



**VISITATION REPORT**

**To the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, University of Messina, Messina, Italy**

**On: 13 - 17 March 2023**

**By the Visitation Team:**

**Dana Pusta**, Cluj-Napoca, Romania: Visitor in Basic Sciences

**Juan Alberto Corbera (Chairperson)**, Las Palmas, Gran Canaria, Spain: Visitor in Clinical Sciences, Companion Animals

**Gerrit Hooijer**, Utrecht, The Netherlands: Visitor in Clinical Sciences, Food-Producing Animals

**Yagmur Derman**, Helsinki, Finland: Visitor in Food Safety and Quality

**Danijela Horvatek Tomic**, Zagreb, Croatia: Visitor in Quality Assurance

**Pavol Valasek**, Bratislava, Slovakia: Practitioner

**Zuzanna Zabinska**, Wroclaw, Poland: Student

**Hans Henrik Dietz**, Copenhagen, Denmark: ESEVT Coordinator

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## **Introduction**

The University of Messina (UniMe) was formally founded as *Messanense Studium Generale* in 1548 by Pope Paul III. The *Regio Istituto Superiore di Medicina Veterinaria* was founded in 1926. The technical and library facilities of the Veterinary School of Modena were transferred to the School of Messina and scientists from the local Schools of Medicine and Biology and the relocation of academicians from other Italian Universities and their appointment to Veterinary Sciences was set.

In 1933, the School of Veterinary Medicine was transformed into the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine (called the Veterinary Education Establishment (VEE) in this Report). During the second world war, the buildings were destroyed by bombing and the veterinary library and several technical facilities and laboratories suffered significant damage.

New facilities in the Annunziata area were inaugurated in September 2001. The VEE became part of the new University Campus of Annunziata (Polo Universitario Annunziata).

In 2001, the VEE was visited by EAEVE for the first time. While the visiting team found most of the premises broadly met the EAEVE requirements, there were some major issues encountered.

The visiting team suggested four Category 1 deficiencies:

- a need to improve the amount of practical hands-on teaching activity in small groups
- a need to increase the level of caseload in all species and for necropsy
- training should include an adequate level of hands-on clinical work
- training should include an adequate level of hands-on activity in food hygiene and meat inspection

A new curriculum was approved in 2004 becoming operative in 2009.

In 2013 the VEE was organised into a single Department, the Department of Veterinary

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Sciences (DVS) which is one of 12 Departments of the UniMe. At the beginning of 2013, the Veterinary Teaching Hospital (VTH) was inaugurated.

The VEE was visited by EAEVE in March 2013. Following the report of the 2013 visit the European Committee of Veterinary Education (ECOVE) pointed out four Major Deficiencies:

- deficient number of necropsies in large and companion animals
- lack of isolation unit especially in large animals
- lack of a mobile clinic
- low small animal caseload in the teaching hospital

The VEE was revisited in March 2015, and it was concluded that all Major Deficiencies were efficiently amended, and large improvements of other Minor Deficiencies were observed. Therefore, the ECOVE issued full approval in April 2015.

In 2018, the VEE had a compulsory visitation from the Italian agency ANVUR (National Agency for the Evaluation of the University and Research system) leading to a positive outcome.

Since the EAEVE revisit in 2015, the number of academic staff has not changed significantly as retirements have been balanced by enrolments. However, new EBVS graduates are now on staff in a variety of fields and a standard residency training program and a few alternative programmes are currently running. The number of admitted students progressively increased from 25 (in 2015) to 40 (in 2019) and to 95 (in 2022) to meet the growing demand for veterinarians.

The low number of food-producing animals in the area of Messina has been compensated by the large number of agreements with extramural farms, the intense activities on Herd Health Management in the dairy area of Ragusa as well as by extramural Professional Practical Training (PPT) activities.

Both the DVS and VTH buildings have been restructured, upgraded for energy saving and completed with facilities (e.g., new operating theatre and anaesthesia for large animals, CT, MRI and a new necropsy room for large animals).

The VTH has undergone significant management changes. Until 2018 it was entirely managed by DVS, starting from 2019 the VTH became a special centre managed directly by UniME, and from 2021 by UniLav S.c.p.a., a company affiliated to UniMe and owned by UniMe (95%), nominated by the University for VTH management.

The COVID-19 pandemic has been a major issue for the VEE. In accordance with the Minister's Decree, March 4<sup>th</sup>, 2020, remote teaching and assessment activities started after a brief interruption. Practical activities of subjects, PPT, External Practical Training (EPT), and laboratory research activities were suspended, reorganised remotely or postponed.

During the COVID-19 pandemic the VTH remained open for pets, stray and feral animals and equines. In May 2020, the access to the building to staff and students was again allowed although in small numbers while meetings, classes, exams, and graduations were carried out remotely. COVID-19 pandemic impaired on teaching and administrative in presence activities also in the academic year 2020/2021 as several interruptions occurred due to cyclic waves of infections. The UniMe promptly provided the necessary hardware and software for remote

teaching (e.g. Microsoft Teams).

**The ESEVT SOP 2019 as amended in September 2021 was valid for this visitation.**

## **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 provides veterinary training in compliance with EU Directive 2005/36/EC, the adopted strategic plan and ESG-standards. The mission of the VEE is to improve the health of animals, people and the environment, which shows the orientation towards the concept of One Health. The objectives of the VEE listed in the Strategic Plan 2021-2023 are firmly linked to ESG and ESEVT standards (there are 12 objectives in total). The VEE curriculum embraces all branches of veterinary medicine and all animal species. Curriculum revision is carried out periodically, depending on the requirements of internal and external stakeholders. Annual reports and cyclical reviews are carried out in accordance with the regulations of the Italian Agency for Quality Assurance (AVA) and the AVA QA System (ANVUR). Since 2013, an EAEVE Committee has been operating at the VEE, to propose actions related to compliance with the ESEVT SOP.

### **1.1.2. Comments**

The curriculum conforms to the Directive EC/2005/36, ESG 2015 Standards, and covers all domestic species (first two curricular years dedicated to basic science and animal production, and following three years to the training on VPH, FSQ and clinical sciences).

### **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.**

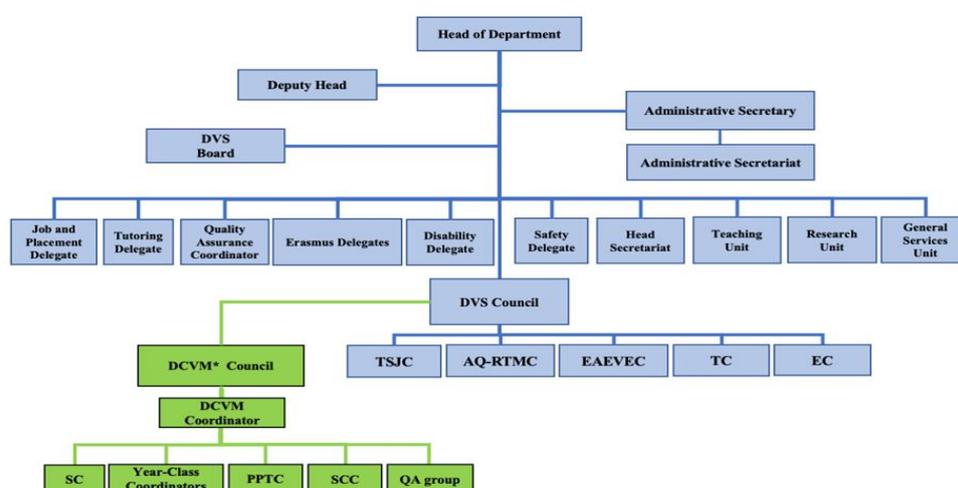
### 1.2.1. Findings

The VEE is part of the University of Messina, Italy. UniMe consists of 12 different departments; one of them is the VEE. The VEE is led by the Head of Department, Prof. Francesco Abbate, DVM. The head of the VEE is elected by all members of the Department every 3 years and can be elected for two consecutive terms. Before the election, a candidate has to provide a work plan that is sent to different stakeholders.

Coordinator of the DCVM is the person responsible for the veterinary curriculum (currently Prof. Marco Quartuccio, DVM). The Coordinator is elected among the professors of the VEE for a 3 year term and can be elected twice.

Head of the VTH is Prof. Giuseppe Catone, DVM.

Councils, boards and committees established at the VEE can be seen in the organigram. Blue colour indicates organisation and management of the VEE and green indicates, in more details, the management of the curriculum.



\*The DCVM is here represented as a relevant example of a degree course organisation.

The QA coordinator has a significant role in connecting the Quality Assurance Presidium (QAP) of the UniMe and the QA committees at VEE level; it supervises the work of the QA Committees without interfering with their autonomy.

The EAEVE committee is a specific body that oversees the implementation of ESEVT standards at the VEE level since 2013, dealing on an annual basis with fulfilment of indicators and standards.

The VEE actively cooperates with other Italian VEEs, and with foreign institutions in the field of teaching and science. The VEE has signed 13 bilateral agreements with institutions in other European countries as part of the Erasmus mobility programme.

### 1.2.2. Comments

The VEE is compliant with the ESEVT Standards with respect to the organisational structure, decision-making processes, and responsibility for the curriculum.

The full name of the Tutoring Committee is “Orientation and Tutoring Committee”, with the role to present curricular activities to prospective students and to organise open days and participate in orientation events organised by UniMe.

### 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**

The Strategic Plan for 2021-2023 is based on the Strategic Plan of the UniMe. In 2022, an annual update of this strategic plan was developed and revised objectives for 2023 were presented during the visitation.

The SWOT analysis is part of this three-year Strategic Plan and consists of three parts - SWOT Analysis for Teaching, SWOT Analysis for Research and SWOT Analysis for Third Mission. At the VEE level, Third Mission is defined as dissemination of services of the VEE, cultural enrichment, and One Health concept.

The operating (strategic) plan lists objectives and indicators divided per year (2021, 2022 and 2023) and area (didactic, research and third mission). It was drafted by the VEE Director, and further discussed and approved by the DVS Council. There are a total of 12 objectives and the same number of indicators (4 in Didactic part, 5 in Research and 3 in Third Mission) for the year 2023.

Monitoring of the strategic objectives takes place twice a year with deadlines set by the UniMe (in July and October). Achieved numerical indicators (achieved indicator level can be minimum, target or higher (excellent)) are recorded in the corresponding software (by a person appointed by the Director) and are part of the annual report (SUA-CDS, SMA).

#### **1.3.2. Comments**

The Strategic plan is revised annually and accepted for the following year. The document does not specify the committee/persons in charge of specific objectives and deadlines for their implementation.

#### **1.3.3. Suggestions for improvement**

None.

#### **1.3.4. Decision**

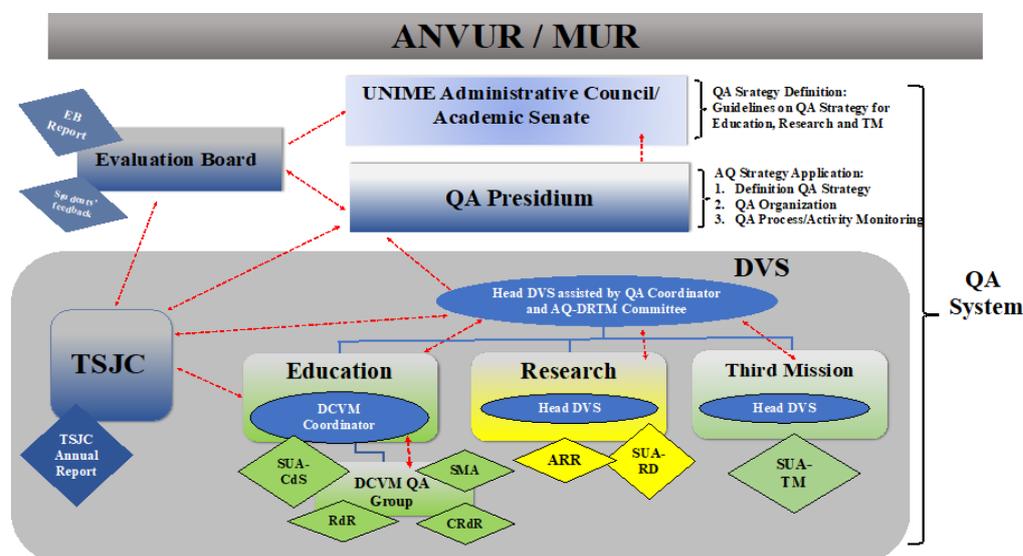
The VEE is compliant with Standard 1.3

**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 QA system which complies with national and university regulations, was introduced at UniMe in 2020 and applies to the university and the departmental level. The attached figure

shows the UniMe and VEE QA system built according to the national standards which confirms that the VEE recognises the importance of quality and QA. At the VEE level, the head of the VEE is assisted by the QA coordinator and the QA Education, Research and Third Mission Committee (QA-RTM).



The written procedures are issued by the Presidium for the QA (QAP) and are available via the UniMe sharepoint.

Signed Quality Policy is visibly available at the premises of the VEE, specifically in the VTH. Annual reports and audits prepared and performed according to national regulations, including the annual form (SUA-CdS) and the annual monitoring form (SMA), are the basis for continuous improvement (closed PDCA cycle). Both of these documents contain specific indicators required by national regulations (ANVUR). The VEE also prepares a cyclical report every 5 years (CRdR) (the last one was prepared in 2018), which is sent for evaluation by ANVUR and after an on-site visit, forms the basis for national accreditation.

Students and other stakeholders are members of different committees related to QA, from DVS Council to the committees as TSJC, TC, QAG, PPT, and SC.

#### 1.4.2. Comments

The quality culture of the VEE is visible through the significant participation of students in the QA processes (10 students in the TSJC, 2 in QAG, etc.), other internal and external stakeholder's involvement (participation in numerous committees and councils), cyclical outcome assessments and quality enhancement mechanisms (annual reports).

It is commendable that many students are participating in QA-committees thereby training students in the importance of QA.

#### 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 has established a Steering Committee (SC) whose members are students and representatives of professional organisations, industry and veterinary practitioners. The official VEE website contains information about the study program (DCVM Teaching Regulation and other documents), a profile of the current student population, as well as QA documents (annual report, annual form, etc.). Students have access to information related to the class schedule, course syllabi, and examination methods. Documents related to EAEVE (previous visitation report and SER) are available on the website.

#### **1.5.2. Comments**

VEE benefits from the interactions with various stakeholders, such as alumni or external stakeholders on an annual basis and in a beneficial way to improve its QA system and curriculum. The topic for discussion received during the last SC meeting, among others, were related to the farm management and animal welfare, responsible drug use, communication, public relations and marketing, and to the Quality systems in the professional supply chains; It is commendable that the webpages of both UniMe and the VEE provide up-to-date information in a user-friendly set up.

#### **1.5.3. Suggestions for improvement**

None.

#### **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 regularly collects quantitative and qualitative data in accordance with national regulations and prepares an annual form and an annual report (as described in Standard 1.4). The three-year Strategic Plan is drawn up by the VEE Head, the VEE Council approves it, and the QA Coordinator monitors performance and suggests corrective measures or improvements. QA Policy is monitored by the QA Presidium and adopted by the VEE Council.

#### **1.6.2. Comments**

VEE uses periodical reviews as a tool for further development and improvement. Students and staff are involved in its provision, analysis and implementation of reports.

During the preparation of the Strategic plan, some suggestions/priorities given by the external stakeholders were related to the: activation of the new master's degree; organisation of courses on animal welfare; strengthening the multidisciplinary research activity of PhD students and One Health approach.

### **1.6.3. Suggestions for improvement**

None.

### **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 last EAEVE full visitation was conducted in 2013, followed by a revisit in 2015, and full approval in 2015. National accreditation by ANVUR was carried out in 2019, preceded by the development of a cyclic report in 2018.

### **1.7.2. Comments**

Progress and the continuous improvement of the VEE after the last EAEVE visitation is seen through the establishment of a permanent EAEVE commission that has been operating continuously since 2013. The establishment of a permanent EAEVE commission for continuous update and with input to different stakeholders on the ESEVT standards is commendable.

### **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**

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There is a single budget for the entire university including the VEE. The VEE is not an autonomous unit with regard to financial expenditures, and it relies on the UniMe (UniMe) for funding. The VEE sets its own annual budget, which includes salaries for permanent staff, operation of services, maintenance and renovation of facilities, logistics, cleaning, and surveillance services. These expenses are covered by the UniMe, apart from the salaries which are funded by the Ministry of University and Research (MUR) through the Ordinary University Financing Fund (FFO). Utilities such as water, electricity, gas, heating, and fuel are paid directly by UniMe. The VEE does not pay rent.

The budget is decided upon by the Academic Senate and the Board of Directors of UniMe. The resources made available by UniMe are allocated based on the educational needs of the degree programmes offered and their related requirements. According to the approved budget for 2023 (<https://www.unime.it/notizie/senato-e-cda-approvato-il-bilancio-di-unico-di-previsione-2023>), revenues and corresponding operating costs are estimated to be around 338 million euros. The UniMe budget for research and internationalisation has increased compared to the previous year, with allocations of €9.6 million for doctoral scholarships, over €2 million for Erasmus scholarships, and €440,000 for merit scholarships. The overhead margin given to UniMe is 25% of the personnel and general expenses budget for research grants and 20% of the entire budget for research services. Tuition fees are not directly allocated to the VEE, but considered as part of UniMe's "functioning" budget. Currently, the maximum annual contribution for regular students, covering didactic, scientific, and administrative services, is €1,160.00.

