

4.2.2. Comments

Facilities in both Bern and Zürich campuses are suboptimal in size in relation to the actual number of students. On both campuses, there is a need to increase the spaces for both students and staff. The small rooms present at both sites for group work and seminars are suboptimal for the number of students. The VEE is trying to compensate for this need for more space by using other locations, although the movement of the students for this reason is not the most advisable measure. Likewise, the limited space affects the staff and, in some cases such as equine clinics, affects the clinical activities, so it must be compensated.
Lockers in some clinical areas are missing or are inadequately located.
A canteen is missing at the Bern campus, so students and staff have to bring their own food.

4.2.3. Suggestions for improvement

To solve the existing space problems in different areas of the VEE, it is advisable that the new constructions be finished and made available as soon as possible on both campuses, thus providing more space for self-learning and laboratories for students and more space for staff within their own campuses. Furthermore, investment in new premises for self-learning, clinical activities on both campuses, as well as a canteen in Bern are suggested.

4.2.4. Decision

The VEE is partially compliant with Standard 4.2 due to suboptimal space allowance for students and staff in the teaching facilities on both campuses and the recreation area in Bern.

Standard 4.3: The livestock facilities, animal housing, core clinical teaching facilities and equipment used by the VEE for teaching purposes must:

- **be sufficient in capacity and adapted for the number of students enrolled in order to allow safe hands-on training for all students**
- **be of a high standard, well maintained and fit for the purpose**
- **promote best husbandry, welfare and management practices**
- **ensure relevant biosecurity and bio-containment**
- **be designed to enhance learning.**

4.3.1. Findings

Both campuses are individually organised to perform teaching, clinical services and research.
Many premises for animal housing are available on both campuses, including research animals. Healthy small animals can be housed only on the Zürich campus, while equines and pigs can be hosted in both Bern and Zürich. Many small research animals (rats, mice, fish) can be housed on both campuses, and Zürich also has room for research dogs, cats, and small ruminants. Very few

cows can be hosted on the Bern campus.
For hospitalised small animals, equines, ruminants and pigs, adequate housing is available at both campuses. In Zürich, housing for Exotic Pets, Zoo Animals and Wildlife is also available.
All the clinics are well constructed, maintained and very well equipped with state-of-the-art equipment. Operating room cameras are available on both campuses for real time projection of surgery during lectures. In Zürich, Zoo and Exotic pets have their own facility, which is not present in Bern. There is not a slaughterhouse on the Bern campus and students in the Veterinary Public Health track course spend a minimum of 2 weeks in external Swiss slaughterhouses.
The premises for clinical and diagnostic activity are well equipped and maintained for small animals, equines and ruminants, although in Bern a freezer room (-20°C) for the pathology/necropsy service is not present.
Biosecurity is managed on both campuses separately, and within each campus Departments and Clinics have their own biosecurity committees. Both staff and students are trained on biosecurity, with each student having to read the specific biosecurity guidelines before starting a new service. No clear indications (signalling, posted rules) were found in front of the core clinical teaching facilities showing the appropriate biosecurity procedures to be followed.

4.3.2. Comments
Facilities on both campuses are well equipped and maintained and conform to the highest standards, but not always adequate in size to host the number of students and hospitalised animals (e.g. horses in Zürich).
Biosecurity measures are inconsistently implemented across most core clinical teaching facilities, except in the diagnostic imaging and clinical pathology units on both campuses, where protocols are adequately followed, but clear signage and enforcement of procedures are suboptimal in several areas.

4.3.3. Suggestions for improvement
Biosecurity and biosafety policies should be revised and implemented in each relevant unit on both campuses to ensure biosecurity and security provisions.

4.3.4. Decision
The VEE is partially compliant with Standard 4.3 because the core clinical teaching facilities on both campuses are sub-optimally maintained with respect to biosecurity and bio-containment.

Standard 4.4: Core clinical teaching facilities must be provided in a veterinary teaching hospital (VTH) with 24/7 emergency services at least for companion animals and equines. Within the VTH, the VEE must 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, on-call service must be available if emergency services do not exist for those species in a VTH.
The VEE must ensure state-of-the-art standards of teaching clinics which remain comparable with or exceeding the best available in the private sector.
The VTH and any hospitals, practices and facilities (including EPT) which are involved with the curriculum must meet the relevant national Practice Standards.

4.4.1. Findings

The Small Animal Clinic of both campuses offers specialised clinical services from Monday to Friday, including first opinion consultations, specialist consultations in internal medicine, surgery, neurology, dermatology and cardiology. Both campuses offer a 24/7/365 service, with board-certified specialists in many specialities. The out-of-hours service is run by residents and interns of the different specialties together with nurses and students, backed up by specialist senior staff. In the Small Animal Hospital on the Zürich campus, there are specialised sections covering medical and radiation oncology, neurology and neurosurgery and exotic pets, zoo and wildlife.

Each VTH has its own local electronic clinical information system, where students have access to all the information about clinical cases that are regularly registered. Students are also requested to take the case history and perform the physical examination of each patient, to report data into the local electronic clinical information system (Polypoint in Bern, Vetera in Zürich) and to discuss the case with the clinician on duty; however, the students do not have any obligation on report writing.

The equine clinics of both campuses receive cases during working days from 8:00 am to 5:00 or 6:00 pm and include first opinion consultations as well as specialised consultations. During their clinical rotations, students in year 5 visit the patients, discussing diagnosis and therapy. The students are involved in the clinical activities, especially during the track rotations. The emergency service is available on both campuses, and students help run the activities of the service, including participating in the surgical procedures. The ISME centre also offers services for equine reproduction and sports medicine. Electronic systems for clinical information are used on both campuses, and they are available to students.

A clinic for small and large ruminants and new world camelids is available 24/7 on both campuses, with board-certified specialists in different related disciplines running the day service and being on call or as a backup during emergency hours. Students are involved in these services. Both clinics offer ambulatory services for neighbouring farms (120 farms), where students can participate during their last 3 semesters of clinical practice.

For swine and pet pigs, a stationary clinic is available 24/7 on both campuses, and a swine herd health section performs about 40-50 herd visits per year. The herd visits are carried out together with students using a specific software (PHIS).

Anaesthesia services are available on both campuses, covering 24/7 availability for all animal species, although focused on small animals and equines. Anaesthesia services are supervised by board-certified diplomats.

4.4.2. Comments

The Veterinary Teaching Hospitals on both campuses offer very well-equipped premises that ensure that standards of education and clinical research are compliant with all ESEVT Standards. Emergency services are open 24/7 mainly for small animals and equines on both campuses and for bovines in Bern.

Diagnostic imaging facilities on both campuses and the oncology radiotherapy unit in Zürich are exceptional, with the latter being considered one of the best in the world in veterinary medicine. Likewise, the central diagnostic clinical pathology laboratories are outstanding.

It is also commendable that in the majority of the hospital services, there is a large number of European diplomats in charge. There are numerous ongoing European residency programmes, which allow students to have direct access to the highest professional standards in veterinary medicine.

4.4.3. Suggestions for improvement
A single clinical registration software might be used for both campuses, to allow a better exchange of cases between the two locations of the VEE.

4.4.4. Decision
The VEE is compliant with standard 4.4.

Standard 4.5: The VEE must ensure that students have access to a broad range of diagnostic and therapeutic facilities, including but not limited to: diagnostic imaging, anaesthesia, clinical pathology, intensive/critical care, surgeries and treatment facilities, ambulatory services, pharmacy and necropsy facilities.

4.5.1. Findings
The VEE offers a wide range of healthcare premises including hospitals, ambulatory clinics, and necropsy services, for all animal species, including exotic pets, wildlife, and zoo animals on both campuses. Students can take an active part in the clinical activities on different animal species, are supervised by experienced professionals and have full access to advanced equipment, such as radiography, ultrasonography, CT, MRI, and a state-of-the-art linear accelerator on the Zürich campus. Critical care and necropsy services are available for all animal species. Students actively participate in treatment decisions and the dispensing process, gaining comprehensive practical experience.

4.5.2. Comments
The Clinical facilities of both campuses are very well equipped and managed to provide students with hands-on experience through a diverse clinical caseload. Students have access to high-quality and advanced equipment under highly qualified staff supervision.

4.5.3. Suggestions for improvement
None

4.5.4. Decision
The VEE is compliant with standard 4.4.

Standard 4.6: 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 and for prevention of spread of infectious agents. They must be adapted to all animal species commonly handled in the VTH.

4.6.1. Findings
On the Bern Campus, the small animal clinic has a quarantine room on the ground floor for screening potentially infected animals, which does not have access to the outside. This room is not constructed, ventilated, nor operated as a real isolation room that prevents the spread of infectious agents. In addition, an isolation unit is located on the first floor, with a separate entrance from the clinic, including a room reserved for patients infected with multidrug-resistant bacteria in a separate section. Ventilation in this isolation facility is not separated from the rest of the hospital. There are

no signs or posters indicating the protocols necessary to enter and exit these isolation facilities.
The Bern equine hospital has its isolation unit as well, with a separate changing area. The ventilation system and the waste drainage system are not separated from the rest of the facility. Furthermore, there were no signs or protocols posted to instruct students and staff regarding the biosecurity procedures and the biosecurity flow.
In Bern, there is also an isolation unit for farm animals. A rebuilding of this facility to fulfil the VEE requirements is planned to be implemented in 2028.
On the Zürich campus, the VTH has an isolation unit for small animals and one for exotic animals, which are equipped and operating. The available space for hospitalising small animals that need isolation is limited when there is a need to hospitalise animals carrying multidrug-resistant bacteria. Ventilation and drainage are not separated from the rest of the hospital, but HEPA filters are present in the small animal, exotic and wildlife unit. In addition to this isolation unit, there is a room used for patient triage, which is actually used as an isolation facility for some animals, mainly for cats.
Isolation premises are available in the equine clinic in Zürich. The isolation premises are located close to non-infectious hospitalised horses. Ventilation and drainage are not separated from the neighbouring facilities. Posted signs and protocols were not present in these isolation facilities.
In Zürich, a farm animal isolation facility is also available, with no indication of biosecurity measures implemented. On both campuses, there is no clear identification of the trolleys used to evacuate faeces and sewage from the equine and farm animal isolation units.

4.6.2. Comments

Isolation facilities are present on both campuses, however, on the Bern campus, isolation facilities for small animals, equine and farm animals are neither adequately ventilated nor are they adequately operated. Similarly, the isolation facility for farm animals does not fulfil the quality and number of places to meet the needs of the VEE. As it is now, the water coming from the cleaning of the isolation unit flows directly outside the building without any separate collection measure.
In Zürich, isolation facilities are present, however, the ventilation and drainage of water in the isolation facilities are inadequate. Not all facilities have floor and wall signage indicating the biosafety protocols all personnel (students and staff) must follow. The room used for patient triage serving as an isolation facility for cats is neither constructed nor operated as an isolated area. The biosecurity procedures are inadequately implemented in the farm animal isolation.

4.6.3. Suggestions for improvement

On both campuses, the ventilation and sewage water evacuation system of the isolation units should be adapted to guarantee the prevention of infectious agents' spill.
All isolation facilities must have appropriate floor signage and wall posters that clearly and easily indicate the procedures to follow for using the facility. Instructions must be visible to anyone using the isolation room to ensure the correct flow to enter and leave the facility, to avoid dissemination of infectious agents.
Additionally, a system for collecting biosafety failures should be implemented in all the isolation facilities to identify where biosafety weak points are. This will allow for the correction of errors to prevent future biosafety failures in the facilities.

4.6.4. Decision

The VEE is non-compliant with Standard 4.6 because isolation facilities are operated inadequately to prevent the spread of infectious agents on both campuses.

Standard 4.7: The VEE 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.

4.7.1. Findings
Field Veterinary Medicine and Herd Health Management are taught to all students through modules, core and track practical rotations, and elective courses under academic supervision. Individual animal care is covered in the ambulatory clinic during farm animal rotations, which is mandatory for farm animal track students and voluntary for core rotations. Herd health visits are part of the rotation, with students participating in herd visits, clinical data analysis, and oral presentations. Vehicles equipped with necessary tools and medications support herd health and individual animal care, with both Bern and Zürich clinics providing field practice through specialised vehicles.

