

Harper & Keele

VETERINARY SCHOOL

Assessment Scheme and Regulations Bachelor of Veterinary Medicine and Surgery (BVetMS)

2020/21 Academic Session

COVID-19 Pandemic: Specific Provisions within the 2020/21 Assessment Regulations

In light of the ongoing uncertainty caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the School has incorporated specific provisions within the 2020/21 assessment regulations. At the time of writing it is not possible to accurately predict the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, so we reserve the right to further review and revise these regulations during the academic year. The School is committed to ensuring that its assessment regulations minimise disruption to student progression whilst also maintaining the academic standards and integrity of the programme. The School recognises that the COVID-19 pandemic may impact also upon students beyond 2020/21 and these aspects will continue to be addressed in future versions of the University's assessment regulations.

For transparency, the specific provisions within the 2020/21 regulations that relate to COVID19 are detailed inside the blue text boxes within this document.

1. Introduction

The arrangements and regulations for assessment and awards have been devised to determine if each student has achieved the module and award outcomes and can demonstrate qualities and abilities which reflect the general educational aims of the Bachelor of Veterinary Medicine and Surgery (BVetMS) programme.

2. Responsibility of the Board of Examiners

Moderation of results and decisions on student progression and awards are the responsibility of the Board of Examiners. This Board has the constitution, authority and responsibilities ascribed to them by the Academic Board of the Veterinary School and the Academic Board and Senate of Harper Adams University and Keele University respectively.

SP1 - COVID-19 specific provision – Assessment Boards

The School will continue to operate its Board of Examiners in accordance with the terms of reference. For operational reasons, the School reserves the right to conduct these meetings via an online platform (e.g. Microsoft Teams) and, if necessary, to alter the scheduled dates of the meetings and to vary the quoracy requirements to ensure that the meetings are able to take place. If meeting dates for the Boards do need to be revised, it may also be necessary to alter the dates that definitive results are released to students. The School will confirm to students (via email) the publication date for results as soon as possible.

3. External examiners

External examiners are appointed by the Harper and Keele Veterinary School to provide assurances regarding the academic standards of the programme and to confirm that the programme operates in accordance with the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications, the relevant subject benchmark statement and the expectations set out in the UK Quality Code for Higher Education and professional body expectations.

SP2 - COVID-19 specific provision – External Examiners

The School will endeavour, wherever possible, to maintain its normal requirements for external examiner participation and input into the Board of Examiners decision making. However, if an external examiner is ill and unable to perform their duties within our agreed timescales, the Chair of Joint Academic Board will be asked to authorise, exceptionally, for the Chair of the Board of Examiners to approve marks, progression and awards without their participation in our processes. In such circumstances, an independent, senior member of staff from either partner University will be required to join the Board to verify that the Board is operating in accordance with its terms of reference and the approved regulations.

4. Assessment scheme

4.1 Credit and programme parts

Programmes are defined by the amount and level of credit and the modules through which students progress. The definition of amount and level of credit and the minimum credit requirements for awards are set out in **Section 7.4 and 8** of these Regulations, for interim and BVetMS awards respectively. The BVetMS programme is divided into 5 parts, Parts 1, 2, 3, 4 and, additionally, for the clinical rotations, Part 5. There is a progressive development of the course content and module level at different parts, with progression of students from one part to the next governed by the assessment regulations (section 8).

Part 1 is the first year of the BVetMS programme, with modules typically delivered and assessed at level 4.

Part 2 is the second year of the BVetMS programme, with modules typically delivered and assessed at level 5.

Part 3 is the third year of the BVetMS programme, with modules typically delivered and assessed at level 6

Part 4 is the fourth year of the BVetMS programme, with modules typically delivered and assessed at level 6

Part 5 is the fifth year of the BVetMS programme and is predominantly centred upon the clinical rotations that are undertaken in the final year of the award. Elements of Part 5 are assessed at Level 6 or 7 as detailed in the Programme Specification.

4.2 Module assessment scheme

The methods and timing of assessment employed in each module are set out in the approved module specifications. All changes to the assessment scheme require formal approval normally in the academic year before the change comes into effect.

To pass a credit bearing module, students must normally achieve an overall mark of 50% for each assessment component(s). However, Clinical Skills Assessment modules are based upon demonstrating practical competencies, each of which must be passed. Full details of the assessment strategy for each module are stated within each approved module specification.

Marks of 49% will stand and **will not** be rounded up to 50%.

For credit bearing modules, where a student achieves an overall mean mark of 50% or more but achieves less than 50% in one or more specified assessment components they will be awarded a Qualified Failure (QF).

Qualified Fail (QF)

Where the student is eligible for reassessment (see **section 6.1** below), the mark for the reassessed QF element(s) will be capped at 50%, although the overall module result will not be subject to capping.