**Table 1:** Annual expenditures for the VEE during the last 3 AYs (in Euros)

Area of expenditure	2021	2020	2019	Mean
<i>Personnel</i>	6,673,113.63	6,465,795.17	6,765,659.64	6,634,856.15
<i>Operating costs</i>	983,077.39	922,231.07	1,014,334.06	973,214.17
<i>Maintenance costs</i>	233,561.92	173,735.64	205,805.48	204,367.68
<i>Equipment</i>	91,166.59	47,455.26	28,681.91	55,767.92
<i>Other costs</i>	204,854.26	36,220.80	89,560.23	110,211.76
<b><i>Total expenditure</i></b>	<b>8,185,773.79</b>	<b>7,645,437.94</b>	<b>8,104,041.32</b>	<b>7,978,417.68</b>

**Table 2:** Annual revenues for the VEE during the last 3 academic year (in Euros)

Revenue source	2021	2020	2019	Mean
<i>Public authorities</i>	6,607,753.19	6,444,991.72	6,751,428.49	6,526,372.45
<i>Tuition fees</i>	515,944.80	545,790.81	514,183.20	525,306.27
<i>Diagnostics services</i>	4,594.60	3,040.64	6,791.14	4,808.88

<i>Other services</i>	57,954.87	3,519.99	3,877.71	21,784.19
<i>Research grants</i>	193,177.66	237,321.46	173,589.76	201,362.96
<i>Continuing education</i>	287,137.75	133,015.57	99,546,55	173,233.29
<b>Total revenues</b>	<b>7,666,562.87</b>	<b>7,367,689.19</b>	<b>7,549,416.85</b>	<b>7,452,868.04</b>

**Table 3:** Annual balance between expenditures and revenues (in Euros)

Academic Year	Total expenditures	Total revenues	Balance
<b>2021</b>	8,185,773.79	7,666,562.87	-519,210.92
<b>2020</b>	7,645,437.94	7,367,689.19	-277,748.75
<b>2019</b>	8,104,041.32	7,549,416.85	-554,624.47

The deficit found in Table 3 is systematically funded by the UniMe.

Ongoing investments (many of them going on during the visitation and many already finalised) include redevelopment and improved energy efficiency with thermal insulation of the VTH (€ 10,170,780), outdoor relax area for students, Clinical Skills Laboratories (UniMe € 100,000), a new study area for students, furnishing classroom corridors with monitors, and completion of the VTH with the operating/diagnostic compartment for large animals and comprising: a CT scan room, an intensive care room with two stalls, an operating theatre, a large sedation and awakening box, a surgeon's preparation room, and a new necropsy room (€ 1,335,260).

The students, staff, and researchers are involved in the budget decision through questionnaires, the VEE council, the head of the VEE, and the VEE administrative secretary. For the facility-related budget decisions UniMe approval is required. The VEE itself can plan new investments according to internal availability or by applying for specific UniMe-funded innovation projects. Regarding research funding, UniMe regulations stipulate that a percentage of the services and certain types of research projects have a share for overhead costs (25% of the sum of the items personnel and overheads).

### **2.1.2. Comments**

The financial management of the VEE is conducted by UniMe. While the VEE may not operate as an autonomous financial entity, it has autonomy in terms of budget management. To sustain the financial stability and growth of the VEE, its financial strategic plan is aligned with UniMe. The VEE communicates its needs and funds for development to UniMe. Decisions for major expenditures and investments are discussed and made at the departmental level based on requirements and needs expressed by singular members, units, coordinators and/or committees. The VEE forwards its collective requests to the Academic Senate and the Board of Directors for further discussion and approval. Furthermore, the VEE has an increasing trend in its funds for its staff (approx. € 500,000 increase in 2022) as revealed during the visitation. Finances of

the VEE are sufficient to sustain the requirements for the VEE to meet its mission and to achieve its objectives for education, research, and services.

In summary, all salaries are paid by the Ministry of University and Research, all expenses including maintenance and operating expenses, equipment, and others are paid by the UniMe and the increased cost of equipment (tripled within 2 years) is paid by the UniMe. Table 3 was not correctly filled in given the fact that in reality the described deficit is funded by the UniMe and hence should not be registered as negative balance/deficit.

### **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**

Clinical and field services are delivered by the VEE through the VTH (Veterinary Teaching Hospital). Until 2018, the VTH was entirely managed by the VEE. However, in 2018, the management was transferred to UniMe. More recently, the management of the VTH has been transferred to UniLav S.c.p.a., which is a management consulting service affiliated with UniMe and owned by UniMe (with a 95% ownership).

The VEE offers consulting services to both public and private organisations and corporations using their specialised knowledge and resources. Prior to providing consultancy services, the request for such services and the corresponding budget are evaluated and approved by the UniLav board and subsequently by the Board of Directors. The administrative secretariat makes routine purchases using the electronic market for public administration (MEPA). However, direct purchases that do not require the use of MEPA are possible for amounts up to €5,000, including VAT. In addition, assignments or consultations can be awarded without requesting three different tenders for amounts up to €40,000, subject to the approval of the director of the VEE through a decree.

### **2.2.2. Comments**

Although the VEE is not an autonomous financial entity, it retains full independence in terms of its operations. Specifically, it has control over how its allocated budget is managed and utilised. The farm visits during the practical activities, HHM and ambulatory clinics have almost exclusively served the students for educational purposes and not for primary financial reasons. The general budget of the VEE is based on the number of admitted students per year which is then managed independently. This includes funds allocated for research purposes. The instructional resource priority is given over financial self-sufficiency of clinical services operations. The VEE has sufficient autonomy to use its resources and implement its strategic plan and hence meets the ESEVT Standard.

### **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 allocation of the budget goes through several stages of decision-making, which involves the management of the VEE, Degree Councils, and individual researchers depending on the nature of the funding. The decision-making process for significant expenditures and investments occurs during the planning stage and is based on various requirements. Nevertheless, changes to the budget allocation are possible if specific needs arise during the year. Further budget modifications require approval from the VEE Council, the Head, and the administrative secretary. To address various suggestions, the VEE management assesses them based on the available budget. If facility-related issues arise, the VEE may request assistance from the UniMe building management unit when deemed necessary. Over the past few years, staff members have been involved in budget proposals for innovative teaching activities and technical investments through specific requests, which are then reviewed and approved by the VEE Council through discussions.

### **2.3.2. Comments**

The VEE has a structured decision-making process for budget allocation. The VEE management, Degree Councils, and researchers all play a role in the allocation of funds, depending on the funding type. The budget is primarily determined during the planning stage, but changes are possible during the year, subject to approval by the relevant authorities. The VEE also has a process for reviewing proposals for innovative teaching activities and technical investments. Overall, the VEE has a well-organised approach to manage its budget and resources to support its research and teaching activities. Resource reallocation and review is done on a weekly basis by the corresponding management boards. The VEE regularly reviews its resources allocation to ensure that available resources meet the requirements of the ESEVT.

### **2.3.3. Suggestions for improvement**

None.

### **2.3.4. Decision**

The VEE is compliant with 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**

The current curriculum of Messina VEE is regulated by the Ministerial Decree no. 270 of 22 October 2004, by the Italian Law no. 17/2010 (*Requirements for study courses*), by the EU Directive 78/1027/EEC, by the Italian Law no. 264/1999 (*Rules on access to university courses*), by the Ministerial Decrees of 4 October 2000 (*Scientific-Disciplinary Sectors*) and 28 November 2000 (*Determination of the classes of specialist degrees*) and according to EU Directive 2005/36/EC, amended by EU Directive 2013/55/EU. The period of study is 5 years, for a total of 300 ECTS, during 10 semesters (2 semesters each year, about 30 ECTS each).

The present curriculum was introduced for the academic year 2015-2016, and minor changes were made in the academic year 2017-2018. The responsible for the curriculum design and management is the Council of the Degree Course in Veterinary Medicine (DCVM), with input from different committees (Steering Committee, TSJC, QAG-DCVM and EAEVE Committee), students and stakeholders. The content of each subject is available online, together with the educational objectives, methods and criteria for students' evaluation. Before the end of each semester the online feed-back of the students is taken which is annually analysed by TSJC and reported to the Council of the VEE. The curriculum comprises subjects which belong to Basic Sciences, Clinical Sciences, Animal Productions and Food Safety and Quality, Veterinary Public Health and One Health Concept.

Professional Practical Training (PPT), called *Tirocinio* in the curriculum, is included in the core curriculum which also includes clinical and emergency services. The practical rotations under academic staff supervision (excluding EPT) includes: Animal Nutrition and Feeding, Animal Breeding, Animal Genetics, Diagnostic Pathology (including Necropsy), Infectious Diseases and Avian Pathology, Parasitology and Parasitic Diseases, Pharmacology and Toxicology, FSQ, Companion Animal Internal Medicine, Companion Animal Surgery, Companion Animal Obstetrics, Equine clinics, Bovine clinics and Swine clinics. *Tirocinio* comprises a total number of 750 h, 30 ECTS, the students being divided into small groups (1-12 students per group). PPT is made in VTH, in Ragusa (located in the VEE teaching dairy farm) and extramurally in slaughterhouses, equine, cattle and swine clinics. The curriculum also includes a total of 9 ECTS dedicated to electives, which are taught in VEE, in the other departments of UniMe, online (Rosetta Stone platform) for foreign language studies or even abroad. The majority of the students (about 80%) prefer the electives offered by the VEE. The logbook for practical activities was implemented in the academic year 2010-2011 (for PPT only), in 2015 it was modified to a more comprehensive one and in 2022 was lastly modified (considering the proposal of the EAEVE committee). EPT, referred to as *Stage*, consists of 4 ECTS (100 h) and it is performed based on agreements, approved by the VEE Council and the UniMe, with practitioners, veterinary facilities, farms, and local health authorities.

#### **3.1.1.1. Findings**

The total curriculum hours are 4,021 hours, out of which 1,953 h are lectures, 16 h seminars, 562 h laboratory and desk-based work, 470 h non-clinical animal work and 695 h clinical animal work, 100 h EPT Stage and 225h for electives. The curriculum hours performed by each student includes 96 h of Basic Subjects (84 h lectures, 12 h labs), 1,295 h of Basic Sciences (924 h lectures, 16 h seminars, 222 h labs, 126 h non-clinical animal work and 7 h clinical animal work), 1,448 h of Clinical Sciences (654 h of lectures, 97 h labs, 113 h of non-clinical animal work, 648 h of clinical animal work), 193 h of Animal Production (64 h of lectures, 8 h of labs, 91 h of non-clinical animal work and 30 h of clinical animal work), Food Safety and

Quality, Veterinary Public Health and One Health Concept comprise a total of 539 h (291 h lectures, 98 h labs, 140 h of non-clinical animal work and 10 h of clinical animal work).

PPT is done during the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> year of study in Ragusa (large and small ruminants, pigs, poultry, rabbits), in the VTH and in other breeding farms from Reggio Calabria.

Students from the 4<sup>th</sup> year are divided into groups (A-F) and each of them spend a week per year, together with the teachers (Food Hygiene, Pathology, Parasitology, etc) for practical activities. They are divided into small groups (2-3 students/activity/teacher).

The clinical activities for the 5<sup>th</sup> year students are organised as follows, for each student (under the supervision of a teacher): extramurally 8 days for ruminants, 3 days for swine, 5 days for equines and also 3 days for equines intramurally. The clinical activities for small animals are carried out in VTH where the rotation of the groups of students (2-3) is monitored during the day and night shifts and the presence is mandatory.

### **3.1.1.2. Comments**

Professional Knowledge is not a sovereign subject taken by each student (according to SER Table 3.1.2).

According to the VEE subjects where Professional Knowledge are incorporated, but not limited to: Information literacy and data management (18h), Professional ethics and communication (10h), Animal health economics and practice management (24h), Clinical practical training in common animal species (375h), Herd health management (105h) and Veterinary legislation (119h). These subjects account for a total of 651 hours.

Clinical rotations during the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> year curriculum includes: companion animals, equines, bovines and swines. PPT in equine is held both in the VTH and extramurally, while bovine and swine PPTs are carried out exclusively extramurally.

According to the VEE, the exotic pets clinical hours taken by each student is about 10 hours of PPT and about 12 hours of theoretical/practical teaching on exotic pets. In the last revision of the learning outcomes of subjects (April 29<sup>th</sup>, 2020), topics on exotic pets or not conventional animals have been included in all the clinical subjects and in some of the preclinical (e.g., Infectious Diseases). The number of new pet companion animals cases is reduced in VTH due to the specificity of the region.

The feedback of the students regarding the content and the quality of teaching is obtained on an average of about 85%, and the loop is closed.

The VEE considers that, even there are multiple opportunities for the students to be engaged in self-learning activities in different subjects or in clinical cases, these activities were not reported in SER because it was considered that they do not perfectly match with the definition provided in the ESEVT SOP (i.e., lack of the final assessment, see page 48 of the ESEVT SOP 2019 as amended in Sept- 2021). However, during the visitation, the VEE provided the data in Table 3.1.1 which includes supervised self-learning activities (by separation the activities included in different subjects) as follows: 55 h self-learning, 517 h of laboratory and desk-based work and 460 h non-clinical animal work.

The criteria of validation the number of hours/ECTS are established by Didactic Rule no. 1636/22.07.2015 (at the UniMe level) completed with a decision of the VEE Council (28.02.2019). These regulations establish the correlations between the number of hours for 1 ECTS as follows: theory (lectures) 6 hours; practicals 12 hours; PPT (*Tirocinio*) - clinical rotations 25 hours; and for the theoretical hours in the clinical subjects: 13 hours.

### **3.1.1.3. Suggestions for improvement**

None.

#### **3.1.1.4. Decision**

The VEE is compliant with Standard 3.1.1.

### **3.1.2. Basic Sciences**

#### **3.1.2.1. Findings**

Basic Sciences topics include Basic Subjects and Basic Sciences nominated as “Specific veterinary subjects”. According to SER Table 3.1.2 Basic subjects include, as follows: 18 h of lectures in Medical Physics, 12 h of lectures and 12 h of laboratories in Chemistry (inorganic and organic section), 18 h of lectures in Animal biology, zoology and cell biology, 18 h of lectures in Feed plant biology and toxic plants and 18 h of lectures in Biomedical statistics. Physics, statistics and Computer Sciences in all are 54 h, 54 ECTS, during first semester. Chemistry of Macromolecules of Biological Interest is taught during sem I, for 48 hours and 6 ECTS.

Basic Sciences subjects are divided into: Anatomy, histology and embryology (a total of 280 h, out of which 208 h of lectures, 24 h of desk-based work, 48 h of non-clinical animal work); Anatomy is taught during the first year of study and it is organised as Propaedeutics Anatomy during first semester, for 69 h and 7 ECTS, systemic and Comparative Anatomy, taught during the entire first year of study for 140 h and 11 ECTS and Applied Anatomy, second semester, 89 h, 7 ECTS. Physiology is taught during the entire second year of study, 18 ECTS, 190 h in total, including 130 h of lectures, 8 h of seminars, 36 h of laboratory and 16 h of non-clinical animal work); Biochemistry, during the first academic year, 12 ECTS, 90 h in total: 54 h of lectures and 36 h of laboratories, General and molecular genetics (100 h in total: 64 h of lectures, 24 h of laboratories and 12 h of non-clinical animal work); Pharmacology, Pharmacy and Pharmacotherapy (64 h in total: 52 h of lectures and 12 h of laboratories); Toxicology (51 h in total, 39 h of lectures and 12 h of laboratories) are both taught during the third year, forming a total of 115 h and 9 ECTS (according to website curriculum). General Veterinary Pathology, second semester of the second year, 7 ECTS and 89 h in total (65 h of lectures and 24 h of laboratories); Parasitology and parasitic diseases, 9 ECTS, second year out of which parasitology is taught for 79 h of lectures (19 h of laboratories and 14 h of non-clinical animal work); Microbiology (47 h in total, 39 h of lectures and 8 h of laboratories); Immunology (17 h in total, comprising of 13 h of lectures and 4 h of laboratories); Epidemiology 18 h of lectures. All Veterinary microbiology and immunology is taught during the first semester of the second year for a total of 115 h and 9 ECTS, Information literacy and data management 18 h of lectures, Professional ethics and communication (10h in total, 5 h of lectures and 5 h of clinical animal work), Animal health economics and practice management 24 h of lectures, Animal ethology (30 h in total, 22 h of lectures, 4 h of seminars, 23 h of laboratories and 20 h of non-clinical animal work), Animal welfare (25 h in total: 11 h of lectures, 12 h of non-clinical animal work and 2 h of clinical animal work) and Animal nutrition (130 h: 83 h of lectures, 4 h of seminars, 23 h of laboratories and 20 h of non-clinical animal work).

#### **3.1.2.2. Comments**

The curriculum in Basic Sciences is in accordance with European Directive 36/2005/EC, as amended by Directive 2013/55/EU. The curriculum is designed according to the European regulation transposed in a set of Italian regulations.

A part of the subjects belonging to Professional Knowledge, such as Professional ethics and communications are included in the Basic Subject category of topics.

Animal health economics and practice management is also included in the Basic Sciences category of subject, but in fact it belongs to Animal Production subjects.

According to the VEE, “Propaedeutics anatomy” includes two modules “Embriologia e Istologia” and “Zoologia”.

The ratio between theory (lectures and seminars: 940 h in total) and practice (laboratories and desk-based work, non-clinical animal work and clinical animal work: 355h in total) in basic subjects, as presented in table 3.1.2 (SER p. 26) is 2.65.

The balance between theory (lectures: 84 h) and laboratories (24 h) in Basic Subjects is: 3.5  
Some of the topics belonging to Basic Sciences subjects are included in the curriculum associated together with other topics (such as Physics, Statistics and Computer Sciences, Animal Biology, Zoology and cell biology, Histology, Genetics, etc).

Some variations were noticed between the number of hours/1 ECTS (CFU) in different subject belonging to Basic Sciences (6h/1 ECTS in Physics, Statistics and English, 7.5/1 ECTS in Veterinary Biochemistry, 8h/1 ECTS in Chemistry and 12.7h/1 ECTS in Applied anatomy and Systemic and comparative anatomy. According to the VEE, 1 ECTS corresponds to different no. of hours, depending if it refers to theoretical or practical activities. All the practical ECTS account for 12h each, whereas theoretical ECTS have a nominal value of 6 h for the propaedeutic subjects (e.g Physics, Statistics, Veterinary Biochemistry, and English) and 13h for the rest of the subjects belonging to Basic Sciences, including Anatomy.

### **3.1.2.3. Suggestions for improvement**

None.

### **3.1.2.4. Decision**

The VEE is compliant with Standard 3.1.2.