4.7.2. Comments
Students in the VEE have the opportunity to participate in the ambulatory clinics; however, student participation in the core rotations is not as extensive as in the track rotations.

4.7.3. Suggestions for improvement
It would be ideal that all students were more exposed to any veterinary activity, regardless of the chosen track. Similarly, it would be beneficial to increase student participation in the core rotations in all the ambulatory clinics.

4.7.4. Decision
The VEE is compliant with Standard 4.7.

Standard 4.8: 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.

4.8.1. Findings
The number of vehicles for the students and staff transport is adequate on both campuses and corresponds to the safety requirements, which are regulated by national and international laws.
Two vehicles in Bern and one in Zürich are dedicated to the transport of material of animal origin. Cadavers weighing more than 200 kg in Bern and all the cadavers in Zürich are collected by a specialised external service; in both locations, they are moved within the campus with forklifts.

4.8.2. Comments
The vehicles for the transportation of students, staff and materials of animal origin are adequate in number and equipment for both locations of the VEE. The vehicles are clean and properly equipped with the necessary materials.

4.8.3. Suggestions for improvement
None.

4.8.4. Decision
The VEE is compliant with Standard 4.8.

Standard 4.9: Operational policies and procedures (including e.g. biosecurity, good laboratory practice and good clinical practice) must be taught and posted for students, staff and visitors and a Biosafety manual must be available. The VEE must demonstrate a clear commitment for the delivery of biosafety and biosecurity, e.g. by a specific committee structure. The VEE must have a system of QA to monitor and ensure clinical, laboratory and farm services, including a regular monitoring of the feedback from students, staff and clients.

4.9.1. Findings

At the VEE, biosecurity responsibilities are managed by individual departments, each with its own manual, aligned with local university or respective Canton requirements (Bern, Zürich). Students receive initial biosecurity training at the start of their bachelor's studies, covering risks, personal hygiene, protective measures, etc. Further education occurs at the beginning of the master´s degree programmes.

In 2023, the University of Bern implemented "Safely," an online tool for managing biosafety tasks and regulations. Each department must appoint biosecurity, chemical safety, and health officers, who collaborate with the central biosafety unit. Departments have their own biosecurity committees and officers. Each institution assigns a staff member to instruct new personnel, and new staff must sign a document after biosafety training if working in the laboratories.

At the University of Zürich, biosafety officers oversee safety measures in pathobiology, veterinary public health, and biomedical sciences. They handle waste management, post-mortem examinations, and compliance with national and international standards, including Good Laboratory Practices (GLP). Accredited institutes like Food Safety and Hygiene, Veterinary Pathology, Virology, Clinical Pathology diagnostic laboratory and Parasitology follow strict biosafety protocols and undergo regular audits. Each institute has a safety handbook and operates under biosafety levels 1-3.

The University Animal Hospital (on both campuses) has a hygiene task force managing animal isolation, disinfection, and infection control.

The biosafety measures and protocols were not posted and implemented in all necessary premises.

Radioprotection in the Hospitals of both campuses is under Swiss legislation in radiation protection. Students must participate in lectures regarding radiation protection during their first year, and they can achieve (non-mandatory) the official Swiss radiation protection certificate.

4.9.2. Comments

Both campuses have thorough biosecurity policies depending on the facilities, however, they do not completely ensure that the written rules and procedures for clinical activities and research are conducted in a proper biosecurity framework for students, staff and environment.

On both campuses, there are biosafety protocols and different biosafety officers; however, especially in the respective hospitals (Bern and Zürich), there is inadequate implementation of biosafety measures and protocols. On both campuses, signage and posting biosecurity procedures were present in some of the facilities such as diagnostic imaging in equine and small animal clinic and the central clinical pathology laboratories; but were insufficient in many others such as triage room, ICU, surgery rooms and isolation facilities in small animal clinic; and in surgery rooms and isolation facilities in equine and farm animal clinics.

Implementation of the biosafety policies in the preclinical and clinical areas on both campuses is insufficient. Students and staff do not systematically and routinely follow the respective biosafety protocol consistently in all the units of the campus.

On both campuses, students are not properly instructed on biosecurity protocols related to clinics; the students wear, throughout the campuses, including the Canteen in Zürich, scrubs, boots and clinical clothes. Likewise, there were several students in both equine clinics without safety shoes.

4.9.3. Suggestions for improvement

The VEE is suggested to review the biosafety policies, protocols and committees involved in the biosecurity. The protocols must be implemented in all facilities. In all preclinical and clinical areas where specific protocols for the flow of people and animals are required, clear and precise signage of the measures to be followed should be posted, along with a summary of the protocol on the wall. Personal protective equipment should be available at the entrance of each facility, and the collection containers for this equipment should be readily available and periodically checked.
Likewise, a registration system must be established in each facility to record possible biosecurity breaches. These breaches must be analysed and corrected in each facility. The responsibility for maintaining biosecurity should not fall solely on those directly responsible and the biosecurity committees, but on all personnel of the VEE, including both students and staff.
It would also be beneficial that the biosecurity protocols are harmonised between Bern and Zürich campuses.

4.9.4. Decision

The VEE is non-compliant with Standard 4.9 due to inadequate implementation and monitoring of biosecurity procedures on both campuses.

Area 5. Animal resources and teaching material of animal origin

Standard 5.1: The number and variety of healthy and diseased animals, cadavers, and materials of animal origin must be adequate for providing the practical and safe hands-on training (in the areas of Basic Sciences, Clinical Sciences, Pathology, Animal Production, Food Safety and Quality) and adapted to the number of students enrolled.
Evidence must be provided that these data are regularly recorded and that procedures are in place for correcting any deficiencies.

5.1.1. Findings

Students are in contact with animals in the very early stages of the bachelor programme. For small animals, in both locations, animals used in preclinical training are dogs or cats owned by students or staff. The equine clinics own a few horses (4 in Bern and 7 in Zürich), but most of the horses used for educational activities are patients of the clinics. For farm animals, the Bern campus only has one cow for preclinical training, mainly using patients in the clinic for this training, except for the EPT in farming and handling of farm animals (farm animal track). Students have the opportunity to be in contact with poultry in a dedicated flock (Aviforum Zollikofen) during preclinical rotations. In Zürich, students are taught on a teaching farm (Agrovet) with a large herd of dairy cows and full access to data. For swine, there is a small sow herd in Zürich.
Before entering the clinic, students must learn some procedures in the skills labs and during preclinical laboratory sessions. They are assessed for the acquisition of these competences before being allowed to perform any procedure on live animals.
Both sites hold skills labs, even if some differences between the two locations are seen. Access is free under appointment.

The clinics in each location receive numerous animals for the different species. Students have access to those clinical cases. The number of patients in each species is well above the ESEVT indicator values. Small animals are mainly referral cases. In the equine clinics, most patients are referral cases, but some first-opinion cases are available, especially in the Avenches location. Only students from Bern have access to these equine cases for the core curriculum. For ruminants, both locations offer clinical cases at the hospitals (mostly referral cases), but an ambulatory clinic was opened recently to offer better access to first opinion cases (Bern) and the ambulatory clinic in Zürich is also providing access to first opinion cases. A large number of farms is available in each location for herd health management education.
Swine are available either at the local swine clinic or during visitations to pig herds.
Animal bodies used for anatomy teaching are either from an animal cadaver donation programme or veterinary practices and experimental animal facilities. Organ systems from ruminants, equines and pigs are collected at the slaughterhouse.
In Bern, cadavers are fresh or perfused with nitrite pickling and preserved at 4°C for short-term use. Perfusion fixed cadavers are stored in a 2% formaldehyde solution for long-term use. They are prepared to respect the national Maximum Workplace Concentration when used for dissection practical classes.
In Zürich, anatomy teaching is formalin-free. Fresh specimens or specimens preserved in nitrite pickling salt are used. In addition, the students are provided with a complete set of macerated bone preparations, as well as plastinated and PEG-impregnated specimens from large and small animals.
Cadavers for pathology teaching come from clinics or external private practices. Some are also provided by animal health services or private owners. Organs can also be collected from the slaughterhouse. After being processed, all cadavers and organs are collected by a certified company.
There is no evidence of the use of any material of animal origin for veterinary public health and food safety practical training.
Students have no access to Exotics animals during the core curriculum but can receive correct exposure during the small animal track of the curriculum only in Zürich.

5.1.2. Comments

The clinics at the VEE are required to have permission from their respective Canton to perform educational activities with the students under the provisions of the Swiss animal welfare law, which, different from other countries, is the only legislation that recognizes the concept of animal dignity and also under the Animal welfare ordinance, which defines all animal husbandry conditions, to be strictly followed.
The number of large animals and equine used for preclinical training is small, especially for cows in Bern. Students are mainly using patient animals from both equine and large animal clinics or farms for preclinical training at both sites.
The equipment and size of the skills lab in Zürich are limited and students do not have the same opportunities as in Bern to gain access and practise. The two locations do not share animal resources for core curriculum teaching, which could narrow the learning opportunities for students, especially in preclinical training. The use of cadavers preserved in formaldehyde solution in Bern, although within legal requirements, is not optimal for the safety of workers and students.

5.1.3. Suggestions for improvement

The skills labs should continuously be improved to provide comprehensive access for students and increase the opportunities to practise different procedures.

Access to healthy animals for preclinical teaching in large animals should be extended, (i.e., sharing access to the Agrovet herd for Bern students and to the Aviforum for Zürich students could improve exposure to preclinical training; extended access to healthy equine for preclinical training would improve the training of the students at the Zürich campus).
The use of cadavers preserved in formaldehyde solution should be reconsidered at the Bern campus.
The VEE could improve the training of the students and reinforce the acquisition of Day One Competences in VPH/FSQ by exploring the use of animal-origin materials to improve the practical training of the students.

5.1.4. Decision
The VEE is compliant with standard 5.1.

Standard 5.2: In addition to the training provided in the VEE, experience can include practical training at external sites, provided this training is organised under direct academic supervision and following the same standards as those applied in the VEE.

5.2.1. Findings
Students have access to different farms in the Bern and Zürich areas, offering clinical exposure to food-producing animals (cattle, swine and poultry). Training is under the direct supervision of academic faculty staff.
Furthermore, a coaching programme for private clinics in small animal surgery was created in Bern in 2023. Students in Bern have access to a private stable for equine dentistry. Students in Bern and Zürich are also provided with access to the Centre for Proper Housing of Poultry and Rabbits.

5.2.2. Comments
The diversification of clinical exposure through admittance to various farms for training in food-producing animals, as well as specialized opportunities (the small animal surgery coaching programme, equine dentistry training, the Centre for Proper Housing of Poultry and Rabbits, etc.). is beneficial for the students' training as future professionals.

5.2.3. Suggestions for improvement
None

5.2.4. Decision
The VEE is compliant with standard 5.2.

Standard 5.3: The VTH must provide nursing care skills and instruction in nursing procedures. Under all situations students must be active participants in the clinical workup of patients, including problem-oriented diagnostic approach together with diagnostic decision-making.

5.3.1. Findings
Undergraduate students have basic lectures and practical courses in nursing care and animal husbandry from the beginning of their studies. In addition, students receive training in nursing and clinical care during each clinical rotation. The students actively take part in the diagnosis, patient care and follow-up of the patients.

5.3.2. Comments
The constant interaction of the students with nurses in all parts of patient clinical work-up and each part of the veterinary teaching hospitals is commendable.

5.3.3. Suggestions for improvement
None.

5.3.4. Decision
The VEE is compliant with standard 5.3

Standard 5.4: 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 VEE.

5.4.1. Findings
In Bern**,** all clinics, including pathology, use an electronic clinical record system, Polypoint. Students have access to the system with their own login in the 2nd year from computers in the department of clinical veterinary science. The students actively use the system to write reports and check clinical and laboratory data (including diagnostic imaging) under the supervision of senior clinicians.
In Zürich, all students starting their practical studies in clinics have a personal account and are trained in using the clinical information system (Vetera®). The students can use the system to write reports and check clinical and laboratory data. Diagnostic imaging is also connected to the clinical information system.

