Accreditation Systems for Veterinary Educational Establishments Internationally

Professor Emeritus Norman B. Williamson, Chairman, Veterinary Schools’ Accreditation Advisory Committee
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1. Purposes of Accreditation
1a. OIE Perspective

- Veterinary education is inadequate in the majority of OIE member countries.
- Veterinary education is the foundation for adequate knowledge, skills, attitudes and aptitudes to perform entry level national level veterinary service tasks.
- These are required to promote animal and public health.
- Education is the foundation for developing further skills in public and private veterinary practice.
- The OIE veterinary education core curriculum should be taught and assessed by VEEs.
- Veterinary educational programs delivered by VEEs should be assessed to ensure that veterinary graduates can meet and comply with international standards and recommendations, particularly those in the “OIE Terrestrial Code”
1b. OIE Perspective

Veterinary Statutory Bodies (VSB) have a responsibility to set standards for veterinary pre-graduate education.

VEEs and VSBs should collaborate regionally to harmonise approaches to the evaluation of VEEs.

VSBs should ensure that curricula employed by VEEs achieve OIE day 1 competencies as a minimum.

VSBs should conduct visits to VEEs (accreditation visits) to confirm that standards are met to enable graduates to achieve unconditional licensing to practise.
2. Accreditation Practises
2a. Accreditation practices should be

Defined and documented
Publicly available
Specifically linked with registration requirements
Linked to changing circumstances and evolving needs
Regular, with cyclical assessments
Able to accommodate new programs before students start
Specific about required attributes of visiting team members
2b. Standards for Accreditation (AVBC/RCVS)

1. Organisation
2. Finances
3. Facilities and equipment
4. Animal resources
5. Information resources
6. Students and learning support
7. Admission and progression
8. Academic and support staff
9. Curriculum
10. Assessment
11. Research programs, continuing and higher degree education
12. Outcomes assessment

These are aligned with AVMA standards and are similar to EAEVE standards - www.avbc.asn.au/veterinary-education/
2c. Accreditation Steps

• The University and school are contacted 12 months before a due visit, normally conducted 7 yearly

• The School prepares a 50 page self-evaluation report with up to 50 pages of appendices addressing the 12 standards

• Accreditation documentation guides the information required in the self-evaluation report

• The report is circulated to the visit team 8 weeks pre-visit

• The visit team meets by teleconference to discuss arrangements and identify further required information
2d. The Roles of Accreditation Teams

- Conduct site visits to accredited schools to check compliance with Standards
- Report in writing and recommend on veterinary school accreditation status to accreditors
- Advise Vice Chancellors of any perceived inadequacies for educating veterinary graduates and commend good practise
- Comment on a school’s responses to reported inadequacies and recommend actions to accreditors
3. Accreditation Internationally
3a. North America

- The COE is now jointly run by the AVMA and AAVMC
- Site visitors no longer participate in COE decisions
- A COE observer participated in all site visits (but now discontinued)
- A matrix checklist is used on visits to ensure focus on standards
- The COE undertakes formal consultation with the profession on standards
- The US Dept. of Education accepts other accreditation bodies for USDE accreditation, including the RCVS and AVBC
3b. Australia and New Zealand

- State and Territory Government Veterinary Boards administer Veterinary Practice /Veterinary Surgeons Acts
- Acts protect the public and ensure standards of veterinary care
- Boards work for the public - if all goes well, the veterinary community and animal welfare benefit indirectly
- All vets must be registered with a Board
- Suitability for registration is largely established by examining the quality of education through accreditation of Veterinary Educational Establishments
- Veterinary Boards have the power not to register graduates from non-accredited VEEs
3c. Europe

• The RCVS revised their Standards and Procedures in February 2015, also incorporating an “Assessment” outcome

• The RCVS aligns their processes to meet EAEVE standards

• Most RCVS visits are undertaken jointly with ESEVT visitors representing EAEVE, plus an AVBC team member

• EAEVE have revised their procedures, and now apply a single step accreditation process

• EAEVE have developed online training modules for all accreditation visitors (experts)

• EAEVE is seeking accreditation by ENQA
3c. Asia

- Asian VSBs and VEEs have responded well to the guidance of OIE
- Asian accreditation bodies are being further developed in Asian countries like India, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Thailand.
- Early moves for regional accreditation are being promoted among ASEAN countries
- Some Free Trade Agreements seek to set terms for recognition of veterinarians on a mutual basis e.g. New Zealand and Korea; Australia and India; among ASEAN countries
- An Asian accrediting body has requested participation in an AVBC accreditation visit
- Another Asian accrediting body has enquired about possible a mutual recognition arrangement with AVBC
• AVBC, EAEVE and AVMA have all interacted with VEEs and VSBs in Asia and agree to work together to further develop veterinary school accreditation standards in the region
• OIE recommendations for Day 1 competencies and OIE Guidelines on the Core Veterinary Curriculum have recently been developed and promoted
• Veterinary Statutory Bodies’ roles in setting veterinary educational standards have recently been discussed throughout the region
• Some Asian schools have enquired and taken steps to become accredited by AVMA, AVBC or EAEVE
• There are moves to have some OIE backed twinning arrangements among Veterinary Statutory Bodies as well as veterinary schools
3e. Latin America

- Some Latin American schools are AVMA accredited.
- Many Latin American Schools rely on the National or regional University accreditation system as the sole form of accreditation.
- Bodies exist to oversee accreditation efforts, like the Pan American Council on Veterinary Education.
- The power of bodies to enforce accreditation standards and not recognise graduates from non-accredited schools appears to be limited or lacking in parts of Latin America.
4. Gaps & Weaknesses in Accreditation