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

### **3.1.3.1. Findings**

The design of the VEE veterinary medicine degree course curriculum includes the specific clinical subjects defined in Annex V.4, section 5.4.1 of the veterinary study programme of the European directive 36/2005/EC, as amended by directive 2013/55/EU and transposed into Italian regulations according to several decrees. Specifically, when analysing compliance with the directive, we have found the following findings in the section on clinical science subjects: Obstetrics is taught in Clinica Veterinaria Obstetrica y Andrologica of 8 ECTS in the 5<sup>th</sup> year and it is complemented by a clinical obstetrics course in the 5<sup>th</sup> year (8 ECTS). In addition, 5<sup>th</sup> year teaching is included with clinical obstetrics and gynaecology in companion animals. Therefore, the curriculum devotes a total of 177 hours to Obstetrics, reproduction and reproductive disorders. From them, a total of 48 hours are focused on “clinical animal work” in obstetrics and reproduction.

Pathology (including pathological anatomy) is taught in general veterinary pathology of 7 ECTS in the second year and pathological anatomy is included in the third year. Therefore, the curriculum devotes a total of 250 hours to “diagnostic pathology”, with a total of 17 hours dedicated to “clinical animal work”. A total of 9 hours are dedicated to “supervised self-learning”.

Parasitology is a second-year subject of 9 ECTS (115 hours) which includes parasitic diseases. Clinical medicine and surgery (including anaesthesia) is included in several subjects from the fourth year onwards, including anaesthesiology. According to table 3.1.2, the total number of clinical practical hours devoted to surgery is 48 hours per student. The number of hours of anaesthesia practice with animals per student is 6 hours according to table 3.1.2.

Preventive medicine is included in the subjects infectious diseases and veterinary police I and

II, which are taught in the 3<sup>rd</sup> year with 106 hours (8 ECTS), including activities on Laboratory and desk-based work (15 hours) and supervised self-learning (3 hours).

As for diagnostic imaging, a total of 39 hours of theory and 24 hours of clinical practice with animals are included. There is no laboratory practice or office work.

State veterinary medicine and public health, veterinary law and forensic medicine are taught in several subjects. A total of 50 teaching hours are devoted to therapeutics in several subjects.

Propaedeutics is introduced in the 4<sup>th</sup> year in the subject semiotics and veterinary medical pathology, which has 8 ECTS (100 hours). Specifically, each student devotes 42 practical hours to this clinical activity with animals, according to table 3.1.2 (for all species).

According to table 3.1.1. of the 694 hours of work on animals in the clinic, only 114 (4<sup>th</sup> year) and 120 hours (5<sup>th</sup> year) are performed equally by all students. Therefore, 234 hours of the 694 (33.7%) are common to all students.

On the other hand, it is established that the total number of ECTS in the 5<sup>th</sup> year for companion animal clinics is 8 ECTS, plus 3 ECTS for equines. This complements the clinical training of the students.

The professional practical training is called *Tirocinio* and includes a total of 30 ECTS (750 hours) taught in the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> years. This internship includes Herd Health Management, Infectious and Parasitic Diseases, Pathology, FSQ & VPH, Internal Medicine and Preventive Medicine, Surgery and Obstetrics.

The subjects "Biosecurity and Biosafety in Approach and management of the animal", "Veterinary profession and enterprise 1, 2 and 3" and "Veterinary communications 1 and 2" are electives subjects.

### **3.1.3.2. Comments**

The design of the curriculum, in relation to the clinical subjects of the Degree Course in Veterinary Medicine at the UniMe, is in accordance with the European Directive 36/2005/EC, amended by Directive 2013/55/EU.

All the subjects set out in the annex of the European directive are included, and progressive learning is foreseen from the basic subjects to the more specialised ones at the end of the degree. In addition, this design allows for the acquisition of day one competences.

The organisation of the degree into subjects and the inclusion of content from the beginning of the preparatory activities at the start of the clinical rotations are coherently integrated into all years of the curriculum, with the exception of the inclusion of the *Propaedeutic*. This clinical learning takes place after the subjects of parasitic diseases, pathological anatomy, infectious diseases and nutrition have been taught. Therefore, students do not have the practical propaedeutic knowledge on how to perform a detailed clinical examination (i.e. lymph node examination, temperature taking, examination of the abdomen, etc.) and the propaedeutic knowledge (semiology) necessary to understand clinical examination findings, such as altered mental status, body condition indices or clinical thermometry, in the third year. So, Propaedeutic content ([Semeiotica e patologia medica veterinaria](#)) is included at the beginning of the 4th year within the curriculum. According to the Curriculum Committee, it is ensured that students acquire these basic clinical learning before entering clinical activities. But the VEE could include this topic in the 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> year in the future revision of the curriculum in order to provide a progression in the acquisition of the Day One Competences.

In the description of the clinical activities planned in the clinical subjects, from the first to the fifth year, no gaps or deficiencies are observed that impede clinical learning and the acquisition of the clinical competences of Day One.

An update (figures in red) of SER table 3.1.2 was delivered to the team during the visit. This information was incorporated in the next table, then findings have been modified accordingly to the correct information provided.

<i>Clinical Sciences</i>								
<i>Subjects</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>C</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>E</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>G</i>	<i>H</i>
Obstetrics, reproduction and reproductive disorders	117				12	48		<b>177</b>
Diagnostic pathology	117		9	62	45	17		<b>250</b>
Medicine	91				6	42		<b>139</b>
Surgery	78				24	48		<b>150</b>
Anaesthesiology	26				6	6		<b>38</b>
Clinical practical training in common animal species						375		<b>375</b>
Preventive medicine and Infectious diseases	57		3	15	6	25		<b>106</b>
Diagnostic imaging	39		2			22		<b>63</b>
Therapy in common animal species	13		2	6	6	23		<b>50</b>
Propaedeutics of common animal species	52				6	42		<b>100</b>

*A: lectures; B: seminars; C: supervised self-learning; D: laboratory and desk-based work, E: non-clinical animal work; F: clinical animal work; G: others (specify); H: total*

### **3.1.3.3. Suggestions for improvement**

None.

### **3.1.3.4. Decision**

The VEE is compliant with 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**

The practical rotations of Food Producing Animals (FPA, in total 15.5 ECTS) is partly organised extramurally, except in Diagnostic Pathology, Infectious Diseases and Avian Pathology, and Food Safety and Quality (8 ECTS), which are taught intramurally (table 3.1.3.). Before starting the clinical rotations, students are prepared integrated in all years of the curriculum:

- In Y1 there is a safety and biosecurity course and the basis of veterinary anatomy, including use of 3D organ models and plastinations.
- Y2 consists of evaluation of welfare indices, examination of blood (cell count, Hb/Ht, protein etc), parasitology, cytology, histopathological examination, identification of livestock breeds, and animal husbandry.
- In Y3 extended teaching in pathology takes place (cadavers, organs, post-mortem examinations), infectious diseases, including vaccination protocols, sampling and examination of biological samples and viscera. Besides that, post-mortem examination

- of avian species and disposal of pathological material.
- In Y4, the training in Herd Health Management, HHM (SER, table 3.1.3.) includes semiotics being part of one of the basic skills of vets. Besides that, much attention is given to examination, differential diagnostics, selecting and interpreting diagnostic tests, treatment plans and analysis of individuals and groups, obstetric and reproduction technologies, surgery and anaesthesiology (suturing, pain management, sedation, anaesthesia). In the PPT, students rotate in groups of 8-12 students to different activities (SER, table 3.1.3): Animal nutrition, Animal Breeding and Genetics, Diagnostic Pathology (including necropsies), Infectious Diseases and Avian Pathology, Parasitology and Parasitological Diseases, Pharmacology and Toxicology. All students (see SER 4.7) spend almost a week in Ragusa, the main dairy area of Sicily. Under supervision of academic staff students are trained extramurally on farms. Before the training in Ragusa all the relevant biosafety and biosecurity procedures are revised with the Teachers before starting the activities in farms or premises (e.g., slaughterhouses; food processing plants). The DVS covers the costs including transport, accommodation and breakfast during this week. At the end of each day students and teacher(s) discuss the cases of the day. Students upload the cases into the database.
  - The last year of the curriculum consists of 4 ECTS bovine and swine clinics extramurally. Students can choose Electives in the areas of Animal Production (three modules of Livestock farm management) and Clinical Sciences (three modules of Veterinary profession and enterprise and two modules of Veterinary communications).

#### **3.1.4.2. Comments**

The build-up of the curriculum for FPA is sufficiently meeting the Day One Competences. Starting with basic procedures, followed by practical rotations in Y4/5. Extramural teaching takes place on dairy farms (some of them very big facilities) with dedicated teachers. The use of 3D, plastinated models and the recent investment into different simulators in the Clinical Skills Lab is commendable offering students many possibilities to enhance their knowledge needed in the practical rotations and an opportunity to work according to the 3Rs in the curriculum. It is up to the students individually to use the given opportunities.

#### **3.1.4.3. Suggestions for improvement**

None.

#### **3.1.4.4. Decision**

The VEE is compliant with Standard 3.1.4.

### **3.1.5. Food Safety and Quality**

#### **3.1.5.1. Findings**

The curriculum of food safety and quality, veterinary public health, and the One Health concept encompasses 57 hours of lectures on veterinary legislation, controls, forensic veterinary medicine, and certification. Food control and animal by-product lectures account for 73 hours, while food hygiene and microbiology, and zoonoses are taught in 112 hours. 19 hours are dedicated to food technology, and 30 hours to veterinary public health. The curriculum also includes 98 hours of laboratory and desk-based work and 140 hours of non-clinical animal work. Clinical animal work accounts for 10 hours, divided equally between veterinary public health, and veterinary legislation, official controls, regulatory veterinary services, forensic

veterinary medicine, and certification.

The propaedeutic course to inspection of food of animal origin and inspection of food of animal origin during the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> years, respectively is part of the food safety and quality training. It is further divided into five modules such as organisation and operations in slaughterhouses and food industries, microbiology of food of animal origin, hygiene, and technologies of food of animal origin, inspection of fresh food of animal origin each 6 h/student, and inspection of processed food of animal origin 12 h/student.

The intramural and extramural professional practical training consists of 125 hours in food safety and quality and veterinary public health involves analysis of foods of animal origin at the Inspection Didactic Laboratory and the Food Microbiology Laboratory (which is ISO/IEC 17025:2018 certified). The VEE has agreements with slaughterhouses, food processing plants, and local health authorities, as well as the Istituto Zooprofilattico Sperimentale Delle Sicilia, to ensure official control in line with EU legislation (Reg. EU no. 2019/624, 2019/625, 2019/627). Furthermore, students are trained in the Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) system, technology in food processing, distribution of products, and veterinary sanitary control procedures inside the premises.

As part of their training, students observe and participate in the practices at various facilities such as bovine/swine/ovine/goats/equine slaughterhouses, meat processing plants, meat cutting plants, shellfish farming and purification centres, honey plants, fishery product plants, egg product and egg packaging plants, and poultry slaughterhouses and poultry meat cutting plants under guidance of a veterinarian. When necessary, the VEE has provided digital alternatives to on-site visits.

**SER Table** Number of visits in slaughterhouses and related premises for training in FSQ

Premises	2021- 2022	2020 - 2021	2019- 2020	Mea n
<i>Slaughterhouse (domestic ungulates)</i>	7	7	1*	5
<i>Poultry slaughterhouse</i>	1	1*	1*	1
<i>Meat cutting plant</i>	2	1	1*	1.7
<i>Meat processed plant</i>	3	1	1*	1.7
<i>Fishery product platform</i>	1	0	0	0.3
<i>Fishery shop</i>	0	3	3	2
<i>Shellfish farming and depuration</i>	1	1	0	0.7
<i>Honey processing Plant</i>	1	1	0	0.7
<i>Eggs packaging and Egg products processing Plant</i>	1	1	1*	1
<i>Pilot Plant of Food Processes (intramural)</i>	2	2	0	1.3

<i>Food Laboratory (ISO/IEC 17025:2018 Certified)</i>	2	2	0	1.3
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\*Visits replaced by videos/power-point presentation/computer-based simulators because of COVID-19 restrictions.

Moodle is the electronic platform used to support teaching. The VEE has also allocated a classroom with 20 computers for student access to electronic educational materials, and students can borrow tablets and notebooks from the library.

Additionally, elective courses on food safety and quality, veterinary public health, and the One Health concept are available for the students.

### **3.1.5.2. Comments**

It is commendable that the FSQ unit established strong connections with local food processing plants in the region and conducts PPT on industrial food hygiene. The PPT includes various stages of industrial food production that allows students to observe and familiarise themselves with diverse food hygiene, safety, and control aspects at different food production stages. Combining such visitations with constructively aligned HACCP training, the students receive robust education in the field of FSQ. The students do not directly work in close contact with foodborne pathogens due to their FSQ laboratory training however, they are taught and receive training on foodborne pathogens in a safe setting. The FSQ unit has established and implemented virtual slaughterhouse training alongside on-site slaughterhouse visitations. The virtual slaughterhouse software and its implementation is the result of an international exchange activity of the FSQ unit. Students taught and got familiar with antimicrobial resistance, and the One Health concept throughout their general microbiology and infectious diseases training. Moreover, during the FSQ training the students are further supported with One Health related activities and seminars. The curriculum design, study structure, and PPT established by the FSQ unit are compliant with the standard.

### **3.1.5.3. Suggestions for improvement**

None.

### **3.1.5.4. Decision**

The VEE is compliant with Standard 3.1.5.

## **3.1.6. Professional Knowledge**

### **3.1.6.1. Findings**

Subjects linked to Professional Knowledge are incorporated in these subjects:

- Information literacy and data management.
- Professional ethics and communication.
- Animal health economics and practice management.
- Clinical practical training in common animal species.
- Herd health management.
- Veterinary legislation.

The Professional Knowledge topics are widely represented in the elective subject called Roadmap to Veterinary Profession, which is an educational path specifically designed to provide students with awareness, knowledge and skills on some professionalising issues not included in the objectives and educational aims of the subjects of VEE. It was established in 2021 and more than 80% of students choose this elective subject.

### **3.1.6.2. Comments**

The Professional knowledge topics are involved in various compulsory subjects which account together for a total of 651 hours. It is commendable that in addition the VEE implements these topics in more detail in elective subjects, especially “Roadmap to Veterinary Profession”, which is followed by more than 80% of the students.

### **3.1.6.3. Suggestions for improvement**

None.

### **3.1.6.4 Decision**

The VEE is compliant with Standard 3.1.6.

**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 provides a study programme that is competency-based and meets its objectives through teamwork of internal and external stakeholders. It is a five-year study programme offered to the students from Italy and abroad aiming to achieve Day One Competences based on EAEVE and national standards.

Qualification resulting from the study programme refers to the national qualification system that was established in Italy in 2018. The study programme is designed and managed to fulfil the requirements set by Italian laws and regulations concerning the Italian Veterinary Education programme (the curriculum present overlapping programme with those of the other Italian veterinary schools).

The QA structure responsible for curriculum includes an EAEVE Committee, QAG-DCVM, and TSJC. The EAEVE committee that has existed since 2015, is responsible for aligning learning outcomes (LO) with Day One Competences (DOC) and detecting the opportunities for improvement in the area of indicators. TSJC is responsible for periodic review of course syllabi and QAG-DCVM has conducted alignment of LO with Dublin descriptors by using Tuning matrix (conducted last academic year).

VEE constantly improves the environment conducive to learning, specifically by maintenance of the facilities, the availability of literature in the library or through e-learning, and teacher education.

Lifelong learning is promoted through the tutoring system (students can discuss a career path in a meeting with the tutor), workshops or conferences for which students get additional ECTS points.

### **3.2.2. Comments**

The study programme that the VEE offers enables students to meet Day One Competences and learning outcomes after 5 years of study.

As an elective, students can select a subject called EAEVE-ANVUR (part of the group of electives called “Road Map to Veterinary Profession”), taught by the members of the EAEVE Committee, and/or possibly supported by external experts.

During the five-year course, students can participate in supervised self-learning activities. However, final assessment or specifically scheduled time slots are not regularly conducted after it.

### **3.2.3. Suggestions for improvement**

None.

### **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**

Learning outcomes (LO) are linked to the subjects through which they are acquired, and matched to Day One Competences (in the form of rubrics). LO of individual subjects are available on the website, in the form of a syllabus, together with additional information as methodological unit and form of assessment.

The EAEVE Committee is the responsible body for alignment of LO and DOC on the VEE level.

On an annual level, the VEE, in accordance with national QA regulations, prepares *Scheda SUA-CdS*, a document that contains learning objectives, student experiences and LO, and its goal is to detect possible improvements. This document is part of the SMA prepared by QAG-DCVM, and both of these documents are presented to students and staff, as well as external stakeholders via web page.

The LO are revised through periodic reviews done by QAG in documents called SUA-CdS and SMA, documents intended to manage the curriculum. They are sent to the VEE Council and TJSC for approval and afterwards are publicly available on the webpage. Course leaders can revise and amend the LO of their subjects, upon the request of the DCVM Coordinator, on an annually basis, according to a standardised pipeline including a sequentially discussions and approvals by: i) DCVM Council; ii) TSJC; and iii) DVS Council.

### **3.3.2. Comments**

Individual subjects are aligned with DOC and form a cohesive framework.

Course leaders can revise and amend the LO of their subjects, upon the request of the DCVM Coordinator, on an annually basis, according to a standardised pipeline including a sequentially

discussions and approvals by: i) DCVM Council; ii) TSJC; and iii) DVS Council.

### **3.3.3. Suggestions for improvement**

None.

### **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 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.**

### **3.4.1. Findings**

Current curriculum was introduced in 2015/2016, and afterwards reviewed every academic year. The DCVM coordinator and DCVM Council are the responsible bodies for the curriculum, and are supported by numerous committees and groups. All of those structures function according to written procedures issued by the UniMe.

QAG-DCVM is responsible for the evaluation of the QA of the teaching and services offered to the students. TSJC is responsible for the evaluation of the students' questionnaires, corrective measures, curricular changes, student progression and welfare. The PPT committee is responsible for intramural and extramural teaching activities. The Tutoring Committee organises and supports students' progression. All of those committees have student representatives. The Steering Committee enables closer connection of the labour market and consequent alignment of the current study programme. Year-class coordinators oversee the organisation of teaching activities on a specific year of study.