5.4.2. Comments
The recording of the patient data in the electronic record system is performed by the staff of the clinic in the presence of the students, who can voluntarily participate in Zürich.

5.4.3. Suggestions for improvement
It would be beneficial for the students' training at the VEE to harmonise the data recording in the electronic patient record system by the students on both campuses.

5.4.4. Decision
The VEE is compliant with standards 5.4.

Area 6. Learning resources

Standard 6.1: State-of-the-art learning resources must be adequate and available to support veterinary education, research, services and continuing education. When the study programme is provided in several tracks/languages, the learning resources must be available in all used languages. 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.

6.1.1. Findings

The VEE maintains the strategy that teaching should be conducted in person ("physical classroom instruction"). This does not exclude that digitalisation of teaching and learning will be facilitated and further developed. Since the COVID pandemic, many efforts have been made in this direction. Virtual classrooms, taping and streaming lectures, podcasts and other online learning materials have been developed and integrated into the curriculum. To facilitate and habituate students to international veterinary scientific literature, it is encouraged to teach in English. For courses given in English, learning resources in English are available.

For the teaching staff, programmes are available for regular professional development. They include sessions for enhancing proficiency in e-tools, platforms and skills labs. Besides that, both Universities offer numerous digital teaching tools.

The first introduction of students to all learning resources takes place at the start of their studies. The librarians introduce information literacy, including the introduction of the PICO Framework and the use of platforms like PubMed and Cochrane. The orientation programmes are continually improved and tailored. Furthermore, at the beginning of each academic year, an introduction is given on the current learning materials. More specific instruction is available during the year (e.g. virtual dissecting table, skills lab stations). The library contains all relevant journals, databases, and books (both in print and electronic) covering all areas of veterinary medicine.

In Bern, the librarian decides about purchasing books after consulting lecturers and particular units. Licensing of VEE databases takes place via the university's library. In Zürich, the librarians, together with the vice-dean of teaching and the different institutes and clinics, make the decisions about purchasing books.

6.1.2. Comments

In the last few years, many digital forms of teaching have been developed, but according to the SER, teaching in physical presence has a strong preference. This is not to say that digital education has no place in the curriculum. Many online materials are available for students, and online materials are still being developed and refined. At the start of the study, as well as at the beginning of each academic year, students are taught information literacy, the use of scientific platforms, and the learning materials of the current year. The library contains all relevant veterinary scientific journals as well as the most recent study books. Lectures and clinicians participate in the choice of books to purchase.

6.1.3. Suggestions for improvement

None

6.1.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Standard 6.1.

Standard 6.2: Staff and students must have full access on site to an academic library administered by a qualified librarian, an Information Technology (IT) unit managed by an IT expert, an e-learning platform, and all the relevant human and physical resources necessary for the development of instructional materials by the staff and their use by the students.

The relevant electronic information, database and other intranet resources must be easily available for students and staff both in the VEE's core facilities via wireless connection (Wi-

Fi) and from outside the VEE through a hosted secured connection, e.g. Virtual Private Network (VPN).

6.2.1. Findings

In Bern as well as in Zürich, an in-house library is present. Moreover, multiple small libraries are available within the different institutes and clinics. Additionally, in many workplaces, specialised books are accessible to both students and employees through individual appointments. According to the SER, the service hours for students, indicating that a librarian is present or that immediate consultation is available on demand, are 6h/week (B) and 31h/week (ZH). In the last few months, after finishing the SER, the system in Bern has changed completely to be service on demand. This means that, unlike before, there are no longer fixed service times for staff on site. Support is now provided exclusively via the service on demand. If somebody requires a personal consultation in Bern, they can make an appointment anytime during office hours. Support staff can be reached by e-mail and telephone during office hours. The libraries are open 24/7 via the university card. In Bern, ILIAS is the university's learning management system supported by a team of seven IT-professionals. In recent years, e-learning platforms have been developed for equine medicine, radiology, neuropathology, pathology and clinical cases. Scheduling software for lectures, night duties, booking skills lab, room reservations and intramural practical training has been developed in one system. This system is linked to Microsoft Outlook and thus to personal calendars. In Zürich, OLAT is an open-source learning management system. This system includes self-study courses, tests, exercises, and peer review and incorporates videos, streaming or learning conferencing. A university-wide coordination group is constantly enhancing the system. A specialised veterinarian provides support for online learning. The university offers support for more advanced teaching projects. E-learning and digital tools differ between both locations of the VEE because they are embedded in different IT systems. WIFI covers the campus of both locations of the VEE. Off-campus, VPN is available for staff and students. Through their login, students at both locations can access the learning management system of the other location.

6.2.2. Comments

On both locations of the VEE, different learning management systems are in operation, namely ILIAS (B) and OLAT (ZH). Both systems are developed by the Universities and not by the VEE. Formally, the libraries give sufficient opportunities to use the facilities. The first impressions of the recently changed system of service hours in Bern, in which all users have access to the library via service on demand, are positive. All relevant systems are accessible for students and staff off-campus via a VPN network.

6.2.3. Suggestions for improvement

None

6.2.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Standard 6.2.

Standard 6.3: The VEE must provide students with unimpeded access to learning resources, 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 changes in learning resources.

6.3.1. Findings

The opening hours of the libraries in both locations are already described in paragraph 6.2. Specific features are offered in Bern as well as in Zürich. In Bern, consultation hours for literature research are offered (e.g. assistance in researching special topics). In Zürich, the library offers coffee lectures, call-in sessions, and workshops. Also, bilateral sessions are offered on specific topics. Skills lab training follows a structured teaching concept and only takes place under supervision (staff members or students employed for this purpose). Stations are designed for self-directed learning. Learning outcomes determine the development and improvement of stations. QR codes are available at the stations, and online videos are accessible. The skills labs are accessible through online booking. The number of skills lab stations is 27 (B) and 16 (ZH). For farm animal teaching, phantoms are available and used during the clinical rotations. During the reproduction rotation week, models associated with reproduction are available (pregnancy diagnosis, calving, epidural and paravertebral anaesthesia). Appendix 7.11 lists all stations already in use or under construction.

6.3.2. Comments

Skill labs in both locations have a lot of modules with a great variety. The number of modules differs significantly between the locations, which is remarkable within one organisation. An evaluation of the skills labs based on the list shown in Appendix 7.11, is complex because of the difference in the layout, namely discipline-orientated (B) versus animal-orientated.

6.3.3. Suggestions for improvement

Further cooperation between both locations to expand and harmonise the skills labs would be beneficial.

6.3.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Standard 6.3.

Area 7. Student admission, progression and welfare

Standard 7.1: The VEE must consistently apply pre-defined and published regulations covering all phases of the student "life cycle", e.g. student admission, progression and certification.
In relation to enrolment, the VEE must provide accurate and complete information regarding all aspects of the educational programme in all advertisements for prospective national and international students.
Formal co-operations with other VEEs must also be clearly advertised.

7.1.1. Findings

The VEE provides clear and comprehensive information regarding its educational programmes, both on its website and through other platforms, ensuring that prospective students, both national and international, are well-informed about the programme details. The regulations for student admission, progression, and certification are consistently applied and publicly available, ensuring transparency and fairness throughout the student journey. These regulations are published on the VEE and university websites, which serve as the primary source of information for prospective and current students.

Students seeking admission to the veterinary programme are expected to meet the specific academic qualifications recognised by the Swiss authorities. The admission process is highly competitive due to limited places available, reflecting the high demand for veterinary education in Switzerland. Hence, in addition to meeting the eligibility criteria, prospective students are required to pass an entrance examination, particularly if the number of applicants exceeds the available slots, which has always been the case in recent years. This *Numerus Clausus* (NC) test assesses the applicant's aptitude and knowledge relevant to veterinary studies. Applications are submitted through a centralised system managed by Swissuniversities, thus ensuring uniformity and fairness in the selection process across all applicants. Applicants are ranked based on their academic performance, and only the top-ranked candidates are admitted. Since courses are primarily taught in German, proficiency in the German language is essential for admission. This examination

The total number of new veterinary students admitted across both campuses increased from 163 in 2021-22 to 175 in 2023-24, with a three-year mean of 168 students. This increase was higher for Bern (9.46%) compared to Zürich (5.62%). As for the overall student progression through the years, the numbers decrease as students advance through the program. For example, in Bern, the number of students drops from 107 in Year 1 to 45 in Year 5.5 (Semester 11). A similar trend is observed in Zürich, where the number of students decreases from 124 in Year 1 to 60 in Year 5.5. While a majority of students complete their veterinary studies within the expected timeframe, there is a notable proportion of students, particularly in Zürich, who require additional time to graduate. 43% of the students would need an additional year for graduation in Zürich, while it is 22% for Bern.

Web pages for both campuses provide a wide range of resources and information essential for student life, including details about academic (curriculum, programme structure, and progression requirements), and social and campus services. Both are well-structured, making it easy for students to navigate and find information about enrolment, course offerings, examinations, and other academic matters. It also includes links to student organisations, and extracurricular activities, allowing students to explore and engage with the university community both in-person and online. This platform ensures that students have 24/7 access to the tools and information they need to succeed academically and socially. In addition, the virtual platform in Bern allows prospective students and visitors to explore the campus and its offerings online 24/7, providing a convenient and accessible way to investigate the university environment at any time. Similarly, Zürich offers virtual tours, which are available through platforms like YouVisit, allowing prospective students to experience the campus remotely. These virtual campus tours are increasingly important for reaching international students who may not be able to visit in person, making it easier for them to get a sense of the university’s and VEE’s environment and offerings. Detailed information on international mobility opportunities, enabling students and staff to explore exchange programmes, study abroad options, and other international experiences are provided through the web. These resources help students plan and manage their international studies, ensuring they are well informed about the available opportunities and requirements.

7.1.2. Comments

The VEE has established a framework for managing the student lifecycle, from admission to graduation, ensuring transparency and fairness in its processes. The consistent application of pre-defined regulations is evident in the competitive admissions process. The availability of detailed and accessible information on the VEE's website demonstrates a commitment to providing comprehensive support for prospective and current students.

The decrease in the number of students as they progress through the years may suggest the possibility that students fail to meet academic requirements leading to repetitions or dropouts. This is supported by the noticeable drop in student numbers between the first and later years. Moreover, the difference between the number of admitted students and those registered in Year 1 is attributed to the inclusion of students who may have been admitted in previous years but are repeating the first year. Additionally, some students might take a gap year or transfer to other programmes or universities, which could also contribute to the differences observed. Considering the slightly higher number of admitted students in Zürich compared to Bern, a higher number of graduates in both the master's program and the Federal Examination was evident for Zürich.
A notable proportion of students, particularly in Zürich, who require extra time to complete their studies reflects a need for ongoing support and intervention to help students progress within the expected timeframe.

7.1.3. Suggestions for improvement
Further academic support to prevent dropouts and delays in graduation is suggested to overcome the decrease in student progression through the programme, particularly in the later years.

7.1.4. Decision
The VEE is compliant with Standard 7.1.

Standard 7.2: The number of students admitted must be consistent with the resources available at the VEE for staff, buildings, equipment, healthy and diseased animals, and materials of animal origin.

7.2.1. Findings
Both the Universities of Bern and Zurich have regulations for admittance at their respective level, which also leads to the *Numerus clausus* system applied by the VEE. The VEE is trying to compensate for the need for more space for both students and staff by increased use of other locations, such as its Institutes (the Institute of Parasitology, Virology and Bacteriology, the Diagnostic Centre and Childcare unit) (also see 4.2.2).
Meanwhile, projects for repair concerning some of the existing buildings are planned to start in 2024, while others (major constructions) are planned to be concluded in the long term (6 to 20 years) to parallel a potential future increase in admittance rates, envisaged by the Cantons.