AVMA – conducted by and on behalf of the profession and the schools, not the public
RCVS – also provide education through contracts with VEEs. Conflict of Interest?
EAEVE - conducted by the profession and the schools, not the public
- has no ability to restrict entry to the profession based on accreditation
AVBC – represents states and territories in Australia, plus New Zealand, therefore not a national body
Asia – Variable arrangements among countries. Strong and independent accreditation in some countries and non-existent in others
Africa – becoming internationally aligned in North and South Africa, unknown elsewhere
Latin America – Internationally aligned in some places, unknown elsewhere
5. Joint International Accreditation
5a. Joint International Accreditation

- Meetings were held by some accrediting bodies as the Global Veterinary Accreditation Group between 1999 and 2007

- In 2007 in Melbourne, the IAWG was formed, then met in October in Schaumburg to
  - Plan for a joint international accreditation visit to Murdoch University in 2009
  - Coordinate accreditation activities in veterinary schools already accredited by the AVMA, AVBC and RCVS
  - Agree on the representation of accreditors on joint visits
  - Agree to share reports from visitors with each accrediting body to make its own decision
  - Agree to use AVMA standards as a basis for accreditation with addenda for RCVS/AVBC requirements
  - Agree to better harmonise standards of accrediting bodies
  - Agree to having joint chairs on site visits
5b. Advantages of Joint International Accreditation

- Graduates’ qualifications gain international recognition
- Students are assured that their education is of international standard
- The public is assured that graduates have achieved an international level of education
- Schools are assured that programs meet peer standards of a diverse team of international visitors, i.e. are internationally benchmarked
- Schools benefit from preparing for and hosting one, rather than multiple accreditation visits saving time, effort and money
- Schools must invite joint accreditation and gain approval by accrediting bodies
5b. Advantages of Joint International Accreditation

• Universities are assured that they meet their aspirations to be of international standard

• Accreditation bodies share experience and best practice, e.g.
  • Use of the evaluation matrix
  • Introduction of an “assessment” standard
  • Shared training on joint visits
  • Aligned phrasing of reports to increase clarity and consistency
5c. IAWG Development

• In 2011 in Schaumburg IAWG participants agreed to 4 further visits.
• In 2014 in London, agreement occurred to conduct 4 more international joint visits.
• And to –
  • Further align standards
  • Share information on accreditation outcomes
  • Use the home country as the point of contact with the University
  • Hold pre-visit teleconferences
  • Extend the AVMA rubric to accommodate AVBC/RCVS standards
  • Develop a format for joint visit Self Evaluation Reports
  • Consider sharing lists of visitors between organisations
  • Be open and share experience with other accrediting bodies
5d. IAWG 2016

- The OIE Day 1 competencies and model core curriculum were discussed, especially how to assess them in VVEs in developing regions
- A workshop was held to consider future developments
- Accreditation standards were compared across IAWG members with members agreeing to explore future alignment with parent bodies where they were non-aligned
- Members agreed to seek to hold the next IAWG meeting in Association with the WVA meeting in Spain in 2018
- Visits were forecast for Murdoch, 2016; UQ, 2018; Sydney, 2019; Glasgow, 2020; Melbourne, 2020.
5d. IAWG 2016

Hosted by AVBC in Melbourne in February, 2016
5e. Training of Visitors

• The IAWG has agreed that all new visiting team members should undergo training

• AVMA
  • Now run training sessions in Schaumburg where experienced accreditors lead simulations through accreditation processes and problems

• EAEVE
  • An online training tool has been developed operated by the University of Vienna for EAEVE
  • All new accreditation experts are expected to have successfully completed this online training course and to have passed the tests.
5e. Training of Visitors

- **AVBC**
  - Members are appointed to balance teams for areas of representation, expertise and gender where possible
  - AVBC has trained visitors by having them participate in a training session that provided simulated visit experiences

- **RCVS**
  - Hold a 1 day training session for team members before conducting visits

- All IAWG members and EAEVE now provide training for team members
6a. Overall Conclusions

• Arrangements between AVBC, the RCVS and the AVMA have ensured that aligned procedures and standards are applied in the UK, USA and Australasia.

• EAEVE processes are now closely aligned with those of IAWG members.

• OIE efforts in promoting veterinary education as a public good have stimulated veterinary school accreditation activities worldwide.

• Accreditation bodies, veterinary schools, their students and the public can be assured that the policies, procedures and standards applied in veterinary school accreditation in Australia and New Zealand, the UK and the USA are among the best globally.

• VEEs and VSBs globally can benefit from the experience of these established internationally recognised accrediting bodies.
6b. A proposal for consideration

- The first step in an accreditation is the preparation of a Self-Evaluation Report.

- All Veterinary Educational Establishments can undertake a Self-Evaluation and produce a report by following the guidelines of the established accrediting agencies.

- I propose that WVA could arrange to broker and administer a process whereby interested VEEs in developing countries undertake to conduct a self-evaluation.

- Current leading accreditation agencies could nominate willing trained accreditors to review, comment on and question these self-evaluation reports to assist the developing schools, without this being in any way a form of accreditation or endorsement.
6b. A proposal for consideration

- Accrediting agencies would improve the experience of their trained accreditors and keep them engaged.
- This would provide developing schools with experience in the first step of the accreditation process.
- Schools would be provided with valuable feedback on their self-evaluation.
- This first self-evaluation step could be acknowledged and recognised in some way by the WVA.