QAG-DCVM drafts, by May, the annual form (SUA-CdS) and the annual monitoring form (SSMA) by December, in order to analyse specific indicators requested by the ANVUR and to evaluate the quality of teaching and services delivered to students during the year. Before it is sent to the QAP, it is checked by the QA Coordinator. DCVM, and thereafter, DVS Councils, approve those reports.

### **3.4.2. Comments**

The committee structure of the VEE that oversees and manages the curriculum has clear and empowered reporting roles, includes a significant number of student representatives, and is directly linked to the QA processes (as can be seen from regular periodic reviews).

TSJC, as responsible structure for student questionnaires, produces an Annual Report containing proposed corrective measures based on unsatisfactory student comments.

### **3.4.3. Suggestions for improvement**

None.

### **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**

The EPT training, called *Stage*, takes place in the 5<sup>th</sup> year. A minimum of four weeks (100 hours) is dedicated to several fields of practice:

- Companion animals (pre-clinical)
- Production animals (clinical)
- Companion animals (clinical)
- FSQ & VPH
- Others (any of the premises or facilities with signed agreement with VEE)

All the EPT providers have been approved by the DCVM Council and signed by the UniMe. EPT providers are from various different areas such as:

- Local Veterinary Units of the National Health System
- Experimental Zooprohylactic Institute
- Private veterinary clinics
- Experienced veterinary practitioners
- Farms and Feed manufacturers
- Premises for food producing

During the EPT the students are fully covered by their university insurance.

### **3.5.2. Comments**

The EPT programme is provided according to the ESEVT SOP with all necessary procedures required. The list of EPT providers is regularly updated and available for students on their digital learning platform.

### **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**

All EPT providers are approved by the DCVM Council and a written agreement is signed by UniMe. A list of providers is regularly updated and fully available to students. At the end of each EPT, the tutor must fill in a satisfactory form, where she/he expresses her/his own opinion on the students activity during EPT. All this feedback is collected by the DCVM Coordinator, recently Prof. Marco Qurtuccio and sent to QAG for evaluation. The Coordinator is also responsible for collection and revision of EPT student's diaries.

### **3.6.2. Comments**

During the visitation the VEE presented the history of the last four years for all of the above-mentioned documents-signed agreements with EPT providers, filled and signed evaluation forms either from EPT providers or students (the feedback on EPT).

### **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 can freely choose from a list of providers, where they wish to complete their EPT. After choosing, the student must be accepted by the provider. Students are required to inform the Coordinator about the beginning and the end of their EPT. At the end of the EPT period, the Coordinator checks the diary and certifies the activities through the document sent to the student's secretariat. Also the student must fill in an assessment form after the EPT, where she/he expresses the observations and complaints. This form is also collected by the Coordinator and sent to QAG for evaluation.

### **3.7.2. Comments**

During the visitation the VEE presented filled out and signed student diaries from EPT from the last four years. All the activities are well described and signed by the person responsible for the EPT programme.

### **3.7.3. Suggestions for improvement**

None.

### **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 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**

The DVS (Department of Veterinary Science) and the VTH (Veterinary Teaching Hospital) are located 5 km from the city centre of Messina, in the Annunziata Campus. It is well connected by public and university transport and is close to highway gates A19 and A20. It offers spacious accommodation of 22,000 m<sup>2</sup> of land, including a central building with teaching facilities, research laboratories, library, and administrative area, a separate Veterinary Teaching Hospital, and extramural facilities in Sicily and Reggio Calabria. All facilities are covered by Wi-Fi connection and parking and access for people with reduced mobility are available.

The SER outlines the strategy and programme to maintain and upgrade facilities and equipment at the DVS and VTH. The "Responsible for didactic activities and laboratory research" is responsible for periodic checks of instruments and equipment, with the support of technical staff members. The Department for Technical Services oversees maintenance and upgrading of the DVS. A three-year programme for maintenance, renovation, innovation, and acquisition is available and reviewed annually. The local staff provides for the correct operation of informatic/electronic equipment and safety of all buildings. Equipment management is under the control of UniLav S.p.c.a. and specialised personnel. The DVS and VTH have undergone maintenance and renovation works including electrical, mechanical, fire prevention systems and energy saving strategies. The buildings of the DVS and VTH have undergone significant surface restoration works and reinforcement of concrete structures. In addition to the central services, the VEE has an office which is responsible for the daily tasks of ensuring proper functioning of the IT equipment and security of the facilities.

The UniMe Building Technical Service Directorate is responsible for ensuring that physical facilities comply with all relevant legislation and maintain high standards of safety and biosecurity. The Prevention and Protection Service (PPS) guarantees that all lifting equipment, compressors, X-ray equipment, MRI, CT, hoists, fire extinguishers, and other items are inspected with the expected periodicity. The PPS is also responsible for the implementation, management, and control of safety in compliance with the requirements of Legislative Decree No. 81 of 9 April 2008, to ensure the health and safety of staff and students working or studying at the DVS.

Hospital equipment, which is managed by UniLav S.p.c.a. and not by the central services of the UniMe. In particular, high-performance equipment (MRI, CT, X-ray, and ultrasound scanners) is subject to an external specialised maintenance contract.

The biosecurity manual is available to all users at all entrances via a QR code. There are clear instructions in all laboratories, rooms and accesses for compliance with biosafety procedures. Free personal protective equipment is available for staff and students at access points where such equipment is required. For example, at the entrance to the dissection room, at the entrance to the necropsy room, at the entrance to the hospital or in the animal production area, among others.

### **4.1.2. Comments**

The main building is being completely renovated to conserve heat and reduce the electricity bill. Solar panels will be included in the near future to improve energy efficiency. In particular

the windows and the isolation of the external walls are being replaced relating to occupational safety and biosafety. A sign with a QR link to the biosafety manual, which was approved on 9 January 2023, is displayed at the entrance to each of the laboratories and main facilities.

During the visit, the implementation of all biosafety procedures could be observed. These procedures are implemented in all facilities where there are risks described in the manual. Furthermore, all users (students, academic and support staff) are made aware of the procedures and how to apply them correctly.

It is commendable that the Safety and Biosecurity training is carried out online (4 hours) followed by the students' assessment; and a QR code is available at each entrance of the laboratories and VTH to access the Biosafety manual.

#### **4.1.3. Suggestions for improvement**

None.

#### **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**

The capacity and size of classrooms for theoretical classes (15 classrooms) is described in SER Table 4.2.1. Four classrooms have more than 90 seats, which is the recent number of students admitted annually. These classrooms are equipped with modern video-projection systems and internet connection.

SER Table 4.2.2 describes the different classrooms for group work in the different subjects. These classrooms (15 in total) have a capacity ranging from 6 to 16 seats, most of them 8 seats; this would therefore be the maximum size of the groups. On the other hand, the description of the laboratories for practices (22 laboratories) is detailed in SER Table 4.2.3 whose size ranges from 5 to 25 seats, including two larger laboratories for basic subjects with 40 seats.

The VEE have had two clinical skills laboratories (LCH) which have recently been merged into one facility. The Clinical Skills Lab includes a Holstein dystocia simulator, a Bovine theriogenology model, and an Equine palpation/colic simulator, as well as an Equine GI tract, Equine neck venipuncture, and Equine palpation radiology limb. Also, a variety of equipment for clinical and surgical training, including anaesthetic and breathing machines, ultrasonographic and endoscopic machines, plastinated organs, a cardiopulmonary resuscitation simulator, and tables for workgroups that are used for preclinical basic and advanced learning practices. The equipment has been recently acquired. Several work tables are available which can accommodate a total of 13 students at a time. In addition to these students have access to many places in smaller rooms and laboratories in the sections.

Premises for study and self-learning are available all over the DVS. The main library offers a range of services such as consultation, articles, books, and journals please refer to Area 6. All users of the VEE have access to a canteen near the main building and there are also vending

machines.

The University of Messina provides a variety of services for students and staff. There are student canteens and catering services located close to the DVS building, as well as automatic machines providing soft drinks and snacks. Club House Cafeteria has an outdoor area with tables and chairs, and the Campus Canteen has seating for 180 people. There are 57 double rooms in the Campus, as well as a two-floor guesthouse for the International Veterinary Student Association. Lockers and clothes hangers are available in teaching rooms and locker rooms for both males and females. Four foldaway beds are available for on call students. The University Sport Center provides free fitness, swimming, tennis, and horse riding opportunities. Toilets and bathrooms are located all over the DVS building, and there are 80 offices with natural light for academic staff, Ph.D. students, and technical staff, as well as large research laboratories.

At the entrance of each laboratory as well as in the veterinary hospital there are lockers.

The [\*Società sportiva dilettantistica UniMe\*](#) (SSD UniMe) is an Amateur Sports Society of Limited Responsibility, established 16.12.2020, it is an internal company of the UniMe that directly manages the Sports Facilities of the University Sports Citadel, the Equestrian Center present at the Annunziata University Pole, the Primo Nebiolo Sports Complex and the Mariani Palace, all facilities owned by the UniMe.

#### **4.2.2. Comments**

The offices and laboratories are very spacious and have sufficient growth capacity to accommodate an increased number of students and researchers in the years to come. There are large laboratories, some with enough space to keep old equipment in the form of a small museum.

The SSD UniMe availability of high-quality sports facilities and services such as swimming pool, equestrian facilities, fitness or team sports that allow sports activity and a full university life, which promotes the well-being and health of the university community is commendable.

#### **4.2.3. Suggestions for improvement**

None.

#### **4.2.4. Decision**

The VEE is compliant with Standard 4.2.

**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 biocontainment**
- **be designed to enhance learning.**

#### **4.3.1. Findings**

The VEE has equids available for healthy animal practices at the University's riding centre (10 horses) and at a farm in "La Quercia" (16 horses and 10 donkeys) located 40 minutes by road from the VEE. In addition, there are cows (21), sheep (143), pigs (480) and poultry (100) for practice on healthy animals.

For dog training, 15 dogs are available at the Helen Keller Regional Center (Guide dogs for

blinds).

Experimental animal housing facilities are available for pigs (6) and small ruminants (4). These facilities are designed and equipped according to the European directive 2010/63/EU and Italian regulations, allowing training and research activities. There is also a centre for research on fish, molluscs and crustaceans. In 2022, the University of Messina built a new Centre for Translational Medicine Unit which includes two stables for hosting pigs and small ruminants, a preoperative room, and two surgery rooms, all of which are adequately equipped. Additionally, the University also constructed the Experimental Ichthyo-pathology Center of Sicily (EICS) on the first floor of the DVS building. The EICS is accredited by the Italian Ministry of Health and is composed of five areas including housing and quarantine rooms, two laboratories, and a room for reproduction.

The Veterinary Teaching Hospital (VTH) is located on the North side of the Central Building and is composed of two separate buildings - a rectangular one for small animals and a semi-circular one for equine and food producing animals. Facilities and equipment for clinical activities include clinical services, operating theatres, imaging (CT, MRI), and boxes for hospitalisation and a necropsy room. The VTH is dedicated to clinical activities, teaching, and research, and also includes service rooms such as locker rooms and showers for staff and students, and warehouses.

The veterinary hospital has space for accommodation of sick animals. Specifically, the VTH has the capacity to hospitalise 3 horses, 23 dogs, 13 cats and 15 exotic animals. In addition, there are 10 ICU boxes for dogs and 8 for cats. The hospital's isolation facilities include 1 box for equines, 1 for food producing animals and 4 for companion animals.

The VTH is equipped with modern, up-to-date and well-functioning clinical equipment which enables the teaching/learning of clinical skills to students and the development of customer services adequate to national and European practice standards, and promotes clinical research activities.

The DVS at the University use intramural and extramural premises for practical training in FSQ and VPH. Intramural activities take place in the "Inspection Didactic Lab", "Pilot Plant of Food Processes" and "Food Laboratory". Extramural activities include visits to slaughterhouses, food processing plants, Local Health Authorities and IZS for official control. These premises include a Bovine/Swine/Ovine/Goats/Equine Slaughterhouse, Meat Processing Plant, Meat Cutting Plant, Shellfish farming and Purification centre, Honey Plant, Fishery product platform, Egg-product and Egg packaging Plant and a Poultry Slaughterhouse and Poultry meat cutting Plant. Students observe the workflow, HACCP plan evaluation, hygiene, and technology of each.

#### **4.3.2. Comments**

The VEE has biosafety and biocontainment facilities constructed in accordance with national and international standards to ensure that they are fit for purpose. The two isolation facilities have a ventilation and plumbing system to ensure proper treatment of solid and liquid waste. They have a separate entrance from the outside for the entry of animals suspected of having infectious diseases in accordance with established protocol. In addition, veterinary staff is provided with appropriate personal protective equipment.

The VEE has adequate facilities and equipment in the haematological and clinical biochemistry laboratory, necropsy room, recently refurbished and in operation.

#### **4.3.3. Suggestions for improvement**

None.

#### **4.3.4. Decision**

The VEE is compliant with Standard 4.3.

**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 Veterinary Teaching Hospital (VTH) at UniMe is a 24/7 emergency service for companion animals and equines, providing general consultations, referral (specialised) consultations, ICU, hospitalisation, and isolation for small animals. The VTH team includes 8 hired veterinarians, academic staff, post-graduate students, Ph.D. students, technicians, groomers, and administrators. External collaborators are also contracted for small animals and horse specialistic services, and diagnostic activities. Until 2018, the VTH was managed by DSV, while in 2019, UniMe took over and in 2021, UniLav S.c.p.a., a society affiliated to UniMe, will manage it. The VTH meets the national Practice Standards and has agreements with local municipalities to provide 24-hour first aid to stray animals. Students participate in all activities, including assisting hospitalised patients and performing medical and surgical procedures during clinical rotations.

#### **4.4.2. Comments**

The veterinary hospital offers clinical services mainly in the major small animal specialties: internal medicine, anaesthesia and surgery, and reproduction. On the other hand, medicine and surgery services for large animals (equidae and ruminants together) are offered. The mobile clinic service is mainly exercised in the livestock farms of Ragusa and in other areas of Sicily. The number of intramural visits for equidae is limited but is compensated by the activity in the livestock farms. The same is true for ruminants, where the number of intramural visits by appointment at the veterinary hospital is low, but the number of extramural visits compensates for this caseload.

The diagnostic imaging equipment for small animals is mainly composed of an ultrasound service which is available in the consulting rooms and with a digital radiology service. In the surgical area there is equipment for endoscopy and laparoscopy. Recently a computerised tomography equipment for equids and another one for small animals have been acquired and are located in a refurbished room at the VTH. Their acquisition is very recent and therefore there are not a sufficient number of cases to justify the incorporation of an imaging technician, but it should be a requirement if these facilities and equipment should be used on a routine basis (see also Standard 5.4). The diagnostic imaging service has recently been complemented with a new MRI equipment for equine use only.

Veterinarians recruited by the VTH have received training in clinical teaching, including

assessment of students' Day One Competences in the logbooks. For this purpose, the hospital's new electronic medical records management system, which was implemented in 2022, allows students to write medical records in draft format. Later, one of the members of the academic staff or the veterinary practitioners at the VTH responsible for the case has to approve, or if necessary, correct these texts, before they are incorporated into the clinical records on a permanent basis. In this respect, this system of allowing students to write the case histories in the electronic medical records system is commendable. An improvement for the connection with the PACS is required in the near future to provide the students with the clinic diagnostic images.

#### **4.4.3. Suggestions for improvement**

None.

#### **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**

During PPT students have access to various diagnostic and therapeutic facilities, and work with a variety of patients of different species. They participate in clinical rounds, discuss clinical cases, plan daily activity, write reports and take part in clinical monitoring of hospitalised patients, therapy administration and diagnostic and therapeutic procedures. All of this is done under the supervision of the academic staff.

Students have access to diagnostic and therapeutic facilities including diagnostic imaging (radiology, ultrasound, endoscopy, CT and MRI).

A full anaesthesia service and equipment for inhalation anaesthesia is available in the operating theatres and pre-surgical rooms, with appropriate monitoring.

The laboratory has full Idexx equipment for standard clinical pathology.

#### **4.5.2. Comments**

The intensive care ward is attached to one of the consulting rooms, allowing for immediate patient care in the event of an emergency. The ICU room is equipped with the basic equipment necessary for the proper care of small animals. This equipment includes infusion pumps for fluid therapy and oxygen therapy boxes.

The VTH has several small animal operating theatres and an equine operating theatre. The operating theatres have the necessary equipment to perform the surgical activities including gas anaesthesia equipment. Both the design of the facilities and the procedures implemented ensure the sterility of the surgical procedures.

In relation to the pharmacy, the management of drug use is in accordance with national and international standards. The use of drugs is recorded, waste management is controlled and drugs under special surveillance (opioids, anaesthetics and similar) are kept in a locked cabinet under the control of authorised personnel.

The VEE has two rooms for performing necropsies. One room for small animal necropsies is located in the main building, next to the dissection room, and another room for large animals is located in the VTH. The new necropsy room for large animals was not operative during the

visit because it was not yet fully equipped.

#### **4.5.3. Suggestions for improvement**

None.

#### **4.5.4. Decision**

The VEE is compliant with Standard 4.5.

**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**

The Veterinary Teaching Hospital has two isolation units, one for companion animals and one for equines/FPA, to accommodate patients suspected or affected by infectious diseases. The units are equipped with necessary materials and operate in accordance with biosecurity protocols. Access requires the use of individual protection devices and disinfection materials, and all materials are treated as special waste and disposed of by an authorised company.

#### **4.6.2. Comments**

Strict access/exit rules are followed to ensure that infectious diseases are contained and not spread. They are properly ventilated and appropriate PPE is used in accordance with the biosafety protocol and guidelines. Waste management is adequate as it allows for the biological containment of both liquids and solids.

The implementation of biosecurity standards is recent and the use of the facilities is also recent. Facility biosecurity protocols are designed and implemented, however they have not been practised in actual cases in the large animal facilities. More clinical cases could increase the use of these facilities and provide sufficient clinical experience for students.

#### **4.6.3. Suggestions for improvement**

None.

#### **4.6.4. Decision**

The VEE is compliant with Standard 4.6.