7.2.2. Comments
While resource allocation at both the Bern and Zürich campuses supports, with some limitations the current student population, ensuring that admissions align with available staff, facilities, equipment, and both animal resources, there is a need for further improvement in these areas to fully support the educational environment. However, no explicit strategic plan is in place to scale these resources in anticipation of future increases in student numbers. The VEE is aware that there is a significant risk to maintaining its educational standards in the face of increasing enrolments. Nonetheless, the VEE's' ability to meet current demands indicates a readiness to develop such strategic measures effectively, ensuring they can continue to uphold high educational standards as student numbers grow.

7.2.3. Suggestions for improvement

The VEE is encouraged to implement proactive goals in its Action plan to overcome the challenge of maintaining adequate support and its high standards for educational activities as student enrolment increases.

7.2.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Standard 7.2.

Standard 7.3: The selection and progression criteria must be clearly defined, consistent, and defensible, be free of discrimination or bias, and take into account the fact that students are admitted with a view to their entry to the veterinary profession in due course.
The VEE must regularly review and reflect on the selection processes to ensure they are appropriate for students to complete the programme successfully. If the selection processes are decided by another authority, the latter must regularly receive feedback from the VEE.
Adequate training (including periodic refresher training) must be provided for those involved in the selection process to ensure applicants are evaluated fairly and consistently.

7.3.1. Findings

The selection and progression criteria at the VEE are well-defined, consistent, and based on a transparent and competitive process. The primary requirement for entry into the VEE includes obtaining a recognised baccalaureate (Matura) and passing a national aptitude test, managed under the *Numerus Clausus* system. This system, which has been in place since 1999, ensures that only the top-ranked candidates, based on their academic performance and aptitude test results, are admitted to the veterinary programme. The aptitude test, which is developed and administered by the University of Fribourg on behalf of Swissuniversities, evaluates the capacity of applicants to acquire new knowledge rather than their pre-existing knowledge. This test is mandatory for all students who are willing to study veterinary medicine in Switzerland and is conducted in three national languages across eight different locations. The selection process is standardised, and the results are communicated to the applicants in August, with successful candidates being placed in Bern or Zürich based on their preferences and personal circumstances.
The progression criteria are clearly outlined in the study regulations and study plan, which are provided to students upon admission. These documents specify that students must pass all examinations for each academic year to progress to the next level. Exceptions are made between the second and third years of the bachelor curriculum, but generally, students must acquire the required ECTS points and successfully complete all courses to advance. In cases of failure, students are allowed to retake examinations up to two times, with the exception of the master's thesis, which can only be repeated once.
The VEE consistently reviews and reflects on the selection processes to ensure that they are appropriate and effective in allowing students to successfully complete the programme. Although the selection process is primarily governed by Swissuniversities, the VEE maintains active communication and provides feedback to ensure that the processes remain relevant and fair. Additionally, those involved in the selection process receive adequate training, including periodic refresher sessions, to ensure that applicants are evaluated fairly and consistently, free from discrimination or bias.

7.3.2. Comments

The selection and progression criteria at the VEE are well-defined, transparent, and consistent, ensuring that only top-ranked candidates are admitted through a standardised process that includes

a national aptitude test. The relevance and fairness of the selection process are made consistent all along by regular reviews of and feedback on the selection criteria by the VEE. The study regulations clearly outline progression requirements, and students are adequately supported in their academic journey. The periodic training for the staff involved in the selection process further ensures fairness and unbiased evaluations, upholding the integrity of the process.

7.3.3. Suggestions for improvement
None.

7.3.4. Decision
The VEE is compliant with Standard 7.3.

Standard 7.4: There must be clear policies and procedures on how applicants with disabilities or illnesses are 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.

7.4.1. Findings
The VEE has established clear policies and procedures to accommodate applicants with disabilities (such as physical disabilities like sensory and mobility; mental disabilities like autism, depression, or anxiety disorder; partial functional disabilities like dyslexia, dyscalculia, ADHD) or chronic illnesses (like diabetes, rheumatism, multiple sclerosis), ensuring that these students can participate in the programme while still meeting the ESEVT Day One Competences by graduation. According to the study regulations, students with documented disabilities or illnesses may apply for specific measures to compensate for disadvantages during their studies. These measures are considered on a case-by-case basis, with input from the Office for Equal Opportunities (Bern) or UZH Disability Office (Zürich). The process includes the submission of a medical certificate and a formal request to the appropriate university office, which then assesses the impact of the disability or illness on the student's ability to meet study-relevant activities. Students with disabilities or chronic illnesses have a right to access arrangements. Access arrangements include the proportionate adjustment of study and examination conditions that are necessary to compensate for disadvantages caused by a disability or chronic illness.
The regulations also specify that compensatory measures must be tailored to the individual needs of the student and that these measures are reviewed and approved by the Dean or Vice Dean of Teaching. Importantly, the policies ensure that while accommodations are made, they do not compromise the requirement for students to achieve the necessary competences expected of all graduates. The VEE's approach emphasises both fairness and the maintenance of academic and professional standards, ensuring that all students, regardless of disability or illness, are equipped to meet the demands of the veterinary profession upon graduation.

7.4.2. Comments
In both locations, the VEE has implemented policies and procedures to support applicants with a wide range of disabilities and chronic illnesses, ensuring they can successfully participate in the programme while meeting the ESEVT Day One Competences. These policies, outlined in the study regulations, provide for individualised compensatory measures that are carefully tailored to each student's needs. The process, involving input from specialised university offices, ensures that accommodations are provided without compromising the academic and professional standards required for graduation.

7.4.3. Suggestions for improvement
None.

7.4.4. Decision
The VEE is compliant with Standard 7.4.

Standard 7.5: The basis for decisions on progression (including academic progression and professional fitness to practise) must be explicit and readily available to the students. The VEE 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.
The VEE 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.

7.5.1. Findings
The criteria for academic progression and professional fitness to practice are available to students through the study regulations and other official documents provided upon admission for both Bern and Zürich. Students are informed that they must pass all required examinations and earn the necessary ECTS credits to progress through each academic year. The study regulations specify that students who do not meet these requirements are allowed to retake examinations up to two times, and the master's thesis, only once.
Mechanisms are in place to identify students who are not performing adequately, with provisions for remediation and support. Both universities offer structured support systems, including academic advising and access to counselling services, to assist struggling students. The regulations also allow for the termination of studies if a student fails to meet the required academic standards after the permitted retake attempts.
Additionally, the VEE monitors student attrition and progression through regular reviews of student performance data. The overall attrition rates at both Bern and Zürich have varied over the years. For Bern, the attrition rate fluctuates, with the highest being 7.40% in 2021/22. Zürich shows a slightly lower overall trend, with a peak of 7.17% in 2022/23. The main causes of attrition are academic failures and personal reasons. For Zürich, academic reasons contributed significantly, especially in the first year, while personal reasons were more evenly distributed across the years. Similarly, Bern also had notable attrition due to personal reasons, particularly in earlier study years. If high attrition rates or poor progression trends are identified, the VEE responds by adjusting its student support services or, where possible, revising admission selection criteria in accordance with national or university regulations.
It is notable that at the University of Zürich, approximately 43% of students require an additional year to complete their studies. To overcome such situation the VEE introduced the "Self Audit / Degree Audit" tool in 2023.
The HappyVetProject supported by the VEE offers a platform focused on supporting veterinary professionals, particularly in managing burnout, mental health, and overall well-being. Various resources, including articles, yoga routines, healthy recipes, and mental health tips tailored for veterinarians, are shared with the students.

7.5.2. Comments

The VEE has established clear and accessible criteria for academic progression and professional fitness to practice. However, there are currently no established academic mentoring mechanisms in place to continuously monitor and support students throughout their entire educational lifecycle at the VEE.
The high rate of students who take an extra year to finalise their studies may indicate a potential need for enhanced progression support. The introduction of the "Self Audit / Degree Audit" tool is a positive step toward addressing this issue, enabling students to better manage their academic progress (review achievements, and plan their academic journey more effectively), potentially reducing the need for extended study periods.
The HappyVet Project is a commendable initiative which aligns with the importance of ensuring that veterinary students and professionals are not only academically supported but also equipped with the tools to manage their mental and physical health effectively, which is crucial for their long-term success and professional fitness.

7.5.3. Suggestions for improvement
None.

7.5.4. Decision
The VEE is compliant with Standard 7.5.

Standard 7.6: Mechanisms for the exclusion of students from the programme for any reason must be explicit.
The VEE's policies for managing appeals against decisions, including admissions, academic and progression decisions and exclusion, must be transparent and publicly available.

7.6.1. Findings
The VEE has mechanisms for the exclusion of students from the program, which are outlined in the study regulations for both Bern and Zürich. The regulations specify that students may be excluded from the program if they fail to meet the required academic standards after exhausting their allowed retake attempts, which are typically limited to three. For instance, if a student fails a compulsory module or the master's thesis after the permitted retakes, they face exclusion from the programme. Also, the policy introduced in 2021 requires that the first-year bachelor's assessment be completed successfully within four semesters, even if the maximum number of examination attempts has not been used. This measure is intended to identify and exclude at early stages, students who may not be suited for the programme.
The policies governing appeals against decisions, including those related to admissions, academic progression, and exclusions, are also clearly defined and publicly available. Students are informed about their right to appeal decisions, and the process for doing so is transparent. Appeals related to academic misconduct, progression issues, and other academic decisions are handled through specific procedures detailed in the regulations. If a student is excluded due to unsatisfactory performance, they may review the examination and submit a written objection with justifications within 30 days to the local VEE via the Dean's Office. If the objection is justified, the dean may withdraw the exclusion. Otherwise, the student can appeal to the independent university appeal committee (Bern: Appeal Committee; Zürich: Rekurskommission der Zürcher Hochschulen), which is not bound by directives from other university bodies. Both universities provide students with avenues to contest decisions, ensuring that the appeals process is fair and accessible.

7.6.2. Comments

The VEE has clearly defined and transparent mechanisms for the exclusion of students, as outlined in the study regulations for both Bern and Zürich. These regulations ensure that students who fail to meet academic standards after allowed retake attempts face exclusion, with specific policies introduced to identify unsuitable candidates early on. The appeals process is equally transparent and accessible, providing students with the right to contest decisions through a structured procedure. The availability of independent appeal committees further ensures fairness and due process in handling exclusions and other academic decisions.

7.6.3. Suggestions for improvement

None.

7.6.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Standard 7.6.

Standard 7.7: Provisions must be made by the VEE to support the physical, emotional and welfare needs of students. This includes, but is not limited to, learning support and counselling services, career advice, and fair and transparent mechanisms for dealing with student illness, impairment and disability during the programme. This shall include provision of reasonable adjustments for disabled students, consistent with all relevant equality and/or human rights legislation.
There must be effective mechanisms for resolution of student grievances (e.g. interpersonal conflict or harassment).

7.7.1. Findings

The VEE ensures that students have access to facilities and resources that promote their physical welfare. Both locations in Bern and Zürich offer fitness and recreational centres, providing opportunities for physical activity and stress relief. Additionally, health services are available on campus to address any physical health concerns, including access to medical consultations and vaccinations. These provisions are designed to help students maintain a healthy balance between their academic responsibilities and physical well-being. For the emotional and psychological support for its students, both universities offer counselling services where students can seek help for mental health issues, stress management, and personal challenges. These services are confidential and provided by trained professionals who specialise in dealing with the unique pressures faced by veterinary students. Regular workshops and mental health awareness campaigns are also part of the support system, ensuring that students have the necessary resources to manage their emotional well-being. Both universities have established offices (Office for Equal Opportunities in Bern, UZH Disability Office in Zürich) to ensure reasonable adjustments for disabled students, consistent with relevant equality and human rights legislation.
Mechanisms are in place to effectively address interpersonal conflicts and harassment at both universities. Formal procedures allow students to report incidents of harassment, discrimination, or conflicts, ensuring complaints are handled promptly, fairly, and confidentially. Support services, including mediation and counselling, are available to assist in resolving conflicts and providing necessary support to victims. Both universities offer detailed information on these mechanisms, regulations, and available support through their respective websites.
The VEE provides career counselling services to support students in planning and pursuing their professional goals. Both universities offer dedicated career centres where students can receive

guidance on various career paths within the veterinary field. Services include personalised career advising, resume and cover letter workshops, and interview preparation. Additionally, the universities organize career fairs, networking events, and seminars featuring industry professionals, giving students opportunities to connect with potential employers and explore diverse career options. Zürich offers a mentoring program at the doctoral (postgraduate) level called "VetCareer" aimed at promoting young academics in both clinical and research fields.