Students are required to pass all assessment components of the Clinical Skills Assessment modules. Where a component is not passed, a Competency Fail (CF) will be awarded for the module.

Competency Fail (CF)

A CF outcome must be passed within a maximum of five attempts. CF outcomes must be successfully completed according to the following schedule:

Module	Successful Completion prior to:
Clinical Skills Assessment 1	Progression to Part 3
Clinical Skills Assessment 2	Progression to Part 4
Clinical Skills Assessment 3	Progression to Part 5
Clinical Skills Assessment 4	End of Part 5
Clinical Skills Assessment 5	End of Part 5

The assessment of students with declared disabilities or specific learning difficulties should, wherever reasonable, comply with the recommendations of the needs assessment report. The Veterinary School Learning, Teaching and Assessment Policy for Students with Disabilities will determine the reasonable adjustments that can be made in supporting individual student needs.

5. Module grading

5.1 Module grading

Grading of students on credit bearing modules is determined by assessment criteria and recorded as a percentage mark, with the pass mark set at 50%. The Clinical Skills Assessment modules are recorded as Pass or Fail only.

6. Reassessment

6.1

Students who have obtained a fail or qualified fail result at the first attempt in a module, will have the right to be reassessed once, within the following limits:

Levels 4, 5, 6 and 7 reassessment entitlement

A maximum of 60 credits, OR one module per part where the failed module exceeds 60 credits, of reassessment per year is permissible.

- The form and timing of reassessment is at the discretion of the Board of Examiners and will be completed immediately before the start of the next study part, or within a period of one year for part-time students. If a student fails to achieve the pass mark, a Fail result will be awarded.

The maximum mark awarded for a reassessed assessment component is 50%.

SP3 - COVID-19 specific provision – Level 4 Reassessment Entitlement

In recognition of the fact that the lack of face-to-face practical teaching is likely to have the greatest impact on the two 45 credit modules at L4, the reassessment entitlement for L4 modules will be increased to 90 credits.

SP4 - COVID-19 specific provision – Level 4 Reassessment Opportunities

In the event that any student is prevented from sitting one or more exams during the June examination period due to approved extenuating circumstances and therefore their first sit occurs during the August examination period, an additional examination period will be scheduled prior to the commencement of the 2021/22 academic year. This will ensure a resit opportunity for any failed modules for students who are within the reassessment entitlement, and allow the opportunity for the student to progress on to Part 2 with their cohort, provided the progression requirements described in Section 7 below are met.

SP5 - COVID-19 specific provision – Level 4 Reassessment Opportunities

The Progression Board will have discretion to grant an exceptional second reassessment in cases where either;

- A maximum of 2 components require reassessment. This could be 2 components within a single module or one component in each of 2 modules.
- or
- Reassessment is only required in modules where the overall mean is 40% or above up to a maximum of 45 credits.

7. Progression, Repeat, Withdrawal and Exit Awards

The table below notes the normal and minimum credit requirements for progression to the next Part of the BVetMS Programme

BVetMS	Normal credit requirement	Minimum credit requirement after permissible reassessments
Progression to Part 2	120 credits	100 credits at L4
Progression to Part 3	240 credits	120 credits at L4 AND 100 credits at L5
Progression to Part 4	360 credits	120 credits at L4 AND 120 credits at L5 AND 100 credits at L6
Progression to Part 5	480 credits	120 credits at L4 AND 120 credits at L5 AND 120 credits at L6 from Part 3 AND 100 credits at L6 from Part 4

7.1 Students meeting the normal credit requirement will progress to the next part of their programme, provided they have not exhausted the permitted number of attempts to successfully pass Competency Failure outcomes within the Clinical Skills Assessment modules (see **section 4.2** above). A student who is permitted to proceed to the next Part of their course shall not be permitted to repeat any successfully passed module(s) with a view to improving their mark.

7.2 Students meeting the minimum credit requirement after attempting all permissible reassessment will be allowed to progress and to restudy the failed module alongside the next Part of their programme provided they have not exhausted the permitted number of attempts to successfully pass Competency Failure outcomes within the Clinical Skills Assessment modules (see **section 4.2** above). By restudying the failed module, the marks obtained previously for all assessment components of that module, whether passed or failed, will be disregarded. All assessments will therefore be undertaken again and the student will have the normal two attempts to pass the restudied module during the next Part of their programme, an uncapped first attempt and a reassessment attempt, with assessment components capped at 50%. If they do not pass the module after these two attempts they will **not** have any option to repeat the year and will be withdrawn from their programme. Depending upon timetable constraints, it may not be possible to attend taught sessions for that module.