**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**

The VTH provides an ambulatory clinic for food producing animals and equines that is mandatory for all students at the DVS. It is mainly located in the Ragusa area in Sicily (described in Standard 3.1.4) with a large number of large and small ruminants, equidae, pigs, poultry, rabbits and 60% of the regional dairy production and 65% of the meat production. Small groups of students in their 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> year are supervised by the permanent teaching staff and local veterinarians on site. Students commute by the DVS car, van, and private vehicles to

visit farms for activities such as clinical examination, treatment and field surgery, pregnancy diagnosis, delivery assistance, deworming treatments, vaccination, HHM and official testing for TBC.

#### **4.7.2. Comments**

The VEE has agreements with several farms in Ragusa to provide appropriate, compulsory ambulatory training for 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> year students.

#### **4.7.3. Suggestions for improvement**

None.

#### **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 DVS provides transportation to extramural facilities for students with their car or 9-seat vehicle, and hires specific vehicles for larger groups. Animals, including equines, are transported to and from the VTH mainly by their owners, although the DVS does own a trailer for equines. Transport of cadavers and/or organs is provided either by an authorised vehicle owned by the DVS or by a contracted company.

#### **4.8.2. Comments**

The transport of students, live animals, cadavers, materials from animal origin and other teaching materials ensures the safety of students and staff. However, 4<sup>th</sup> year students generally travel to extramural activities in their own cars or in nine-seat vehicles. The VEE procures a specific vehicle for larger group sizes. Meanwhile, 5<sup>th</sup> year students must arrange for their own transport to the extramural facilities.

#### **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 assure clinical, laboratory and farm services, including a regular monitoring of the feedback from students, staff and clients.**

#### **4.9.1. Findings**

The DVS at UniMe has implemented a course on biosecurity and animal handling for students prior to participation in laboratory activities and clinical rotations, followed by a written test. The course includes laboratory, slaughterhouse, necropsy room, radioprotection, and breeding facility security training. All students must also take a 4-hour workplace safety course prior to matriculation. At the VTH, students are made aware of biosecurity and are actively involved in the application of biosecurity standards. Waste management is organised according to the specific categories of materials and hazardous waste is collected in special containers, and is regulated at the UniMe level. Activities on animals are in accordance with National Good Clinical Practices and European legislation, while a system of feedback is in place to monitor clinical services from clients. PPT activities are evaluated by students through anonymous online questionnaires.

#### **4.9.2. Comments**

Biosafety and biosecurity procedures are correctly implemented and available to students, staff and visitors. A QA monitoring system of clinical, laboratory and farm services is in place. A customer satisfaction evaluation system was implemented in 2022, with the aim to improve VTH services, and to facilitate the relationship between users, staff, and administrative officers. A satisfaction form has been drafted and it is available at the front office of the VTH, used both for appraisal and complaints. An internal Committee composed of the VTH Director, the administrative service manager, UniLav QA representative, and the VTH legal expert was appointed for periodical evaluation of the filled satisfaction forms.

#### **4.9.3. Suggestions for improvement**

None.

#### **4.9.4. Decision**

The VEE is compliant with Standard 4.9.

### **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.**

#### **5.1.1. Findings**

Hands-on training in all fields of veterinary medicine starts with basic subjects on models, organs, carcasses and live animals. The DVS uses the principle of the 3Rs as a starting point. One of the contributions to the 3Rs is the development of the Clinical Skills Lab being an important way to enhance training in applied anatomy and/or imaging without use of animals. An Ethical Committee oversees all activities in which animals are used for teaching purposes. In companion animals, most of the clinical training is performed during intramural practical training in the VTH under the supervision of academic staff and/or licensed veterinary practitioners. There are compulsory shifts during the weekend and night. Moreover, the VTH has agreements with public authorities and municipalities to enhance the number of clinical cases, but also with private organisations (i.e. Guide Dogs for the Blinds). The agreement with

the municipalities is mainly signed to provide health care including emergency treatments to stray animals (dogs and cats). These agreements allow on-duty students to participate, under supervision, in: i) safely handling and restraining animal patients; ii) assisting veterinarians; iii) managing hospitalised animals; iv) administering drugs and fluids, and v) carry out diagnostic tests.

Clinical training on equine, bovine, and swine, is offered during the PPT. In equine the PPT takes place partly in the VTH with new and modern facilities, which were put in place during the last two years. In bovine and swine, the training takes place extramurally. The DVS has an agreement with *Istituto di Incremento Ippico per la Sicilia* (Horse Training Institute) to increase the case load.

The students' personal logbook is the main document in which all the medical records are listed, divided by species. The PPT is organised in a way that guarantees a well-balanced exposure among all clinical activities. In Y4 all students are exposed to population medicine activities through participation in the HHM, and, in the 5<sup>th</sup> year, they are exposed to individual medicine through attendance at the VTH and ambulatory clinics for food producing animals.

According to the Indicators (I18, I19 and I20), considering the necropsies of all species, only the number of necropsies of equine is below the minimal value (see also table 5.1.6). In SER table 5.1.1 the number of cadavers and organs are listed.

For training in anatomy local slaughterhouses are contracted. Besides that, non-infectious carcasses from the VTH are used. Additionally, plastinated organs, 3D models, the Histology and the Osteology labs are used.

For training in pathology, a big variation in cadavers and material of animal origin have been used. The cadavers are obtained from VTH, local practitioners, owners, prosecutor's office (forensic examination) and wild mammals found dead or shot. The necropsies in livestock are mainly carried out in the Ragusa area.

The cadavers are used for many purposes after necropsy (tissue sampling, microbiology, toxicology and exams). Material originating from external sources is transported by a vehicle, authorised for this kind of transportation. Rest material is destroyed by incineration by a contracted company.

In SER table 5.1.2 the number of healthy live animals used for pre-clinical training is listed, and in table 5.1.3 and 5.1.4 the number of patients seen intra- and extramurally resp. SER table 5.1.5. shows that most of the patients are first opinion patients. SER table 5.1.7 shows the number of herds/flocks/units in Animal Production and HHM, and SER table 5.1.8 the number of visits in slaughterhouses and related premises.

A procedure is in place for monitoring the number and variety of animals and material of animal origin used (DCVM, PPT Committee). The PPT Committee is specifically in charge of the logbook evaluation and countersignature. The EAEVE Committee calculates every year the ESEVT indicators.

### **5.1.2. Comments**

According to the numbers listed in SER tables 5.1.1 to 5.1.8, a wide variety of cadavers and material of animal origin have been used in the (pre)clinical training of students. The Indicator I12 is negative. However, it is compensated for and clearly seen that training of SA mainly occurs intramurally with a very large number of patients available for students.

The Indicator I9 is negative. However, it is compensated for by the extramural training in FPA being commendable due to the very large amount of clinical material and the access for students in both 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> year.

It is considered important to have a well organised system of registration of cases in the students' logbook. Also the yearly monitoring of the system is essential. Most of the patients are first opinion cases, which can be considered as positive. But, with the expectation of a

growing number of students in the coming years, it could be expected that relatively more referral patients will enter the VTH.

The borderline Indicator I19 (equine necropsies) has been explained by the fact that necropsies of equines were more impacted by COVID-19 pandemic in AY 2020/2021 than in AY 2019/2020. According to the SER, it is foreseen that the caseload of equine patients will grow in the coming years together with the new necropsy room, in which the pathology services can be further implemented.

### **5.1.3. Suggestions for improvement**

None.

### **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**

Practical training at external sites takes place in farms under direct academic supervision and following the same standards as those applied in the VEE. Several farms have agreements with the VEE, but not all farms. Student transfer is organised using private cars and buses. Travel time has been used for preparation of cases before the visit and evaluation after the diverse visits.

During the PPT activities, the academic staff provides to each student two farm schedules to fill-out. The farm schedules comprise questions related both to farm animals (e.g. morphological evaluation as claw/hoof and udder characteristics), assessment of BCS-Body Condition Score, of FCS-Faecal Consistency Score, of RM-Rumen Fill and features of the farm management (e.g., identification of feeds and feedstuff, distribution of diets for food-producing animals, the ration present in the manger, box management, monitoring of environmental parameters, and diverse strategies as vaccination, prevention, treatment). Both schedules can be filled out in the same farm (when the animals are subdivided and, consequently, managed according to their production stage: weaning, growth, lactation, dryness) or in different farms. The teaching is carried out according to clear protocols also related to Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR).

In poultry farms students have the possibility to carry out their practical work (2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> year) on farms in the organic line of chicken production, and/or in the industrial chicken line. These farms follow the closed cycle chain. The sites are equipped with the most advanced technologies. In 2<sup>nd</sup> year practical activities are also provided in the field of bee production. Practical activities in horses are carried out at the breeding facility of local equine and donkey breeds named *Istituto di Incremento Ippico per la Sicilia* (Ambelia - Catania).

### **5.2.2. Comments**

There is a wide variety of possibilities to train practical activities in commercial farms which have a contract with the VEE. Animal welfare, as well as antimicrobial resistance has been involved in the teaching on the farms. For students, especially interested in horses, working at the institute in Ambelia is an opportunity.

### **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**

Nursing care skills and nursing procedures are trained in Y2 (Physiology, Husbandry and Animal breeding), but also in clinical exercises, clinical rotation and PPT. Communication skills with owners are considered important. A recently renovated Clinical Skills Lab can also be used.

Students are instructed in biosecurity and biosafety procedures before the hands-on training starts. The group size of hands-on clinical training in SA (intramurally) is 1-4, in FPA (extramurally) 1-12 depending on the current activity. This group size aims to guarantee an adequate number of cases together with improving teamwork skills.

Students are encouraged to deepen their understanding of the clinical cases. During clinical rotations, students are encouraged to discuss clinical cases with the academic staff. The discussion includes potential differential diagnosis, and proper ancillary examinations for conclusive diagnosis, and consequential treatment options and pain management. This normally occurs during the intramural activities at the VTH, mainly, at the beginning or at the end of the daily shift. During the extramural activities it is a current practice to discuss with the teacher(s) possible scenarios which might be encountered at the farm. These are then compared with the actual situation encountered at the farm and further discussed at the light of possible areas of interventions.

### **5.3.2. Comments**

Students have ample possibilities to get familiar with most of the aspects of the veterinary field, including a prominent role for communication. The limited group size of 8-10 students allowing students to improve teamwork skills is commendable. In the VTH, on a daily basis cases are discussed with academic staff at the beginning of the end of the daily shift. Extramurally, the discussion with the teacher and/or the farmer depends on the organisation during the day and including travel time.

### **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 2021 a new electronic database has been implemented (AMSGestVET), which is in-house customised. The system is only available within the VTH. The records drafted by the students need to be validated by the relevant teacher to make them official. Only a written description of X-rays is recorded in the system, because of the absence of a picture archiving and communication system (PACS). Records of clinical activities performed extramurally are recorded in a cloud database (Google sheets). Necropsy reports are recorded in Excel.

#### **5.4.2. Comments**

There are three different systems in place for storage of medical records.

The AMSgestVET system is not available outside the VTH and for students within the VEE only if there is a connection with the VTH and the data are not used for municipalities or other organisations.

Students have no access to the spreadsheet on which necropsy records are filed. Only approved by the professor consulting records might be possible.

Although students have access to the written reports, an electronic Picture Archiving and Communications System (PACS), where radiologists can archive and manage diagnostic images is not provided. Therefore, students can only review the images on the radiology equipment or on the ultrasound machine itself. So, students graduate without experience with the use of a PACS system, which at the moment can be considered as state of the art.

See also Standard 4.4.2.

#### **5.4.3. Suggestions for improvement**

A member of the academic staff skilled in diagnostic imaging is suggested to coordinate the new diagnostic imaging equipment and their use for teaching purposes.

#### **5.4.4. Decision**

The VEE is partially compliant with Standard 5.4 because of suboptimal access for students to some clinical data (necropsy files and diagnostic imaging files).

### **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**

All the learning resources provided by the VEE are available through the online integrated library database (SBA). The services are explained in a service charter that allows users to search and locate documents. There are three levels of bibliographic advisory to users, Initial information on the organisation of services; Advise on use of research tools; Assistance by appointment for more complex tutoring (preparation for degree thesis etc.).

The main duties of SBA and the departmental libraries are:

- Make available spaces for study and research at appropriate opening hours and provide the information necessary for use of services

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- Consultations and local loans through on- site consultations or computerised local loan
- Supply of articles and interlibrary loan - the ones not owned by University libraries by using the Nilde system.
- Development and collection of electronic periodicals and databases
- Development and management of the collective catalogue of entire University (UniMe)
- Online orientation and bibliographic consulting services provided by SBA team using the Teams platform

There is also available UniME Discovery Service, which ensures users integrated access to all the University's bibliographic resources. In addition, many other databases are accessible (Scopus, Web of Sciences, NCBI Pubmed etc.)

The services provided by Vet Library on site include:

- Orderly access to the patrimony of textbooks, scientific books, and specialised journals
- Loans of books
- Online research and distribution of bibliographic information
- The purchase of books and periodicals using Library funds or funds expressly transferred from the Department and/or the Units, with respective classification and cataloguing
- Self-service photocopying of the materials available (whenever permitted by law).
- Document delivery
- Access to CD ROM and online databases and to all the electronic resources available from the UniMe, through SBA
- Inter-library book loans
- Find bibliographic material for a degree thesis. Qualified personnel are available to guide and instruct users on research strategies and it is suggested to make an previous appointment by email

At the beginning of each academic year 1<sup>st</sup> year students are instructed how to activate and manage the institutional email account, access the e-learning services, and benefit from the library services. The SBA organises information laboratories for its users and workshops are also organised at the request of teachers. There are also various events, where SBA staff are accessing the students and providing the information (Matricola day etc.). A space for the teaching of learning resources has been also devoted during the Roadmap to Veterinary Profession, in which the elective subject “Electronic resources” strengthen the awareness, and knowledge of students on: i) Bibliographic research and use of databases; ii) The scientific article in veterinary medical research; iii) Guidelines on designing and drafting a report/thesis. Online services are available thru SSO (Single Sign-On), which is provided by UniMe by ESSE3 system. The credentials to access are provided for each user by VEE.

The person responsible for the DVS library periodically sends a request to the Head of DVS regarding the implementation of learning resources (e.g., books, periodicals, databases, etc). These requests are shared throughout the academic staff and after discussion are sent to the DVS Council for approval. Students periodically evaluate the teaching resources through anonymous satisfaction questionnaires; this feedback is analysed, reported and proper action is taken via relevant Councils (DVS and DCVM).

### **6.1.2. Comments**

The way of managing learning resources by the library of VEE fulfils all the necessary essentials to provide all relevant sources of information to students and staff. Students are properly taught about the use and availability of learning resources and have unlimited online access to the digital database both at the VEE school and from home.

### **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**

The library is currently manned by a head librarian and two full-time staff members. An IT technician is also available. The Library is open Monday through Thursday, from 8.30 a.m. to 4.30 p.m. and Friday from 8.30 a.m. to 1.30 p.m. It is closed during Christmas and Easter, and for two weeks in August.

The annual budget spent for the acquisition of books, textbooks, and hardcopy journals is 60,000 euros. The Technical-Scientific Committee (TCS) sets the budget, while the head librarian is responsible for managing the resources in accordance with the decisions made by the TSC.

The library is in the main building of DVS and consists of reception desk, bookshelves and isolated seats:

- The main room with 26 seats and desks (9 of which are equipped with PC logged to internet)
- Two small rooms with 10 extra seats recently unavailable to students
- Recently the hall in front of the library has been furnished with desks, sofas, and chairs (for a total of 40 extra seats).

For all institutional users licensed software (Mendeley, EndNote, Microsoft 365 and Wos UNIME subscription) is available.

There are also several libraries in the different department units, which serve mainly as lecture rooms for the students and staff, some of them are equipped with pc stations and most contain relevant books related to the department. The main library has a list of resources available at these sites.

The e-learning platform currently used at the VEE is Moodle. It collects course materials, supplementary documents, suggestions for further reading, exercises as well as formative and summative assessment tests. All the information and notices can be found on the dedicated page of the University Portal.

There is also a newly renovated computer classroom equipped with 20 computers located next to the library. The library also provides an opportunity to loan 20 tablets and 10 notebooks for UniMe- and PhD-students. This purchase has been financed by the Sicilian Region with the funds of the Ministry of Economic Development.

Microsoft Teams, along with integrated applications such as OneNote, is currently the recommended software for remote team work. On Teams, a "virtual room" has been created, where the user is able to contact the staff, formulate requests, obtain useful information and

advice for bibliographic research.

The University's wireless network "UniMe-WiFi" allows staff and students to use network resources. This system was activated for the Team during the visitation. University staff authenticate using the GAIA (Integrated University Access Management) credentials (link) and the students authenticate using the system "ESSE3". The VPN system is active and available, it is called OpenVPN and the user needs to install it to the computer, several links with instructions are available. Additional benefits include controlled access to services such as Titulus, U-gov and IDEM.

### **6.2.2. Comments**

The subsidiary libraries in different department units were verified and they are widely used by students and teachers as stated in the SER. There are many books and other hard copies of research materials oriented to the topic of the department. It is commendable that the VEE provides ample physical and virtual opportunities for group work and individual study facilities as well.

### **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 archive of SBA contains approximately 7,722 books and 621 hard copy journals. On average the library loans nearly 200 books per year to students. Due to a shortage of Italian textbooks in electronic format, those used for the veterinary curriculum are hard copies.

The VEE provides for students access to Ebsco discovery, CAB abstracts and the new platform called IRIS. Other databases, to which the students may gain access are Pandoracampus and Mlol.

The VEE collects the necessary information and communication options in the Moodle platform, which is the main tool for students and teachers.

Practical training is widely supported in a Clinical Skills Lab (CSL) (more in Standard 4.2). It is regularly used for relevant training in corresponding subjects with relevant teachers or by teachers themselves upon request to the CSL.

### **6.3.2. Comments**

Recently (just a short time before the visit took place) two CSLs were merged into one. It serves as a facility to provide practical training for clinical subjects under supervision of relevant teachers. It is a compulsory part of the curriculum. As freshly open, it does not provide space for students to use this facility for training in their free time yet.