7.7.2. Comments

The VEE demonstrates a strong commitment to supporting the physical, emotional, and welfare needs of its students, offering comprehensive services across both Bern and Zürich campuses. These include access to fitness and health facilities, confidential counselling services, and tailored support for students with disabilities, ensuring compliance with equality and human rights legislation. These resources are integral in helping students transition from academic life to their professional careers, ensuring they are well-prepared to enter the veterinary profession with confidence. The "VetCareer" program utilizes mentoring to support the professional development of early-career researchers and clinicians within the Zürich faculty.

The VEE also provides mechanisms for addressing interpersonal conflicts and harassment, along with career counselling and mentoring programmes.

7.7.3. Suggestions for improvement

None.

7.7.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Standard 7.7.

Standard 7.8: Mechanisms must be in place by which students can convey their needs and wants to the VEE. The VEE must provide students with a mechanism, anonymously if they wish, to offer suggestions, comments and complaints regarding compliance of the VEE with national and international legislation and the ESEVT Standards.

7.8.1. Findings

The VEE has implemented mechanisms that allow students to convey their needs, suggestions, and complaints, including anonymous submissions. At both Bern and Zürich, students have access to formal channels where they can provide feedback on various aspects of their educational experience, including compliance with national and international legislation and ESEVT Standards.

At Bern, surveys and feedback forms are regularly used to gather student input. Additionally, platforms such as the Studierendenschaft der Universität Bern (SUB) are offered, where students can voice their concerns and suggestions. At Zürich, student feedback is received through structured surveys and feedback mechanisms. Students can provide their input regarding academic matters and other concerns, with the assurance that their submissions can be made anonymously if desired. Both universities emphasise the importance of maintaining open communication with students and providing transparent procedures for addressing their feedback.

In Bern, the Student Affairs Office, and in Zürich, the Dean of Studies, meet with the student council at least once a year, with additional meetings convened for urgent matters. Furthermore, student representatives are actively involved in the decision-making processes, as they sit on almost all committees, including the curriculum committee and local faculty assemblies. This involvement

allows students to address specific concerns directly within these bodies, ensuring their voices are heard and considered in the VEE's governance.

7.8.2. Comments

The VEE ensures that the students can effectively convey their needs, suggestions, and complaints. Both Bern and Zürich provide formal channels for student feedback, while the available anonymous route for submissions ensures that all students feel comfortable sharing their concerns. Regular surveys, feedback forms, and platforms facilitate ongoing communication between students and the administration. Additionally, the active involvement of student representatives on various committees, such as the curriculum committee and local faculty assemblies, ensures that student voices are integrated into the decision-making processes.
The overall clinical rotation feedback is limited to the EPASS system, and no specific clinical experience surveys are implemented, which restricts the opportunities for continuous improvement.

7.8.3. Suggestions for improvement

It is suggested that a generalised clinical rotation feedback mechanism is implemented, ensuring that students and supervisors have the opportunity to provide regular and constructive evaluations to enhance the learning experience and maintain the program’s quality.

7.8.4. Decision

The VEE is compliant with Standard 7.8.

Area 8. Student assessment

Standard 8.1: The VEE must ensure that there is a clearly identified structure within the VEE 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.

8.1.1. Findings

The Curriculum Committee of the VEE has developed the general student assessment strategy, and the local student affairs offices are responsible for conducting the assessment process. The learning objectives defined in VET-PROFILES serve as the basis for the selection of assessment methods. For all examinations, a blueprint defines and outlines the sampling plan for the subcategories and the sub-classifications of module content and the cognitive level to be achieved. Examinations during the bachelor and master courses follow the topics of the modules and take place each semester after completion of the respective module. The methodologies for assessment include written examinations, oral examinations and performance tests, all of which are used for summative assessment. Performance tests are also used to provide students with formative assessment.
The format of written examinations, using the identical platform in Bern and Zurich, is computer-based in the languages predetermined by the respective university (Bern: German and French; Zürich: German). Oral examinations use an interview format and are conducted by two internal examiners with an external co-examiner.
Performance tests are used summatively at the end of the 3rd year of study. At Bern, an objective structured preclinical examination (OSPE) is used to assess the learning objectives of the practical

modules of the bachelor course. In Zürich, preclinical practical skills are assessed with a practical OSPE and oral examinations that cover modules of the 2nd and 3rd year of studies.
Performance tests are used formatively to provide students with feedback and coaching. The VEE uses observational work-based assessment (WBA) methods to observe, assess and improve student performance in patient care settings during their clinical rotations in the last 3 semesters of the studies. Students perform a collection of formative dynamic tests, including mini-CEX, DOPS or case presentations. The students also receive continuous feedback via their e-portfolio (EPASS). Formative assessment is provided to students by supervising staff, including clinical technicians, clinicians following the residency programme and senior assistants and during external practical training by responsible external supervisors.

8.1.2. Comments
There is a clearly defined structure for assessment strategy within the VEE. The distinct lines of responsibility for assessment ensure the coherence of the assessment regime. The study programmes of the VEE show an emphasis on the development of lines of formative testing through the bachelor and master's programmes.

8.1.3. Suggestions for improvement
The introduction and use of competence-based formative assessment methods should be continued.

8.1.4. Decision
The VEE is compliant with Standard 8.1.

Standard 8.2: The assessment tasks and grading criteria for each unit of study in the programme must be published, applied consistently, clearly identified and available to students in a timely manner well in advance of the assessment. Requirements to pass must be explicit.
The VEE must properly document the results of assessment and provide the students with timely feedback on their assessments.
Mechanisms for students to appeal against assessment outcomes must be explicit.

8.2.1. Findings
The criteria and examination procedures are communicated via the study plan and all information and relevant documents are available on the VEE's websites. For written examinations, cut-off scores are determined by standard-setting methods. The minimal competent standard is graded with the mark of 4.0, and the best mark is 6.0. Differences in the difficulty of examinations between years are statistically analysed and cut-off scores are adjusted. The pass mark for written examinations is ideally around 60% of the maximum achievable points. An examination expert panel decides the suggested cut-off scores.
With some exceptions, all ECTS credits of an academic year must be earned before entering the next academic year and no master modules can be taken without having successfully passed the bachelor level. The first year of Bachelor studies is an assessment year with a time limit of two years for students to receive all credits. Students are informed about appealing procedures at the beginning of each study year.

8.2.2. Comments
There is a thorough and consistent programme within the VEE for informing students of the

requirements concerning assessment, for documenting results and for providing students with feedback on their assessment. The mechanisms for students to appeal against assessment outcomes are explicit.

8.2.3. Suggestions for improvement
None

8.2.4. Decision
The VEE is compliant with Standard 8.2.

Standard 8.3: The VEE must have a process in place to review assessment outcomes, to change assessment strategies and to ensure the accuracy of the procedures when required. 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.

8.3.1. Findings
The student assessment strategy is defined by the local study plan, which is regularly reviewed by the VEE Curriculum Committee. The quality control process for reviewing and evaluating the assessments performed by the VEE Curriculum Committee is supported by experts from the Swiss Institute for Medical Education during the implementation of new assessment methods. Test validity and reliability are continuously monitored and evaluated jointly by the student affairs offices.

8.3.2. Comments
The VEE uses expert panels to review critically the assessment process both addressing content and formulation of examinations before testing and evaluating outcomes by using psychometric item analysis and analysis of student feedback after testing. This assessment strategy provides the VEE with a sound basis for improving the validity and reliability of student testing across the full range of professional knowledge, skills and competences.

8.3.3. Suggestions for improvement
Analysis of programmatic assessment should be undertaken to determine the suitability of formative assessment methods introduced into Curriculum 21 for students to achieve Day One Competences.

8.3.4. Decision
The VEE is compliant with Standard 8.3.

Standard 8.4: Assessment strategies must allow the VEE to certify student achievement of learning objectives at the level of the programme and individual units of study.
The VEE 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.

8.4.1. Findings
Results of the assessments with grades or pass/fail decisions are documented in the electronic curriculum management systems of the VEE. The achievement of clinical professional skills is

evaluated and organised via the e-portfolio EPASS. Responsible teachers of modules write a recommendation for promotion respectively for pass/fail decisions grounded on work-based assessments. The e-portfolio EPASS also entails a combination of an evaluation instrument and a personal development tool.

8.4.2. Comments
The VEE encourages the active participation of students in their learning process by using several educational activities such as the communication skills programme and clinical skills lab training. The use of the e-portfolio EPASS at the VEE has allowed the student achievement of learning objectives to be certified for the individual units of study and across the programmes. EPASS is used as an evaluation instrument to enable formative feedback and for summative assessment.

8.4.3. Suggestions for improvement
None

8.4.4. Decision
The VEE is compliant with Standard 8.4.

Standard 8.5: 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 student 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.

8.5.1. Findings
The degree of Master of Veterinary Medicine is not the legal qualification to practice veterinary medicine in Switzerland and Liechtenstein. After completion of the degree of Master of Veterinary Medicine at the University of Bern or at the University of Zürich, all graduates must undertake the identical Federal Licensing Examination, irrespective of the chosen track in the Master. The successfully completed examination results in the awarding of a Diploma and is a requirement to practice veterinary medicine in Switzerland and Liechtenstein. The Federal Licensing Examination consists of two parts, a multiple-choice question examination and an objective structured clinical examination (OSCE).
The e-portfolio EPASS is used for both formative and summative assessment and the achievement of clinical professional skills are evaluated and organised via EPASS. Direct assessment of clinical skills and Day One Competences are performed through the use of work-based assessments (WBA) and the use of mini-CEX (clinical exams), and direct observation on procedural skills (DOPS) to provide formative feedback to students. Skills labs are available for students to achieve skills. At the end of the bachelor programme, an objective structural pre-clinical examination (OSPE) is a summative assessment of students' skills. At the end of a rotation in the last 3 semesters, each student must perform a case or task, and the observed performance is judged.

8.5.2. Comments
The use of EPASS has provided a tool for gathering the formative and summative assessments of students. The increased focus on formative assessment enables students to take more responsibility

for their attainment of skills and competences. The quality of formative assessment provided to students by teachers is dependent on the training of teachers in novel competence-based formative assessment methods. The e-portfolio is also a personal development tool that allows students to reflect on their learning and to take an active role in recognizing their own interests and learning goals.

8.5.3. Suggestions for improvement
The use of EPASS as a personal development tool should be optimised to enable a better monitoring of the professional development of students.

8.5.4. Decision
The VEE is compliant with Standard 8.5.

Area 9. Academic and support staff

Standard 9.1: The VEE must ensure that all staff are appropriately qualified and prepared for their roles, in agreement with national and EU regulations and must apply fair and transparent processes for the recruitment and development of staff.
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 academic staff (calculated as FTE) involved in veterinary training must be veterinarians. It is expected that more than 2/3 of the instruction that the students receive, as determined by student teaching hours, is delivered by qualified veterinarians.

9.1.1. Findings
The academic staff of the VEE is either directly attached to Vetsuisse in Zurich or Bern or belongs to the Science Faculties of the Universities of Bern and Zürich via long-term agreements. Total number of FTE academic staff is respectively 249.7 FTE in Bern and 406.3 FTE in Zürich. 72% and 80.5% of the permanent academic staff are veterinarians in Bern and in Zürich, respectively. All this staff receive an initial training to teach and assess. The recruitment process is clearly defined with the election of an appointment committee in charge of managing the recruitment process. This committee ranks candidates after receiving feedback from the VEE members and submits a list for approval to the local University and to the VEE council.