7.3 Students not meeting the minimum credit requirement after attempting all permissible reassessment will not be allowed to progress to the next Part of their programme.

a) If they have met all of the following conditions, they will be given the opportunity to either fully repeat or partially repeat that year of study:

- (i) obtained a mean mark of over 50% for that part of the course after permitted reassessment, **and**
- (ii) obtained a minimum of 60 credits within the current study part of the course, **and**
- (iii) the student has not previously repeated (either fully or partially) a Part of the BVetMS programme.

SP5 - COVID-19 specific provision – Repeat Year Opportunity

The mean mark required for eligibility to either fully repeat or partially repeat the previous year of study (Section 7.3a, condition i) will be decreased to 40%. All other conditions (7.3a conditions ii and iii) of eligibility remain the same and must be met.

Such students must pass all of the modules they take in their repeat year of study or they will be withdrawn from their programme. They will not be permitted to proceed with fewer than 120 credits and therefore will not be permitted to restudy any failed module. For students who elect to undertake a full repeat of the year, no credit may be carried forward from the original modules studied from the failed part of the course. During the repeat study year, students will have the right to be reassessed in a maximum of 60 credits or one module where the failed module exceeds 60 credits.

Exceptionally, the Board may exercise its discretion to sanction a repeat year of study where verified and approved exceptional circumstances are available to the Board.

b) If they have not met conditions (i), (ii) and (iii) above, they will be withdrawn from their programme.

Students must also have undertaken and demonstrated competency in the clinical/professional skills requirements both within modules and within Extra Mural Studies (EMS) elements appropriate for this stage of the programme. Details of EMS requirements are provided in the EMS Handbook.

7.4 Students who are withdrawn from their programme will be considered for one of the following exit awards, depending upon the number and level of credits they have been awarded prior to withdrawal.

Exit award	Minimum credits required
BSc (Hons) in Animal Health Science	120 credits at Level 4 or above AND 120 credits at Level 5 or above AND 120 credits at Level 6 or above
Diploma of Higher Education in Animal Health Science	120 credits at Level 4 or above AND 120 credits at Level 5 or above
Certificate of Higher Education in Animal Health Science	120 credits at Level 4 or above

All credits from modules at Level 5 or above must have been awarded by the Veterinary School. For external candidates seeking entry with advanced standing, Accreditation of Prior Learning will only be permissible for Level 4 modules, up to a maximum of 120 credits.

The BSc award will be classified as described in section 9. The Diploma and Certificate awards are unclassified.

7.5 Progression of part-time students

The Board of Examiners have discretion to vary the progression requirements set out above, especially for part-time students and students who have entered with advance standing, to take into account individual circumstances and the appropriateness of

studying related modules from other parts of the course before having accumulated the total number of credits for each part.

8 Requirements for the award of Bachelor of Veterinary Medicine and Surgery

To be awarded the Bachelor of Veterinary Medicine and Surgery, a student must be awarded all 600 credits studied on the programme, as follows:

- 120 credits at Level 4 (From Part 1)
- 120 credits at Level 5 (From Part 2)
- 255 credits at Level 6 (120 from Part 3, 120 from Part 4 and 15 from Part 5)
- 105 credits at Level 7 (From Part 5)

All credits from modules at Level 5 or above must have been awarded by the Veterinary School. For external candidates seeking entry with advanced standing Accreditation of Prior Learning will only be permissible for Level 4 modules, up to a maximum of 120 credits.

The award will be classified as described in section 9.

9. Classification of awards

9.1 Bachelor of Veterinary Medicine and Surgery award (BVetMS)

A mean module mark will be calculated from all Level 6 and Level 7 modules (rounded to the nearest integer with a mark of 0.5 or above rounded up) to determine whether a Distinction may be awarded. When calculating the mean module mark, each module mark will be weighted by the credit value of that module so that, for example, a 30-credit module carries twice the weight of a 15-credit module.

The award will be awarded 'with Distinction' if a mean module mark of at least 75% is achieved.

Exceptionally, a Distinction may be awarded where the examination board is satisfied that the approved exceptional or special circumstances (see section 11) are likely to have significantly affected student performance. In such cases, the board should determine the extent to which a Distinction would be an accurate reflection of the student's capability or where further, uncapped, assessment opportunity/ies would be a more appropriate outcome. Such discretion may only be exercised where a mean module mark of at least 73% is achieved from all Level 6 and Level 7 modules.

9.2 Bachelor of Science with Honours in Animal Health Science Degree

A mean module mark will be calculated to determine the classification that will be awarded. When calculating the mean module mark, each module mark will be weighted by the credit value of that module so that, for example, a 30-credit module carries twice the weight of a 15-credit module.