Low number of loans of books is because it is common that students prefer to buy their own books either new ones or used ones from older schoolmates. There is a great variety of translated books in Italian available for the students on the market.

### **6.3.3. Suggestions for improvement**

None.

### **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 advertisings for prospective national and international students.**

**Formal cooperations with other VEEs must also be clearly advertised.**

### **7.1.1. Findings**

All the information about the student life cycle is available on the UniMe webpage where, more specifically, information about admission, orientation and placement can be found. UniMe is also annually organising Open Days and Welcome days activities as well as using social networks (such as Facebook, YouTube and Instagram) for the dissemination.

A special section of the website is dedicated to potential foreign students and mobility (13 bilateral agreements with European Universities).

### **7.1.2. Comments**

Non-EU students residing abroad can apply to study at the UniMe, providing all the necessary documents and proving their proficiency in the Italian language. Later on, they need to pass an Italian language test. Following it, they can formally apply for one of the reserved seats available every year for foreign students. Full details are available at the UniMe website <https://international.unime.it/study-us/application-and-admission>.

### **7.1.3. Suggestions for improvement**

None.

### **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**

Yearly student quota is decided by the Ministry of University and Research, based on the available resources of the VEE. Quota includes EU and non-EU students residing in Italy and abroad. On the VEE level, the number of admitted students is decided after the communication between TSJC (responsible for the monitoring of enrolled students), EAEVE committee (responsible for the monitoring of ESEVT Indicators) and QAG-DCVM (responsible for ratio between number of staff and students). After these three bodies reach their conclusions, the

DSV Council proposes the enrolment quota to UniMe, and on to the Ministry of Universities and Research (MUR). The enrolment quota for students from outside the EU is agreed at the MUR level and if there are no such candidates, those places can be used to enrol EU students. The MUR also has the task of determining the whole national quota for the enrolment of students in the field of veterinary medicine and consequently determining the number of students who will enrol in all Italian VEE. The final number is agreed with national veterinary organisations, the Ministry of Health and regional representatives.

On an annual level, about 600 students apply to study at the VEE, and the number of enrolled students during the last three academic years was as follows: 2019/2020 - 35+5 non-EU; 2020/2021-50+8 non-EU; 2021/2022 - 55+5 non-EU students.

The number of students who studied at the VEE during the past three academic years is variable (from 278 to 319), with an average of 296 students throughout all years of study (this number also includes so-called off-course students).

An average of 29 students graduate from the VEE annually (from 43 in AY 19/20 to 24 in AY 21/22). The total duration of studies is scheduled for 5 years, and 31.2% of students graduate within 5 years; 26% graduate within 6 years; 18.8% within 7 years, and 24% of them graduate within three or more years after completing their regular obligations.

The VEE also enrolls postgraduate students, including interns, specialisation study participants, residents, PhD students and postdocs. The number of those students enrolled varies by academic year, with the highest number of final year specialisation studies students (average 132), then PhD students (average 26.3), residents (5.7), interns (2.3), and the least post-doc students (0.7).

### **7.2.2. Comments**

Due to the positive evaluations of the VEE and larger financial investments that are underway or yet to follow, the VEE decided to initiate a significant increase in the enrolment quota for the next AYs - 95+5 of non-EU students (that was accepted for AY 2022/2023 and onwards).

### **7.2.3. Suggestions for improvement**

None.

### **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 admission criteria in the VEE are general for all Italian universities - all processes are prescribed by MUR. Entrance exams are written for all veterinary faculties throughout Italy on the same day, with the same questions (60 multiple-choice questions in 100 minutes time

interval). Foreign students must present diplomas related to previous education, have at least 12 years of schooling or regulate their enrolment through an ENIC/NARIC certificate.

Students with disabilities have the option of writing tests according to the special rules (longer writing time, calculators, presence of a tutor).

At the VEE level, there is an internal admission committee led by the DCVM coordinator, supervised by the head of the student secretariat (currently this committee is composed of only UniMe technical staff). The role of that committee is supervision, and the members of the committee carry out training (on the guidelines issued by the MUR) before starting to write the entrance exams.

The method of appeal to admissions and the selection procedure is prescribed by Italian laws. A student who did not enter the national ranking list can appeal to the Regional Administrative Court. The internal admission committee informs MUR of all changes in the admission procedure (if any occur).

All admission and enrolment criteria are published on the VEE and MUR websites. After passing the entrance exam, students receive passwords to access the national ranking list.

### **7.3.2. Comments**

The internal admission committee at the UniMe is present only for those Degree Courses with an annual fixed number of student admission, including Veterinary Sciences. The structure of the internal admission committee is the same for each Degree Courses, however the Coordinator is different for each and every one of the Degree Courses.

### **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 goal of UniMe is to enable students with disabilities to participate in all activities, from enrolment to graduation. This is achieved through university structures such as the University Services Office (SSD office). Students can find all this information in a document called "Vademecum for students with DSA".

UniMe organised "*Centro di Ricerca e di Intervento Psicologico*" (CeRIP), as psychological support. The CeRIP is most frequently involved in helping, especially the freshman, who experience a particularly challenging transition between their previous educational experience (high school) and the University system. This condition often impairs and limits the early acquisition of the skills and learning tools fundamental for a successful study progression. The CeRIP provides counselling and tutoring help as early as possible to solve all the issues associated with this impairing condition.

At the VEE there is a Referent teacher who has closer contact with students, but students are also offered with other activities such as individual mentoring, adapted teaching material, and/or support services. The VEE, through all these activities, ensures that students with disabilities successfully master DOC.

Currently at the VEE, there are two students with recognised learning disabilities. No students with physical disabilities are currently enrolled.

#### **7.4.2. Comments**

The “Referent Teacher” is the liaison between the student and the DVS and he/she is in charge of enforcing all the necessary measures to allow the students to express all their learning potentials.

Students are clearly aware of all of the above mentioned possibilities and are using it when necessary.

#### **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**

Progression criteria, and the services to students are planned, implemented, monitored, and revised by the DCVM and DVS Council. The criteria for progressing through the study program are available to all students through the Teaching Regulation and the VEE website, and describe the fulfilment of educational obligations (OFA), mandatory attendance of 70% of classes and the so-called propaedeutic exams. If the student has not fulfilled the assigned OFA, he/she has no other option other than enrolling as a first-year repeater.

Students during their studies at VEE can be on-course students, off-course students or repeating students. On-course are those who passed a certain number of exams and acquired a sufficient number of ECTS for enrolment in the higher year of study. Off-course students are those students who, despite having attended all the courses of the entire five-year curriculum, have not passed all the exams. Accordingly, they are still enrolled at the VEE however, they do not formally belong to any of the five annual classes of the veterinary curriculum.

Repeating students are those who did not obtain enough points in Chemistry, Physics or Biology during the entrance exams or who did not participate in enough teaching activities (compulsory attendance is at least 70% of lectures and practicals).

Students can track their progress through the *App UniMe* digital application.

Students can lose their student status if they do not pass at least one exam within 8 academic years.

The Tutoring Committee assigns a tutor to each newly enrolled student who supports her/him during her/his studies, from the list of potential tutors, agreed by coordinator. The tutor is in regular contact with students via email, personal meeting or the MS Teams. Equal Tutoring Service can be assigned to students who have difficulties in progressing through their studies to provide the student with access to all useful information and additional educational activities.

Students can give their feedback on the Tutoring System via Survey Monkey questionnaire. Every year, VEE presents the number of students who dropped out of their studies in the annual report. This number is stable during academic years and amounts to about 4.8% after the first year of studies. The main reasons for attrition are personal issues or transferring to other universities.

The conditions for advancement through the study programme are planned, ensured and monitored through the DCVM and DVC Council and other bodies in charge of the quality system (QAG-DCVM, TSJC, EAEVE Committee, etc.). Students are involved in this process through participation in the aforementioned committees. DVS Council, DCVM coordinator, QAG-DCVM and EAEVE committee are responsible for planning and implementation; DVS and DCVM Council together with TSJC are responsible for monitoring, and DVS and DCVM Council for revision.

The number discrepancy between the students enrolled in the first and second years reflects the number of those students which transferred either to other Degree Courses (such as Medicine) or to other Veterinary School closer to their original home town.

### **7.5.2. Comments**

A number of activities have been undertaken to shorten the length of average duration of studies. In particular, the Tutoring service has been activated in order to closely coach those students who encounter particular difficulties in keeping up with programmed schedules of courses and exams. Additionally, the CeRIP has proven to be a very effective support for students, in particular for those at the early stages of their university career.

The Specialization schools are postgraduate training programmes intended to provide to the trainee a state-of-the-art knowledge, concerning a specific topic. The specialist will serve as national experts on the studied topic. These Specialization Schools are a prerequisite to access the National Health System through a public competition.

The tutoring and support system of the VEE and the UniMe is commendable.

### **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**

At UniMe, a student can be excluded from the studies if he/she drops out on his/her own, if he/she does not pass at least one exam within 8 years and if he/she commits a very serious disciplinary offence.

If a student does not return to the study programme within an 8-year time period, the student is automatically excluded from the study programme because of inactivity.

In case of initiation of a disciplinary process against a student, the student has the right to file a complaint, and the procedure itself is described in the Teaching Regulation.

### **7.6.2. Comments**

As seen in Area 8, students have multiple opportunities to express disagreement concerning the assessment procedure. These can be discussed directly with the teacher at the time of the exams, or by email at a later time. Furthermore, they can appeal to the exam score results within 3 days from the exams, using the Esse3 platform.

### **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 provides physical and emotional support to all students through its own mechanisms or those of UniMe. Numerous information is thus available to students via websites (including all necessary documents and forms), as well as internet (Wi-Fi) access, canteen on the premises, public transport, library, language centre and special services of support for students with disabilities and/or foreign students. Students can also join the university choir and numerous student organisations that operate at the UniMe level, while IVSA operates at the VEE level. There are many opportunities for practising sports, through amateur sports clubs and extensive facilities at the campus. VEE provides students with opportunities for mobility and work in research centres.

Meals in the student canteen are subsidised (as low as 2€ per meal) whereas the food prices at the cafeteria are standard.

All the foreign language courses provided by the University Linguistic Centre via Rosetta Stone Platform are for free for UniMe students.

Students at the VEE level can present their grievances through their year coordinator, student representatives in commissions, can contact the student ombudsman (guarantor) or even head of VEE or the rector directly.

### **7.7.2. Comments**

For career advice, students can refer to their tutors or to the staff of the VEE. Additionally, multiple opportunities are offered through ad hoc events and workshops, which are regularly organised on the UniMe campus. Finally, additional information for students can be found at the specific web page of the UniMe.

### **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**

Students can submit their suggestions, comments, complaints, etc. through their representatives in committees, the Academic Senate or the Board of Directors. They can also use the so-called Suggestion-Box, a box located in the VEE area. The Head of the VEE, if there is a need, can place one of the students' proposals as a point on the agenda of the DVC or DCVM Council.

#### **7.8.2. Comments**

Students are aware of all mechanisms to convey their needs and wants. Also, the number of student representatives in the VEE board and committees ensure that the students are properly represented and heard.

#### **7.8.3. Suggestions for improvement**

None.

#### **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 students assessment strategy in Messina VEE was established in accordance with UniMe TR rules (Didactic Rules of the University) 22. July 2015. The body responsible for students evaluation is the Didactic Council of VEE (DCVM), with the support of Teacher Students Joint Committee (TSJC), QAG-DCVM (Quality Assurance Group of Degree Course in Veterinary Medicine) and the EAEVE Committee belonging to the VEE.

There are several derogations specific for veterinary studies from the university didactic rules, listed in SER Table 8.1.1, which specify an extra ordinary exam session (7 in the VEE, compared to 6 in UniMe), propaedeutic exam adopted, 70% compulsory class attendance, compulsory professional practical training (Tirocinio) in order to acquire all the skills requested in the logbook. Acquisition of the practical skills must be recorded in the logbook and signed by an academic staff, learning outcomes are aligned with ESEVT Day One Competences and assessment methods and also specific procedure for assessment related issues regarding the student's appeal.

The dates of exams are set by the DCVM Council at the beginning of the AY and published on the website. There are three exam sessions, as follows:

- **The first session** February - April) includes 3 ordinary exam appeals and 1

- extraordinary (May).
- **The second session** (June - July) includes 2 ordinary exam appeals.
- **The third session** (September - November) includes 2 ordinary exam appeals and 1 extraordinary (December).

A total of 7 ordinary exam appeals are open to all students, while the two ordinary ones are reserved to off-course students. Article 8 of DCMV TR clearly states preparatory exams (listed under letter A) which must be taken before specific exams (letter B). Also the attendance certificate (70% - theoretical + practical) sent by the teacher to the student secretary is requested for the exam. The students who didn't get the attendance certificate, can sit the exam only in the following AY. There is no limit regarding the number of times the student can retake an exam.

The exam can be written, oral or practical and the exam methods and criteria are described for each subject and are available on the VEE's website.

The final exam consists of an oral presentation of the final degree thesis in front of the Academic Commission appointed by the dean. The final grade represents a mean of the thesis grade and of the average marks obtained during the curriculum. The maximum score is 110 (with honour).

According to the SER table 8.1.2, during AY 2021-2022 out of a total of 30 teaching subjects, 16 were only oral exams (53.3%), 3 (10%) were only written exams, 3 (10%) were oral-written exams, 8 (26.7%) were practical-oral exams, 1 (3.3%) was written-practical-oral-exam and 11 (36.7%) were mixed format of assessment Tot method.

### **8.1.2. Comments**

Over the last years many improvements of the assessment methods in VEE have been implemented, due to self-feedback (from teachers and students) and by involving the participation of some teachers in different work-shops (University of Bologna, Royal Veterinary College).

The methods for student assessment include oral and written exams to assess the theoretical knowledge, practical pre-clinical skills are assessed during the practical exam at the end of each subject, and the practical clinical skills are part of clinical exams. All practical competences are registered in a logbook, signed by both the teacher and the academic tutor and verified by the PPT Committee.

According to the VEE the "Propaedeutic exam" is intended as a topic which provides the basis for a proper understanding of a follow up discipline which could not be fully mastered without a thorough knowledge of the former. The "Propaedeutic exams" are part of the Veterinary curriculum at the UniMe and are defined as "adapted to the curriculum", given that they are not specifically listed within the "UniMe Teaching Regulation".

### **8.1.3. Suggestions for improvement**

None.

### **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 assessment tasks are established according to the UniME TR, article 20 (Teaching calendar) and Art. 23 (Assessments methods). According to this, there is no limit regarding the number of retakes of the same exam, the dates of exams are established at least 60 days before the exam. The minimum annual number of exams cannot be less than 6 (excluding off-course students), the exam sessions are not allowed to overlap the teaching activities. The interval between two successive appeals cannot be less than two weeks. The exams are public and are held in the premises of the university. The exams can be oral, written or practical. The examination commission must include at least two members of the academic staff. The results of exams are expressed in number (minimum for approval is 18 and maximum is 30 (cum laude)).

Article 9 of DCVM TR regulations refers to exams and evaluation of practical skills, class attendance for exam, acquisition of practical skills, minimum requirements for progression as well as indications regarding examinations procedures for students with disabilities.

Each student is informed about the exam mark, which is recorded through the UniMe-ESSE3 system by the Presidents of the Commission only after explicit acceptance of the student.

The syllabi of each course also contain the assessment methods and passing criteria and it is available online.

The final degree exam is also regulated, as previously mentioned by DCVM-TR, is stated in front of a Commission formed by 7 members minimum (including the Director and the coordinator of the commission). The final grade is composed by: the basic score (up to 30, 31 with praise) representing the average (considering the ECTS for each subject) and converted into 110; curricular grade (up to maximum 4 points) considering international mobilities with ECTS, practical training, conclusions of study in the expected period and obtaining of two honours in the main subjects; the final grade of the thesis (up to a maximum 7 points). The final minimum mark can be 66/110 and the maximum is 110/110 with honour.

The students may appeal regarding assessment or other aspects of the students life, according to the severity and responsibility to: students representatives in different commissions, such as (PPT Committee, QAS, TSJC); students representatives in DCVM and DVS Councils; directly by the student to the dean or to the coordinator of DCMV, directly to the Student Guarantor (selected and appointed by the University Senate for three years, has an individual office and is responsible for any initiative aimed at reporting and removing irregularities, deficiencies, dysfunctions, delays and any abuses against students) or even to the rector.

### **8.2.2. Comments**

The calculated average number of hours / ECTS varies considerably, for instance for the first three academic years, between 6.00 to 12.8 and the final mark for the degree is calculated also considering the number of ECTS. This was established according to the UniMe and VEE regulations.

Student representatives of committees are elected every 2 years. Representative candidates can apply either to the DCVM Council or to the DVS Council or to both. Once elected, representatives are assigned to the various committees, but those who are part of the QA groups cannot join the TSJC Committee.

### **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**

TSCJ is the main body responsible for implementation or cancellation of a degree course, as well as monitoring and quality assessment of the teaching and learning, as established by the Regulation of DVS (Prot. n. 0079220 of 10/31/2017) in the art. 12 (*Department Joint Faculty Students Committee*). TSCJ proposals are submitted to the DCVM Council and the final decision body is the DVS Council. During the last year, TSJC with active involvement of the students (who are also part of TSJC, DCVM and DCV) proposed a series of improvements related to the syllabi, with special attention upon evaluation criteria and methods. The adopted minutes are transmitted via TITULUS protocol to all members (including students).

According to the demands of the internal auditing process (AVA) and the external one (made by ANVUR), the monitoring activities are annually performed and at any time when the students have a demand (AVA-ANVUR questionnaires).

#### **8.3.2. Comments**

During the last year, TSJC with active involvement of the students proposed a series of improvements related to the syllabi, with special attention upon evaluation criteria and methods.

During the last years, as a consequential feed-back to students' demand, many exams were changed from oral to written exams and the presentation of clinical cases is encouraged in clinical subjects.

#### **8.3.3. Suggestions for improvement**

None.