9.1.2. Comments
I1 and I2 are far above median value despite some differences for I2 between the 2 campuses.

9.1.3. Suggestions for improvement
None.

9.1.4. Decision
The VEE is compliant with Standard 9.1.

Standard 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 VEE's mission.
A procedure must be in place to assess if the staff involved with teaching 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.

9.2.1. Findings
The total number, qualifications and skills of staff involved in teaching were recently updated to comply with the need for the implementation of Curriculum 21. No further increase is expected. Work contracts for academic staff are split between permanent and non-permanent positions. Each of them is defined in relation to each University's rules. Procedures to assess staff involved in teaching are in place.

9.2.2. Comments
The motivation of the teaching and support staff to support a high level of education is noteworthy.

9.2.3. Suggestions for improvement
None.

9.2.4. Decision
The VEE is compliant with Standard 9.2.

Standard 9.3: Staff must be given opportunities to develop and extend their teaching and assessment knowledge and must be encouraged to improve their skills. Opportunities for didactic and pedagogic training and specialisation must be available. The VEE must clearly define any systems of reward for teaching excellence in operation.
Academic positions must offer the security and benefits necessary to maintain stability, continuity, and competence of the academic staff. They must have a balanced workload of teaching, research and service depending on their role. They must have reasonable opportunities and resources for participation in scholarly activities.

9.3.1. Findings
A program for professional growth and development is in place including two distinct academic qualification paths: Educator track and Habilitation track. Requirements for teaching activities are different for each one. A balanced workload of teaching, research and service is well defined. In both tracks there is a mandatory time dedicated to training in higher education didactics: 8 days for educator track and 5 days for habilitation track. Those programmes should be finished before the end of the training period. In addition, a mentoring programme is in place, especially for the educator track. Opportunities are organised in each university site for didactic and pedagogical training.

9.3.2. Comments
The balance between teaching and research is not well recognised in some units, leaving room for interpretation by young faculty staff.

9.3.3. Suggestions for improvement

The VEE would benefit from a regular review of the equilibrium of duties for faculty members in each unit.

9.3.4. Decision
The VEE is compliant with Standard 9.3.

Standard 9.4: The VEE 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 VEE's direction and decision-making processes.
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.

9.4.1. Findings
Professional growth and development programmes are well explained for each type of position. Formal and informal mentoring procedures are in place and offered either as mandatory or optional. Support staff are able to apply to the internal continuing education programme as well as to external opportunities.
Promotion criteria for academic staff are in place, clear and explicit.

9.4.2. Comments
Based on the institutional policies required to promote academic excellence, both universities offer various professional development programmes, dedicated to professional progress and to improving educational competences.

9.4.3. Suggestions for improvement
None.

9.4.4. Decision
The VEE is compliant with Standard 9.4.

Standard 9.5: A system for assessment of teaching staff must be in operation and must include student participation. Results must be available to those undertaking external reviews and commented upon in reports.

9.5.1. Findings
On both campuses, the assessment of teaching staff is operated under the regulation of the dedicated university unit. Evaluations of the teaching activities are conducted at regular intervals depending on the teacher (senior or junior). The evaluation process is based on questionnaires sent electronically to instructors and students. The questionnaires are automatically processed (Evasys). Subsequently, instructors receive a report of their results, and those results are also discussed in the teaching committee (Bern) or during quality meetings (Zürich). In both Bern and Zürich, students are part of those discussions. If an inadequate rating by students is observed, the activity will be re-evaluated on the next occasion.

9.5.2. Comments
An inadequate rating of a teaching activity by the students will lead to re-evaluation and further discussions with the Q-responsible for teaching or the scientific officer-Q-teaching take place. Students have a less systematic intervention in evaluating clinical rotations and EPT.

9.5.3. Suggestions for improvement
It would be beneficial to implement a system to teach and assess teaching practitioners involved in the External Practical Training. The VEE would benefit from systematising the evaluation of clinical rounds and EPT by students.

9.5.4. Decision
The VEE is compliant with Standard 9.5.

Area 10. Research programmes, continuing and postgraduate education

Standard 10.1: The VEE must demonstrate significant and broad research activities of staff that integrate with and strengthen the veterinary degree programme through research-based teaching.

10.1.1. Findings
Research activities of the VEE include international and interdisciplinary studies related to basic and clinical sciences.
VEE staff is present in a high number of funding advisory boards and evaluation panels. They are also journal editors or members of editorial boards of many scientific papers.
The VEE implements research-based education in each discipline. Many teachers are EBVS certified or ABVS specialists. In all clinics and institutes, procedures for the discussion of state-of-the-art research (seminars, journal clubs, etc.) are established.
The VEE guarantees a minimum of 30% protected education and research time besides clinical activities. Participation in international congresses and workshops is encouraged.
Residency programmes are crucial to promote research-based education. Due to the strict structure and requirements of such programmes (EBVS/ABVS regulations), lecturers are stimulated to apply evidence-based approaches.
The VEE promotes internal science exchange for example the annual Science and Barbeque Day, where research projects are presented. Young academic staff can use this opportunity to show their activities and share recent results.
The research-based education includes early postgraduate training programmes (internships) for students throughout the whole curriculum. In 2023, the VEE's staff participated in 45 research grants.

10.1.2. Comments
The VEE is very research-oriented and promotes and includes research-based teaching in many subjects. The VEE has a very wide range and a high quality of research activities.

10.1.3. Suggestions for improvement
None.

10.1.4. Decision
The VEE is compliant with the Standard 10.1

Standard 10.2: All students must be trained in scientific method and research techniques relevant to evidence-based veterinary medicine and must have opportunities to participate in research programmes.

10.2.1. Findings
Evidence-based medicine, scientific research, and life-long learning are integrated into the VET-PROFILES.
At the beginning of their studies, students are instructed in scientific working by the introduction to the library and scientific literature research. Each student is required to perform independent research in a field of his/her choice as a master's thesis. Younger students in Bern are invited to participate in the master's thesis presentation of the 5th-year students.
Subsequently, during their studies, the students learn how to generate and evaluate scientific data and how to present it as a master thesis. Most master's theses are offered within the research programmes of the respective institutions. The VEE's curriculum requires that all students demonstrate their ability to conduct scientifically oriented work based on research question formulation, preparation of a research plan, and writing a report that is structured, consistent in content, clearly formulated and correctly referenced. This compulsory module involves 20 ECTS (16 weeks full-time) of the master's programme.

10.2.2. Comments
The VEE's curriculum integrates evidence-based medicine, scientific research, and lifelong learning by requiring all students to conduct independent research as part of their master's thesis, while also offering younger students the opportunity to participate voluntarily in research at various departments before their master's year, fostering early involvement in scientific inquiry and professional development.

10.2.3. Suggestions for improvement
None

10.2.4. Decision
The VEE is compliant with the Standard 10.2.

Standard 10.3: The VEE 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.

10.3.1. Findings
The VEE runs nationally and internationally accredited continuing education programmes (Swiss Veterinarians Association, European and American Colleges of different specialisations). The VEE offers 27 European or American residency programmes in nearly all the fields recognized by the EBVS/ ABVS and reflecting all the areas of specialisation of the veterinary field. Residents and graduates of these colleges give public talks and are well-respected speakers at congresses. The VEE is in close contact with the GST (Swiss Society of Veterinarians -Gesellschaft Schweizer

Tierärzte) to supervise the need for specialists in specific fields. Some of the VEE senior academics are members of the GST Board.
Programmes for clinical specialisation are: internships, residencies, and national programmes of veterinary specialisation (Foederation Veterinariorum Helveticorum, FVH). Residencies follow the requirements of the EBVS / ABVS and are monitored at the VEE by the Specialisation Committee (SPEZKO). The FVH programmes follow the requirements of the Swiss Society of Veterinarians (GST). Continuing education programmes are designed based on the needs of the clinical disciplines. Information about these (incl. available positions) is provided through the VEE's websites.
The Graduate School of Health Sciences (GHS) (University of Bern) has an interdisciplinary programme jointly organised by the Faculty of Medicine, the Faculty of Human Sciences, and the VEE, and offers research PhD programmes. Depending on the field of research, the candidates can be assigned to one of the three Expert Committees (FK):
- preventive and social medicine, public health, medical education, psychology, rehabilitation, clinical research and others
- neurosciences,
- clinical sciences: clinical career & patient-oriented research.
The PhD programme requires a minimum of 18.0 ECTS credit points.
The Graduate School of Cellular and Biomedical Sciences (GCB) (in the University of Bern) provides training in the theory and practice of experimental research in individually selected research areas. The research project is carried out in a laboratory affiliated with one of the participating Faculties (Vetsuisse Faculty (Bern/Zürich), Medical and Science Faculty, University of Bern). The training programme requires a minimal number of 6.0 ECTS credit points. Each student is supervised by a committee consisting of a supervisor, co-advisor and a mentor.
In Zürich, there is a Life Science Zürich Graduate School (LSZGS) MD-PhD programme. The LSZGS is the joint graduate school for UZH (University of Zürich) and ETHZ (Federal Institute of Technology in Zürich) in the field of life sciences. The PhD programme requires a minimum of 12.0 ECTS credit points. The MD-PhD programme requires 35 additional ECTS credits. Because none of the PhD programmes of the LSZGS is specific for veterinary science, PhD students with a veterinary background in Zürich can follow the PhD programme of the GCB Bern but are awarded the PhD from the VEE Zürich.
Doctoral programmes are assessed, monitored, and regulated by the respective Graduate Schools.
The VEE offers a postgraduate doctoral programme in Veterinary Science. Students are obliged to make a research project, prepare a written thesis, and perform a public oral presentation. The doctoral students are supervised and evaluated by two faculty members. The programme typically lasts 1 to 3 years. The Dr.med.vet. title (Doctor medicinae veterinariae) is attributed and recognized by the respective universities. In Zürich, a doctoral programme in veterinary medicine with a focus on natural sciences is offered in collaboration with the Science Faculty of UZH and includes a written dissertation, a curricular part (24 ECTS Credits) and a final examination (6 ECTS credits). This doctoral programme must be started no later than 3 years after obtaining the Master of Veterinary Medicine, and the doctoral programme is expected to be completed within 1.5 years. This doctoral programme prepares students for application to the Life Science Zürich Graduate School PhD programme.

10.3.2. Comments

The VEE provides a wide range of different postgraduate education forms. The number and diversity of residency programmes are worthy of praise. The VEE has a very high number of

teachers with Diplomate status.

10.3.3. Suggestions for improvement
None

10.3.4. Decision
The VEE is compliant with the Standard 10.3.

Standard 10.4: The VEE must have a system of QA to evaluate how research activities provide opportunities for student training and staff promotion, and how research approaches, methods and results are integrated into the veterinary teaching programmes.

10.4.1. Findings
All academic staff promotion requirements include research activities, so all teachers at the VEE are involved in research. Teachers within an institute/department are encouraged to review teaching materials among themselves and provide feedback to each other. Within individual modules, module coordinators assess whether the research-based learning objectives are still current and give feedback to the teachers. Another mechanism to ensure that teaching is always based on the latest research is the interdisciplinary composition of expert groups for examination development (written exams and OSCE), in which external experts are included. Examinations and teaching content are evaluated both externally and internally and are aligned with the subject matter.

10.4.2. Comments
The VEE's research activities give plenty of opportunities for students to be exposed to research-based teaching.

10.4.3. Suggestions for improvement
None

10.4.4. Decision
The VEE is compliant with the Standard 10.4.

11. ESEVT Indicators

The two tables below include the raw data and calculated indicators for Vetsuisse. In the corrected version of the SER, the tables provide cumulated raw data and indicators for Vetsuisse, and not for Bern and Zurich separately.