The mean mark obtained from all Level 5 modules will contribute 30% to the overall mean module mark. The mean mark obtained from all Level 6 modules in Part 3 will be calculated and will contribute 70% to the overall mean module mark. This overall mean module mark will be rounded to the nearest integer with a mark of 0.5 or above rounded up.

The award will be classified as follows:

First Class

- An overall mean module mark of at least 70%

Second (Division I)

- An overall mean module mark of at least 60%

Second (Division II)

- An overall mean module mark of at least 50%

10. Professional Behaviour and Fitness to Practise

The School has an obligation to monitor and assess the professional, as well as academic, development of the student in accordance with RCVS guidance. A student may be withdrawn from study as a result of failing to meet the expectations of the Fitness to Practise policy. For further details on this aspect, please refer to the Vet School [Key Information page](#).

11. Exceptional circumstances (ECs)**11.1 Procedure for claiming exceptional circumstances**

If a student does not attend an examination or does not complete an in-course assessment, or believes that their performance in the assessment has been affected because of an exceptional circumstance, the Board of Examiners can take these circumstances, and their effect on the student's performance into consideration. However, the Board of Examiners will only do this if the School Exceptional Circumstances Panel recommends that they should do so.

The claim must detail the specific circumstances that the student wishes to be taken into account and show how they affected either their ability to submit for assessment or their performance level. The claim should normally be supported by appropriate independent documentary evidence.

Full details on the process for submitting a claim for ECs are available from the Vet School [Key Information page](#).

If the claim has been accepted by the EC Panel, the Board of Examiners may then take the exceptional circumstances into account in making decisions on retake opportunities, student progression and final awards.

12. Aegrotat awards

An Aegrotat award for incomplete study is an unclassified award that may be conferred in exceptional circumstances, such as in cases where a student's ability to complete an award is permanently compromised by severe illness once extenuating circumstances processes have been fully considered and followed as applicable. All Aegrotat awards are unclassified. Only the awards in Animal Health Science are available as Aegrotat awards. The Chair of Veterinary School Examination Board may exercise their discretion to recommend conferment of an Aegrotat award where the Board is satisfied that the academic performance of the student satisfies the requirements of the level of the award under consideration. As an Aegrotat award is a final exit award, it must be considered to be the conclusion of a student's study on a particular course and the implications of this must be agreed with the student prior to consideration of the award by the Exam Board. Before a recommendation for an Aegrotat award is submitted, the student must have indicated that they are willing to accept the award and they understand that this involves waiving the right to be reassessed.

13. Posthumous awards

(a) Any taught award of the University may be conferred posthumously where the death of a student occurs prior to their completion of the requirements for their award. A posthumous award may be accepted on the student's behalf by a parent, spouse or other appropriate individual. The award conferred in such circumstances will normally be as a minimum the next exit award for which the student would have been eligible, based on the stage of the programme of study they had commenced at the discretion of the Chair of the Vet School Academic Board. All posthumous awards are unclassified.

(b) If the death of a student occurs after they have completed all the requirements for an award the award will not be considered posthumous and will, therefore, be classified where appropriate. An award made in such circumstances may still be accepted on the student's behalf by a parent, spouse, or other appropriate individual.

14. Appeals procedure

Students who have valid reasons for appeal may do so through the Appeals Procedure of the Veterinary School. Details are published on the Vet School [Key Information page](#).

15. Graded transcript

A graded transcript will be issued to each student on which will be recorded the mark and grade in each module of the course at each assessment stage.

16. Academic misconduct: cheating, collusion and plagiarism

Students are expected to have familiarised themselves with the Veterinary School's extant policy, procedure and guidance on academic misconduct available from to the Vet School [Key Information page](#), to ensure their work meets normal expectations of acceptable Higher Education practice.

17. Coursework deadline policy (including project-based modules)

Arrangements for the submission of all student work will be published for each module. Student work submitted **up to five working days** later than the published date/time will be subject to the final mark being capped at 50%. Student work submitted **more than five working days** after the deadline will be awarded a score of zero.

The only exception to the above is if a student produces a written claim for exceptional circumstances using the approved Exceptional Circumstances process, with appropriate evidence, in support of a failure to hand work in on time, normally **within 48 hours** of the submission deadline. In this case, the work will be marked, with marks recorded as provisional. The Exceptional Circumstances Panel will subsequently consider the claim and decide whether the provisional marks attributed to the late work should be accepted and advise the Board of Examiners accordingly. The outcome will be reflected in the results notified to students following the Board of Examiners meeting.

18. Arrangements for considering incomplete/missing marks due to significant disruption

In the event that assessment marks/grades are unavailable to the Veterinary School due to force majeure (including major loss due to fire, theft, industrial action or other event outside of the Veterinary School's control), the Veterinary School exam board shall propose to the Joint Management Group a set of arrangements to be implemented to address the absence of marks/grades.