#### **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**

The student achievement of learning objectives certificates is in accordance with the Italian University system and it consists of four types of assessment, as follows: final exam of each subject (>18/30), interim tests (>18/30), logbooks (signed by the academic staff or trained academic tutor) countersigned by the person in charge with PPT and the grade obtained for the final graduation thesis. The obtained marks are recorded on the UniMe-ESSE 3 system and

they are available personally for each student. The academic staff is not allowed to have free access to all the marks, due to privacy regulations.

Cohort-level data are reported only in the UniMe repository and they can be made available to the Director, TSJC and QAG-DCVM in the case of complaints.

#### **8.4.2. Comments**

The VEE has in place assessment strategies which allow to certify the student achievement of learning objectives at each individual unit of study and also at the level of the entire programme.

The students are actively involved in the learning process, being members of TSJC (half of the members are students), VEE Council, DVS Council, QAG-DCVM, PPT Committee and EAEVE Committee.

#### **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 VEE Council has adopted internal policies regarding a variety of formative and summative types of assessment methods and direct assessment of clinical skills and DOC according to ESEVT standards.

The quality control of the students logbook is firstly checked and signed by the academic staff responsible for teaching and / or by the academic staff supervising PPT activities, countersigned by the professor in charge with PPT (member of PPT Commission), and in the end of the course it is delivered and verified for completeness by the Coordinator of DCVM.

#### **8.5.2. Comments**

Since the last EAEVE evaluation in 2013, the VEE has implemented a series of changes in the assessment of the students and in the achievement of DOC in accordance with ESEVT standards. This has led to a continuous improvement of the assessment methods and DOC achieved by the students.

#### **8.5.3. Suggestions for improvement**

None.

#### **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 DVS, with the DCVM Council as the responsible body, follows the National Regulations regarding the requested competences.

Teachers of the DVS have participated in national workshops titled “Fundamentals in Veterinary Education”, “Workshop on Developing modern and integrated teaching and assessment for Veterinary basic sciences”, and “Workshop on Developing modern and integrated teaching and assessment for Veterinary clinical educators”. Participation in workshops or courses is not compulsory for teachers. Teaching skills are considered as sufficient after finishing the recruitment process.

SER Table 9.2.2. shows that the percentage of veterinarians involved in veterinary training during the last three years was 72% (including 6 externals).

### **9.1.2. Comments**

The DVS offers training and workshops for teachers in co-organisation with other Establishments. In the SER it is not clearly described how many teachers of the DVS participated in these courses. Although not compulsory for all teachers, according to further information the vast majority of academic teachers and all the veterinary practitioners involved in the veterinary curriculum participated in the courses. New, enrolled teachers are expected to be more proactive in attending courses on how to teach and assess students, but also for them courses are not compulsory. Teaching skills are considered as sufficient for new teachers after ending the recruitment process. However, the VEE cannot definitely ensure that all staff are sufficiently prepared for their teaching role because there is no formal training in place for all staff involved in teaching.

### **9.1.3. Suggestions for improvement**

It is suggested to establish a formal teaching training programme for all staff members teaching undergraduate students.

### **9.1.4. Decision**

The VEE is partially compliant with Standard 9.1 because of suboptimal formal teaching training for staff involved with teaching.

**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 staff of the DVS has a large number of qualified academic staff. Most of them are full or associate professors (46% female, 54% male). Besides that, the current staff counts 7 EBVS Diplomates. The Indicators I1, I2 and I3 are all above the minimum value.

Selection on recruitment and promotion of academic staff depends on the number of dedicated “staff points”, which yearly have been assigned by UniMe to the DVS. The number of points is depending on a range of locally established parameters (research, teaching goals, student population size and the expected turnover). The allocation of “staff points” is discussed within the DVS Board (see Standard 1.2), and a proposal is submitted for deliberation to the DVS Council. In the three-year Strategic Plan, the policy for recruitment/selection has been described. The Academic Senate eventually decides about the proposal of the DVS Board.

Proposals for the recruitment of new support staff are either made by the DVS and/or UniMe. Candidates are selected via a competitive selection procedure based on a profile describing the required specific/general skills. For horizontal and vertical promotion, the individual’s professional knowledge and development are of the utmost importance (see also 9.4). Regarding the support staff, 12 are administrative, while the 12 remainders are technicians.

### **9.2.2. Comments**

The coming years’ increase in the number of temporary assistant professors is foreseen thanks to extra budget from the National Recovery and Resilience Plan.

It is commendable that academic as well as support staff members are very supportive of the students’ needs. Students expressed they are helpful, and always available for students. Recruitment and selection of staff members has been strongly regulated. The DVS Council discusses the proposal of the DVS Board about the allocation of “staff points”.

Regarding horizontal and vertical promotion, in the last two years 15 support staff members met the possibility to apply for promotion (horizontal and vertical).

### **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**

Italian law (2010) defines the different levels of academic staff functions. The permanent

functions include full and associate professors. Temporary positions comprise Type A (untenured) and Type B (tenured) assistant professors. The contract of Type A can be extended for two years. The type B becomes an associate professor after going through the procedure described under 9.2.1. In the DVS “old type” assistant professors are still working (tenured before implementation of the law in 2010).

According to the SER, the required workload is perceived as compatible with research, professional development, and other activities. There are several opportunities for ensuring life-long learning and professional growth:

- “Training for Teach in Vet”, developed together with the Departments of Veterinary Medicine of Naples and Sassari is available as an online course. The training is divided into basic and advanced levels.
- In 2022, the DCVM participated in a pilot degree course for an International Erasmus Project regarding the Open Innovative Resources for high-quality inclusive digital higher education. The aim was to develop new forms of inclusive digital education acquiring useful services and tools to meet the needs of students with disabilities, but also of students with specific learning disabilities.
- For 2023, the DCVM has planned a course aiming to strengthen the teaching skills of the teachers of UniMe to raise the quality of teaching and encourage innovative teaching.
- Attending national and international events/meetings of scientific societies. These societies are paying more and more attention to teaching related issues.

At this moment, there is no reward system in place for excellence in teaching. In the SER it is suggested that a reward system should be introduced. There is no precise time schedule for its achievement because this decision is not entirely up to the VEE but also to the UniMe Senate and Board of Directors.

During the COVID pandemic all the academic staff received training (organised by the UniME) in online teaching.

### **9.3.2. Comments**

The Italian Law defines the procedures for the promotion of academic staff. Horizontal and vertical promotion of support staff can be managed by the DCVM (see also 9.2). According to the SER, the DVS and UniMe take a number of initiatives for life-long learning and professional growth. Eighty % of the staff members participated in the courses. At this moment there is no obligation for staff members to take courses. Introduction of a reward system is a decision of the UniMe Senate and/or Board of Directors, and therefore out of the competence of the VEE.

### **9.3.3. Suggestions for improvement**

None.

### **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**

The Italian Law defines the procedures for the promotion of academic staff. Horizontal and vertical promotion of support staff can be managed by the DCVM (see also 9.2). Recruitment of academic staff takes place after calling competitive national examinations. A PhD is a prerequisite. Since 2010, for permanent positions as associate or full professor a National Scientific Qualification is needed before the national examination starts. The DVS Board is the body in charge of proposals for the recruitment and progression of academic staff. The DVS Council, who is the decision-making body to which proposals of the DVS Board are submitted enhances the sharing of information, because the DVS Council consists of an ample representation of academic and support staff members. All the members of the academic staff as well as support staff representatives participate in the DVS Council. The Three-year Strategic Plan is the basis for the discussion in the DVS Council. A SWOT analysis is publicly available.

Recruitment of non-academic staff takes place annually and has been managed by the DVS. Recruitment of support staff (research support and administrative staff) has been managed by the DVS and/or UniMe. UniME organises the competitive selection process.

For horizontal as well as vertical progression individual's professional knowledge and development are of the utmost importance. Every year the DVS Head evaluates the support staff members (individual performance). They are eligible for horizontal progression after a two-year period in the same position. Staff members have the opportunity to contribute to the VEE's direction and decision-making process, because they are members of the DCVM Council.

#### **9.4.2. Comments**

The procedure of promotion of academic staff has been defined in Italian law. Clear procedures exist for vertical and horizontal promotion of staff members. The roles of the DVS Board and the DVS Council in the decision-making process are clear. All teachers are members of the DCVM Council and thus potentially involved in the decision-making process.

#### **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**

Students regularly assess either the teachers or the courses they deliver through mandatory and anonymous online questionnaires. Four themes are questioned (subject, teaching, interest, suggestions). PPT activities and tutors are subject to the same questionnaire. The results are analysed by the Teacher Student Joint Committee (TSCJ). If the sum of negative responses

exceeds 33% of the total responses, it has been considered as criticism and reported along with suggestions in the annual report. This report is transmitted to the Head of DVS and the Coordinator of the DCVM for further discussion and/or action. The UniMe Quality Assurance Presidium also receives the annual report (see Standard 1.4).

### **9.5.2. Comments**

The assessment by students of teachers or courses is compulsory, anonymous and has to be done before the examination. There is a well organised system which helps to guarantee the quality of teachers and courses.

### **9.5.3. Suggestions for improvement**

None.

### **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**

The VEE provides an environment for students to become interested in research activities through a seminar called "Electronic Resources" as outlined in the "Roadmap to Veterinary Profession". This seminar is focused on introducing students to the use of scientific databases and is led by the EAEVE Committee, with three subjects on offer. The first subject is "Bibliographic research and use of databases," taught by the Head of the VEE library. The second subject is "The scientific article in veterinary medical research," taught by academic staff. The third subject is "Guidelines on designing and writing a report," also taught by academic staff. Active involvement in research activities is not limited to dissertation thesis writing alone but is also integrated into the course of study at the different units of the VEE. This ensures that students are consistently exposed to the latest research findings, providing them with a hands-on learning experience that is crucial for their academic and professional development. As a result, students are better equipped to engage in research activities that align with the VEE's mission of improving animal, human, and environmental health. VEE encourages student involvement in research activities and initiatives, such as the European "Researchers' Night." This event provides students with the opportunity to interact with UniMe researchers and gain valuable insights into the latest research trends in the field. In addition, the department provides various service centres, including research centres, to help students with their academic and research needs. During the preparation of their thesis, students work closely with their supervisors, which is a key moment for the acquisition of scientific and critical thinking skills, report writing, and bibliographic search skills. This interaction ensures that students are adequately prepared to contribute meaningfully to the research community and are equipped to excel in their future endeavours. Teachers at UniMe actively engage with their students during classes, presenting their research activities and offering opportunities for active collaboration on these projects, including the possibility of applying for a thesis. This approach fosters a culture of research within the department and provides students with a platform to develop their research skills. As part of their academic requirements, UniMe students have the option to choose between a compilation thesis or an experimental thesis.

However, regardless of the chosen option, students must submit a formal thesis request at least six months before graduation, according to the specific procedure available on the VEE website. After receiving approval, students work independently but under the supervision of their tutors, to carry out the necessary bibliographic research and draft a study protocol. In the laboratory of VEE, the student performs all the necessary procedures to obtain the expected results, again under the tutor's guidance. Once the thesis is completed and revised by the tutor, the student must upload the final draft for plagiarism control.

The VEE offers various active post-graduate programmes, including a Ph.D. in Veterinary Sciences and Specialisation Schools in areas such as Animal Reproduction and Inspection of Food of Animal Origin. The Ph.D.-course is divided into three curricula: Public Health and Food Product Security, Morpho-physiology, and Veterinary Clinic. Each curriculum lasts three years and covers different areas of study, such as Pathology, Anatomy, and Surgery. Additionally, the VEE has a Training Centre approved by the European College of Aquatic Animal Health (ECAAH). The Specialisation Schools (SS) offered by UniMe have varying durations and enrolments. The SS in "Inspection of Food of Animal Origin" is typically activated every three years, but starting from the AY 2022/2023, it will be activated every year, and it has a duration of three years, enrolling 15 students for each cycle. The SS in "Animal Reproductions" and "Pathology and Clinic of Companion Animals" are activated every year and have a duration of three years, enrolling 25 students each year. The SS in "Breeding, Hygiene, Pathology of Aquatic Species and Control of Derived Products" is currently activated every year, has a duration of three years, and enrolls 10 students for each cycle. The diploma of the SS is a prerequisite to access the National Health System through a public competition. The VEE expects the number of students enrolled in postgraduate programmes (Specialisation Schools, Ph.D. programme) will increase.

**Table 1.** (SER) List of the major ongoing funded research projects in the VEE (AY 2021/2022).

Project Tipology	Partial (in €)	Total (in €)
<b>Academic Research Grant</b>		<b>76,500</b>
FFABR ( <i>n</i> =51) 20-22	1,500 x 51	
<b>National Research Grant</b>		<b>1,217,459</b>
<i>Pon Novaselprov</i>	290,225	
<i>Pon Bio=C=Co</i>	496,110	
<i>Pon Pescatec</i>	137,659	
<i>Por Fse Animalbiomed</i>	143,480	
<i>Por Fse Biotecno</i>	149,985	
<b>European Research Grant</b>		<b>1,579,114.72</b>
<i>Sicilgermobank Psr</i>	794,792	
<i>Po Feamp Innovittica</i>	183,500	

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<i>Po Feamp Mis2 Fifa</i>	150,000	
<i>Po Fesr Biotrak</i>	425,746	
<i>Po Fesr Agrivet</i>	25,076	
<b>Private Company Research Grant</b>		<b>232,891.71</b>
<i>Bioveto Test</i>	1,500	
<i>Innovet</i>	24,400	
<i>Ecuphar</i>	13,000	
<i>Leishvet</i>	5,500	
<i>Ubatech</i>	5,000	
<i>Arcoblu 2013</i>	81,000	
<i>Veterinaria</i>	17,900	
<i>Aslab</i>	2,140.00	
<i>Res_Ct_Chi_B</i>	4,762.33	
<i>Zanzara Tigre</i>	7,460	
<i>Res_Ct_Brt</i>	18,217	
<i>Res_Ct_Panz</i>	2,252	
<i>Ric_Lta_2016</i>	10,000	
<i>Chees Hallal</i>	39,760	
<b>Total Financed Grants</b>		<b>3,105,966</b>

The quality assurance (QA) process at the VEE involves the evaluation of research quality to ensure that the research activities meet high standards. The research activities are continuously monitored by two local groups: the Internal Quality Assurance Group (QAG-DCVM) and the UniMe Quality Presidium (QAP), as well as the Italian national agency for the evaluation of universities and research institutes (ANVUR). The academic staff of VEE has published a significant number of indexed publications (Scopus indexed journals) over the past three academic years, with a total of 517 publications. Specifically, there were 147 publications in 2020, 166 publications in 2021, and 204 publications in 2022.

**10.1.2. Comments**

The VEE is actively promoting research-based education and offering programmes and opportunities for students to get involved in the research field. The VEE has successfully secured sufficient funding for research activities including EU grants. Four seminars per

semester are normally organised for 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> year students. Additionally, veterinary students of 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> year, are invited to attend seminars organised by the PhD programmes. The ECAAH approved training programmes are divided into Standard residency programme and Alternative residency programme. The primary goal of the ECAAH training programme is to increase the competency of those who practise in the field of aquatic animal medicine/health, including all aquatic organisms (fish and aquatic invertebrates). Seminars that are organised throughout the year for both undergraduate and postgraduate students are given by visiting academics and professionals. There is a balance between teaching, research, and administrative duties of the academic staff. While research activities take a significant portion, only the teaching load (120 h/year) is regulated by the Italian system. It is commendable that funds for international meetings and courses are readily available for doctoral students and researchers. The VEE has a significant and broad research activities of staff, and these activities integrate with and strengthen the veterinary degree programme through research-based teaching.

Through the seminars dedicated to undergraduate students they are able to acquire basic understanding of research skills that will be useful to them throughout their academic career and beyond.

### **10.1.3. Suggestions for improvement**

None.

### **10.1.4. Decision**

The VEE is compliant with 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**

Teachers at the VEE introduce their research activities during classes and invite students to actively collaborate on these projects by applying for a thesis. Additionally, on the UniMe website "Announcements and Competitions," which provides information about active opportunities in national research programmes, and "Opportunities Abroad" which lists active international research programmes can be found. Students can choose to complete a compilation or experimental thesis, and must submit a formal request at least six months before graduation. With guidance from their tutor, they will carry out bibliographic research and perform laboratory procedures to obtain results. The student and tutor will analyse and discuss the results before finalising the thesis, which is then checked for plagiarism.

### **10.2.2. Comments**

The students work under the guidance of their tutor, conducting bibliographic research and laboratory procedures to obtain results. These activities help students to comprehend scientific methods and research techniques relevant to evidence-based veterinary medicine research. The VEE offers sufficient opportunities for students to participate in veterinary research programmes. Students are aware of the research activities of the units of the VEE and they actively participate in the research programmes and field studies. Students can choose the topics of their final theses that are connected to the research activities of the corresponding units. All students are trained in scientific method and research techniques relevant to evidence-based veterinary medicine and both undergraduate and post-graduate students have

opportunities to participate in research programmes. The Team noticed scientific papers appearing with students' results from their thesis work. Involvement of students in research activities is commendable.

### **10.2.3. Suggestions for improvement**

None.

### **10.2.4. Decision**

The VEE is compliant with 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 currently offers a range of post-graduate programmes, including a Ph.D. in Veterinary Sciences and a Training Centre approved by the European College of Aquatic Animal Health (ECAAH). There are also several Specialisation Schools (SS) available, focusing on specific topics such as Inspection of Food of Animal Origin, Animal Reproductions, Pathology and Clinic of Companion Animals, and Breeding, Hygiene, Pathology of Aquatic Species, and Control of Derived Products. The Ph.D. programme is a three-year course divided into three different curricula, namely Public Health and Food Product Security, Morpho-physiology, and Veterinary Clinic. Each curriculum has its own focus area, covering subjects such as Pathology, Food Inspection, Animal Nutrition, Pharmacology, Parasitology, Anatomy, Physiology, Ethology, Small and Large Animal Clinic, Obstetrics and Gynecology, Surgery, Animal Welfare, and Legislation. Post-graduate students can apply for the programme each year by submitting a research proposal, and a special committee appointed by the doctoral Coordinator evaluates all candidates based on their curriculum and research proposal. The ECAAH Training Center has several general objectives for its training programme, and currently, there are active students training in the programme. The VEE's Specialisation Schools (SS) provide comprehensive training in specific areas of veterinary science and offer a range of programmes that vary in duration and enrolment numbers. Graduates of the SS programmes are eligible to compete for access to the National Health System. Postgraduate trainees play an essential role in supporting the academic staff at VEE during hands-on professional training and clinical activities for undergraduate students. They are also actively involved in the VTH and HHM training programmes.