Name of the VEE: VetSuisse					
Name & mail of the VEE's Head: Prof. Dr. Roger Stephan (stephanr@fsafety.uzh.ch)					
Date of the form filling: October 2, 2024					
Raw data from the last 3 complete academic years		**2023/24**	**2022/23**	**2021/22**	**Mean**
1	n° of FTE teaching staff involved in veterinary training	592	576.6	553.3	573.9
2	n° of undergraduate students	925	800	775	833.3
3	n° of FTE veterinarians involved in veterinary training	274.8	269.62	267.27	270.6
4	n° of students graduating annually	109	99	113	107.0
5	n° of FTE support staff involved in veterinary training	343.2	302.9	304.5	316.9
6	n° of hours of practical (non-clinical) training	942	919	765	875.3
7	n° of hours of Core Clinical Training (CCT)	1531	1308	1203.5	1347.5
8	n° of hours of VPH (including FSQ) training	143	143	143	143.0
9	n° of hours of extra-mural practical training in VPH (including FSQ)	160	160	160	160.0
10	n° of companion animal patients seen intra-murally	29521	32994	34554	32356.3
11	n° of individual ruminant and pig patients seen intra-murally	2744	3225	3487	3152.0
12	n° of equine patients seen intra-murally	4748	5340	5407	5165.0
13	n° of rabbit, rodent, bird and exotic patients seen intra-murally	2669	2559	2203	2477.0
14	n° of companion animal patients seen extra-murally	160	159	197	172.0
15	n° of individual ruminants and pig patients seen extra-murally	8133	8392	10763	9096.0
16	n° of equine patients seen extra-murally	597	824	886	769.0
17	n° of rabbit, rodent, bird and exotic patients seen extra-murally	104	85	109	99.3
18	n° of visits to ruminant and pig herds	1138	1124	1192	1151.3
19	n° of visits to poultry and farmed rabbit units	7	4	4	5.0
20	n° of companion animal necropsies	432	571	620	541.0
21	n° of ruminant and pig necropsies	973	1318	1422	1237.7
22	n° of equine necropsies	209	210	231	216.7
23	n° of rabbit, rodent, bird and exotic pet necropsies	910	993	1099	1000.7
24	n° of FTE specialised veterinarians involved in veterinary training	144.03	145.57	139.27	143.0
25	n° of PhD graduating annually	104	113	130	115.7

Name of the VEE:		**VetSuisse**			
Date of the form filling:		**October 2, 2024**			
Calculated Indicators from raw data		**VEE values**	**Median values**[1]	**Minimal values**[2]	**Balance**[3]
I1	n° of FTE teaching staff involved in veterinary training / n° of undergraduate students	0.69	0.15	0.13	0.56
I2	n° of FTE veterinarians involved in veterinary training / n° of students graduating annually	2.53	0.84	0.63	1.90
I3	n° of FTE support staff involved in veterinary training / n° of students graduating annually	2.96	0.88	0.54	2.42
I4	n° of hours of practical (non-clinical) training	875.33	953.50	700.59	174.74
I5	n° of hours of Core Clinical Training (CCT)	1347.50	941.58	704.80	642.70
I6	n° of hours of VPH (including FSQ) training	143.00	293.50	191.80	-48.80
I7	n° of hours of extra-mural practical training in VPH (including FSQ)	160.00	75.00	31.80	128.20
I8	n° of companion animal patients seen intra-murally and extra-murally / n° of students graduating annually	304.00	67.37	44.01	259.99
I9	n° of individual ruminants and pig patients seen intra-murally and extra-murally / n° of students graduating annually	114.47	18.75	9.74	104.73
I10	n° of equine patients seen intra-murally and extra-murally / n° of students graduating annually	55.46	5.96	2.15	53.31
I11	n° of rabbit, rodent, bird and exotic seen intra-murally and extra-murally/ n° of students graduating annually	24.08	3.11	1.16	22.92
I12	n° of visits to ruminant and pig herds / n° of students graduating annually	10.76	1.29	0.54	10.22
I13	n° of visits of poultry and farmed rabbit units / n° of students graduating annually	0.05	0.11	0.04	0.01
I14	n° of companion animal necropsies / n° of students graduating annually	5.06	2.11	1.40	3.66
I15	n° of ruminant and pig necropsies / n° of students graduating annually	11.57	1.36	0.90	10.67
I16	n° of equine necropsies / n° of students graduating annually	2.02	0.18	0.10	1.92
I17	n° of rabbit, rodent, bird and exotic pet necropsies / n° of students graduating annually	9.35	2.65	0.88	8.47
I18	n° of FTE specialised veterinarians involved in veterinary training / n° of students graduating annually	1.34	0.27	0.06	1.28
I19	n° of PhD graduating annually / n° of students graduating annually	1.08	0.15	0.07	1.01

1 Median values defined by data from VEEs with Accreditation/Approval status in May 2019
2 Recommended minimal values calculated as the 20th percentile of data from VEEs with Accreditation/Approval status in May 2019
3 A negative balance indicates that the Indicator is below the recommended minimal value
*****Indicators used only for statistical purpose

Most of the indicators are well above the minimal values, some of them exceeding the median, which is commendable and consistent with the findings in the individual FV Report Areas.
The only indicator well below the minimal value is I6 (= -48.80). This led to non-compliance with Area 3, Curriculum, Standard 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. The curriculum must include the subjects (input) and must allow the acquisition of the Day One Competences (output) listed in Annex 2. This concerns Basic Sciences, Clinical Sciences in companion animals (including equine and exotic pets), Clinical Sciences in food-producing animals (including Animal Production and Herd Health Management), Food Safety and Quality, and Professional Knowledge."), sub-standard 3.1.5 "Food safety and Quality), where "the VEE was non-compliant because of insufficient training in the Food Safety and Quality, which does not allow the students to acquire Day One Competences."

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

Area 1. Objectives, Organisation and QA Policy	C	PC	NC
Standard 1.1: The VEE must have as its main objective the provision, in agreement with the EU Directives and ESG recommendations, of 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. **The VEE must develop and follow its mission statement which must embrace all the ESEVT Standards.**	X		
Standard 1.2: The VEE 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. 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. **The decision-making process, organisation and management of the VEE must allow implementation of its strategic plan and of a cohesive study programme, in compliance with the ESEVT Standards.**	X		
Standard 1.3: The VEE must have a strategic plan, which includes a SWOT analysis of its current activities, a list of objectives, and an operating plan with a timeframe and indicators for its implementation.	X		
Standard 1.4: The VEE must have a policy and associated written procedures for the assurance of the quality and Standards of its programmes and awards. It must also commit itself explicitly to the development of a culture which recognises the importance of quality, and quality assurance, within their VEE. To achieve this, the VEE must develop and implement a strategy for the continuous enhancement of quality. The development and implementation of the VEE's strategy must include a role for students and other stakeholders, both internal and external, and the strategy must have a formal status and be publicly available.	X		
Standard 1.5: The VEE must provide evidence that it interacts with its stakeholders and the wider society. Such public information must be clear, objective and readily accessible; the information must include up-to-date information about the study programme, views and employment destinations of past students as well as the profile of the current student population. **The VEE's website must mention the ESEVT VEE's status and its last Self Evaluation Report and Visitation Report must be easily available for the public.**	X		
Standard 1.6: The VEE must monitor and periodically review its activities, both quantitative and qualitative, to ensure that they achieve the objectives set for them and respond to the needs of students and society. The VEE must make public how this analysis of information has been utilised in the further development of its activities and provide evidence as to the involvement of both students and staff in the provision, analysis and implementation of such data. **Any action planned or taken as a result of this data analysis must be communicated to all those concerned.**	X		
Standard 1.7: The VEE must undergo external review through the ESEVT on a cyclical basis. Evidence must be provided of such external evaluation with the assurance that the progress made since the last ESEVT evaluation was linked to a continuous quality assurance process.	X		
Area 2. Finances			
Standard 2.1: Finances must be demonstrably adequate to sustain the requirements for the VEE to meet its mission and to achieve its objectives for education, research and services. The description must include both expenditures (separated into personnel costs, operating costs, maintenance costs and equipment) and revenues (separated into public funding, tuition fees, services, research grants and other sources).	X		
Standard 2.2: 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. **The VEE must have sufficient autonomy in order to use the resources to implement its strategic plan and to meet the ESEVT Standards.**	X		
Standard 2.3: Resources allocation must be regularly reviewed to ensure that available resources meet the requirements.	X		
Area 3. Curriculum			
Standard 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. The curriculum must include the subjects (input) and must allow the acquisition of the Day One Competences (output) listed in Annex 2. This concerns Basic Sciences, Clinical Sciences in companion animals (including equine and exotic pets), Clinical Sciences in food-producing animals (including Animal Production and Herd Health Management), Food Safety and Quality, and Professional Knowledge. **3.1.1. General findings**	X		

3.1.2. Basic sciences		X	
3.1.3. Clinical Sciences in companion animals (including equine and exotic pets)	X		
3.1.4. Clinical Sciences in food-producing animals (including Animal Production and Herd Health Management)		X	
3.1.5. Food Safety and Quality			X
3.1.6. Professional Knowledge	X		
Standard 3.2: Each study programme provided by the VEE must be competency-based and designed so that it meets the objectives set for it, including the intended learning outcomes. The qualification resulting from a programme must be clearly specified and communicated and must 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. **The VEE must provide proof of a QA system that promotes and monitors the presence of an academic environment highly conducive to learning including self-learning. Details of the type, provision and updating of appropriate learning opportunities for the students must be clearly described, as well as the involvement of students.** **The VEE must also describe how it encourages and prepares students for self-learning and lifelong learning.**	X		
Standard 3.3: Programme learning outcomes must: ● **ensure the effective alignment of all content, teaching, learning and assessment activities of the degree programme to form a cohesive framework** ● **include a description of Day One Competences** ● **form the basis for explicit statements of the objectives and learning outcomes of individual units of study** ● **be communicated to staff and students** ● **be regularly reviewed, managed and updated to ensure they remain relevant, adequate and are effectively achieved.**	X		
Standard 3.4: The VEE 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** ● **perform ongoing and periodic review of the curriculum at least every seven years by involving staff, students and stakeholders; these reviews must lead to continuous improvement. Any action taken or planned as a result of such a review must be communicated to all those concerned** ● **identify and meet training needs for all types of staff, maintaining and enhancing their competence for the ongoing curriculum development.**	X		
Standard 3.5: External Practical Training (EPT) is compulsory training activities organised outside the VEE, 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, herd health management, practical training in FSQ and VPH). **Since the veterinary degree is a professional qualification with Day One Competences, EPT must complement and strengthen the academic education inter alia by enhancing student's professional knowledge.**	X		
Standard 3.6: The EPT providers must have an agreement with the VEE and the student (in order to state 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 VEE on the EPT programme. **There must be a member of the academic staff responsible for the overall supervision of the EPT, including liaison with EPT providers.**	X		
Standard 3.7: 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 VEE and evaluating the EPT. Students must be allowed to complain officially and/or anonymously about issues occurring during EPT. The VEE must have a system of QA to monitor the implementation, progress and then feedback within the EPT activities.	X		
Area 4. Facilities and equipment			
Standard 4.1: All aspects of the physical facilities must provide an environment conducive to learning, including internet access. The veterinary VEE must have a clear strategy and programme for maintaining and upgrading its buildings and equipment. Facilities must comply with all relevant legislation including health, safety, biosecurity, accessibility to people with reduced mobility, and EU animal welfare and care standards.	X		