### **10.3.2. Comments**

The VEE offers a wide range of post-graduate programmes in veterinary sciences, providing comprehensive training in specific areas of the field, covering diverse subjects. These programmes contribute to the advancement of veterinary science and prepare highly skilled professionals to meet the demands of the industry and society. Such as the ECAAH approved training programme. The VEE carries out joint research projects, such as "Theoretical and practical training on arthropod vectors of veterinary and medical importance in Bolivia " and organises interactive training courses on importance of vector-borne diseases. The VEE includes its students in such activities to train them in scientific methodology, direct needs of profession and society. The VEE provides advanced postgraduate degree programmes that complement, strengthen the veterinary profession, and hence addresses the needs of the society.

### **10.3.3. Suggestions for improvement**

None.

### **10.3.4. Decision**

The VEE is compliant with 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**

The quality of research activities is ensured at both local and national levels by various groups, including the Internal Quality Assurance Group (QAG-DCVM) and UniMe Quality Presidium (QAP) at the local level, and by ANVUR at the national level. The QA Committee works to improve and evolve research activities within the VEE by monitoring internal ratings, comparing them with international benchmarks, and promoting external collaborations among research groups. One of the QA Committee's specific activities is preparing the annual SUA-Research report as requested by UniMe QAP. The UniMe Quality Presidium is responsible for implementing the Quality Policy based on government guidelines and works closely with various committees and coordinators to ensure quality standards are met. The research quality is evaluated through a peer review process, with results released every five years and used for the allocation of the share of the ordinary financing fund.

#### **10.4.2. Comments**

The VEE places great importance on quality assurance in research-based education. The department has established a thorough evaluation system at both local and national levels to assess the quality of research activities carried out by its staff. The QA process not only evaluates the adequacy of research quality but also ensures that research activities contribute to research-based training and involve students as much as possible. The evaluations follow detailed guidelines and collaborates with various committees, and the Italian national agency for the evaluation of universities and research institutes. The VEE is committed to ensuring that its research activities meet the planned standards and objectives.

#### **10.4.3. Suggestions for improvement**

None.

#### **10.4.4. Decision**

The VEE is compliant with Standard 10.4.

## 11. ESEVT Indicators

Raw data from the last 3 full academic years		2021/2022	2020/2021	2019/2020	Mean
1	n° of FTE academic staff involved in veterinary training	59,7	56	60,7	57,9
2	n° of undergraduate students	319	293	278	306,0
3	n° of FTE veterinarians involved in veterinary training	42,2	39,5	41,7	40,9
4	n° of students graduating annually	25	25	43	25,0
5	n° of FTE support staff involved in veterinary training	20	18,5	18,5	19,3
6	n° of hours of practical (non-clinical) training	1032	1032	1032	1.032,0
7	n° of hours of clinical training	695	695	695	695,0
8	n° of hours of FSQ & VPH training	430	430	430	430,0
9	n° of hours of extra-mural practical training in FSQ & VPH	131	81	63	106,0
10	n° of companion animal patients seen intra-murally	3818	2848	1230	3.333,0
11	n° of ruminant and pig patients seen intra-murally	8	6	1	7,0
12	n° of equine patients seen intra-murally	104	77	60	90,5
13	n° of rabbit, rodent, bird and exotic patients seen intra-murally	98	70	90	84,0
14	n° of companion animal patients seen extra-murally	0	0	0	0,0
15	n° of individual ruminants and pig patients seen extra-murally	118	201	210	159,5
16	n° of equine patients seen extra-murally	67	123	0	95,0
17	n° of visits to ruminant and pig herds	55	43	8	49,0
18	n° of visits of poultry and farmed rabbit units	10	2	0	6,0
19	n° of companion animal necropsies	59	27	22	43,0
20	n° of ruminant and pig necropsies	45	13	8	29,0
21	n° of equine necropsies	3	0	4	1,5
22	n° of rabbit, rodent, bird and exotic pet necropsies	41	20	15	30,5
23	n° of FTE specialised veterinarians involved in veterinary training	16,6	15,6	17,4	16,1
24	n° of PhD graduating annually	8	7	6	7,5

The boxes within the red frames must be filled in by the Establishment (the other values will be automatically calculated)

Calculated Indicators from raw data		Establishment values	Median values <sup>1</sup>	Minimal values <sup>2</sup>	Balance <sup>3</sup>
I1	n° of FTE academic staff involved in veterinary training / n° of undergraduate students	0,189	0,16	0,13	0,063
I2	n° of FTE veterinarians involved in veterinary training / n° of students graduating annually	1,634	0,87	0,59	1,044
I3	n° of FTE support staff involved in veterinary training / n° of students graduating annually	0,770	0,94	0,57	0,204
I4	n° of hours of practical (non-clinical) training	1032,000	905,67	595,00	437,000
I5	n° of hours of clinical training	695,000	932,92	670,00	25,000
I6	n° of hours of FSQ & VPH training	430,000	287,00	174,40	255,600
I7	n° of hours of extra-mural practical training in FSQ & VPH	106,000	68,00	28,80	77,200
I8	n° of companion animal patients seen intra-murally / n° of students graduating annually	133,320	70,48	42,01	91,311
I9	n° of ruminant and pig patients seen intra-murally / n° of students graduating annually	0,280	2,69	0,46	-0,184
I10	n° of equine patients seen intra-murally / n° of students graduating annually	3,620	5,05	1,30	2,322
I11	n° of rabbit, rodent, bird and exotic seen intra-murally / n° of students graduating annually	3,360	3,35	1,55	1,815
I12	n° of companion animal patients seen extra-murally / n° of students graduating annually	0,000	6,80	0,22	-0,223
I13	n° of individual ruminants and pig patients seen extra-murally / n° of students graduating annually	6,380	15,95	6,29	0,085
I14	n° of equine patients seen extra-murally / n° of students graduating annually	3,800	2,11	0,60	3,205
I15	n° of visits to ruminant and pig herds / n° of students graduating annually	1,960	1,33	0,55	1,413
I16	n° of visits of poultry and farmed rabbit units / n° of students graduating annually	0,240	0,12	0,04	0,195
I17	n° of companion animal necropsies / n° of students graduating annually	1,720	2,07	1,40	0,320
I18	n° of ruminant and pig necropsies / n° of students graduating annually	1,160	2,32	0,97	0,190
I19	n° of equine necropsies / n° of students graduating annually	0,060	0,30	0,09	-0,033
I20	n° of rabbit, rodent, bird and exotic pet necropsies / n° of students graduating annually	1,220	2,05	0,69	0,527
I21*	n° of FTE specialised veterinarians involved in veterinary training / n° of students graduating annually	0,644	0,20	0,06	0,581
I22*	n° of PhD graduating annually / n° of students graduating annually	0,300	0,15	0,09	0,212

**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	C	PC	NC
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	C	PC	NC
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.	x		
3.1.1. General findings			
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)			
3.1.5. Food Safety and Quality	x		

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<b>3.1.6. Professional Knowledge</b>			
<p><b>Standard 3.2:</b> 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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>The VEE must also describe how it encourages and prepares students for self-learning and lifelong learning.</p>	x		
<p><b>Standard 3.3:</b> Programme learning outcomes must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ensure the effective alignment of all content, teaching, learning and assessment activities of the degree programme to form a cohesive framework</li> <li>• include a description of Day One Competences</li> <li>• form the basis for explicit statements of the objectives and learning outcomes of individual units of study</li> <li>• be communicated to staff and students</li> <li>• be regularly reviewed, managed and updated to ensure they remain relevant, adequate and are effectively achieved.</li> </ul>	x		
<p><b>Standard 3.4:</b> 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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• determine the pedagogical basis, design, delivery methods and assessment methods of the curriculum</li> <li>• 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</li> <li>• 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</li> <li>• identify and meet training needs for all types of staff, maintaining and enhancing their competence for the ongoing curriculum development.</li> </ul>	x		
<p><b>Standard 3.5:</b> 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).</p> <p>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.</p>	x		
<p><b>Standard 3.6:</b> 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.</p> <p>There must be a member of the academic staff responsible for the overall supervision of the EPT, including liaison with EPT providers.</p>	x		
<p><b>Standard 3.7:</b> 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.</p>	x		
<b>Area 4. Facilities and equipment</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>PC</b>	<b>NC</b>
<p><b>Standard 4.1:</b> 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.</p>	x		
<p><b>Standard 4.2:</b> 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.</p>	x		
<p><b>Standard 4.3:</b> The livestock facilities, animal housing, core clinical teaching facilities and equipment used by the VEE for teaching purposes must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• be sufficient in capacity and adapted for the number of students enrolled in order to allow safe hands-on training for all students</li> <li>• be of a high standard, well maintained and fit for the purpose</li> <li>• promote best husbandry, welfare and management practices</li> <li>• ensure relevant biosecurity and bio-containment</li> <li>• be designed to enhance learning.</li> </ul>	x		
<p><b>Standard 4.4:</b> 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.</p>	x		

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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.			
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		
<b>Area 5. Animal resources and teaching material of animal origin</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>PC</b>	<b>NC</b>
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	
<b>Area 6. Learning resources</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>PC</b>	<b>NC</b>
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.	x		
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		
<b>Area 7. Student admission, progression and welfare</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>PC</b>	<b>NC</b>
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 cooperations 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		

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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		
<b>Area 8. Student assessment</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>PC</b>	<b>NC</b>
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		
<b>Area 9. Academic and support staff</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>PC</b>	<b>NC</b>
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.	X		

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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.			
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		
<b>Area 10. Research programmes, continuing and postgraduate education</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>PC</b>	<b>NC</b>
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		
<i>C: (total or substantial) compliance; PC: partial compliance (Minor Deficiency); NC: non-compliance (Major Deficiency)</i>			

## **Executive Summary**

The Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, University of Messina (called the Veterinary Education Establishment (VEE) in this Report) was founded in 1926. The technical and library facilities of the Veterinary School of Modena were transferred to the School of Messina and scientists from the local Schools of Medicine and Biology and the relocation of academicians from other Italian Universities and their appointment to Veterinary Sciences was set.

In 1933, the School of Veterinary Medicine was transformed into the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine. During the second world war, the buildings were destroyed by bombing and the veterinary library and several technical facilities and laboratories suffered significant damage. New facilities in the Annunziata area were inaugurated in September 2001. The VEE became part of the new University Campus of Annunziata (Polo Universitario Annunziata).

A new curriculum was approved in 2004 becoming operative in 2009.

In 2013 the VEE was organised into a single Department, the Department of Veterinary Sciences (DVS) which is one of 12 Departments of the UniMe. At the beginning of 2013, the Veterinary Teaching Hospital (VTH) was inaugurated.

In 2001, the VEE was visited by EAEVE for the first time. The VEE was visited again by EAEVE in March 2013. The VEE was revisited in March 2015, and it was concluded that all Major Deficiencies were efficiently amended, and large improvements of other Minor Deficiencies were observed. Therefore, the ECOVE issued full approval in April 2015.

In 2018, the VEE had a compulsory visitation from the Italian agency ANVUR (National Agency for the Evaluation of the University and Research system) leading to a positive outcome.

The SER was provided on time and written in agreement with the SOP 2019 as amended in September 2021. Replies to the pre-Visitation questions from the experts were provided before the start of the Visitation. Ambiguities, contradictions and errors in the SER identified by the experts were communicated to the VEE who circulated updated elements of the SER to the team before the end of the visit.

The Visitation was well organised and the Liaison Officer and his team did a great job to adapt the schedule of the Visitation, to search for the requested information, to organise the relevant meetings, and to ensure the wellbeing, health and safety of the Visitors.

### **Areas worthy of praise (i.e. Commendations):**

#### **Area 1**

- Standard 1.4: Many students are participating in QA-committees thereby training students in the importance of QA.
- Standard 1.5: Both UniMe and the VEE web pages provide up-to-date information in a user-friendly set up.
- Standard 1.7: The establishment of a permanent EAEVE commission for continuous update and with input to different stakeholders on the ESEVT standards.

#### **Area 3**

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- Standard 3.1.4: The use of 3D, plastinated models and the recent investment into different simulators in the Clinical Skills Lab.
- Standard 3.1.5: The FSQ unit has established strong connections with the local food processing plants in the region and conducts PPT on industrial food hygiene.
- Standard 3.1.6: The VEE has established the elective subject “Roadmap to Veterinary Profession”.

### **Area 4**

- Standard 4.1: The Safety and Biosecurity training is carried out online (4 hours) followed by the students assessment; and a QR code is available at each entrance of the laboratories and VTH to access the Biosafety manual.
- Standard 4.4: The system of allowing students to write the case histories in the electronic medical records system.

### **Area 5**

- Standard 5.1: The extramural training in FPA is commendable due to the large amount of clinical material and the access for students in both 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> year.
- Standard 5.3: The limited group size of 8-10 students allowing students to improve teamwork skills.

### **Area 6**

- Standard 6.2: The VEE provides ample physical opportunities for group work and individual study facilities as well.

### **Area 7**

- Standard 7.5: The tutoring and support system of the VEE and the UniMe.

### **Area 9**

- Standard 9.2: Academic as well as support staff members are very supportive of the students’ needs.

### **Area 10**

- Standard 10.1: Funds for international meetings and courses are readily available for doctoral students and researchers.
- Standard 10.2: Involvement of students in research activities.

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

- Partial compliance with Standard 5.4 because of suboptimal access for students to some clinical data (necropsy files and diagnostic imaging files).
- Partial compliance with Standard 9.1 because of suboptimal formal teaching training for staff involved with teaching.

Additional suggestions for improvement are described in the Visitation Report.

### **Items of non-compliance with the ESEVT Standards:**

None.

## **Glossary**

ANVUR	- National Agency for the Evaluation of the University and Research system
ARR	- Annual Research Review
AVA	- Self-assessment, Periodic Evaluation, Accreditation/ <i>Autovalutazione, Valutazione e Accreditemento</i>
AY	- Academic Year
CdA	- Board of Directors/ <i>Consiglio di Amministrazione</i>
CFU	- Corresponding to ECTS/ <i>Crediti Formativi Universitari</i>
CRdR	- Cyclic Review Report/ <i>Rapporto di Riesame ciclico</i>
CSL	- Clinical Skills Laboratories
CTM	- Centre for Translational Medicine UNit
DCVM	- Degree Course in Veterinary Medicine
DCVM TR	- Teaching Regulation of Degree Course in Veterinary Medicine
DOC	- Day One Competences
DVS	- Department of Veterinary Sciences
EAEVE	- European Association of Establishments for Veterinary Education
EAEVEC	- EAEVE Committee
ECAAH	- European College of Aquatic Animal Health
EBVS	- European Board of Veterinary Specialisation
ECOVE	- European Committee of Veterinary Education
ECTS	- European Credits Transfer System/ <i>Corresponding to Italian Crediti Formativi Universitari (CFU)</i>
EPT	- External Practical Training
ExCom	- Executive Committee
FSQ	- Food Safety and Quality
FFO	- Ordinary University Financing Fund
FFABR	- UniMe Basic Funding for Research Activities/ <i>Finanziamento Attività di Base della Ricerca</i>
FPA	- Food Producing Animals
FTE	- Full Time Equivalent
HHM	- Herd Health Management
ICU	- Intensive Care Unit
ISEE	- Economic and financial situation indicator/ <i>Indicatore della Situazione Economica e Finanziaria</i>
IZS	- Experimental Zooprophyllactic Institute
MEPA	- Electronic market for public administration
MRI	- Magnetic Resonance Imaging
MUR	- Ministry of University and Research
Nilde	- Network Inter-Library Document Exchange ( <a href="https://nilde.bo.cnr.it/">https://nilde.bo.cnr.it/</a> )
NSQ	- National Scientific Qualification
OFA	- Additional Learning Requirements/ <i>Obblighi Formativi Aggiuntivi</i>
OMIR	- Office for Mobility and International Relations
PPT	- Professional Practical Training / <i>Tirocinio</i>
QA	- Quality Assurance
QAG	- Quality Assurance Group
QAG-DCVM	- Quality Assurance Group of Degree Course in Veterinary Medicine
QAP	- UniMe Quality Assurance Presidium/ <i>UniMe Presidio di Assicurazione della Qualità</i>
QA-RTM	- Quality Assurance Research and Third Mission Committee

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RdR	- Annual Review Report/ <i>Rapporto di Riesame annuale</i>
SA	- Small animals – companion animals
SBA	- University Library Service/ <i>Servizio Bibliotecario di Ateneo</i>
SC	- Steering Committee
SCC	- Student Career Committee
SLD	- Specific Learning Disorders
SMA	- Annual Monitoring Form/ <i>Scheda di Monitoraggio Annuale</i>
SR	- Student Representatives
SS	- Specialisation Schools
SSO	- Single Sign-On
SUA-CdS	- Single Annual Report – Course of Studies/ <i>Scheda Unica Annuale - Corso di Studi</i>
SUA-RD	- Single Annual Report-Research of Department/ <i>Scheda Unica Annuale – Ricerca del Dipartimento</i>
SUA-TM	- Single Annual report for the Third Mission/ <i>Scheda Unica Annuale - Terza Missione</i>
TC	- Tutoring Committee
TR	- Teaching Regulation
TSC	- Technical Scientific Committee
TSJC	- Teacher Student Joint Committee
UniMe	- University of Messina
UniMe TR	- Teaching Regulation of University of Messina
VEE	- Veterinary Educational Establishment
VPH	- Veterinary Public Health
VQR	- Research Quality Assessment/ <i>Valutazione della Qualità della Ricerca</i>
VTH	- Veterinary Teaching Hospital
QAG-DCVM	- Quality Assurance Group of the DCVM
QAP	- Presidium for Quality Assurance
QA-RTM	- Quality Assurance Research and Third Mission Committee

**Decision of ECOVE**

The Committee concluded that no Major Deficiencies had been identified.

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