Standard 4.2: 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. Students must have ready access to adequate and sufficient study, self-learning, recreation, locker, sanitary and food service facilities. **Offices, teaching preparation and research laboratories must be sufficient for the needs of the academic and support staff.**		X	
Standard 4.3: The livestock facilities, animal housing, core clinical teaching facilities and equipment used by the VEE for teaching purposes must: ● **be sufficient in capacity and adapted for the number of students enrolled in order to allow safe hands-on training for all students** ● **be of a high standard, well maintained and fit for the purpose** ● **promote best husbandry, welfare and management practices** ● **ensure relevant biosecurity and bio-containment** ● **be designed to enhance learning.**		X	
Standard 4.4: Core clinical teaching facilities must be provided in a veterinary teaching hospital (VTH) with 24/7 emergency services at least for companion animals and equines. Within the VTH, the VEE must 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, on-call service must be available if emergency services do not exist for those species in a VTH.** **The VEE must ensure state-of-the-art standards of teaching clinics which remain comparable with or exceeding the best available in the private sector.** **The VTH and any hospitals, practices and facilities (including EPT) which are involved with the curriculum must meet the relevant national Practice Standards.**	X		
Standard 4.5: The VEE must ensure that students have access to a broad range of diagnostic and therapeutic facilities, including but not limited to: diagnostic imaging, anaesthesia, clinical pathology, intensive/critical care, surgeries and treatment facilities, ambulatory services, pharmacy and necropsy facilities.	X		
Standard 4.6: 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 and for prevention of spread of infectious agents. They must be adapted to all animal species commonly handled in the VTH.			X
Standard 4.7: The VEE 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		
Standard 4.8: 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 4.9: Operational policies and procedures (including e.g. biosecurity, good laboratory practice and good clinical practice) must be taught and posted for students, staff and visitors and a Biosafety manual must be available. The VEE must demonstrate a clear commitment for the delivery of biosafety and biosecurity, e.g. by a specific committee structure. The VEE must have a system of QA to monitor and assure clinical, laboratory and farm services, including a regular monitoring of the feedback from students, staff and clients.			X
Area 5. Animal resources and teaching material of animal origin			
Standard 5.1: The number and variety of healthy and diseased animals, cadavers, and material of animal origin must be adequate for providing the practical and safe hands-on training (in the areas of Basic Sciences, Clinical Sciences, Pathology, Animal Production, Food Safety and Quality) and adapted to the number of students enrolled. **Evidence must be provided that these data are regularly recorded and that procedures are in place for correcting any deficiencies.**	X		
Standard 5.2: In addition to the training provided in the VEE, experience can include practical training at external sites, provided this training is organised under direct academic supervision and following the same standards as those applied in the VEE.	X		
Standard 5.3: The VTH must provide nursing care skills and instruction in nursing procedures. Under all situations students must be active participants in the clinical workup of patients, including problem-oriented diagnostic approach together with diagnostic decision-making.	X		
Standard 5.4: 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 VEE.	X		
Area 6. Learning resources			
Standard 6.1: State-of-the-art learning resources must be adequate and available to support veterinary education, research, services and continuing education. When the study programme is provided in several tracks/languages, the learning resources must be available in all used languages. Timely access to learning resources, whether through print, electronic media or other means, must be	X		

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.			
Standard 6.2: Staff and students must have full access on site to an academic library administered by a qualified librarian, an Information Technology (IT) unit managed by an IT expert, an e-learning platform, and all the relevant human and physical resources necessary for the development of instructional materials by the staff and their use by the students. **The relevant electronic information, database and other intranet resources must be easily available for students and staff both in the VEE's core facilities via wireless connection (Wi-Fi) and from outside the VEE through a hosted secured connection, e.g. Virtual Private Network (VPN).**	X		
Standard 6.3: The VEE must provide students with unimpeded access to learning resources, 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 changes in learning resources.	X		
Area 7. Student admission, progression and welfare			
Standard 7.1: The VEE must consistently apply pre-defined and published regulations covering all phases of the student "life cycle", e.g. student admission, progression and certification. **In relation to enrolment, the VEE must provide accurate and complete information regarding all aspects of the educational programme in all advertising for prospective national and international students.** **Formal co-operations with other VEEs must also be clearly advertised.**	X		
Standard 7.2: The number of students admitted must be consistent with the resources available at the VEE for staff, buildings, equipment, healthy and diseased animals, and materials of animal origin.	X		
Standard 7.3: The selection and progression criteria must be clearly defined, consistent, and defensible, be free of discrimination or bias, and take into account the fact that students are admitted with a view to their entry to the veterinary profession in due course. **The VEE must regularly review and reflect on the selection processes to ensure they are appropriate for students to complete the programme successfully. If the selection processes are decided by another authority, the latter must regularly receive feedback from the VEE.** **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		
Standard 7.4: There must be clear policies and procedures on how applicants with disabilities or illnesses are 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		
Standard 7.5: The basis for decisions on progression (including academic progression and professional fitness to practise) must be explicit and readily available to the students. The VEE 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. **The VEE 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		
Standard 7.6: Mechanisms for the exclusion of students from the programme for any reason must be explicit. **The VEE's policies for managing appeals against decisions, including admissions, academic and progression decisions and exclusion, must be transparent and publicly available.**	X		
Standard 7.7: Provisions must be made by the VEE to support the physical, emotional and welfare needs of students. This includes, but is not limited to, learning support and counselling services, career advice, and fair and transparent mechanisms for dealing with student illness, impairment and disability during the programme. This shall include provision of reasonable adjustments for disabled students, consistent with all relevant equality and/or human rights legislation. **There must be effective mechanisms for resolution of student grievances (e.g. interpersonal conflict or harassment).**	X		
Standard 7.8: Mechanisms must be in place by which students can convey their needs and wants to the VEE. The VEE must provide students with a mechanism, anonymously if they wish, to offer suggestions, comments and complaints regarding compliance of the VEE with national and international legislation and the ESEVT Standards.	X		
Area 8. Student assessment			
Standard 8.1: The VEE must ensure that there is a clearly identified structure within the VEE 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		
Standard 8.2: The assessment tasks and grading criteria for each unit of study in the programme must be published, applied consistently, clearly identified and available to students in a timely manner well in advance of the assessment. Requirements to pass must be explicit. **The VEE must properly document the results of assessment and provide the students with timely feedback on their assessments.** **Mechanisms for students to appeal against assessment outcomes must be explicit.**	X		

Standard 8.3: The VEE must have a process in place to review assessment outcomes, to change assessment strategies and to ensure the accuracy of the procedures when required. 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		
Standard 8.4: Assessment strategies must allow the VEE to certify student achievement of learning objectives at the level of the programme and individual units of study. **The VEE 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		
Standard 8.5: 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 student 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		
Area 9. Academic and support staff			
Standard 9.1: The VEE must ensure that all staff are appropriately qualified and prepared for their roles, in agreement with national and EU regulations and must apply fair and transparent processes for the recruitment and development of staff. **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 academic staff (calculated as FTE) involved in veterinary training must be veterinarians. It is expected that more than 2/3 of the instruction that the students receive, as determined by student teaching hours, is delivered by qualified veterinarians.**	X		
Standard 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 VEE's mission. **A procedure must be in place to assess if they 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		
Standard 9.3: Staff must be given opportunities to develop and extend their teaching and assessment knowledge and must be encouraged to improve their skills. Opportunities for didactic and pedagogic training and specialisation must be available. The VEE must clearly define systems of reward for teaching excellence in operation. **Academic positions must offer the security and benefits necessary to maintain stability, continuity, and competence of the academic staff. Academic staff must have a balanced workload of teaching, research and service depending on their role. They must have reasonable opportunities and resources for participation in scholarly activities.**	X		
Standard 9.4: The VEE 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 VEE's direction and decision-making processes.** **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 9.5: A system for assessment of teaching staff must be in operation and must include student participation. Results must be available to those undertaking external reviews and commented upon in reports.	X		
Area 10. Research programmes, continuing and postgraduate education			
Standard 10.1: The VEE must demonstrate significant and broad research activities of staff that integrate with and strengthen the veterinary degree programme through research-based teaching.	X		
Standard 10.2: All students must be trained in scientific method and research techniques relevant to evidence-based veterinary medicine and must have opportunities to participate in research programmes.	X		
Standard 10.3: The VEE 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 10.4: The VEE must have a system of QA to evaluate how research activities provide opportunities for student training and staff promotion, and how research approaches, methods and results are integrated into the veterinary teaching programmes.	X		
C: (total or substantial) compliance; PC: partial compliance (Minor Deficiency); NC: non-compliance (Major Deficiency)			

Executive Summary

Brief history of the VEE and its previous EAEVE Visitations

Vetsuisse was established after an inter-cantonal agreement (the Vetsuisse Concordat) between the Veterinary Faculties of Bern (founded in 1900) and Zürich (founded in 1902). The merger between the Bern and Zürich veterinary faculties, which still belong to their home universities, started in 2001 and was officially completed by 2006 when VEE opened its gates. Both Bern and Zürich offer the whole Vetsuisse Faculty (VEE) curriculum, although with some slight differences.

Three ESEVT visitations took place at VEE. The first visitation was performed in November 2007, and a revisitation followed in September 2010. Both visitation teams concluded that there were no major deficiencies, and ECOVE granted VEE full approval. A full visitation was carried out in October 2017 resulting in the accreditation of the Vetsuisse Faculty, Universities Bern and Zürich by ECOVE on November the 28th, 2017. However, differences between the two Institutions still exist and are mainly related to different cantonal and university legislation

The Self Evaluation Report (SER), along with extended Appendices, was provided on time. The ESEVT SOP 2019 as amended in December 2020 and September 2021 is valid for the full visitation of September -October 2024.

Brief comment on the SER

The description of some of the Areas and Standards needed numerous clarifications and/or raised questions; answers to those were provided by the VEE on time, ahead or (most of them) during the visitation.

Several inaccuracies were identified in the SER tables and figures, which were corrected by the VEE in a timely manner. Further information and corrections, such as joint Indicators for Vetsuisse, were provided on site, during the visitation.

Brief comment on the visitation

The Visitation was well organised. The Liaison Officer and his team were very efficient, diligent and always helpful. The programme of the visitation was designed in advance, in several stages, in constant agreement with the Chairperson and the Coordinator.

The visitors were given all the assistance needed and had access to all the information, facilities and individuals they asked for in a transparent manner.

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

- The number of teachers achieving Diplomate status at the VEE is commendable
- The extent of the residency programme is commendable.
- The efforts of the VEE to maintain a well-equipped Veterinary Teaching Hospital is commendable
- The involvement of students and stakeholders in the decision-making process within the VEE is highly commendable
- The efforts of the VEE to motivate students to take part in the teacher/course evaluations are highly commendable
- The range of research activities at the VEE is commendable.

Additional commendations are described in the Visitation Report.

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

- The VEE is partially compliant with Substandard 3.1.2 because of suboptimal laboratory training in some Basic Science subjects.
- The VEE is partially compliant with Substandard 3.1.4 because of suboptimal pre-clinical training in bovine on the campus of Bern.
- The VEE is partially compliant with Standard 4.2 due to suboptimal space allowance for students and staff in the teaching facilities on both campuses and the recreation area in Bern.
- The VEE is partially compliant with Standard 4.3 because the core clinical teaching facilities in both campuses are sub-optimally maintained from the point of view of biosecurity and bio-containment.

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

- The VEE is non-compliant with Substandard 3.1.5 because of insufficient training in Food Safety and Quality, which does not allow the students to acquire Day One Competences.
- The VEE is non-compliant with Standard 4.6 because isolation facilities are operated inadequately to prevent the spread of infectious agents on both campuses.
- The VEE is non-compliant with Standard 4.9 due to inadequate implementation and monitoring of biosecurity procedures on both campuses.

Additional suggestions for improvement are described in this Visitation Report.

Glossary

CCT: Core Clinical Training
D1C: ESEVT Day One Competences
EAEVE: European Association of Establishments for Veterinary Education\
EBVS: European Board of Veterinary Specialisation
ECOVE: European Committee on Veterinary Education
EPT: Elective 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
OSCE: Objective Structured Clinical Examination
PDCA: Plan Do Check Adjust
QA: Quality Assurance
SER: Self Evaluation Report
SOP: 2023bStandard Operating Procedure
VEE: Veterinary Education Establishment
VPH: Veterinary Public Health
VTH: Veterinary Teaching Hospital

Decision of ECOVE

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

1. Non-compliance with standard 3.1.5 because of insufficient training in Food Safety and Quality, which does not allow the students to acquire Day One Competences.

2. Non-compliance with Standard 4.6 because isolation facilities are operated inadequately to prevent the spread of infectious agents on both campuses.

3. Non-compliance with Standard 4.9 due to inadequate implementation and monitoring of biosecurity procedures on both campuses.

The Veterinary Education Establishments (VEEs) of the Universities of Bern and Zurich are therefore classified as holding the status of: **PENDING ACCREDITATION**.